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Faith in this Space Age [1]

Introduction

THERE are two ancient questions that have always been relevant in the minds of men as they have striven and still strive to come to terms with the enigma of being, and especially of their own being. No doubt it is just because of their timeless relevance that the following two passages of the Old Testament, containing these questions, are amongst the best-known parts of the Bible. The first quotation, which comes from the eighth psalm, and has provided a title for a recent psychological symposium and for many a thesis and discussion, is 'What is man?' In the particular context in which it occurs in the psalm it is, perhaps, especially significant for our present subject: 'When I consider thy heavens. . . . What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?'

The second question, from the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, is, in a sense, the obverse of the first: 'To whom then will ye liken God?' for it is only in the mould of the latter that we can hope to congeal an adequate concept of man, and it is only in anthropomorphic terms that those parts of God's ways which can be known could possibly be expressed. At the very start, however, we must recognise that the second question is all too rarely asked in this age of human prowess and human terror, and that, if asked, it receives too often the agnostic reply, 'We cannot know'; a reply that is frequently honest, that may hide agonies of a questing spirit, but is sometimes merely the slick answer of a lazy ignorance that has not bothered to enquire.

'What is man?' and 'To whom . . . will ye liken God?' are the two questions on which faith in any age turns, for faith, in the sense in which I shall use it, is that relationship of trust and confidence between the creature man and his Creator which characterises true religion, which marks it off from superstition. It is to be noted that faith in this sense is entirely different from belief in, that is to say acceptance of, objective faith. It is not less but more. Objective facts there must be, otherwise faith is mere superstition, but there must also be subjective experience

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if faith is really to be a personal relationship. To put it biblically, 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God'. When the Word of God comes to a man it comes not in the indicative mood, simply conveying information. It comes in the imperative demanding response.

At this point, may I say that I am neither a theologian nor a philosopher but, if I may borrow the words of Mark Antony, I am 'a plain, blunt man that love my friend'. It is that divine friendship, that trust, confidence and reliance which I shall call faith.

It cannot be denied that this confidence of which I speak is not common in the world today. There are of course many reasons, amongst which is the fact that population growth outstrips missionary potential (a fact that is a challenge to the Church to look to its strategy), but in this discussion I shall confine myself to the situation in the literate, and therefore presumably educated, Western world, to so-called Christendom.

Attitudes in the World Today

It is a truism that people's attitudes to society, to life and to religion in this space age are largely conditioned by science, but this conditioning is not direct. It is not that people are becoming more scientific. Indeed, it is open to question whether even scientists as a whole are becoming more scientific, as the perils of specialisation blind them to the unsubstantial basis of their thought forms, and the axiomatic rather than logical foundation of their presuppositions.

In a foreword to one of the monographs published in association with the Nuffield Foundation Unit for the History of Ideas, Jaques Barzun says, 'Western society today may be said to harbour science like a foreign god, powerful and mysterious. Our lives are changed by its handiwork, but the population of the West is as far from understanding the nature of this strange power as a remote peasant of the Middle Ages may have been from understanding the theology of Thomas Aquinas.' Earlier he refers to 'the work that modern science sets its hand to: no longer the improvement of man's understanding or man's comfort but the increasingly confident assurance of his self-destruction'.

We shall return later to this popular lack of understanding, but for the moment it is sufficient to note that the power for destruction is real enough, in all conscience, and that coupled with the mystery and uncertainty as to what will be cooked up next, it has established fear

as a characteristic attitude of the age. Of course, there is healthy fear and morbid fear, and while we cannot but regret the actions of our race that have brought such fear upon the world, and deplore our own frequent unwillingness to face the facts, our shirking of our responsibilities, yet the outcome of this fear has not been wholly bad. It has contributed in no small way to the growing political and social awareness of our age. However much we may disagree with the policies of the 'Committee of one hundred', it is a healthy thing for a nation and for the world when a tiny minority is prepared to swim against the stream of public opinion and to suffer for it as well. In short, fear has made people think. It has awakened the dormant question 'What is man?' The other, 'To whom then will ye liken God?', cannot be far behind.

