

The Freethinker

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IN RECENT MONTHS the visit of two Protestant theologians to these shores from the Continent has excited considerable comment and been the theme of BBC talks. Like other religious activity, Theology is at present in the "dog days." There is a notable lack of men of real ability and the mental level of the younger generation of clergy, if we are to judge from their current performances on radio and TV, appears to have suffered a lamentable decline since Victorian days, when quite a few men of intellectual distinction were in the ranks of the clergy. The Churches have no Newmans, Mansells, Milmans or even Kingsleys today. This appears confirmed by the enthusiastic reception given to the two continental theological scholars, Albert Schweitzer and Karl Barth. Respectively 80 and 70 years old, neither can be said to represent the present generation, since both belong to a bygone age.

Modernist and Fundamentalist

Both Schweitzer and Barth "profess and call themselves Christians." But at that point their theological affinity begins and ends. For Schweitzer is a Modernist and a very advanced one. It is a convincing proof of the desperate state of current Christian theology when it has to appeal to the aid of a man whose fundamental interpretation of *The Jesus of History* logically destroys any possible belief either in his godhead or even in his historical role as the founder of the Christian Church! Karl Barth, on the other hand, is a Fundamentalist, in fact the Fundamentalist of our time. He is Calvin's successor, an authentic theologian of the Reformation, for whom the whole modern movement of critical scholarship is merely a ghostly aberration. Thus our two visitors represent not a uniform Protestant doctrine but two widely diverging wings of the Protestant Church who, apart from their common acceptance of the Protestant name, hold widely differing conceptions as to the actual content of the Faith which is implied by that name. That is as theologians. In other religious directions both have earned the respect of all liberal thinkers; Schweitzer by his self-sacrificing medical work in tropical Africa, Barth by his courageous opposition to the racial insanities and inhumanities of the Nazi regime when at the height of its power. Here, however, we are concerned with their status as theologians and their respective conceptions of Protestant Christianity.

The Horns of the Dilemma

The fact is that current Protestant theology is on the horns of a dilemma, with roots stretching back to the Reformation itself, and its present opposing solutions are represented by the schools of Barth and Schweitzer, briefly the Modernist and Fundamentalist schools. At the Reformation its leaders, then in revolt against Rome, proved strangely timid in their theological innovations. In the final form which it assumed in the major Protestant Churches,

the Reformation represented a compromise rather than a root-and-branch break with the past. It retained the Catholic creeds and fundamental dogmas which they expounded, such as the Trinity, Incarnation and Virgin Birth. When the subsequent rise of Biblical criticism and Church history called these dogmas into question Protestantism was "put on the spot" since its basic principle of free discussion forbade it to prohibit all concessions with the infallible authority of the Church of Rome. Today the Protestant Churches remain divided on the best way of escaping from their impasse. The Modernists wish to meet the rationalist critique by concessions, while the Fundamentalists propose to dig in their heels and refuse to budge. Our two visitors are probably the most prominent exponents of these respective tendencies.

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

Two Protestant Theologians

— By F. A. RIDLEY —

The Quest of the Historical Jesus

Dr. Schweitzer is a brilliant and versatile man known in the field of music almost equally as in that of theology, besides holding a medical degree and being an historian of Indian philosophy. Here, however, it is with him as a theologian that I am concerned. In this field his *magnum opus* is his book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, which he wrote in 1906, and which has gone through many editions and been translated into most European languages. In form a study of modern criticism of the Gospels, it attracted international attention not so much by its immense learning as by the novelty of its conception of the man whom the author asserted to have actually been the "Jesus of history." Briefly, Schweitzer's Jesus is a man, not a god; there appears to be no room for the Trinity in his presentation of the Galilean prophet. Moreover, Jesus was *mistaken*; his whole teaching represented, in our author's striking expression, an *interimsethik*, a provisional teaching until the coming end of the world which Schweitzer held to have been the fundamental dogma of Jesus and of the early Christians. Christianity then started as a "revivalist" sect begun by a *misguided* preacher! Modernism with a vengeance — we have here travelled far from orthodoxy! Why, then, at this time of day call oneself a Christian at all? What is there left to worship?

Back to Calvin?

But there are still orthodox Fundamentalists who will have none of it! Of these, Karl Barth is perhaps the best known. He is a neo-Calvinist. Back to Christ — and to Calvin! Like most believers in spiritual revelation, Dr. Barth's theology is a little difficult to describe in precise terms. But it is essentially *theocentric*; as one of his admirers phrased it on the radio, "Dr. Barth's theology is primarily concerned, not with what man thinks about God, but with what God thinks about man." Barth is a self-confessed Fundamentalist who does not so much reject, as *ignore*, the whole

apparatus of critical scholarship. He seems to be a theological throwback to the days of Calvin. He appears to accept predestination and to deny both evolution and *any* positive application of reason in and to the religious sphere; all we have is Omnipotence outside time and space, speaking to man, and theology consists solely in recording and interpreting the divine commands. Obviously we are here a long way from any form of Modernism.

