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# Deus Verum

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## The Fallacy of the "Science vs. Religion" Debate: Bad History

### BAD HISTORY



The history which began to portray the church as the opponent of science first came from the pens of protestant propagandists. This claim was, of course, not found very credible at the time but a few centuries later the theme was gladly taken up by atheist Enlightenment thinkers. In their disgust with the social institution of the "Old Regime" thinkers like Voltaire were the ones who really started the science vs. religion myth.

Influenced by these men an American, A.D. White, was the one who truly engrained this idea into the modern consciousness. His famous book *The History of the Warfare Between Science and Theology* was the most blatant statement of the idea yet. The publication of this book occurred at the same time as Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, and in the confusion that followed Darwinists like T.H. Huxley used White's book alongside Darwin's in order to help their previous anti-religious agenda. The idea of the Church as the enemy of science became the vogue in universities and was repeated so loudly and for so long by so many that the common man came to accept it as common knowledge.

In any case the content of White's book was sketchy at best, it was heavily footnoted, but as the physicist and Benedictine Stanley Jaki has noted, if one bothers to check his sources one wonders how in the hell he could write the things he did. This book and others like it held sway until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when several writers gave us a clearer picture of the historical events.

The correction of these popular falsehoods really began with the theoretical physicist Pierre Duhem who, while researching in the universities library found hundreds of forgotten old manuscripts dealing with medieval science and the Church. This resulted in his writing a massive 11 volume history of science called *Le Systemes du Monde*. This groundbreaking research once again opened the historical field to a more accurate view of the historical situation. In America Joseph J. Walsh, a doctor, professor of science at Fordham and a true renaissance man with a doctorate in law as well as an Sc.D (one step above a PhD) in biology, wrote a number of books including *Catholic Churchmen in Science*, and *Science and the Popes*. These men influence the work of several later historians and in more recent times the likes of Edward Grant, David C. Lindberg, and James Hannam, all of whom are physicists and historians, and all of whom have helped to bring clarity and truth to the history of Science.

Posted by [Bede Venerabilis](#) at 5:51 AM

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