

The Inconvenient Relation Between Religion and Science: The Prevalence of the Heliocentric Theory

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Abstract

Which is the relation between religion and science? Or rather between religious dogma and science? Convergence or opposition? Parallel or incompatible roads? Is this relation truly inconvenient?

In order to answer this question thoughtfully, we must first juxtapose these two primal notions.

In the case of a religious dogma, faith must be absolute. Dogma as a theory can be proved only through itself and its power is the absence of doubt. On the contrary, in the case of science, according to the philosophical view of Descartes, doubt should be present in any problem arising in order to avoid possible errors and prejudices; through doubt we can be led to the discovery of an indisputable truth. So the Cartesian doubt in the area of science is the main methodological starting point, which leads us to the proof.

The difference between dogma and science, or rather the difference of the religious beliefs from respective scientific theories, stems from exactly this point.

Religion is faith and absolute truth, while science is doubt and falsifiability (or refutability). Karl R. Popper, for example, was critical against the inductive methods used in science. All inductive proofs are limited, he said, while he taught that falsifiability should replace the ability for verification as a criterion of the difference between the scientific and the non-scientific. Science is seen more in the frame of an unending search for objective knowledge, rather than in the frame of a knowledge system. The principle of falsifiability is for Popper the criterion for the scientific or non-scientific character of a given theory. Thus, astrology, metaphysics and the Marxist theory are classified as *pseudosciences* because of their incapability to be subjected to the application of the falsifiability principle. Within a religious structure there is no phenomenon that can refute the core of the theory and there is nothing that can make the foundations of the structure tremble.

In science, when something new is discovered, anything that contradicts, even partially, to the prevailing scientific theory, then, sooner or later, the theory is replaced by a new theory. According to Popper scientists should rather try to disprove their theories than to verify them time and again