The Future of Protestant Theology

At the present time the Protestant Churches are making heavy weather. On the one side they have to face the aggressive counter-reformation of the R.C. Church, which is making such an energetic bid for world power. On the other, both the mounting tide of freethought criticism and the growing indifference of the masses to *any* form of doctrinal religion is steadily undermining the influence of the Protestant Churches. It would, however, be premature to write them off as already no more than religious relics. As McCabe reminds us in his monastic autobiography, which contains one of the most objective critiques of Christian theology ever penned, the Protestant version of

religious psychology is as natural and as recurring as any other. Despite the present vogue of Karl Barth's neo-Calvinism and the notoriety of such crude popularisers as Billy Graham, who can hardly be dignified with the title of theologian, it appears more likely that Protestant theology will continue in a Modernist direction, even if not in that precisely indicated by Schweitzer. It will incorporate as much as it can of modern scholarship and will be Unitarian rather than Trinitarian in character; whilst, in current practice, popular Protestantism will tend to sublimate both Faith and Reason into an ethical system laying more stress on morality than on speculative theology. The Karl Barths and Billy Grahams represent vestigial relics: and modern culture, in the excellent phrase of my learned colleague Mr. Cutner, will continue its evolutionary task of "civilising Christianity." That it has succeeded already in doing so to some extent is proved by the reception accorded to Schweitzer in theological circles. Time was when the distinguished author of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* would have been burnt at the stake as an arch-heretic for his views of the "Jesus of history." Even theology is moving with the times.

Krishnamurti

By THE REV. JOHN L. BROOM, M.A.
(Concluded from page 263)

We are all inevitably conditioned by our heredity and environment and so we become Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Freudians or atheists. Consequently, says Krishnamurti, "you respond to the challenge which is always new, according to old patterns, and therefore your response has no corresponding validity, newness, freshness. If you respond as a Catholic or a Communist, you respond according to a patterned thought. Therefore your response has no significance. And has not the Hindu, the Mussulman, the Buddhist, the Christian created this problem? As the new religion is the worship of the State, so the old religion was the worship of an idea."

Can we then escape from our conditioning? To this Krishnamurti gives an affirmative answer though he insists that it is not possible through any effort of the mind or soul or through the practice of any form of meditation or asceticism. "How we worship those who have few things! A loin cloth, a robe symbolises our desire to be free from desire, but that is a very superficial reaction. Why begin at the superficial level of giving up outward possessions when your mind is crippled by innumerable wants and desires, beliefs and struggles. Surely it is *there* that the revolution must take place, not in how much you possess, or what clothes you wear or how many meals you eat." The secret of happiness lies in the acceptance without approval or condemnation of what *is*, and not in trying perpetually to swim against the tide. Thus Krishnamurti's solution of such problems as those of fear, loneliness or boredom is paradoxically not to try to solve them, for that merely perpetuates the very cause of the problem, the striving self. Instead he says we must practise what he calls "choiceless awareness" of the facts. "My son dies and I believe in reincarnation or immortality or some such rubbish to prevent me psychologically from having more pain. But in the very process of believing there is conflict and pain." We are always afraid of an idea and never of a fact. When we face the fact as it is the fear vanishes. Thus in answer to a questioner who complained he was bored and asked if he should undertake some useful work, Krishnamurti replied "Why not just be bored? If you say 'I am bored and I will do something else', you are merely trying to escape from boredom and as most of our activities are

escapes, you do much more harm socially and in every other way." One must say "full stop", look at the fact and find out its causes. "If you are not interested in why you are bored, you cannot force yourself to be interested in an activity, like a squirrel going round in a cage." Thus we come back to Krishnamurti's fundamental doctrine that truth cannot be realised through any religion, philosophy or political party. "No one can lead you to truth. Truth can only come to the mind that is empty of the known. . . . Suppose there were no masters, no religious organisations, no Buddha, no Christ, and you had to begin at the beginning. You would have to understand your own process of thinking and not create a God which pleases you. . . . To be truly creative is to be free of the past and to live in a state of continual awareness from moment to moment, for it is the conditioned past which is forever shadowing and distorting the present. . . . For the discovery of truth there is no path. You must enter the uncharted sea. If your mind is crowded with knowledge of the doctrines of this or that saviour it acts inevitably as an impediment of the new in the realisation of which alone lies happiness and truth."

To criticise Krishnamurti's doctrines is rather like boxing with one's shadow, for as we have seen, the whole point of his teachings is that reason, a product of our whole conditioning, by its very nature obscures the truth. Obviously his writings bristle with logical inconsistencies (he attacks all kinds of belief but this in itself is a belief of his) and yet there is about his utterances a freshness and spontaneity which in the opinion of the present writer at least make this apparently fatal objection seem somehow beside the point. "I have not read any books on psychology or any religious books," he ingenuously proclaims, regarding this, of course, as a desirable attribute, since knowledge "about it and about" is, according to him, the supreme enemy of the condition of "choiceless awareness". There is certainly, I believe, something to be said for the opinion that both theists and atheists tend on occasion to become bogged down in futile never-ending circular arguments. At the same time, reason is surely indispensable in exposing the more obvious absurdities of orthodoxy and as we have seen, Krishnamurti himself does not hesitate to employ it (e.g., in his attack on belief in God) with devastating effect when the need arises. Nevertheless, under the apparent naïvety and contradictory nature of his thought, there does lie, I believe, a profundity and essential truth which cannot be gainsaid.

Apartheid for Women

By C. G. L. Du CANN

AT AN EARLY DATE, the Church of England is—yet again—to consider the position of women in that institution. There is a faint and feeble movement amongst certain clergy to extend the status of women in Church work.

Faint and feeble indeed! For the Anglican communion still shudders at the idea of female bishops or female priests, and even discountenances the lowly order of deaconesses. The Church never has believed, and does not now believe, in the equality of the sexes. Women are not fit for Holy Orders. Only "the lesser creeds without the law," such as Nonconformists, allow females to be "ministers"; and even they dislike it.

