

Inevitable Changing of Church Doctrines

As the world becomes more scientifically advanced, our understanding of the natural world changes considerably. New scientific observations contradict the doctrines of the church and therefore the church is inevitably forced to adapt and change its conceptions and understanding of its doctrines. Although the church might have been wrong on its previous ideas of the world, so also were the notions of science such as geocentric model of the universe. It makes it difficult for one to ultimately choose what the truth is and which side of the spectrum is the correct. In stating this, it can be said that the differences in certain doctrines between science and Christianity can be explained when looking at the details and there is a possible explanation as to why such differences are reached. It may seem that Christians change their doctrines just to conform to the conflicting views of science, but these discoveries help create new interpretations of scripture and show previous ideas as a simple misunderstanding.

A popular area of controversy between the church and scientists dealt with the idea of the universe and the earth. The idea of understand the world we live in has been a topic of debate numerous times and over plentiful sub-issues. According to White, one of the Christian church's first doctrines dealing with Earth stated that the world was flat. There was a thought that stated is one sailed to far they would fall off the edge of the world. This idea seemed conceptually sound at the time until Magellan sailed around the world to prove the world was no longer flat. Here is the first example of a Christian doctrine being disproved by science. The Church received loads of repercussions for being incorrect. Immediately following there became a problem about the contradiction between the church doctrine and scientific evidence. However, the doctrine could be changed if scripture was looked in a different perspective. This leads one to wonder why or how such a discrepancy could be reached.

In Christianity, there often are times where the way things are interpreted need context to support their meaning. A specific text could support a certain belief in one situation, but without perspective no definitive conclusion can be reached. For example, in Matthew chapter 18 verse 20 it says, "For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them." (New International Version). This is God speaking to the people of Jerusalem. Many Christians falsely use this verse as an example as to why people worship in congregations or as to why prayers are sometimes said aloud and in groups. When looking at this verse without context, this explanation can definitely apply and see why it is used in support of the previous statements. However, when looking at the context of the scripture, it is obvious that these interpretations are not what the verse was intended to suggest. It talks about casting down judgment on people in the previous verses. Therefore it can be concluded that the verse was used to say that human judgment is acceptable and that he will support these decisions. This proves that honest mistakes in taking scripture out of context can provide alternative implications. So a possible explanation as to why the church's doctrine was incorrect was because of the misunderstanding of scripture and as people became more educated, the alternative description prevailed.

The Christian Church was wrong on the idea of Earth being flat, but as for the model of the universe, science ultimately suffered a misunderstanding. The geocentric model of the universe was first explained by the philosophers Aristotle and Ptolemy. Scientist proved this concept to be "true". Although the Christian Church adopted this belief, it was ultimately science that came to this formation of principle. When scientist eventually arrived at the realization of the claim to false, all science was not put to shame or deemed "unbelievable". Just because one facet of science seemed to be incorrect, people still continue to pursue it and believe all things in that area to be true. So it becomes difficult to decipher the differences between the mishaps of

the church and those found in science. It is impossible to state that because either one suffers misconceptions and falsities, that there is an obvious wronging of the other. A scientist cannot blame the Christian Church and vice-versa to be true.

Another idea involving science and the adaptation of the Christian Doctrine is due to the evolving or discovery of animals in remote or new locations. This is one of inevitable scientific evidence deals with the logical contradictions of animals. First, Bertrand Russell presents an idea that logically does not make sense in the scientific eye but is a Christian doctrine. This issue is the gathering of animals on Noah's ark. Russell argues that how is it physically possible to fit all species of animals on a boat and also how does a sloth reach the place in time before the flooding of the world. This logically does not make sense, however, Christians believe that all animals were on the ark. It does not necessarily conflict because the bible does not state how or why the animals got there, but that they just did. It could have happen by latching on to other animals or some divine intervention. So consequently, there is no evidence that shows how this highly improbable thing is done, but possibly adds to the mystery and majesty of God. This example proves that a Christian belief that does not automatically make sense in the scientific realm, irrefutable.

There are instances where Christianity and science have been wrong, and also circumstances where neither side is wrong nor right. However, the church has been much more reluctant to change than science. This can have explanations that do no demean the value of the religion itself, but the people operating or running the organization. The reluctance to change was due to the scare of losing power. The church ventured as far as to say that you were condemned if you did not believe in these certain doctrines, although there was no scriptural

evidence. These statements are erroneous and give a bad image for the reliability of the doctrines, but to no compromise the actual beliefs of Christianity.

The issue becomes whether or not that church deserves to be criticized for false or misleading doctrines. It is unfair for science to say that beliefs cannot evolve and learn from previous experiences because science participates in the exact same procedure. Scientists who say that the change in the doctrines were only due to science and were invalid but they actually were adaptations that make sense in scripture. The argument that only science is true is disproved through the false belief in the geocentric theory. Also, as scientists become more educated, so also do theologians. Therefore the context of the scripture used to derive their beliefs can be better understood when looking at greater depth in the context surrounding the verse. The context can provide alternative meanings that could lead to original doctrines. Although there are scientific probabilities that seem highly unlikely to occur, it cannot be disproved that it would not happen. So arguments like that of Noah's ark cannot be used to diminish the Christian doctrine because it has not been proved as untrue. The church has been much more reluctant to change, but this is not because of the lack of solidity in the faith, but fear for lack of power, which shows the doctrines to remain true even if there is an evolution. There is nothing that proves that Christian doctrines cannot change and yet still be true.