

Science, poetry and religion

The title of this essay is its main point. The point is that there is not a two-fold comparison (still less a dichotomy) between science and religion, because science is part of religion. Religion is a way of life and science is part of that way of life (if the religion is any good). You can see this from the very spelling of the word:

R is for Reconnection,

E is for exacting standards,

L is for lifelong learning,

I is for intuitive dissatisfaction,

G is for gratitude,

I is for increasing awareness,

O is for ongoing difficulty,

N is for neighbourliness.

Well that is what the word spells out when it is in a healthy condition. Religion gone bad is what happens when any or all of these ingredients have been dropped or ignored or replaced by their opposites.

The two-fold separation is between science and poetry. Science seeks out universal patterns; poetry insists on the value of the particular. Science aims for a precise match between words and physical observations; poetry evokes, and alludes to that which is beyond words. Science insists you must agree or show where the mistake is; poetry invites you into a space. This is not to say that science cannot be allusive nor that poetry cannot be right or wrong, true or untrue.

Good religion is the good host which welcomes both guests and helps them to talk to one another.

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