The Anglican monk who, emulating Roman Catholicism, calls himself "Father" Huddleston of the Mirfield Community of the Resurrection, who protests so vigorously along with Canon Collins of St. Paul's, against the "apartheid" of negroes in South Africa, might well consider the "apartheid" of women in the Church. In denouncing "apartheid" in South Africa, the Church is a very dirty pot calling the kettle not black enough! It is a richly comic situation, and you may well laugh at Mr. Huddleston instead of finding "naught for your comfort" in his thesis.

Women should face up to the ugly situation that in the Christian religion their status is traditionally inferior, and will remain so. The holy Apostle St. Paul is usually blamed for it. True, Paul laid it down flatly in his First Epistle to the Corinthians as follows: "Let your women keep silence in the churches for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

Nowadays, when women speak at the Bar and in Parliament (and indeed everywhere else, most unfortunately, except in the Churches and Masonic Lodges), St. Paul's edict upsets Christian women slightly. It is regarded as a slur. So, too, is St. Paul's further teaching that "the head of the woman is the man" and "the woman was created for the man"—the man who alone "is the image and glory of God."

Christian women, therefore—so far as they dare—are apt to sniff at the Holy Apostle Saint Paul! They say they are not Paulines but Christians. Alas! this is out of the frying-pan into the fire. For Saint Paul, a verse or two later, says: "The things I write unto you" (including silence for women) "are the commandment of the Lord." Paul expressly claims the authority of Jesus Christ for keeping women dumb in church.

Nor is this all. We must face the stark fact, so unpalatable to feminists, that the Christian God is male—God the Father, and not Goddess the Mother. Jesus invited no women to the Last Supper in the upper room—we may take it that these inferiors were in the lower kitchen usefully engaged—and never commanded women to eat his body or drink his blood at all. In these circumstances, Christian women may perhaps consider themselves fortunate that the Church allows them to communicate or even attend Mass or Holy Communion. Jesus did not.

Women who try to think that Jesus Christ regarded women as highly as men should ask themselves why no woman was numbered amongst the Twelve Apostles. They may ask, too, why the Disciple whom Jesus loved was John and not Mary Magdalene, who counted as no disciple at all. Again, they may ask why Jesus habitually addressed

his mother as "Woman" and not as "Mother," and seems to have been rather impolite to her except when speaking to her from the Cross.

Can there be any real doubt that Jesus Christ regarded women as an inferior sex—as did all his contemporaries? If we say he was no wiser than others of his day, what becomes of his omniscient divinity?

The truth is that the Church in modern times is in an inescapable dilemma with regard to Womanhood. It is a dilemma which will grow more acute with the passage of time and the social, economic, and political advance of the female sex. No doubt the Roman Church will stand fast by the rock of tradition and steadfastly deny the priesthood to women. The Anglo-Catholic section of the Anglican Church will struggle to keep themselves in line with Rome. Nonconformity can, and had better, surrender to female claims, and talk of "evolutionary Christianity" as the excuse.

A negro man can (theoretically) become Pope of Rome or Archbishop of Canterbury; and in practice there are black Christian Bishops existing today. But a white woman cannot even be a priest, and tradition is not the whole answer. The real reason is that the Christian religion regards woman, the vehicle of Original Sin, as an inferior order of being, as unfit for sacerdotal functions as to be London taxi-drivers. (There are still a few male preserves left besides begetting!)

Still, in the Church of England we may see very slight advances for godly woman. More deaconesses, more women-vergers, more women-choristers, and the like humble posts will increase. They may even be allowed to "read the Lessons" at Matins and Evensong, even to "lead us in prayer" and even "to preach the Word." This, however, marks the limit of their advance. They will never be allowed to administer the Sacraments.

In a word, *Apartheid for Women* in the Church will remain. If Christian women don't like it they will have to lump it—as they do at present. They might well write to that celibate cleric "Father" Huddleston and ask if apartheid for white women in England is not as indefensible as apartheid for black men in South Africa, and why he does not cry "Naught for your Comfort" to the Church in England as to the Government of South Africa?

Can it be that this Anglican monk, Mr. Huddleston, upon his especial question of "human equality before God," is an unctuous hypocrite? Females are surely better fitted by nature to be sermon-preaching, confession-hearing, sickbed-comforting persons than male celibates; and even heathen religions have admitted them as priestesses and prophetesses. The Churches of Rome and England, by excluding them from the male privileges of sacerdotalism, proclaim the inferiority of women to men; and no sophistry can get over that plain fact. Women should face up to it.

CONVERTING US

SOME time ago, we had occasion to mention a rather sustained attempt at the conversion of Mr. F. A. Ridley to Roman Catholicism. He was, literally, inundated with Catholic literature. More recently the Secretary of the National Secular Society has been similarly plied. As one measure adopted involves inconvenience and a little embarrassment, it may be well to warn possible future victims. If they receive a specimen copy of *The Catholic Digest* they should write and cancel any further deliveries of this monthly magazine; otherwise they may receive two successive copies and then an invoice for 18 shillings.

This Believing World

Congratulations to the Rev. Dr. W. E. Sangster for his stand against any wishy-washy Christianity. Dr. Sangster is the pet theologian of the *Sunday Times*, and the other week contemptuously dismissed the reverent Rationalist view that Jesus was a mere Man. As he so trenchantly put it, "If Christ was only a good man, uttering his dreams and proclaiming an ethic, His word is without authority and His religion is doomed." Nothing could be clearer. Jesus Christ is God, and Dr. Sangster is his Prophet.

