

The Freethinker

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NOVEMBER 17TH, 1958, was a notable anniversary in English history and one which, unlike so many of its kind, possessed a real, as well as a conventional importance. For this date commemorated the accession to the throne of Elizabeth I, who succeeded her ill-famed sister, Bloody Mary—the last Catholic Queen of England. From my own predilections, as well as with regard to the traditional republican sympathies of THE FREETHINKER, I probably shall not be accused of any excessive veneration for the institution of monarchy as such. However, the first Elizabeth was not only a brilliant woman and a remarkable personality; her reign really did constitute an epoch, and on the whole, a highly progressive one in the chequered annals of our "Island Story." For had Mary, that fanatical Catholic, been immediately succeeded by someone of the same outlook and Catholic associations as herself, it must be regarded as a moot question whether England could or would have emerged from the Reformation as a Catholic or Protestant land. Up to her succession, it does not appear to be at all clear whether or no England would have permanently cast in her lot with the Reformation. It was the decisive power of the absolute monarchy of the Tudors which eventually tilted the balance away from Rome—and from the Middle Ages.

Elizabeth Tudor

How far this social and religious revolution was really due to the personal policy of Elizabeth, or even how far she herself sympathised with the Reformation, is still a subject of controversy amongst scholars. Again, it is doubtful whether Elizabeth, or the very able "Brains Trust" who advised her, was ultimately responsible for the glories of the Elizabethan Age. She was certainly no puritan, either in her Court life or in Church affairs, or—so her enemies alleged—in her morals. She and her ministers were completely ruthless, though it may be argued that only thus could they have survived at all in face of the tremendous pressure brought to bear upon England by the Catholic counter-Reformation, which worked day and night to destroy Mary's heretical successor, and by the Protestant extremists who wished to do away with secular, as well as ecclesiastical domination—an ambition which they temporarily succeeded in within half a century of the Queen's death. Certainly Elizabeth Tudor was hardly more qualified personally to be a Protestant saint than her predecessor was to be a Catholic one. She must always remain under the gravest suspicion of being privy to one of the most atrocious murders in a century marked so pre-eminently by spectacular crimes: the murder of Amy Robsart, wife of her favourite, the Earl of Leicester. But Progress, like Providence, is apt to select peculiar personal instruments for its ultimately impersonal ends. In which connection it can hardly be disputed—except indeed by our modern neo-Catholic apologists—that her policy made for both Protestantism and, under the conditions of her age, for political and religious progress. Perhaps the best

tribute to the efficiency of Elizabeth and her ministers is to be found in the recent statement of a Roman Catholic bishop that England's first Protestant Queen was a modern version of the wicked Queen Jezebel of Old Testament fame.

The English Reformation

As students of the history of the Reformation are aware, that cosmopolitan phenomenon took different forms in different lands. In England it started and to a large extent continued, under royal patronage. It was the English absolute monarchy of the Tudors, identical only in name with the merely titular monarchy of our day, which gave it the initial and decisive impetus,

and which subsequently presided over its changing fortunes. It was essentially the Tudor monarchy, a Welsh-derived dynasty with little legal claim to the throne, which it had obtained by armed rebellion, that launched England on the revolutionary path which attachment to the Reformation then signified. It was Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, who became—for apparently very mixed motives—"the mighty lord who broke the bonds of Rome." But Henry, as his latest Catholic biographer testifies, was never a Protestant. He merely wished to displace the Pope as the secular head of a still Catholic Church. To the end of his days he went on hanging Catholics as traitors to the Royal Supremacy, and burning Protestants as heretics against the Catholic faith. It was only under his son, Edward VI, that England swung to the Calvinistic left and became Protestant in doctrine also; a branch of the Continental Reformation. When Edward died (of hereditary syphilis, which apparently doomed his whole family to sterility and to ultimate extinction), his sister Mary restored the Roman connection with the aid of her Spanish relatives. And during the lurid, but fortunately brief, reign of Mary, England adhered to the Catholic counter-Reformation. The fires of Smithfield burned merrily with the Protestant martyrs, who are still commemorated there. It was the succeeding, and fortunately long, reign of Elizabeth which finally decided the issue. For it seems clear that it was the enormous power of the English monarchy which finally tilted the balance on to the side of Protestantism. Elizabeth I, whatever her personal beliefs may have been, must accordingly be regarded as the founder of Protestant England, at least as a permanent factor in human progress. Her accession must therefore rank as a red-letter day in the annals of religious and political progress, for she finally, as far as England is concerned, broke the medieval stranglehold of Rome on our national and religious life.