But apart from fear and an increasingly active social conscience, with its awakening concern for the underfed, the underclothed and the underprivileged, there have been two other attitudes generated. The first of these, scepticism, again is not wholly evil. By sweeping away the Jewish fable and mediaeval speculation that for long clogged biblical interpretation, this scepticism has given the Word of God a freer, more direct approach to men's minds. Because the voice of ecclesiastical dogma and theological authority is heard with the healthy, even rebellious scepticism of contemporary intellectual youth, that same youth is turning to the Bible in a genuine and honest spirit of enquiry, more than ever before. The churches of our land may not often be filled, but where they are filled it is largely with students, and those students are in earnest.

While Milton could castigate the unfaithful pastors of his day with the words 'The hungry sheep look up and are not fed', amongst the student classes at any rate today the situation is changed, for the church that gives no food has no sheep.

The other attitude that characterises our society today is cynicism. This is far less healthy. It is the attitude of an empty spirit, with no philosophy of life, no 'weltanschauung' as the Germans have it, no faith. It is demonstrated by the growing popularity of satire, which is wholly destructive, frequently dishonest and largely irresponsible. While scepticism is an attitude of the mind unwilling to be stampeded by the emotions, cynicism is an attitude of the emotions which prevents the mind from taking the future seriously.

It is against this background of common attitudes that we must now consider some misunderstandings affecting faith.

Misunderstandings about Science

We have already referred to Barzun's remark that 'Western society harbours science as a god' whose theology is virtually unknown to the layman. Before addressing ourselves, therefore, to a brief enquiry into the aims and character of science it is important that we should take notice of the popular image of the god, for it is of course the popular image of science (and sometimes even of scientists) rather than the true character of science that affects the faith of most.

To many people, science is conceived almost entirely in terms of what is done or said to be done in its name. It is science that sends men into space and it is science that has succeeded, so far, in bringing them back again. It is science that makes hydrogen bombs and that explodes them in the atmosphere to rain an ever-increasing flux of radioactive poisons over the face of the earth. It is science that fits people with new kidneys, sews up holes in their hearts, changes their minds or even their sex. Science, in the popular mind, is even more like a demigod than a god. Indeed, to not a few it appears to be a monstrous offspring from the unholy union of the mind of man with Mother Nature.

But if the responsibility for man's technological achievements is thus wrongly laid on the shoulder of science, the other shoulder is asked to bear another heavy load. Science is thought of, not only as the great doer, but as the final cause. It is the explanation of, and therefore the reason for, everything. Once let the oracle pronounce on any subject and all mystery and wonder is gone, no worship is left but for the mind of man that thought up the explanation.

It is just here that the image of science is most godlike and most impious. It has often been said that much of the progress of modern science has arisen from its determined exclusion of final causes from its explanations. Teleological principles and purposive tendencies have no place in scientific understanding. Mechanism, not meaning, is at the heart of a scientific account, pattern not purpose. We are inclined, too, to think ourselves wiser than the Greeks because, having made this abstraction, we have been more successful in harnessing nature. But the Greeks were seeking to understand rather than to use, and their preoccupation with final rather than efficient causes, with purpose rather than mechanism was a preoccupation with a more difficult, perhaps a hopeless research—a research that today we would not regard as scientific, that was metaphysical rather than physical.

If this were realised, the popular image of science would be cut down

to size and no harm would be done. Unfortunately, nine out of ten people one meets today confuse explaining with explaining away. The nucleic acids have robbed life of its wonder for them, and the ontological problem vanishes from their minds like a morning mist under the omnipotent beams of continuous creation.

No, let us face it, the mystery of being is no less a mystery because we have, or hope soon to have, an adequate theory of fundamental particles. The evolution of the primates (I use the word in a sense which would include Bishop Wilberforce) is, for me at any rate, as great a cause for worship as if they had been created *ex nihilo*.