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Anyone who doubts the Deity of Christ should, according to Dr. Sangster, "soak himself in the Gospels and read and re-read the record of that matchless life." If he then does not agree with Dr. Sangster, he is nothing but a blatant infidel, for "those who knew Jesus best came to believe that he was God." And how could they be mistaken? Why, Jesus "made claims for Himself which are staggering in their immensity," like "He that has seen Me hath seen the Father," and "I and my Father are One." And the Rev. gentleman adds—quite rightly—that "the Christian Church is built on the exultant conviction that He was God."

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Some of us agree with all this though the worthy Doctor shrinks, no doubt, with horror when we also insist that there are no Gods anywhere whatever. Jesus is a God like Jupiter or Jehovah; but as these Deities are mere *names* and do not exist, what has Dr. Sangster to say to those who also insist that Jesus is a mere name?

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It is quite a mistake to think that the BBC alone is responsible for religious broadcasts. Our commercial TV has entered the lists from a "cultural" angle, recognising that programmes giving us only music-hall artistes and more or less old films, can only mean lack of culture. So there is now, from time to time, something on religion, and the other week we were introduced to various chaplains and padres who minister to the pressing pious needs of holiday campers. All these people, we were told, enthusiastically welcomed the services.

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We were not, of course, shown a picture of our holiday crowds vociferously cheering the reverend gentlemen—Christian services are far too solemn for that. But we had a glimpse of young children singing hymns and being told of the wonderful miracles of Jesus—especially the one about feeding the multitude; though the kiddies might have been more impressed if "our Lord" had given the people huge lashings of ice cream and lollipops rather than a few stale loaves and out-of-date fishes. And every child was forced to shut its eyes in reverent prayer. Thus is culture in the commercial world saved at long last.

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But on the radio the other evening came a talk by a "doctor-priest" on the "Healing Ministry and its Place in the Life of the Church Today," which appeared to us to be far more Fundamentalist than anything volunteered by the renowned Billy Graham. Every "miracle" of healing by Jesus was thoroughly believed in by the doctor-priest; and though they were "miracles" performed by a God, he appeared to have no doubt that similar miracles could be performed by even a simple curate in the Church today. His address was a miracle of complete belief, and could only have been delivered by a priest who had completely forgotten the science he had been taught as a doctor. Still, the spiritual needs of radio listeners have to be met, and what is safer than unadulterated Fundamentalism?

Thousands of delegates from East and West Germany attended the Conference of the German Evangelical Church held in Frankfurt the other week. It would prove interesting to learn from so many of our own Christians why this was possible, considering that during both wars they tried to put the blame on "atheistic" Germany; and this in spite of the fact that the Kaiser and his soldiers had as their favourite aphorism "God with us," and Hitler never shrieked on the radio without dragging in God, who was always on the side of Germany. The truth is that the bulk of all the nations engaged in both the wars were theists in some form or other, and God was always on their side. Religion as such has never stopped a war.

Newcastle Notebook

OUR VERY RELIGIOUS and bountiful Newcastle newspapers cannot neglect free publicity for the Church even when they issued a supplement devoted to the recent Royal Agricultural Show. "Many people," notes an article, "are puzzled at the idea of the Church having an exhibition at the show." I claim to have been among that crowd of people. The explanation followed: "It is the duty of the Church to go where people congregate," and the Show presented "an opportunity for evangelism which ought not to be neglected." We have thus to record another attempt to convert a Christian country to Christianity! If the Church adheres staunchly to its practice of being where the people accumulate, we might reasonably expect to find them at the 1956 Earl's Court Radio Show, appropriately in the Exhibition of Old Radio Receivers which a well-known wireless journal has proposed should be a feature of this year's event. Alas, the Church is an old receiver now, with failing selectivity, and the repair and overhaul of which might well be considered by any service engineer to be a hopeless proposition.

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IN consequence of the belated coming of Bulganin and Krushchev, some newspapers are still unreeling yards of correspondence on the subject of "religious persecution." The Newcastle evening one selectively favoured comment on the oral behaviour of escaped Poles and Latvians, whose boos and jeers rent the London air in token of contempt. "What right have they to abuse our hospitality?" hotly asked a correspondent. "Because," retorted a scalded Roman Catholic, "these Poles and Latvians know what religious persecution is in communist countries." Ungrudgingly, we agree that Catholics know better than others what religious persecution is, in the same way that well-practised musicians like Beecham and Boult know what music is. The Roman Church has much to answer for without questioning the actions of others.

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"Atheism Leads to Misery"—so states the signpost in the title of an article by Charles Haig, whose black-and-white outlook precludes any concession that a genuine, true believer may nevertheless be a scoundrel, and an atheist the secular equivalent of a saint. Any sublunary aberration (presumably from high treason to walking on the grass) is, in his view, attributable to a want of belief in a hypothetical Most High. There are minters of newspaper eulogies of God and his works, but Mr. Haig is not of their ranks. His *bête noire* is the anti-religious world, with which he concerns himself violently, instead of cultivating his own garden, be it only a window box.

GEORGE MILLER.

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Telephone: Holborn 2601.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS

Correspondents may like to note that when their letters are not printed or when they are abbreviated, the material in them may still be of use to "This Believing World", or to our spoken propaganda.