Elizabethan England and the Catholic Counter-Reformation

This momentous Reformation was only achieved finally after a generation-long struggle with the militant Catholic counter-Reformation, then represented on the political field by the world-wide Spanish Empire, and on that of ideology by the newly founded Jesuit Order which agitated

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

The First Elizabeth

By F. A. RIDLEY

and plotted incessantly. Pope Pius V, now canonised, actually excommunicated Elizabeth and called on all good Catholics to depose and, if possible, kill her. A Catholic successor might still have turned the tide back to pre-Elizabethan times. But the great plot ended with the Spanish Armada, which was blessed by the Pope. And when Elizabeth finally died the hour of Roman domination over England had departed, it might then have appeared, for ever.

From Elizabeth to Elizabeth

Was it so in reality? Recent events in the reign of the second Elizabeth, and in particular, the recent hullabulloo over the death of the late and the accession of the present Pope, may cause doubts. Rome must now hope that if

Protestantism and religious liberty began under the first Elizabeth, they are shortly due to end under the second! To judge from the recent antics on TV, radio and the press, there are many highly-placed persons on these institutions who share this current ambition of our contemporary Catholic counter-Reformation. If only for which reason, we are still inclined to think that November 17th, 1558, the date of the accession of our first Protestant Queen, is still an event worthy of commemoration; and we hope that in 2058 it will still be possible to commemorate the fifth centenary of Elizabeth I. But this will not be so if Rome succeeds eventually in realising its present hopes. There will then be, we can be quite sure, no celebrations of the modern "Queen Jezebel."

Atlantic Waves

From ROBERT H. SCOTT (U.S.A.)

BECAUSE of the unexpected successful launching by the Soviet Union of its man-made earth-satellites, the anti-intellectualism which has plagued the United States for at least thirty years has already diminished considerably. Scientists, not football players, baseball players, motion picture actors and actresses, and crooners, are now in this country, in a large part of it, at the top of the heap. And this bids fair to continue in view of the fact that the U.S.S.R. is not letting down on its educational training of its young men and women. There is involved here not only a question of national pride and prestige but also, as most Americans believe, a question of national survival. So I look upon this unexpected recognition of the superiority of brain over brawn as a thing to be welcomed and encouraged, a thing which, indirectly too, will advance the cause of atheism, since atheism and intelligence and knowledge go hand in hand, though not always openly.

Even this country's present financial and economic "recession," as the Republicans are calling our depression, has not taken the minds of the American people from their swing toward more science in their educational institutions and more knowledge generally in all fields of learning. This economic and financial slump is far more serious than our newspapers and periodicals and radio stations have made it out to be. Some politicians, including some Republicans, frankly say that the business and industrial decline will get considerably worse before the year's end. As George Bernard Shaw pointed out in 1933 on his visit to America, our economy is already largely Socialistic. Since his visit the Roosevelt measures have made our economic and financial system much more Socialistic than ever, so much so, in fact, that our Socialism is in excess of our Capitalism. So concerned is the present Administration that it has already instituted government work projects to alleviate the alarming unemployment problem, and such a procedure would have been regarded with horror by any Republican thirty years ago, or even twenty.

★

I am looking forward with interest to the next Presidential campaign. A new "hopeful" for the Democratic Party is Senator John Kennedy of Massachusetts, the young Roman Catholic career politician who came exceedingly close to being nominated as Vice-Presidential candidate of the Democratic Party, instead of Senator Kefauver. Kennedy is now being brought more and more on the radio and in the press as the coming Presidential nominee of the Democratic Party in the next Presidential campaign. Various Protestant organisations here have put certain questions to him, publicly, about his stand on certain policies and attitudes of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in

the U.S.A., and he has so far skilfully sidestepped the questions. He is sincerely a *practising* Roman Catholic, and this will, as he knows, strongly militate against his chances of being elected if nominated, or even nominated.

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I shall, if I can, take advantage of charges that some Federal Court Commissioners accepted financial and other favours to press my claim for implementation of the F.C.C.'s Scott Decision of 1946, which was handed down by men who are no longer members of the F.C.C. I shall point out that the men who are now under fire for official impropriety took an oath (and hence were not atheists) to guard and preserve the public interest in radio and television, and that it was these same non-atheists who arbitrarily and completely against the documented facts, refused to enforce the Scott Decision even in cases of direct and sometimes vicious attack upon and against atheists on religion-broadcasting radio and television stations. If I could stir up publicly-expressed anger from one or more members of the F.C.C. I shall be pleased, for that might result in my being called to Washington for a hearing and inquiry. Already public indignation is high against the F.C.C. and there is much talk of the need and probability of legislation that will make qualification to membership in the F.C.C. a thing entirely out of politics.