Those of us who are in any way concerned with science, education or the press have an iconoclastic responsibility. The popular image of science must be broken and science must be seen for what it is, an important cultural activity, perhaps the most important, nevertheless an activity made, like the sabbath, for man, not man for science. I believe that no small part of the cynicism and scepticism and of the lack of any sense of purpose or any genuine faith, which affects a section of youth today, is due to the erroneous view of science that many of them have received from their school teachers. It seems to me to be vitally important that those who will teach our young people in the future must themselves have been taught not only science, but sufficient of the history and philosophy of science to prevent them presenting the image of a false god to their pupils.

What then are the aims and character of science? I would like to quote my colleague Dr Toulmin in his book *Foresight and Understanding*, to the foreword of which we have already referred. 'The central aims of science', he says, 'are . . . concerned with a search for understanding—a desire to make the course of Nature not just predictable but intelligible.' I need hardly say that the fact that understanding may also be useful is not relevant. It is the understanding that is the good to be pursued. Now, Toulmin asks, 'What patterns of thought and reasoning give scientific understanding?' and replies in effect ' "ideals of natural order," which settle what a scientist regards as "self-explanatory" or "natural" '.

These 'ideals of natural order' are the basic presuppositions of science. They cannot be logically deduced but are rather borne in upon us by our collective experience. These ideals are many and varied. They differ from discipline to discipline and from generation to generation. The reputation and respectability of many of them as providing the axioms on which the structure of science is based are beyond dispute.

The principle of the uniformity of nature, the rational validity of those biophysical processes in our brains which we call thought, the value of the principle of economy of hypotheses (Occam's razor) in the search for truth, are assumptions that every scientist makes. So much do our ideals of natural order become a part of our thinking selves that we may readily forget that these ideals are not a logically essential aspect of reality but are rather, in part at any rate, the way we look at Nature. To use Eddington's famous picture of the ichthyologist, they are the mesh of the net by which we draw specimens from Nature's ocean.

That those questions which we ask of Nature are determined by the way we look at her, that we see her through spectacles tinted pink by the tremendous success of mechanics and the truism of natural selection, has a most important bearing on faith in this space age.

Because the presuppositions of our science, which are rational though not logically determined, have sunk far back into our subconscious, with an almost Freudian desire to forget, we deceive ourselves into imagining two errors. We forget the empirical faith-like basis of our science, that even science is based on non-demonstrable conclusions, whose validity like those of faith lies simply in the fact that they work. They fit our experience. Secondly, the comfortable detached attitude of the scientist, protecting us, as it does, from any involvement in the scheme of things, rapidly becomes so prominent in our thought that other ways of looking at things are neglected. Preoccupied with the 'How?' we fail to ask 'Why?' Satisfied with the pattern of the world, we no longer seek for a purpose. Intoxicated by our own increasing appreciation of the mechanism, we leave no thought for the meaning.

Misunderstandings about the Bible

No 'ideals of natural order' have been more successful in presenting us with an intelligible and coherent pattern of Nature than Newton's laws of motion. So successful has the classical mechanics based on these laws been that the elusive phenomena of electromagnetism and atomic physics were first explained in images borrowed from fluid and corpuscular motion, vortices, waves and idealised billiard balls. The Universe came to be regarded as if it were an immensely complex piece of clockwork, rigorously determined in its behaviour by the laws of mechanics, from its first 'tick' to its last 'tock'. God was allowed, by most, to retain the key, and by the pious to hold a pair of tweezers by which to *intervene*. Thus was a miracle seen as violence done to

Nature by an omnipotent Supernature. At the same time, so familiar did mechanics become that not only did most people rarely wonder at the mystery of being, but they never wondered at all at the mystery of mechanics, of causality. Strangely, while an apparently capricious nature spawned animism in the minds of savages, the concept of an orderly nature which was itself nurtured by Christian theism is today a frequent excuse for agnosticism.

Nature is exalted above God so that even hymn-writers say 'laws that never shall be broken for their guidance Thou hast made'. But this concept of a Nature guided by the laws of God is neither biblical nor scientific, for the laws of nature do not *pre*scribe the behaviour of nature but *de*scribe it, and the biblical view, indeed the plainly stated word of Jesus Christ, is that the events of Nature are the activity of God. He of whom it is written that 'He upholds all things by the word of His power' said, 'God maketh his Sun to rise . . . and sendeth rain'.

