

## On Gosse's Good Ideas and Bad Methods

Gosse's integration of science and religion into a plausible synthesis was conceived on an outlandish notion. People don't want the mere possibility of an idea; they want to believe. To say that God planted false evidence all over the world is in fact possible, but it lacks conviction. There is no logical reason why God would do that. Furthermore, it negatively alters the persona of God in religion, and discredits the practice of science altogether. Not only is Gosse's idea based on an incredulous premise, but it completely offends both practices. Although he set out to illustrate how the two fields could coexist in harmony, he ends up pushing them farther apart. Despite the method of arbitration, the notion that humanity needs both science and religion is indeed accurate.

Skeptical premise aside, Gosse makes a mockery first of Christianity. In theorizing that God intentionally placed false clues all over the Earth to lead us astray from truth, Gosse implies deception and mischief in God's character. This notion of God is drastically different from the teachings of Christianity, which contend that God is an icon of morality and benevolence and that He loves us all as His own children. Casting Christianity's ultimate figure in a negative light inevitably will offend its followers, no matter what the intention.

On the other hand, Gosse infers that science shouldn't even be in practice. Science seeks to find truth based on the laws of our world, and if those laws are all false, then we have no way of finding truth. If the very basic foundation of what we know is wrong, and everything else we have learned is reliant on that basis, then

we know nothing. We may as well not even bother trying to learn anything about our world because it is essentially impossible. Granted, in this case science still has practical application in our everyday lives regardless of the false evidences it reveals, but under Gosse's theory it is but trivial in the grand scheme of things.

I do not believe that there can be a peaceful synthesis between science and religion. There are simply too many direct factual conflicts to construct one reasonable holistic philosophy out of the two. However, I do believe that the coexistence of science and religion as two separate practices is what is best for humanity. The effect of religion on people is undeniably real. Regardless of whether or not the premises of Christianity are true or false, people harvest myriad of things through religion that are beneficial to themselves as well as society. People act more ethically in the face of Christianity, whether it be for genuine belief in God's word or simply because they fear His wrath. Even those not so closely associated with religion will watch what they do "just in case." Many gather strength and hope from a variety of sources within religion; in the congregation of fellow Christians, in the teachings of the Bible, in the possibility of an afterlife, or in believing that God is watching over them and their loved ones.

Science also plays an extraordinarily significant role in the well-being of mankind. Figuring out the laws of our world and how things work leads to advances in medicine, technology, food cultivation, and many other things critical in the survival and advancement of human civilization. Even understanding the history of

the Earth through scientific technology such as carbon dating is vital so that we may learn from past occurrences and prepare for what lies ahead.

Furthermore, each of these fields in existence without the other would have devastating consequences. In a society without religion, the significant number of people who act morally out of religious faith or fear would no longer have reason to do so. Instead, science would only be able to guide people in relation to observable effects. For example, religion would say not to kill someone because it is wrong to take life. Science would say the taking of life would amount to nothing more than a dead body, which will donate itself back to the natural process of nature.

Statistically, crime rates would be much higher than the present and aid for those in need would dwindle. Not only would participation in such programs as community service diminish, but the programs themselves would be fewer in number due to the sizable amount run through religious organizations. People would have nowhere to turn for hope and support either; science may in fact have the opposite effect, using laws such as determinism to suggest the nonexistence of free will and even God. Many people need to believe in such concepts as free will and God in order to see the purpose of even living at all.

Religion without science is no better. We can look to history to show us how religion has even ravaged human society. Back in the olden days, Christianity used to advocate filthiness in order to show humility in the face of God. However, this caused all sorts of disease, which in turn decimated the population. When faced with such plagues, prominent Christian figures would claim them as the Wrath of God,

and thus propose further filthiness as the solution, which obviously only made matters worse. Religion does not empirically investigate the world and therefore through religion we can gain little knowledge about it past mere observation. Humanity would be lost without the vast amount of information science provides and the practical applications which stem from it.

I see no problem with the balance between science and religion as it exists in society now. The coexistence of both acts as a system of checks and balances. Although science would say that religion is putting restraints on scientific advancement, we need religion to question the moral implications of some of science's endeavors. For example, on the issue of cloning is science abusing its capabilities? Is cloning overstepping our boundaries as humans, essentially playing with God? Could disrupting the natural order of life have devastating consequences? These questions need to be seriously considered, regardless of what conclusion we come to in the end. Similarly, science checks religion, helping it to evolve for the good of mankind. As mentioned earlier in the example of plagues, the altruism religion seeks to advocate is often misguided by its own beliefs. The application of science to religious teachings is beneficial and sometimes even necessary for human advancement. So despite the deeply heated controversies between science and religion, the situation now is about as good as it ever will be, and as good as it ever needs to be.