

IS THE PERCEIVED DISCORD AND CONFLICT BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGIOUS FAITH A MISUNDERSTANDING?

In relation to the debate on whether or not religion opposes science and science opposes religion, James D Williams of the University of Sussex, says: "Where we have issues, they generally revolve around people trying to reconcile science and religion or using religion to refute science. This misunderstands the nature of science. Science deals in the natural, religion the supernatural. Science seeks explanations for natural phenomena, whereas religion seeks to understand meaning in life." This is a lie.

It is a lie for he says religion. If one religion fits science what about the rest? If one religion fits science reasonably but is not a perfect fit the others will be a bad or terrible fit. Catholics hold that their Church is the one true Church and if other religions are not the one true Church then they will have to have their disputes with and threats from science. When man invents a religion that religion will have all kinds of errors including scientific ones.

It is a lie for you can have a sense of meaning in life without bringing in the supernatural. Some atheists believe or hope that through physics eternal life is somehow possible but not in the sense that the supernatural is involved. They call it a mystery but it makes their lives feel ultimately and eternally important. It is not true that meaning in life is confined to supernatural religion.

Some mystics redefine the natural as being supernatural without seeming to be. They see their lives and the mundane as somehow magical. They reject magic as in wafers turning into God and apparitions but they pretend reconcile naturalism and supernaturalism in their own way. But in reality they redefine natural as supernatural. Their attitude is credulous in principle. They cannot talk if some doctor starts saying that those who eat his garden peas will have everlasting life on earth.

Many people feel their lives have meaning because they love science and its benefits. And religion makes many historical and even scientific claims many of which have little or no importance in matters pertaining to the meaning of life. For example, if the Catholic Church is wrong about Mary being a lifelong saint or if it is right what has that to do with your sense of purpose in life? Also, religion is not all about the meaning of life - it is about explanations for phenomena too. Suppose remarkable coincidences take place after somebody prays that cause what is prayed for to happen. Religion will say this shows God at work in and through and with nature. Science will say it is a coincidence and is not remarkable when you consider how even bigger coincidences happen in nature that have nothing to do with anybody praying for them to happen.

It is a lie for if science proved that nature shows signs that no God was involved Williams would say this only means God is hiding or could be hiding. It could also mean that there is no God. If science cannot refute a hiding God, it does not change the fact that science has no reason to care if there is such a God. God by definition is that which alone matters so therefore if science does not care about God then science and God are irreconcilable.

It is a lie for saying science is not about religious stuff and religion is not about natural stuff IS trying to reconcile science and religion. Putting things into boxes so that they will not conflict is a form of reconciliation.

Williams lies also in saying the natural and supernatural can be treated as separate. To deal with the natural, you have to assume that no supernatural force exists that will tamper with it or manufacture or corrupt the evidence. And if the natural is caused by the supernatural and run by it then it is just the supernatural under a different name.

The Christian view is that the supernatural and the natural are not separate at all but just act differently. Thus in a sense a flower growing is a miracle.

Science involves working out what is a possibility and what is not. If you recover from an illness and have been taking appropriate antibiotics then science will deny that the supernatural cured you. It will not argue, "Okay the pills could make this person better but that does not mean they did. God did it." It will not say, "The person who takes these pills gets better but that does not mean the pills cured him. God could have decided to act directly when somebody takes the pills so the pills in themselves have no power at all." It will say the antibiotics cured you. Thus it excludes magic and the supernatural. Supernatural and science are mutually exclusive.