

IS THAT A FACT?

- A I'm scientific you see.
- B Oh yes?
- A I like to investigate everything.
- B That's nice.
- A I must have clear proof.
- B Mmm....
- A No blind leaps of faith for me.
- B No
- A I deal in facts....only in facts.
- B Is that a fact?
- A Absolutely!
- B Are you sure?
- A Course I'm sure!
- B You're not just saying that...as a "blind leap of faith"?
- A Ha! Ha! Very funny!
- B Would you say you were open-minded?
- A Of course I would!
- B But you only deal in facts, right?
- A Yes....
- B Would you be open to the possibility of there being more to life than facts?
- A How do you mean?
- B Well, answer me this: What is a fact?
- A Something I can prove.
- B Can you prove I love you?
- A Er...Yes and no. I know you love me, but it is not so easy to prove it. Of course it would help if you showed that you love me now and again. But that is another matter!
- B Anyway, easily proved facts are only a small part of life. Most of the time we live by other ways of knowing.
- A Like what?
- B We live by hunches and intuitions for example. Remember the first time we met? I just knew that you fancied me! I couldn't prove it, but I just knew.
- A You certainly seemed pretty confident when you crossed the dance floor.
- B Well, faith is hindsight in advance as they say! The point is that I had a strong hunch that you fancied me, but I really couldn't have any proof till after I tested the theory by asking you to dance. The experiment might have failed and I might have come away with a groin strain and a distinct lack of scientific evidence!
- A Oh, so it was a scientific experiment was it?!
- B Oh no, dear.....more "a leap of faith"! Seriously though, it illustrates the point that it began with faith and then the belief was put to the scientific test. Maybe we can agree that faith and scientific testing can go together.....even marry each other!
- A I don't mind admitting that things begin with faith, but they do have to end with proof and factsscientifically proven, hard facts! For example, Thomas Edison just knew that he would eventually invent the light bulb. It took him 10,000 attempts, mind you, but in the end he proved he could and he could prove how he could do it!
- B My, you certainly have a strong belief in your science.
- A How do you mean?
- B Does it ever occur to you that you might, just might, possibly, maybe could be a tiny little bit mistaken in your blind faith in scientific proof, as understood and proven by yourself?

- A Oh I do know that I don't know everything. I know that I can misinterpret the evidence and proofs before me, but there are some things which are simply, obviously, objectively beyond dispute. Either Edison's light bulb switches on or it does not. It works or it doesn't. It has nothing to do with me.
- B That is my point. Only some things are like that. Most things are not so neat and simple as that. Some things we stand back and watch, like a scientist conducting an experiment; and we try to minimise our involvement in the experiment in case we prejudice the result. Thomas Edison had to keep himself out of his lightbulb experiments. But it was completely the opposite when I wanted to test whether you fancied me rotten or not. For that experiment to work I had to put myself into the action and ask you to dance.
- A Ah, but that was different.
- B Exactly! Proving electricity in lightbulbs is very different from proving electricity in personal relationships with people. In one you put your whole self out, in the other you put your whole self in!
- A Sounds like the Hokey Cokey!
- B Seriously though, it is the very basic scientific principle that what you study determines how you study it. You have to ask the right questions to get the right answers. So, if you study stars, you use a telescope; but if you study lemon meringue pies you use your tongue. If you get them mixed up, you stick your tongue out at the stars and look at your lemon meringue pie with a telescope. Then, I do "believe" that it will be a "fact" that you will get nowhere.... Fast!
- A Ah, but I still say that proof is essential. Different things require different proofs, fair enough, But in their own way everything still has to be proved. Proof is proof!
- B So, what would prove electricity?
- A When you flick a switch and the electric light comes on.
- B What would prove Alpha Centauri our nearest star?
- A When I see it with my own eyes through a telescope.
- B What would prove that I love you?
- A A bunch of flowers now and then, and maybe a Chinese take-away thrown in.
- B So, what would prove, say....God, to you?
- A Not a lot!
- B Now, that's not scientific!
- A Well, if I could see Him through my telescope.
- B That's not scientific either! Seriously though, what would constitute a proof? What would God have to do to convince you of His existence?
- A Well, maybe if He sent me a bunch of flowers to say He loved me.
- B By the way, everything seems to be so subjective. It is all to do with you. But God can exist with or without your opinions.
- A Please Himself! But I'm only interested in how it affects me.
- B Now that's definitely not scientific! Anyway, the point I want to make is that God is unique, different, in a set of one and He has to be studied uniquely, differently and in the way appropriate to Him.
- A Aye, right! So you want to re-write the rules for Him.
- B No. It is the scientific principle that everything has to be studied in its own way. Same goes for God. He is not a thing, nor a theory but a person. He is not a human person but a divine person. We cannot possibly see Him through a telescope, taste Him with our tongue, nor prove him like a mathematical formula.
- A So it can't be done....it is impossible.
- B Well there are difficulties. The main problem is that tiny brains in tiny creatures on a tiny planet can't comprehend the vastness of the universe nor the infinity of its Creator. We can't stand God up and measure Him, we can't put Him in some context, we can't see the whole picture, we can't test Him, we can't reach up to Heaven, we can't put Him on a microscope slide, we can't

experiment on Him in a science lab.

A There you go then....He's not provable, by definition!

B Not quite! It is true that we can't prove God. But HE can prove God. Lost sheep can't find shepherd, but Good Shepherd can find lost sheep. We can't cross the dance floor to Him, but He can cross the dance floor to us. We can't prove Him by scientific experiment, but we can get to know Him in a courtship. We can't see the invisible God, right enough, but He can reveal Himself to us and give us eyes to see Him.

A How?

B He reveals Himself through the Bible –His written Word, the Church – His spoken Word and in Jesus – His Word lived out in flesh and blood. God's Word comes in this three-fold way – all ways which we can understand and relate to. These are your proofs. You've got the package - now unpack it! Experiment, test, prove scientifically all you like. In the end faith is the appropriate way of knowing, the best way, the only way of knowing a person whether human or divine. It has to mean personal involvement not personal detachment.

A I thought you said we should not keep putting ourselves into centrestage.

B What I am saying is that there is a right and a wrong personal involvement. When we want to know God, or anyone, we have to invest ourselves in getting to know them. However, we must let them reveal themselves to us and not jump in with our preconceptions and prejudices. We must sit under Jesus, the Bible, the Church, not sit above acting as judge and jury picking out just what we want to hear, making God in our own image! By the way, have you ever checked out the evidence? Have you read the Bible, gone to Church, studied Jesus?

A Er...no, not really.

B Well that's not very scientific, is it?

A I suppose not.

B In the end, I prefer to speak about "trusting Jesus" rather than "proving God", just as I prefer trusting you rather than proving you. We don't speak that way. We prove theories but we trust persons. And see when I trust you, or Jesus, it is not blind leaping faith, irrational conclusions without evidence and facts. On the contrary I only trust folk whom I know well and with whom I have had a long-standing relationship. I like to look before I leap just like I looked a long time before I crossed the dance floor that night we met!

A Actually, for me, it was a blind leap of faith, love at first sight.

B Is that a fact?