

"Observants" OT

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 20 Apr 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4573>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

James Wynn — 20 Apr 2006, 17:15

Dan'I said:

There is an alternative approach: I believe in Revealed Truth.
I also believe in Observable Facts.
When they seem to be in conflict, it means that I have
misunderstood one or both of them; and this is where Reason
complements Faith. Faith will not allow me to discard a Revealed
Truth because it is inconvenient or incompatible with Observable
Fact; Reason will not allow me to discard an Observable Fact
because it is inconvenient or incompatible with Revealed Truth.

I think you have described here the "observant" position on Reason
and Faith very well here. My point is that "seculars" would not be at all
be surprised to find Revealed Truth and Observable Facts in conflict.
In fact, for them "Faith" does not truly begin until they **are** in conflict.

To maintain integrity, I have to understand both in such a way that
I reject neither, and yet resolve apparent contradictions.
It isn't always easy. In fact, I suspect that the difficulties it
presents are one reason why so many people do take refuge
in Fundamentalism, Literalism, etc.

And I am asserting that the fundamentalists, the literalists, do the same thing you are doing.
They have merely set a more difficult task for themselves.

Seven-day creationists do not value faith and reason equally; they
insist that reason must be the handmaid of faith, and that all
Observable Facts must be interpreted to align with (their version of)
Revealed Truth.

For the sake of argument, I'll agree with you about this and remind you that they have an
important model in this in the letters of Paul: "Let God be true and every man a liar." Romans
3:4 However, in my agreement I will stipulate that in my experience they do not believe little
handmaid Observable Facts will ever go her own way. They affirm that she will always continue
to hold the hand of her mistress. If she is undeniably not there, they contend, then neither is
Revealed Truth. You are looking at something besides Revealed Truth.

Practically, your position and theirs are indistinguishable.

It seems to me that your use of the term "observants" is ... well,
a little narrow.

It is intended to be narrow. I'm using the term technically, not conventionally. I'll accept a better
term if you have one. The term "seculars" is equally narrow.

My point is to stipulate the division between
people who believe that Faith is "real" (in the ordinary sense)
and can be articulated and those who see it as free-floating metaphor.

It is possible both to be an observant Christian and to subscribe to the findings of modern evolutionary biology (including its psychological implications).

I don't deny that it is possible...easy really...to be an observant (as I am using the term in this thread), and to believe in evolution. Looking back on it, after the fact, I chose seven-day Creationists as an archetype for at least two reasons.

1) I figured that seven-day Creationists would be the *least* represented on this list, and therefore I could eliminate as many voices as possible saying that I had mischaracterized their beliefs.

2) I figured that that position was the *most* based on Faith while simultaneously *least* based on Reason (as Chris providing the conventional definition: "a combination of reason with certain everyday empirical assumptions/premises that we need to get by in our everyday lives"). Just as pure secular materialists (ala Richard Dawkins) would represent the other extreme. I never intended to rob from you the honest appellation of "observant Christian". There are lots of ways "observe" one's Faith and lots ways to think about it while one observes it.

Yet, I suspect a your justification for being a believing Christian while subscribing to the psychological implications of evolutionary biology would make interesting reading.

Once again, the dividing line is whether one believes matters of Faith are "real" or metaphors. And whether they can or ought to be critically examined at all.

The Catholic church, a while back, declared that -- though it is not heretical to believe in literal 7-day creation -- it is heretical to insist upon it, because it attempts to put limitations on God's options in how He chose to create the universe.

I've heard this before, and while I'm not familiar with the details of this encyclical, it seems to me that Seven-day Creationists have a bone to pick with the Catholic Church. After 1900 years of teaching Seven-day Creationism, it is now suggesting that there is something a devilish about believing it strongly or arguing for it with vigor. This, despite the extensive and famously contentious list of things taught in encyclicals and the Catechism that a Christian *must* or *ought to* strongly believe and affirm.

But "science" -- as opposed to scientists, who are as human as you, me, and Chris -- in its proper form always doubts its theories.

Yes, and "true religion" is always humble and turns the other cheek. This is why I'm uncomfortable with speaking as though "science" is the sole, exclusive tool of seculars and reason while "religion" is the domain of observants and faith, as some tend to do.

As for your Feynman example, I'm afraid he is beside the point. I'm sure I could find plenty of similar qualifications by evangelists interpreting the book of Revelation. But in matters of both Science and Religion, there are inevitably underlying unverifiable presumptions which the individual practitioners find they cannot relinquish.

I'm also something of a Nietzsche fan...He was hugely influenced by the arrogance of the Victorian scientific establishment, and particularly their tendency to think they'd done away with God.

I'm hardly a *fan*, but I allowed Friedrich his best shot on my world-view.

Today, I think the issue is not whether we have killed God so much as whether we have

rendered Him unable to say anything meaningful nor to lay any solid claim on our existence. We've not excised him from our bodies, we've only rendered him a benign logical appendix.

In this way, the Victorian sentiment is hardly out-moded, Hubble's Big Bang theory suddenly and surprisingly put God back in center stage, and it has ever since made secular theoretical physicists extremely uncomfortable as Stephen Hawking noted in his famous book. Hawking was not the first or last to devise theories with the deliberate purpose of removing "In The Beginning" as an implication of Hubble's theories.

J