Christians, who are rightly concerned to guard against pantheism and jealous of the transcendence of God, too often today overlook the immanence of His activity. They forget that Isaiah says God 'stretches out the heavens as a curtain', God 'brings princes to naught', God 'blows upon them', and of the stars, God 'brings out their host by number . . . and because He is strong in power not one is missing'. The wonder of a miracle is not that God is great enough to mess about with Nature, but that God is great enough to be 'mindful of man', and sufficiently concerned to act here in this tiny speck in the Universe in a way that declares His concern. A miracle declares His concern, not because He has acted where He does not normally act, but because His action has differed from what He is normally expected to do. That the Sun shone only on Israel and not on the Egyptians during the plague of darkness is specially significant, but it is neither less nor more the activity of God than its rising in England today on good and evil alike.

If the biblical view of God and the World is all too rarely known because the Bible is more talked about than read, the common excuse for not reading the Bible is half a century out of date. The Bible has been recognised down the centuries since the Reformation, even by those not committed to a personal faith in Christ, as a book full of wisdom and good counsel. But though it is heard by the Christian as the Word of God it is, of course, only in these circles that we can expect it to be recognised as such. The majority of people believe that the Bible has been discredited, and this belief keeps them both from listening to its message and from giving serious attention to Christ.

It is impossible to over-emphasise the effect of the tragic and rigid opposition of the Church a hundred years ago to the need for a fresh, more spiritual look at the Genesis teaching about creation. But again the effect has not been wholly bad, for today the Church is rediscovering its mission and is to be found once again presenting Christ to men. The preaching of Christ, however, requires reference to the Gospels and the attitude of a man to what is read or preached is rightly coloured by what he believes about the documents. Of course, it is easy to say that the Word of God, when it comes to a man, is the Word of God whether he recognises it as such or not, but the remark is, in fact, irrelevant; as irrelevant as is a realisation that 'God makes the sun to rise' to the preparation of the nautical almanac. If I may use the metaphor of one of Christ's parables, a man's presuppositions and attitude are part of the situation in which the Good Shepherd seeks him, and they do affect his response to the Shepherd's voice.

There seem to me to be three valid contemporary attitudes to the Gospel records, other than indifference, all of which are ways to faith in Christ. There are those to whom, for example, the words of Christ in Matthew's Gospel, ' No one knows the Father but the Son and those to whom the Son may choose to reveal Him', come as the Word of God. To such, it is but a step to hear the ensuing invitation, 'Come unto me', and to respond. There are many people with a robust and active faith in Christ in this space age, whose initial response was to preaching which reiterates—'The Bible says'.

There are others in whose lives and affections Christ is enthroned, who began with no preconceived notions about the validity of the New Testament; yet to them the account of the life, teaching and death of Jesus and the founding of the Church are in themselves the authentication of the Gospel. The ring of authority, of rectitude, of unselfish love in the life of Christ and the story of the change in the apostles from the cowardice of Good Friday to the confidence of Whitsun, these things, they are convinced, ring true. No attempt to account for the Gospels and the Acts (and the Epistles too for that matter) commends itself to their minds when endeavouring to reach a right judgment but that Jesus lived and taught essentially as the evangelists portrayed, that He died and rose again, in fact that 'in Christ God was reconciling the World to himself' (2 Cor. v. 19, R.S.V. margin).

