

# SCIENCE AND FAITH

## INTRODUCTION - GOD OF THE GAPS?

'The advances of science and technology . . . all . . . affect the man in the street and contribute to his sense of uneasy confusion'. (J. R. W. Stott, *Our Guilty Silence*, Hodder and Stoughton 1967, p. 33.) Many still feel today that Science and Technology hold all the answers and that the need for God has receded further into the background. Therefore this issue is devoted to a number of topics covering various aspects of the boundary between science and Christianity. The first paper, written by Terry Martin (at the time of writing a Physics undergraduate at Queen Mary College, London) assesses the impact of science and a scientific training upon a Christian. He sets himself to answer the following questions: 'Is the enterprise of science legitimate? Is it worthwhile for the Christian to follow? Does science have any moral issues?' To the first question he answers, yes. There is today, I believe, a return to the clear understanding that it is God's world that we are living in, and that man's purpose is to subdue it (Gen. 1: 28). The word 'subdue' surely means that fields of human endeavour, research, exploration, endurance are legitimate activities for man and particularly for the Christian. As always it is what is done with the knowledge, once it is available, that is the crucial point. There are still those who think that some of the developments that arise from science are evil—urbanisation, industrial life etc.

'And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark satanic mills'

Does science raise moral issues? Are certain lines of investigation allowable, are there any restrictions which should be placed upon scientific activity? If there are, how is it to be decided? Terry Martin's conclusion is here somewhat tentative but he suggests that it is possibly right for certain lines of research to be curtailed. With the current awareness in this area (e.g. Porton Down etc.) this will provoke fruitful discussion.

In the second paper, by Professor Robert Boyd, we are concerned with the origin and the nature of the universe. Prof. Boyd mentions two current cosmological theories. In the first it is suggested that some 10,000 million years ago all the matter in the universe was concentrated in one region and that it then exploded and was thrown out in all directions. The second theory is that of continuous creation. Perhaps the Christian's natural reaction to these theories is to prefer the former, since it appears that Genesis suggests that God created everything at one point in time long ago. However, this does not take into account that God is free from the limitations of time and space. God is bigger than we imagine Him to be. Our reaction then to cosmology and to current developments should be to welcome it all, confident that it may tell us more of the wonderful universe we live in.

We then have two papers which discuss the area which is the centre-piece in the unhappy conflict between science and Christianity, which has often led both scientist and Christian to adopt entrenched positions. Dr. Zandrino (a biochemist and our first Argentine contributor to the *Journal*) in his paper catches something of the wonder of God's creation, reminding us of the fact that it is God's world and that He made it. The more the scientist can tell us the more wonderful does God's work appear to be. Dr. Gareth Jones carefully takes us over the grounds of the controversy. He draws a clear distinction between the different levels of 'evolution'. He asserts that the detailed mechanism of biological evolution is of no concern to the Christian as a Christian, but that the conflict emerges at the level of the philosophical approach to evolution. The opening two chapters of Genesis are then considered and a tentative suggestion as to their interpretation is made.

The final paper is concerned with the nature of man. It is noteworthy that some of the themes of this paper are common to some of the earlier papers. It is Paul Hyland's contention that the scientific and Christian interpretation of the world and of the nature of man can be united, and in support of this he quotes from Teilhard de Chardin. (Paul is a science and philosophy graduate of Bristol University.)

It might be said that the papers cover the more traditional areas of discussion between science and Christianity, and this point is conceded. Areas that could be expanded include further discussion on the nature of man, and on the mind of man, and the whole subject of the technological age. Contributions on these subjects are invited and if sufficient are received it is to be hoped that a whole issue can be devoted to these areas or, at least, that articles on them will appear from time to time in these pages.

J. P. REDFERN

## **THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE UPON ONE'S PERSONAL FAITH**

*by* TERRY MARTIN

The subject of 'Science and Christianity' has been the centre of much discussion and debate; and as long as science remains a dominant force in our culture it is only correct that Christians should continually address themselves to the whole extent of the problem.

It will be helpful to distinguish some of the different issues that are involved. First, we are confronted with the ever increasing store of scientific facts about the physical world and man. How do these facts correlate with those that we obtain from Biblical revelation? Analysing particular difficulties may well throw light upon the Biblical record, and the way we should understand it! Such specific areas of conflict (apparent or otherwise) are the concern of the other three papers.