

Sir John Houghton, former director of the Met Office, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, Co-Chair of the IPCC (Sunday Telegraph, 10.9.95)

Houghton warns that God may induce man to mend his ways with a disaster.

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Moral outlook: earthquake, wind and fire

SIR JOHN HOUGHTON, the former director of the Meteorological Office, has believed in God all his life. He believes that God has a personality and that He does not mind letting His errant children feel the whip. “God does show anger. When He appeared to Elijah there was earthquake, wind and fire. Our model is Jesus. He was a man as well as being divine and he certainly showed anger.”



ME AND MY GOD

Sir John Houghton
talks to Frances Welch

An expert on global warming and chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, Houghton warns that God may induce man to mend his ways with a disaster. “God tries to coax and woo, but he also uses disasters. Human sin may be involved; the effect will be the same.”

“If we want a good environmental policy in the future, we’ll have to have a disaster. It’s like safety on public transport. The only way humans will act is if there’s been an accident.”

Houghton’s work as a scientist has been enriched by his faith. He sees no clash between science and religion and has just written *The Search for God: Can Science Help?* in which he presents evidence of God’s existence in scientific terms. This ranges from demonstrations

he was inculcated with the notion of God before the age of reason. But he does not feel that this undermines his faith. “I’m simply grateful for these early religious influences in the same way that I’m grateful for early influences in science.”

His schoolteacher father and mother were Baptists, who attended meetings of the Plymouth Brethren. Houghton emphasises that his parents’ branch was nothing like the sect immortalised in Edmund Gosse’s *Father and Son*. “There are exclusive varieties of the Plymouth Brethren, then there are open Brethren who