For the great majority in this age, however, neither of these two attitudes seems adequate as a basis for the faith of a lifetime. While in

the deepest sense it must always be the sheer fact of Christ that is the datum, the objectivity on which the faith of a Christian is based, that fact may break in upon a man's being, may become a matter to be reckoned with, in a variety of ways. There is no more insistent mode in which the fact of Christ invades the mind of man than its historicity. The first Rendle Short lecturer, Professor F. F. Bruce, has done much to dispel the uncertainties about the dates and reliability of the New Testament documents with which the last century closed. To quote the late Sir Frederic Kenyon when he was director of the British Museum, in a lecture aimed to make this very point, 'nine-tenths of the ingenious theories of the origin and structure of the Gospel falls to the ground, because there is simply not time for . . . complicated processes of development' (Presidential address to the Victoria Institute, 1949). It is not my intention to dwell on this point in detail, but no lecture on Faith in this Space Age would be complete if it did not draw attention to the immense difference in our contemporary certainty of the history of Jesus Christ and the origin of the Church from that existing a generation or so ago. To quote Kenyon again, because there is probably no greater authority, 'Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established' (*The Bible and Archaeology*, 1940).

It is the historicity of the Christian religion that is its very core. It is this which distinguishes the Christian faith from both Philosophy and Superstition. The apostles of Christ who companied with Him, who saw Him in public and in private, in acclamation and rejection, in prayerful anticipation of the cross and in its horrible reality, these men came in their various ways and differing idioms to the conviction of the reality of what we call the incarnation, and John, who gave us the mysterious and pregnant phrase, 'The Word (the Logos) became flesh', says himself at the end of his gospel record that 'these things are written that ye might believe'.

Faith in the Christian sense is the response of the personality to God as seen in Christ. While there is a complementary account in terms of subjective experience and response to the Word of God, faith itself is as objectively based on events outside the self as are the theories which compose our current picture of the physical world.

Complementarity

In reviewing some of the attitudes of mind today which affect the approach of thinking people to matters of faith, and in considering some

of the misunderstandings about science and about the Bible that are abroad, implicit reference has been made several times to the idea of complementarity. This idea has had such an important impact upon the thinking of scientists and others that we must now consider it rather more explicitly.

The concept of complementarity grew up in physics in the first decades of this century. In searching for models, generally of a conceptual character but sometimes of purely mathematical formulation, by which to represent the basic entities of atomic physics, it was found to be convenient to the point of practical necessity to employ for the same entity more than one complementary model. For example, the ancient dispute in which Newton himself had been engaged, whether light was really corpuscular or wave-like in character, was finally resolved by the answer 'both'. Anyone who endeavours to form a mental picture of a wave and of a particle is immediately aware of their utter dissimilarity, even if he does not realise that the theory of refraction demands of the first that the velocity of light decreases on entering a denser medium and of the second that it increases. So much of our understanding of the behaviour of light rays (and of other electromagnetic radiation) could be explained, or perhaps one should say represented, by the wave theory that it required the genius of Einstein and Planck to break free and to represent the interaction of light with matter on a corpuscular model. But they did not thereby dismiss Young, Maxwell, Lorentz and all who had done so much to establish the wave theory. Instead physicists came to see that reality was too subtle and complex to be represented by any one model taken from gross macroscopic experience. Impossible as it is to conceive of a 'wavicle', a kind of hybrid between a wave and a particle, yet the two views must be held together. Justice to experience, that is to say to experiment, could only be done, not by mixing up the models to give a wavicle of which nonsensical questions concerning the radius of the wave or the frequency of the particle could be enquired, but by holding both models in the mind as different facets of a truth not to be encompassed in a single imagery, and by employing at any one time the model relevant to the aspect of the whole situation currently under consideration.

To take a well-known and homely (literally!) illustration; if I want a new house I may have drawings prepared by an architect. These drawings will consist of plans and elevations. The elevation shows no detail of the kitchen floor tiling or the wood blocks in the hall. The

plan shows little evidence of the high windows I asked for. Yet only an idiot would take either drawing for the whole and complain that either the house had no floors or it had only vestiges of windows. To form an adequate mental picture of my new home I must make a synthesis in my mind from the drawings in front of me and, furthermore, must see my wife and children, my visiting friends and myself in it.

