

NATURAL SCIENCE AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. By John Baillic. (Oxford University Press; 5s.)

HOMO FABER. By G. N. Tyrrell. (Methuen; 15s.)

FOOTNOTES FOR THE ATOM. By Vincent E. Smith. (Bruce Publishing Company; \$3.50.)

MAN OR MATTER. By Ernst Lehrs. (Faber and Faber; 30s.)

THE NEGLECT OF SCIENCE. By F. E. Simon. (Blackwell; 8s. 6d.)

DOUBT AND CERTAINTY IN SCIENCE. By J. Z. Young. (Clarendon Press; 7s. 6d.)

It still seems to be felt necessary to find some 'answer' to science. Perhaps it is unusual now to consider the problem specifically as a conflict with religious faith, as Professor Baillic does, and rare indeed to welcome 'the strain thus placed on our spirits by the impersonality of nature' (p. 34), but there remains a feeling that too much has been eliminated from the scientific picture. According to Mr Tyrrell it is inevitable that specialists should be unable to detect and overcome that tendency to over-simplify by which 'Nature, in the course of evolution, has indoctrinated the human mind for practical purposes' (p. 59). Unfortunately he has insufficient first-hand knowledge of what he attacks to be in a position to persuade any but other non-specialists of this; nor is Dr Smith, who as a Thomist is clearer about the values omitted, likely to be any more successful in convincing the scientists, since he shows so little sympathy for their point of view. The attempt of Dr Lehrs to develop an alternative discipline based not on intellect but on the senses, which integrate man and nature, is too fantastic in its details to receive any consideration from orthodox science.

It is a relief therefore to discover two eminent scientists so well able to write for laymen. Professor Simon's aim in these articles reprinted from *The Financial Times* is merely the practical one of showing how science can solve our economic problems, and especially the fuel crisis, but his views merit serious consideration. Professor Young's Reith Lectures, to which (at the cost of some repetition) chapters of comment have been added, are themselves a piece of research. Here is a biologist trying to discover what can be said from his point of view about man's higher activities. He holds that this is best done 'by speaking of the rules that become established in the brain' (p. 152) and which we create in order to improve our power of communicating with one another. The detailed working out of this thesis does not always carry conviction; few anthropologists today would accept his account of the rise of religion, but it would certainly be difficult to improve on his description of the development of rules of communication in the sciences. The model by which the modern biologist conveys his discoveries is no longer conceived atomistically: 'Biology, like physics, has ceased to be materialist. Its basic unit is a non-material entity, namely an organisa-

tion' (p. 136). Hence, in his own account of how our brain works, Professor Young uses analogies with the new calculating devices and with the statistical treatment of population, holding that we must now 'concentrate on the *patterns* of action set up among the millions of cells'. (p. 60.)

There is little sign here, then, of the conflict spoken of by the other writers. It is true that there is an echo of Professor Ryle's criticism of the concept of mind, and a similar attack on creation, but it concerns notions that no reputable thinker has ever held, and it does not seem that Professor Young would find much to disagree with in teaching such as that of St Thomas. And surely if, as appears, the progress of science depends as much on ideas as on observations, collaboration between biologists and philosophers might be of profit to both.

L.B.

INQUIRING SPIRIT. By Kathleen Coburn. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 25s.)

More than almost any other Englishman, Coleridge succeeded in bridging the gap between philosophy and poetry, and yet perhaps because of his peculiar ability in this direction his work remained incomplete. This was bound to be so for two reasons: he lived in an age when 'mythologies, including the Christian, were now felt to be exploded' and it was almost impossible for a man to begin his investigations from a standpoint of faith in a plan of reality. And Coleridge himself was keenly aware of the oneness of truth; it was impossible, he felt, for true poetry to be the opposite of true philosophy; their hostility was only one example of the apparent opposition of various revelations of the one same eternal truth.

It was this interplay of diversity and unity, relative and absolute, that fascinated him. Good Platonist as he was, vowed servant of the Idea, he entertained no contempt for the real and actual problems, and in passages like the following it is the voice of Aristotle we hear: 'You know, that every intellectual act, however you may distinguish it by name in respect of the originating faculties, is truly the act of the entire man. . . .' Throughout his voluminous writings this same idea is revealed, varying only in statement according to the context; the oneness of truth, the unity of substantial form, the dignity of the human person. Such agnosticism as there is is only the healthy agnosticism of any honest man faced with a plan of creation that is still unfolding itself.

That seems to be a satisfactory explanation of Coleridge's 'incompleteness' and of the need that exists for Miss Coburn's book. Because Coleridge's thought was really alive and part of himself it is not possible to fit it into any ready-made scheme. Much of it, most of it in fact,