

Worship Sharing 1-30-2024
“The heart and the head”

But all you that be in your own wisdom and in your own reason, you tell that silent waiting upon God is famine to you; it is a strange life to you to come to be silent, you must come into a new world. Now you must die in the silence, die from the wisdom, die from the knowledge, die from the reason, and die from the understanding.

George Fox 1657

We do distinguish betwixt the certain knowledge of God and the uncertain, betwixt the spiritual knowledge and the literal, the saving heart-knowledge and the soaring airy head-knowledge. The last, we confess, may be by divers ways obtained; but the first, by no other way than the inward immediate manifestation and revelation of God’s Spirit, shining in and upon the heart, enlightening and opening the understanding.

Robert Barclay 1678

Conflict between science and religion comes when people see things in a partial way, thinking that part of the picture is the whole picture. We need to listen to what both science and religion can tell us in order to understand the whole. Science can help us understand many aspects of reality, and in particular see the fine-tuning in physics that allows our existence. That understanding can be very precise, and it can make a huge impression. Our broader experience can give us a relation to spiritual issues with many dimensions. In terms of the beauty of things, I get that by walking in the mountains every Saturday and looking at birds, trees, waterfalls, flowers, clouds, the sea, and all the rest of it. In terms of religious experience, it is what many Quakers have found in the gathered Meeting for Worship.

Consequently, I like to talk about “intimations of transcendence”—of perceptions of a kind of existence lying behind the surface appearance, which gives a grounding for meaning, morality, and purpose.

George Ellis 2004

Queries

How do these quotes speak to you?

In what ways have you needed to stand aside from ‘understanding’ in your spiritual journey?

In what ways do you experience “intimations of transcendence”?