The simple criterion on which the requirement for complementary models rests is that they must be necessary to do justice to our experience. It is nearly sufficient to say 'experiment' here but not quite, for although the whole of science is based on experiment, if we may interpret the word to include observation of that over which we have no control—such as radioactive decay or the motion of the Moon; life itself consists of experience. What we are concerned with here is life itself, our experience of the whole. That is to say, there is a degree of involvement, of subjectivity, of 'cogito ergo sum' as Descartes put it, about life that is missing from science. 'I think, therefore I am' is true to the *experience* of all of us although experimental psychology might reach the different but equally true conclusion that 'I am, therefore I think'.

Three areas out of several in which tension between science and faith arises from time to time in men's minds are creation, creation of life and freedom of will. I have no special competence in any of these fields. It is therefore inappropriate to do more than note the way in which our experience would seem to require that complementary views be held here, that we realise that reality is too complex, has too many facets, for justice to be done to it by a single model.

Because we have just mentioned involvement and subjectivity we will start by considering freedom of will. If I choose to eat a boiled egg for breakfast there are at least three complementary ways I can look at the phenomenon. Moreover, each of them may, in principle, be complete and self-contained, having no gap where the others must be fitted in, just as the plan of my home has no empty space waiting for the elevation to be fitted in.

There is, presumably, an unbroken chain of physical cause and effect by which my brain came ultimately to generate those potentials which resulted in my boiling and eating an egg. While the significance of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle would be taken by most to mean that my decision to eat the egg could not have been predicted by a knowledge of the whole physical configuration of the Universe at some distant time in the past, yet we would not expect a microscopic

examination of the chain of cause and effect to show anything mysterious, anything that would appear to behave in a way foreign to quantum statistics, anything we would recognise as purposive.

On the other hand, the psychologist would see (I must resist the temptation to say 'imagine he saw') in my subconscious a set of forces, desires and inhibitions connected with other things (that I cannot think of for the moment, for reasons they would be happy to explain). The resultant of these forces is seen as my choice to eat an egg.

Of course, *I* know that all this is beside the point. I ate the egg because I chose to, and what is more I acted with a sense of responsibility in that I made sure there were enough for the other members of the household before I made up my mind. If I were to become obsessed with either of the other ways of looking at the situation my personality would be affected. I would, to that extent, become abnormal, sub-human. No, I am responsible for my choice, I expect others to hold me responsible, and I hold them responsible for their choices. Only this will do justice to my experience; yet you cannot expect to find in my brain anything you can label 'consciousness of responsibility'.

Let us now consider the problem posed by the origin of life and ultimately of self-consciousness.

The Bible is emphatic, not just in Genesis but throughout, that life is due to God's will and that the spirit of man which, for the ancients, was symbolised by the breath, is sent by God and returns to God. Today, the work of Crick and his colleagues has gone a long way to showing how the basic material of organisms in all the intricacy of its structure and inherited pattern may be built up by the normal processes of chemistry from inorganic matter, and he would be a brave, not to say foolhardy, man that would say that the artificial synthesis of living matter from its chemical elements will not be accomplished in a decade or so. None would deny that life, even in the lower creatures, is unimaginably complex and wonderful, and many consider that self-consciousness is a natural (if I may use the word to imply not supernatural) concomitant to a certain high degree and kind of order met with in the brains of *homo sapiens*, if not of other creatures. That this may well be the case, and the whole climate of thought today tends to this view, does not in the least detract from the complementary and biblical view that God is the eternal giver of it all.

Two matters may be worth mentioning here in passing. The first is that the New Testament doctrine of resurrection and the body celestial implies that after death the personality shall have a new and different

body, when 'asleep in Christ' shall cease to be the appropriate way to describe it. Is it, I wonder, too fanciful to suppose that it is the order or the pattern that represents the self that can be said to be immortal and that is, in the resurrection, 'clothed upon with our house that is from heaven' (2 Cor. v. 2)? The second point is that we must be careful that we do not imagine a God smaller than His Universe. A Universe teeming with life, as this may well be, requires a God vastly greater than the Church often represents Him to be, incredibly greater than most of us imagine. God, if He is the Christian God and not a local terrestrial deity, must not only dwell in eternity but be great enough to humble 'Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and that are in Earth'.