P. HAMILTON (Dublin).—The writer of the old article you mention is dead.

H. MAY.—Re "Who Moved the Stone?", Mr. Cutner will be making some comments shortly.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

- Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Satis Café, 40 Cannon Street).—Sunday, August 26th, 7 p.m.: A Lecture.
- Blackburn Branch N.S.S. (Market Place).—Sunday, August 26th, 7.30 p.m.—G. MILLS (Manchester Branch).
- Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Broadway Car Park).—Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Messrs. DAY, NEWTON and SHEPPARD.
- Kingston Branch N.S.S. (Castle Street, Kingston-on-Thames).—Every Sunday, 8 p.m.: J. W. BARKER and E. MILLS.
- Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, SMITH and FINKEL. Sundays, 7.45 p.m.: Messrs. MILLS, WOODCOCK, SMITH and FINKEL.
- Platt Fields, 3 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS and others.
- Manchester County Forum (Crown and Anchor, Port Street).—Sunday, August 26th, 7 p.m.: C. SMITH, "Religion and Democracy."
- Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings most evenings of the week (often afternoons): Messrs. THOMPSON, SALISBURY, HOGAN, PARRY, HENRY and others.
- North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.
- Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY and R. POWE. Sunday, 11 a.m.: R. MORRELL and R. POWE.
- Orpington Humanist Group.—Sunday, August 26th: Ramble to Shoreham and Otford; train, 10.24 a.m. Victoria.
- Wales and Western Branch N.S.S. (Bristol Downs).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.: DAVE SHIPPER.
- West London Branch N.S.S.—Every Sunday at the Marble Arch from 4 p.m.: Messrs. ARTHUR, EBURY and others.
- West Ham Branch N.S.S. (Victoria Park).—Every Sunday, 7 p.m.: J. L. SHEPHERD and others.

Notes and News

We hear from Mr. W. Cronan, Secretary of the Edinburgh Branch N.S.S., that their guest speaker, Mr. H. Day (President of the Bradford Branch) had a large and successful outdoor meeting recently on the famous Mound speaking ground. Two hours of propaganda were effective in bringing several inquiries for N.S.S. membership.

The Kent Mercury (20/7/56) conjured up delicious visions of a prudish parson walking backwards down a rising (or up a descending escalator (or both!)) counting the number of scantily clad girls on London Underground advertisements. The clergyman in question had complained to his parishioners that he counted 12 half-dressed girls out of 36 posters. Did he make "repeated trips to check his figures?" asks the Mercury punningly. "Or has he a very good memory?" The "Peeping Vicar," as the paper nicknames him, was moved to inquire, "Are we all going mad?" "I don't think so," wrote the Mercury editor, "but I would be

sure I was if I started counting the posters displaying brassieres and corsets near the escalator."

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SURELY *The Observer* deserves praise again, too, for its leader (12/8/56) urging the M.C.C. to refuse fixtures in South Africa on grounds where coloured spectators were not admitted. The Tourists, it pointed out, "will have a serious responsibility—human, not political—and there can be no possible doubt as to how they should use it. Sport, like art, cannot afford frontiers." Some years ago during the visit of a Commonwealth cricket team to Ceylon it was found that small coloured boys could only indulge their interest from a position outside the ground from which they were excluded. Mr. George Duckworth, the former England and Lancashire player, who was manager of the team, used his influence to obtain their admission.

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AT least two N.S.S. members protested in the Press against the recent Lord's Day Observance Society's action against Sunday motor-cycling clubs. Mr. James Gibson made good use of his liberal-minded local papers in Dumfriesshire, and a new member, Mr. P. G. Young, also wrote an effective letter. "If Christians want to go to church on Sunday," he writes, "let them. If, on the other hand, 'heathens' want to see motor-cycles racing in some place where the noise of their exhausts is not drowned by the bells of empty churches, let them also." This was a splendid "first assault on the local Press," and we offer our congratulations to the writer. Readers might also care to note that Mr. G. H. Taylor is compiling a list of journals throughout the country which are prepared to give a fair hearing to our point of view.

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ARRANGEMENTS for the October 3rd BBC protest meeting under the auspices of the Humanist Council are proceeding well. Four speakers have already accepted invitations to appear. They are Mrs. Margaret Knight, Miss Kathleen Nott (author of *The Emperor's Clothes*), Mr. E. M. Forster, the eminent novelist, and Mr. Joseph Reeves, M.P., Chairman of the R.P.A. Among others, Dr. J. Bronowski and Mr. J. B. Priestley have expressed written support.

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WE are pleased to report that, following some preliminary prospecting by Mr. David Shipper and the help of local member, Mr. F. Rothwell, the Blackburn Branch of the National Secular Society is staking its claim for consideration as a force in the city's life. Welcome assistance has come from fellow Lancastrians and, on Sunday evening, Manchester Branch Secretary, Mrs. H. M. Rogals, and member Mr. G. H. Mills will travel to Blackburn to hold an outdoor meeting, the former to sell and distribute literature, the latter to speak. We wish them and the Blackburn Branch every success.

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PRIME MINISTER NEHRU recently sent a message to the Mayor of Nagasaki on the occasion of the 11th anniversary of the explosion of the atomic bomb over the city of Nagasaki. "I wish to reaffirm," he said "the resolve of the Government and the people of India to seek, in conjunction with other nations, cessation of nuclear explosions which threaten to destroy the heritage of mankind. This mighty power of nuclear energy that has been discovered by man must only be used for peaceful purposes and for the improvement of the lot of mankind. The people of Nagasaki were among the first to suffer from this terrible weapon, but their sufferings have helped to disturb the conscience of mankind. I earnestly hope that men and women of good will in the world help to banish the terrible spectre of atomic warfare from earth."

Do Unto Others . . .

By COLIN McCALL

IT IS DIFFICULT to realise that a crankish religion which believes in Satan, Adam and Eve, and the rest of that rubbish, should have registered a 2,300 per cent. increase in membership during the past quarter of a century. Yet such is the case with Jehovah's Witnesses, according to a report in *The New Yorker* (June 16th, 1956). They now boast 187,000 "ministers" in the United States and about half a million in other lands; while their magazines, *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, have circulations of 2,100,000 and 1,400,000 respectively, the first in 40 languages, the second in 13. Hardly surprising, then, that the Witnesses should incur the envy and displeasure of other Christian sects whose membership graph shows no such steep ascent. Displeasure, often amounting to violence, which their pacifist sentiments prevent them from returning.

