

**THE RELATION BETWEEN  
RELIGION  
AND SCIENCE: A  
BIOLOGICAL APPROACH**

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The Relation Between Religion and Science: A Biological Approach by Angus Stewart  
Woodburne

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**ANGUS STEWART WOODBURNE**

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The University of Chicago

THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION  
AND SCIENCE: A BIOLOGICAL  
APPROACH

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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DEPARTMENT OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY IN THE  
GRADUATE DIVINITY SCHOOL

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BY  
ANGUS STEWART WOODBURNE

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## PREFACE

The attempt is made in this thesis to examine the age-long problem of the interrelationship of religion and science from a new angle, namely that of psychology considered as a biological science. There is a general recognition today that the elements common to the religions and those common to the sciences are psychological. The facts of religious experience and the facts of scientific experience are so multiform that the only place to discover a common basis is in the attitudes of consciousness giving rise to these variant concrete expressions. Furthermore there is a general recognition among psychologists that the genesis of all the attitudes, including the religious and the scientific, is localizable in the instinctive behaviors of the psycho-physical organism.

It seems only fair that psychologists should recognize that those best equipped to define instinctive behavior are the biologists. On the basis of a biologically acceptable definition, a sound theory of the origin of religion and science is possible. The theory proposed is that these attitudes have their roots in behavior which, while instinctive, is multiple. In proof of the contention, reference is made to many of the rites and practices of primitive peoples which are recorded in the source books on anthropology. It is the hope of the author that this effort may contribute in some small measure to the solution of a great problem.

A. S. WOODBURNE

CAMP DODGE, IOWA  
January, 1920

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## CHAPTER I

## CONCERNING METHOD

It is the aim of this chapter to set forth in outline the development of a scientific method. The deductive method of Aristotle dominated the thinking of the Middle Ages and was ecclesiastically sanctioned in Catholicism. But the needs created by scientific progress made the evolution of a better method inevitable. The seventeenth century witnessed the rise of induction which in its developed form is the method of modern science. But induction, to be complete, must make use of the genetic method, involving history and psychology. Thus this sketch (1) indicates the cause and nature of the long conflict between science and theology, and (2) furnishes a vindication for the study of the relation of religion to science from the point of view of psychology.

The attainment of a method for a scientific approach to our human problems has a history which takes us back to the Greeks. The beginning of logic is to be found in Aristotle. It was his theory that reality is to be found in particulars, and that these particulars have universals and attributes attached to them. He was the first to conceive of reason (*λογος*) as a definite subject of investigation. The process of reasoning, he taught, was a combination of premises (*συλλογισμός*) to produce a new conclusion. Logic was thus for him a science of deductive inference. He can hardly be said to have a logic of induction. His universals were obtained by a process of analysis and abstraction in which differences were eliminated and particulars were grouped according to their homogeneity into classes. Accordingly science, which was selective, picked on a specific object, which it handled with the tools forged for the purpose. Its abstract universals were obtained in the analytical fashion, and were then made the major premises in a deductive process which led to a definite conclusion. Any reasoning which could not be put thus in the form of a syllogism was regarded as imperfect.