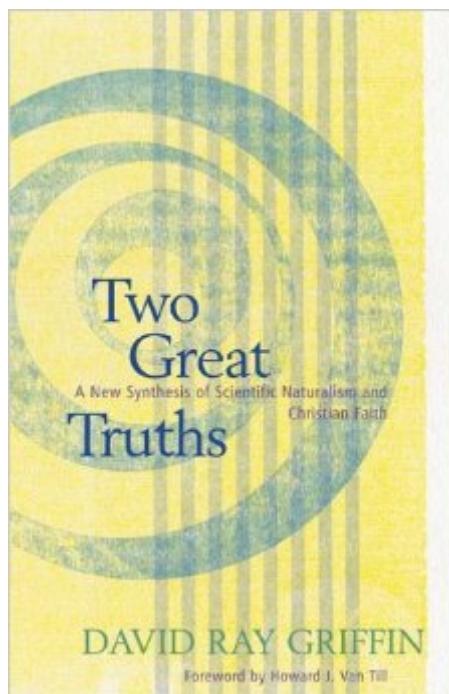


The book was found

Two Great Truths: A New Synthesis Of Scientific Naturalism And Christian Faith



Synopsis

Furthering his contribution to the science and religion debate, David Ray Griffin draws upon the cosmology of Alfred North Whitehead and proposes a radical synthesis between two worldviews sometimes thought wholly incompatible. He argues that the traditions designated by the names "scientific naturalism" and "Christian faith" both embody a great truth--a truth of universal validity and importance--but that both of these truths have been distorted, fueling the conflict between the visions of the scientific and Christian communities. Griffin contends, however, that there is no inherent conflict between science, or even the kind of naturalism that it properly presupposes, and the Christian faith, understood in terms of the primary doctrines of the Christian good news.

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Customer Reviews

Given that today real harm that can be done by the traditional teachings of many faith communities it is refreshing to find a book that allows thoughtful and compassionate people to affirm both what they know about the world and the possibility of that world being an environment of peace and caring for everyone. In a small book, Two Great Truths, David Ray Griffin, shares the richness of a lifetime spent in contemplating and writing about how we understand God. And most importantly he offers an affirming vision of both reality (science) and the Christian faith. Dr. Griffin's work is based on a view of the world that sees all things as interconnected and interrelated in the way in which quantum physics' sub-atomic basis of reality operates. Everything participates in an ongoing process of creativity. God is "what makes things make themselves". There is therefore no need to see God as supernatural. Griffin argues that this idea was a distortion in the early church when God

was seen as creating out of nothing and as determining everything that happened in the world. He says that it is good news that we do literally, live and move and have our being in God and that we are free to make our own response to life. However that means that the responsibility for the kind of world in which we live is ours. God provides the best possibilities for any given situation. It is our choice whether what happens is for good or for evil. God's aim for the world is goodness, beauty, harmony and peace. We are never out of the presence of God because the creating Spirit of the Universe animates all of life.

This book tries to reconcile what the author calls Scientific Naturalism and Christian Faith. It includes interesting developments on theology and cosmology, with a critical overview of the idea of "creation out of nothing". Griffin shows how this idea has damaging implications regarding the perfect goodness of God and the free-will of man. In his analysis of Christian doctrines, Griffin makes a distinction between primary doctrines constituting a great truth, and subsequent secondary and tertiary doctrines which distract our attention from them and even end up contradicting them. Some of those later doctrines which turn out to be false are the result of distortions accumulated with the passing of time. Another source of misinterpretations comes from the confusion of languages. A mythological narrative for instance may express a deep truth, which will become false if taken literally. It needs first to be translated into our common or scientific language in order to be properly understood. The problem then, is that such a translation will result in a loss of meaning, and a narrower scope of interpretation. Truths may also be different because they answer different questions. They can be different, but not necessarily conflicting at a fundamental level. All this is interesting but not really new. So the real contribution of this book seems to be found at the more general level of considerations about the concept of truth itself. In my view, things would have been easier if the author had not used the word faith, especially in his title, when he actually means creed or conviction. It seems appropriate when speaking about truth, to use words in their true meaning. Even, as is the case here, if their true meaning is not their more usual one.

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