Nothing in their teaching prevents litigation, though, and the Society has taken 55 test cases to the United States Supreme Court in recent years. Furthermore, it has won 44 of them. Less successful have been recent cases in Britain and Eire. The House of Lords' rejection of an appeal for exemption from military service was extensively reported in the Press, and readers will be familiar with it. The Irish case, however, has received little notice. It has alarming features which deserve to be widely known.

A Roman Catholic priest and 10 laymen were charged with assault and malicious damage during an incident at Clonlara, a village in County Clare, last May. Books and pamphlets had been seized from two Jehovah's Witnesses and, later, burned in public. The charges of assault were admitted and found proved, but were dismissed under the Probation of Offenders Act; the other charges were dismissed. The two Witnesses, by contrast, "were bound to the peace in their own sureties of £100 each and independent sureties of £100." In a special leader on the case, *The Irish Times* (July 28th, 1956) rightly calls this "a curious, and a most disturbing" turn of the law. The Witnesses, Stephen G. Miller and Henry Bond (an ex-Catholic), were riding home on a motor-cycle on Sunday, May 13th, after a house-to-house canvass, when a car in front stopped close to another and blocked the road. A number of men were standing about, but Miller drove past them on the grass verge, one man trying to drag Bond off the pillion as the motor-cycle passed.

The Witnesses took a wrong turning, however, and found themselves in a cul-de-sac leading to the hotel known as the Angler's Rest. There was no telephone with which to call the police, and the priest and the men arrived before they could get away. "Why are you going around distributing and selling heretical books?" asked the priest, the Rev. Patrick Ryan, C.C. "We have got our priests; we don't need any more," said some of the men; and then the assault took place, Miller being punched and pushed around. He was warned to leave and never return. Cases belonging to Miller and Bond were then taken, and their books were burned. Father Ryan admitted that he had "collected a group of men" and gone after the Witnesses, caught up with them, warned them to leave, and taken some of their books, which his men had burned.

Replying to cross-examination, Miller confessed to holding the view that the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity was of pagan origin and that Satan was the author of it. Mr. J. M. (or I. M.?) Houlihan, solicitor for the accused, then asked Miller if he knew that the Constitution of Eire, under which the Courts were established, began: "In the Name

of the Most Holy Trinity, from Whom is all Authority"; he replied that he did. "According to you, the laws of the land and the Constitution of this country are under the authority and authorship of Satan, the Devil himself," then said Mr. Houlihan. "It is not surprising when you see the conduct of its ministers," retorted Mr. Miller, with some justification but a dangerous lack of tact.

"It is the law of this land that blasphemy is a crime punishable by statute. It is the law of the land that it is punishable under common law by indictment. It was made so constitutionally in this country, freely and by the will of the people under the patronage, acknowledgment and authority of and specially designated under Almighty God and the Blessed Trinity," continued Mr. Houlihan. "We had an unusual and an unholy and an unprecedented witness in the witness-box, who sees nothing wrong and does not feel in error in telling your worship that Satan himself discovered the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and therefore commits blasphemy against God and His Blessed Mother. From further specific questions it must follow, therefore, that the Constitution of this country has been enacted under the authority of Satan."

That is obviously the way to speak to an Irish Court. According to Article 44, section 1, sub-section 1 of the Constitution, public homage was due to Almighty God and His Name should be revered and respected, added Mr. Houlihan, whereas this witness makes "no distinction between Catholics and non-Catholics."

District Justice Hurley began his summing-up in encouraging fashion. It was the duty of the Courts, he said, to maintain law impartially; the Courts had to be non-sectarian. It was the duty of the Courts, he continued in this noble strain, "to maintain the right of the individual and personal liberty." The case had to be tried on its own particular merits. Then he must have remembered he was in Ireland. "The Irish faith is something that has been tempered by the fires of history. It is a tradition, a legend, a way of life. It has its roots in lovely villages and mountains, in prison cells and on the scaffold, and in sorrowful mothers' hearts." Scarcely could the listeners have swallowed the lumps in their throats, before he switched to the attack—and Mr. Miller can be thankful *he* didn't finish on the scaffold, too.

Mr. Miller and his companions sought to destroy and challenge that religion, said the Justice. They were guilty of blasphemy in the Catholic understanding of the word. Were the people of this Irish village expected to lie down before it? He did not think so; indeed, he thought Mr. Miller and his friend were lucky to escape as lightly as they did. But—benign man!—he thought that "outside of defence there was no justification for assault even in those circumstances." There was "provocation," however. He found the charge of assault proved—and he dismissed it under the Probation of Offenders Act. He dismissed the remaining charges and then bound both Miller and Bond on the terms given above, with three months' imprisonment in default. This amounted (as *The Irish Times* remarked) to "exonerating the offenders in popular opinion, if not in law." In this appalling case, the victims of the assault were punished instead.