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I should like to see a cessation of false propaganda, for surely it is obvious to any American not completely deluded by that propaganda that the Soviet Union's government truly wants and is working for permanent world peace. America's chief stumbling block is its own Secretary of State. Dulles is blinded to the virtues and potentialities of the U.S.S.R. for social and political and intellectual progress; and this blindness on his part is owing partly to his inveterate love of Capitalism, but also partly to his deeply ingrained Christian piety (his son recently became a Jesuit priest). As Oscar Riddle repeatedly says in his *The Unleashing of Evolutionary Thought*, there is throughout the world a war to the death between Naturalism or Atheism on the one hand and Supernaturalism or Godism on the other; and Dulles, I need not tell you, is committed wholly and irrevocably to the aid of the forces of Supernaturalism, that is to say, to Reaction and anti-progressivism. Unfortunately he has back of him a host of financially, socially and politically potent people and organisations who think as he does or who go along with him for the sake of their own material advantage. But I am betting my money on Naturalism to win the day, eventually. For facts are stubborn things and will not be denied. Eventually they overcome all opposition.

Catholic Action

By COLIN McCALL

THOSE WHO PICK UP Professor Jeremiah Newman's book, *What is Catholic Action?* (M. H. Gill and Son Ltd., Dublin, 1958, 15s.) expecting to learn anything of real value about the subject will, I fear, be disappointed. Its chapter headings sound explicit enough, and the preface hopes that the book will "help in elaborating an exact concept of Catholic Action." But this, like so many Roman Catholic writings, is mostly a great deal of blather about nothing.

I don't mean that Catholic Action itself is nothing. Far from it. But the Catholic Action that Professor Newman writes about bears little resemblance to the real thing. One keeps hoping that the latter will emerge: on the next page; in the next chapter; in the conclusion. But no. The author has devoted 160 pages to the time-honoured sport of Roman Catholic intellectuals: setting up minor little dummies to knock down with great ostentation; solving piffing little problems in the most complicated manner. I realise, of course, that he is not writing for heretics. My difficulty is, deciding who he is writing for. His book is subtitled, "An Introduction to the Lay Apostolate," but if it is also meant to be an introduction for the lay apostolate—as the blurb suggests—I cannot see it having much appeal.

It contains a warning against the evils of Communism, but that can hardly be a novel theme to the Catholic reader, who must 'gin to be weary, too, of the "tide of paganism and indifference [that] threatens to engulf the world." No doubt, though, there will be plenty of Papists prepared to "try to guide these souls to truth" and "strive . . . to undo . . . the ill-effects of their example on the faithful." I have, in fact, pondered that last phrase and its affinity to the recent violence against evangelists in Ireland.

Professor Newman makes no secret of his concern over the spread of Protestantism in some Catholic lands. In what is perhaps the most revealing section of his book, he tells us that in Central and South America the activity of sects like Jehovah's Witnesses is "causing considerable anxiety to the Church." And he quotes Mgr. Léon-Joseph Suenens that in Latin America "Protestantism has increased from 700,000 in 1925 to 4,500,000 today"; that Quito radio, "financed by fifty sects from the United States, covers with its propaganda the whole of Latin America"; and that 16,000 Protestant clergymen are working there with—according to one (unnamed) historian—"the greatest modern success of the Reforming movement since the sixteenth century." Considering the Muslim threat, too, and the entrenchment of "paganism and secularism" in "certain milieux," Professor Newman sees "a pressing need to be up and doing." He knows in his heart, mind you, that the Church cannot fail, "that in God's Providence it will one day triumph," but there is apparently no harm in Catholic Action giving God a little help.

Soon after this, by comparison very exciting, part, the book enters the doldrums and movement becomes imperceptible to the reader. The Professor has put a lot of work into it, but how futile it all seems! I am ready to believe that "The structure and peculiar character of the Sodalities of Our Lady are no obstacle whatever to their being called with the fullest right 'Catholic Action under the auspices and inspiration of the Blessed Virgin Mary,'" as the late Pope declared. It may be true—as his immediate predecessor said—that "Catholic Action is not confined within a closed circle." I might agree that at all costs "there must be avoided the error made by a certain number who desire to reduce all that is done in the interest of souls to a single

pattern." But I cannot honestly say that it fires my imagination.