Earlier on we referred to the 'ideals of natural order' which men take as self-evident, requiring no explanation. Such an ideal is the continuity of existence of matter and of energy. The great conservation laws of physics, which in fact embrace other things than matter-energy, are regarded as axioms requiring no further explanation. This is entirely proper, yet both the basic cosmological theories, that of continuous creation or that of creation at some past epoch, require that the continuity laws shall not hold absolutely. In each case matter-energy appears or has appeared, as it were, from nowhere. Now, it is important to realise that creation in this sense is as much an empirical fact about which we may seek to formulate laws as are any of the other facts of physics. Of course, it may be difficult to the point of impossibility to formulate such laws, but this does not make creation mystical. The sense in which creation is mystical is the sense in which the whole of existence continues to be mystical. It is another, a complementary way of looking at it in which we may ask what is the purpose and meaning of it all, and in which the reply 'for Thy pleasure they *are* and were created' (Rev. iv. 11) becomes meaningful.

Jesus Christ

It may seem from what we have said that a theistic view of the Universe is neither unscientific nor unreasonable. Some years ago a panel of scientists from different disciplines who answer listeners' questions on science on the B.B.C. were asked, 'Has science made belief in God more difficult?' The unanimous verdict of the panel, of which at that time I was a member, was 'No; belief in God is unaffected one way or the other by science'.

The fact, however, that complementary views of mind, of life and of creation are not only possible but also seem necessary to do justice to these great concepts does not of itself force us to take a theistic view of the world, to believe in God.

God, if the word is to correspond to any reality other than Nature itself, must surely be personality. If the 'I . . . it' relationship appropriate in our attitude to Nature does not also take in God, then the only remaining relationship possible is 'I . . . Thou'. If God is not Nature or a part of Nature to be observed (which would rob the word of its meaning) He can only be Subject to be encountered. That is to say God *if* He is, and *if* He is to be known, must reveal Himself in personal encounter. He cannot be expected to turn up in scientific experiments.

Now, I do not pretend that the revelation of God comes to a man easily any more than I suppose it to be easy to synthesise a valid and balanced concept of the World from the possible complementary views. What I do say is that the central claim of the Christian gospel is that God has taken the initiative without which He could not possibly be known, and that those who are sufficiently in earnest to accept the moral consequences of the encounter may still find God in Christ.

It is in Jesus Christ that the two questions with which we opened this talk find an empirical answer. It is not without reason that Jesus adopted the title of 'Son of Man' and referred also to Himself as the Son of God.

I said earlier that faith is a trust, a confidence, a reliance. Christian faith is like this today in this space age as much as it ever was. The encounter of St Peter and St John with Christ convinced them that here was a man on whom they could rely, whom they could trust. The manhood they saw in Jesus was the true answer to the question 'What is man?' He is higher, nobler, humbler, more unselfish than the men that we have known. Moreover, Manhood seen ultimately in this perfection is seen to subsist by its relationship to God. It is this fact that God is mindful of man and man in his turn is mindful of God that marks man off from the animals, and the teaching of Christ, and indeed of the Bible, makes it clear that it is the purpose of God that men should be like Christ and so be truly men. But the divine fiat 'let us make man in our image' (Gen. i. 26) had found its answer in the supreme *Imago Dei*, so that St Matthew quotes that the Son alone reveals the Father and St John recalls, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father' (John xiv. 9). Not only does contemplation of the Christ

call forth the conclusion 'here indeed is man', but it results too in the conviction 'here indeed is God'.

'To whom then will ye liken God?' Those who have caught a glimpse of Christ today still find as did the founders of the Christian Church that no explanation will suffice, no synthesis of views will do justice to their experience that does not contain, as its frontage so to speak, the Pauline declaration, 'In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily' (Col. ii. 9).

Of course, it necessitated the mystery of 'kenosis'. Of course God emptied Himself to be found in Jesus, but if I want to know what God is like there is nowhere else to look. At this point, faith is as empirical as science itself. Speculation and philosophy cannot search out God, but if my experience may be a guide for others, that which can be known of Him will be found in Christ.