No doubt the judgment would confirm Mr. Houlihan's strange delusion that Eire is a country of "religious tolerance": a belief apparently based on the fact that a Protestant was the first President, and that a Jew has been Lord

Mayor of Dublin. But the line had to be drawn at "blasphemers," and the defendants "felt that they had a clear obligation to defend their families." One such family-protector, Patrick Sheehy — the man who struck Miller on the chin — said that he did so when he heard the latter address the priest as "my dear chappie." Mr. Sheehy added, gratuitously, that he was "prepared to do the same thing tomorrow in the same circumstances." Whether the justice reprimanded him for this is not stated in the two lengthy reports I have before me (*The Irish Times* and the *Irish Weekly Independent*) but, judging from Mr. Hurley's other comments, I think it unlikely. In Mr. Hurley's eyes — as well as Mr. Sheehy's — "my dear chappie" would seem to provide a clear case of "provocation." One must be reverent to a priest even though—as Miller indicated—the priest's actions were most irreverent. In Eire at any rate.

Buddhism in Korea

By D. SHIPPER

MOST KOREANS make no pretence of any formal religious observance. However, the teachings of native religions, joined with Confucian ethics and Buddhist precepts, are established, to a great extent in the life of the people.

The preoccupation with death and the reverence accorded to ancestors is a conspicuous example of the religious trend, and so is the use of the Korean word "Haranim", which means "The One Heavenly Lord" or "Almighty".

In the earliest days of Korean history, primitive beliefs consisted of Sun, ancestor and mountain worship. The Koreans regarded the Sun as the Heavenly Lord, the creator of their forefathers, and on top of high mountains mankind could communicate with the Heavenly Lord.

Later there developed a kind of Shamanism composed of elements of Polytheism and nature worship. Its main tenet was that not only human beings, but lower animals and even inanimate things have souls or spirits. During the third century in the Kingdom of Silla religious services were held for mountain spirits, the sun and the moon. In the Middle Ages sun worship held an important place in Korea.

The coming of Buddhism and Confucianism heralded official repressions of Shamanism which, however, left its mark on both. Shamanism had no (known) founder and no scripture of its own. Traces of this ancient religion are now found, only rarely, in rural areas, apart from superstitious vestiges. In time the Koreans developed ethical standards which (they claim) are clearly distinguishable from those of Japan and China, and refer to these traits sometimes as "Shinkyo", a kind of Deism.

This was rooted in the Korean mind possibly before Buddhism and Confucianism existed. The first of the great world religions to reach Korea was Buddhism, which came from China. It travelled down the peninsula very slowly during the fourth century A.D., and by 392 A.D. there were nine monasteries. Buddhism became the religion of the country by decree. In AD 524 it assumed a dominant role in the Kingdom of Silla and after that ascended rapidly, being recognised as the state religion for the next two centuries. The highest peak was reached in A.D. 576 when the King of Silla became a monk and the Queen became a nun. This peak, during the era of the Three Kingdoms, lasted until approximately A.D. 664. As the Buddhist culture reigned in and around the capital of Silla, there was a free flow of culture in Eastern Asia. Many Buddhist pilgrims and devotees travelled to China and India, the most notable being a Buddhist priest from Silla, Ilwei Chao, who visited the Tang capital. After taking the sea

route through the South China ports, Singapore, Sumatra, Ceylon, and all India, he returned through Kashmir and the Tiensham route to Chongon. He recorded this unique trip in a book entitled *Journey to the Five Indies*, which was among the treasures lost in the Tung Hwang caves in Chinese Turkestan, discovered recently.

The Mahayana branch of Buddhism is still intact in Korea, though in the country of its origin it disappeared long ago, and many scholars of Silla enriched Buddhism in Korea.

Buddhism declined after Silla unified the peninsula, when the king forbade support of the monks, but with a change of dynasty it reasserted itself and was again recognised as the state religion while the Koryo kings reigned. Its power gradually grew, the monks occasionally dominating the rulers.

In the 11th century a great deal of the country's money was devoted to religion, and it is recorded that 30,000 Buddhist monks were present at a ceremony in 1140. Perhaps the greatest project of the Koryo dynasty was the collecting, engraving and publishing of the *Tripitaka* (or Buddhist *sutra*). It was started by a royal command in 1236 and it took ten years to complete the 80,000 wooden plates. As there were two pages on each side of each plate, this made a total of 160,000 leaves or 320,000 pages (of the best available texts of scriptures). This has been kept intact and is now in a temple on Mt. Kaya.

Therefore the oldest, most accurate and complete *sutra* of Mahayana Buddhism is in Korea. The work is called *Taejangkyong*. Buddhism is a tolerant belief and the prevailing Shamanism and the native Deism had a great effect on Buddhist practices. Even today, nearly all the Buddhist temples have shrines attached for mountain spirits which are not of Buddhist origin.

Apparently it is not easy even for the experts to ascertain whether some religious sculptures found in Korea are entirely Buddhist. Many memorial stones and tomb-sculptures were built in the native tradition and are not of Buddhist origin. When the Yi dynasty began Buddhist power declined as rapidly, or more rapidly, than it had arisen. Laws were passed forbidding women to visit monasteries, and forbidding monks from congregating to pray for rain, and land was taken from them and restored to the people. Buddhism never returned to its former status after 1392 in spite of intervals of royal support, but quite clearly has had an important influence on Korean life.

Today it occupies an important position, not because of numerical strength, but through its influence over important members of the community. Before the liberation in 1945, there were 1,524 Buddhist temples with 6,792 monks and 336 nuns throughout the Korean peninsula. In 1950, before the war on the "49th parallel", there were 949 temples with 5,517 monks and 248 nuns in the southern half of Korea. (I have not seen northern figures.)

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education (1953), 161 Buddhist temples were totally destroyed or damaged in the Korean War, 287 monks were either murdered or kidnapped and two nuns died. (Southern figures) 688 Buddhist temples remain in the south, with 5,330 monks and 246 nuns. Followers of the Buddhist religion numbered 3,458,520 in the south, in July 1954.