A semblance of life returns, some sixty pages on, where Professor Newman briefly describes the structure of Italian Catholic Action—essentially a generalised type—which Pius XI said should serve as a model for other countries. Now, however, the Professor suggests there should be more division of labour: "specialised as well as general Catholic Action." And he proceeds to make a distinction that really deserves our attention. "In so far as specialised Catholic Action exerts an influence on temporal affairs"—he says—"it is by intrinsically religious or educational action. Whether specialised or otherwise, Catholic Action must confine itself to this. The actual application of social principles in the concrete is work for Temporal Action of Christian Inspiration." And, dispensing with his recurrent "some would say," "it might be argued," "it may be," or "it would seem," Professor Newman's main point is that Catholic Action is primarily "religious and spiritual," whereas Temporal Action of Christian Inspiration is, as its name implies, temporal. Economic, trade union, or political activity, therefore, comes within the scope of the latter organisation, but not the former.

Does it really matter? In one significant way, yes. Place Christian Temporal Action (as it is easier to call it) in "a different department of the lay apostolate from that of Catholic Action"; say that "The Hierarchy cannot normally assume any responsibility for it" (as it must for Catholic Action); and you have the ideal situation, whereby the Church benefits from C.T.A.'s successes but C.T.A. itself must "render full account" for its failures. The Professor is sufficiently human to admit that "this seems a very harsh attitude"; but he is too much a Catholic to leave it at that. Sure enough, "closer examination" shows "how right it is."

In fact, it is a stratagem to enable the hierarchy to shirk responsibility for the actions of its organised laity, if it suits it to do so. This is confirmed when, having specifically separated the two movements for one purpose, Professor Newman draws them together again in "a vital relationship of co-operation." And, after remarking that Catholic Action "on the whole . . . leaves politics severely alone," he calmly lets it "legitimately interest itself in politics when religious or moral principles are at stake"—which opens the gateway to the whole field. In such cases, said the penultimate Pius, "Catholic Action can and must, when possible, *intervene directly*" (italics in original). So, in 1948, Italian Catholic Action "did all in its power to secure a Communist defeat in the Italian elections."

Inevitably—in typically irritating Catholic fashion—Professor Newman countermands with, "Normally, however, its influence will be indirect . . . by way of education in Christian principles." But he will not convince the wary reader. Technical definitions apart, Catholic Action is a lay organisation, directly responsible to the priesthood and the bishopric, which does not hesitate to enter business, political, and trade union life to further the aims of the Roman Catholic Church.

—NEXT WEEK—

WORLD ENEMY: RELIGION

By DR. J. V. DUHIG

This Believing World

To the Rt. Rev. F. A. Cockin, until lately the Bishop of Bristol, was given the task recently of inculcating Christian Morals in three lectures for broadcasting to schools. He must have found it a fearsome task for, if any child was an iota the wiser after listening to his confused exposition, he would certainly have been wiser than Dr. Cockin himself. He had to admit that even unbelievers could lead moral lives; and, though, of course, Jesus had to be dragged in at all costs, exactly why was not made clear—unless it was because the rev. gentleman himself was a Christian and he was addressing a presumably Christian audience. We cannot help wondering what Spurgeon, or his modern follower, the Rev. Billy Graham, would have thought of Dr. Cockin? Anything whatever?

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And here we have the "Daily Express," after nearly 2,000 years of Christianity, asking in its "Children's Week" articles, "How important is Religion?" It almost seems useless to supply the answer. Religion is forcefully described as the most important factor in forming a child's most priceless gift—"a strong, happy, and vital character." The fact that our prisons are full of people who have been thoroughly taught religion is not even referred to. What the lady writer, who no doubt herself is a shining example of a properly taught religion, is quite sure about is that the State-taught religion in our schools is not good enough. Children should be taught a little more than mere Bible stories.

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But if you take away the stories of the Flood, the Exodus, the angels singing hosannahs at the birth of Jesus, and so on, and concentrate on Paul's theology—would that make children religious? Would it really teach the "spiritual significance of Christianity"? We would dearly like to meet children of almost any age who have the ghost of an idea what "spirituality" actually means. If Christianity has to be taught in school, it should form part of a series on Comparative Religions, for all of them without exception belong to the "Ages of Faith," all are unhistorical, and all are based on credulity and superstition.

