

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

I like thinking, so I like science. Because science is thinking, experimenting and making statements about us and about our world. I completely disagree with Descartes though who said: cogito ergo sum (I think so I am). I would rather say: I feel so I am (I'm sorry I can't write this in Latin). But I only can make such a statement because I think and have a memory.

I don't like religion. Because religion is believing in untested and untestable statements about us and our world.

Science is about making statements (refutable conjectures) about reality, about how it is and how it will be. Religion is about making statements (irrefutable truths) about how it is and how it should be. Religion tells people how to behave (especially how women should behave – is God a man?) but no religion will ever tell objects what to do. So some religions would say that God doesn't want you to ride on a bicycle on Sundays but there is no religion that forbids stones to roll from the mountain on Sundays. Why is that?

When scientists talk or write about the word 'truth' they are talking of how well a statement, a model or a theory fits the real world. Most scientists agree that there are no age-long true theories or facts. Even so, science is capable of making predictions by – for example – discovering the laws that govern the physical world.

Science is the art of making a perfect representation of the world so it can predict some aspects of it.

Social sciences have the same aim as the physical sciences: the prediction of future outcomes. In social sciences the subject of study is the inner part of man, his behaviour and his artefacts. The difference with the physical sciences lies in the research methods used. Between brackets: some social scientists believe they should only use the same methods of that of the physical sciences. How erroneous!

If we take a close look at science then you may conclude that scientists start from the world as they encounter it and then they try to explain (and predict) how parts of it interact. There is no design in science, except the design of scientific models and theories.

A scientist is like a man entering a building and starting to investigate how the different parts of the building work (together).

A religious believer (yes a man too and not a woman) on the other hand enters the building, has a quick look around, leaves the building, examines it meticulously from the outside and wonders who the architect was. Of course there is nobody to tell him, so he starts speculating. Soon he discovers there is no information to speculate upon so the believer makes up a story, goes home and tells everybody the great news (his invented story). And because he did not have a good look at the inside of the building he invents how we should behave in there (and especially the women).

Catholics thought that the earth was flat. They did a lot of horrible things to Galileo because he told them the world was not like a pancake but like a soccer ball. Now they too the world is round. But how many people had to die before they accepted this 'fact'?

Because religion has no way of testing its beliefs, religious statements can be held as absolute truths. This causes believers to think they are the best of breed and that their morals should therefore be imposed on others.

Is it possible to be religious and to be a scientist? Theoretically science and religion are not compatible. But there are scientist believers. In my view they have a big problem in explaining how they can live with conflicting statements and in explaining how they solve this incompatibility.