In Korea the Buddhist hierarchy has a different system from other countries. The highest monk (or Archbishop) rules the temples through the Colleges of Bishops.

—NEXT WEEK—

THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE

By G. H. TAYLOR

Disturbing Happy Natives

AN ILLUSTRATION of this comment by Thomas Hardy, in reference to the work of foreign missionaries, is being given in Australia by Archdeacon Robertson (Chairman of the Australian Board of Missions).

In a sermon in Sydney, the rev. gentleman explained that he had been urged by the Commonwealth Minister for Territories to see if something could be done to clear up the confusion into which the natives of New Guinea are being plunged by the rivalries of missionaries in that territory.

"There are," he reminded him, "Presbyterian, Methodist, Pentecostal, and other missionaries all seeking to convert the natives in that area." Discreetly did he omit to mention that among the other missionaries were both Anglicans and Catholics. "Everywhere," he added, "were the natives being driven into confusion." He wanted to know if a common faith could not be adopted by all these rival missionaries. Archdeacon Robertson confessed himself disturbed by the situation. But he does not appear to suggest any remedy. Nor is there any likelihood of his being in a position to do so while the Catholics are in the field, convinced that theirs is the one and only faith whereby the natives can enter the kingdom in the skies.

What a farce it all is — the unfortunate natives, the great majority of them in a state of semi-savagery, being assailed and tortured by the exponents of all these competitive and conflicting religions! The position is even worse, for it is obvious that the efforts of these missionaries have so wide a field for conversions among their own white people. For example, in the same issue of the paper containing the New Guinea exposure (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, June 4th) the statement is made by the President-General of the Methodist Church of Australia that for a large and increasing section of the community the Church and religion are outmoded.

Further testimony to the same effect, showing that among their own people these missionaries could find plenty to do if conversions are their hobby, is supplied through the Australian press practically every day of the week.

J. Y. ANDERONEY (Sydney, Australia).

CORRESPONDENCE

THE REFLECTIONS OF A STUDENT

Nothing can be more welcome than the present move of the Humanist Council to make its influence felt and its voice heard.

How true it is that Christianity opposes all scientific changes, but when such changes have taken root in the minds of the people, Christianity quickly claims the credit for it, and then sees no difference between science and religion. The Bishop of Croydon, in his recent talk on "Lift up your hearts," claimed that God wrote the law of gravity. These Church ministers are fit for the stage.

The irrational forces planted in man by religion are so strong that the rational forces have very slender chances of success against them. A handful of people might be able to lead a life of reason, but the majority are content to die with their delusions and superstitions all intact. Men detest knowing the truth about themselves.

The Humanist Council has the arduous but worthwhile task of educating the uneducated and re-educating the miseducated. I wish fellow members success in their services to mankind.

AJA EZE (London University).

MILITANCY

So Mr. Ottaway wants a less militant quality in Freethought? Why? Had this attitude been adopted, persons like myself might never have become aware of the existence of an alternative school of thought. We knew, of course, that there must be others of a like brand of scepticism, but *not* that they had any organised voice. Had Freethinkers been *more* militant we might have known sooner. It is worth while considering the case of the Salvation Army! Would the S.A. be a household world if they had *not* been militant? In the course of my work, I am in the company of men who

design and operate scientific apparatus which is the product of years of highly specialised scientific research and careful reasoning, and yet these men accept (if they ever bother to think much about it) the myths that form the basis of Christian worship!

Oh for a militant secular leader to clear away the mists of superstition! Without the attitude that Mr. Ottaway deplores the people are not likely to be antagonised; they are more likely to live in ignorance that such a thing as Freethought exists, at least, on any scale worth considering.

H. A. ROGERSON.

ISLAM AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

Like Mr. F. A. Ridley (*THE FREETHINKER*, June 15th) I have often considered the social and intellectual reactionary character of modern Islam compared with its brilliance in the Middle Ages, for example. What is responsible for the decline? Is it the effect of desert climate, or is Spengler correct, after all?

For the greater part of a long lifetime I have lived in a community which also comprises many thousands of these members of Islam, so that I have had countless first-hand opportunities of observing them. We certainly do not suffer locally from a desert climate; so that is one factor ruled out.

As a community, they are sober, law-abiding, clean, neatly-garbed and peaceful. The men make excellent tailors, masons, carpenters, fishermen and motor mechanics, and the women are efficient housewives and fine dressmakers.

It will be noticed that all these occupations may be classed as repetitive or derivative; not creative or original. This also applies in less degree to us Europeans, of course, but we *do* produce some great and original minds, if few; whereas I cannot think of any really outstanding man amongst our local Muslims. Almost all our Muslims are coloured folk, by the way.

They have produced no noteworthy authors, scientists, engineers, artists or musicians. We Europeans here have. (I say this only to show that the climate is not to blame.)

The ancestors of these most orthodox of Islam peoples — "more pious than the Pope" — came from Indonesia about 300 years ago, mostly as slaves to the Dutch, and they were freed in 1834 — under British rule. They have formed a compact and happy community ever since.

LEONARD MARTIN (South Africa).

THE BBC

I am immensely pleased at the way you are pressing the case of the BBC's boycott of the N.S.S. Secretary's talk. Only by continuous pressure can we gain access to this important means of propaganda.

—F. BURKE.

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death of John Hayes, of Kilwinning, Ayrshire, on July 17th, 1956, at the age of 70. Mr. Hayes was a keen reader of this paper for many years and we send our sincere sympathy to his widow and relatives.

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