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We note not without a little amusement that Mr. George Cansdale gave an address for children on TV recently on "Animals of the Bible," specialising on "The asses of the Bible." Balaam's famous speaking Ass formed one of them, but what about the human asses? A bigger number of asses than the famous Apostles would be hard to find anywhere—they even outvie the assinity of a number of Bible "kings" and "prophets." One of Jacob's sons, Issachar, is actually described as an ass—a "strong ass." But, of course, Mr. Cansdale specialises only in animals.

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We see that Prof. C. S. Lewis, the author of *The Screwtape Letters*, a book supposed to knock Freethought almost into smithereens, has just published another religious work on the Psalms described by a reviewer as revealing "a new beauty" in them. Something like 283,659 books have already been written on the Psalms, but they will always unfold a new beauty in a new book. All the same, we wonder what Prof. Lewis has to say about Psalm 109 described by Ingersoll—"In the literature of the world there is nothing more heartless, more infamous." Still, not all the Psalms can be so described.

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The ITV religious programme the other Sunday included an interview with Henry Armstrong, the famous coloured boxer, who once held three world championships at the

same time. With a very religious upbringing, it is not surprising that he has now become a Baptist minister, and no doubt the idea of bringing him before viewers was to prove that if a boxer has accepted Christ as his Saviour, we all should do likewise. Mr. Armstrong, very proud of his prowess in the ring and in the pulpit, hinted that there was a strong connection between his three championships and the Holy Trinity...! What a pity that the rev. gentleman interviewing him hastily closed this part of Mr. Armstrong's revelations and turned to less pious records.

Ecclesia Militans

ARGENTINA: After the expulsion of Perón the Catholic hierarchy has easily recovered its supremacy, with the result that marriages remain indissoluble. Consequently, people with good sense and money go to Montevideo or even as far as Mexico when contracting a marriage. With the ordinary people, too, religiosity does not go deep and is more a matter of tradition and custom; to stay away from mass is simply not done, unless you have the good excuse of old age-cum-bad-weather or a long way to walk. Their religiosity, so far as it still exists, has always been a queer blend of their old pagan creed with a varnish of Catholicism. If a child dies it is considered an invaluable advocate for his family, nay, the whole village, in heaven and instead of mourning the event is celebrated as a piece of good fortune. So much so that the little corpse may even be loaned for several days to a neighbouring community to allow them to partake of the occasion.

FINLAND, hitherto a purely Lutheran country, has had to absorb about half a million of Karelian immigrants from the East who, as Greek-Catholics, consider themselves the "true believers." Another competition was not long in entering the fray: a rich Dutch bishopric had two R.C. churches built in Helsinki and to tell from their grandeur, Rome must expect, before long, a mighty growth from their poor beginnings.

DENMARK AND SWEDEN: Since the Reformation these countries have been the historical strongholds of Protestantism; however, since the Second World War here, too, Roman Catholicism is on the offensive, backed by wealthy patrons from abroad, who are building not only churches but even cloisters and convents. The intelligentsia of these countries is split between the opposite trends of Communism and Catholicism. In Denmark the teaching staff of a certain Grammar School is overwhelmingly Catholic, although the pupils are all Lutherans. Imagine a purely R.C. country like Spain and their pupils being educated by Protestant teachers, what outcry this would cause! Yet other religions are not half as totalitarian and arrogant as is Papism.

NORWAY: This country has opened her doors to the infamous Order of Jesus, whilst until then the Jesuits had not been allowed to settle in the country. Catholic missionaries even roam the thinly-populated districts of Lapland to convert the population.

ICELAND: After World War Two U.S.A. sent more troops than there were inhabitants, and the majority of them were R.C.s. They formed the nucleus of a Roman Catholic enclave for which a huge R.C. church was built. The mental climate in this country is, however, very liberal, and it is to be hoped that after the cessation of the U.S. occupation the R.C. wave will also recede.

[Translated and prepared by P. G. Roy from *Freigeistige Aktion*, September, 1958.]

THE FREETHINKER

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Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 41 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1. Members and visitors are welcome during normal office hours.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

CAN ANY READER tell us who were the publishers of *Psychology and Religion* (1935), by Dr. David Forsyth, and also state the price?

F. BARBER.—There are two main opposing astronomical theories as to the beginnings of the universe, or at least the cycle now in being: There is the heavy atom explosion, or "Big Bang Theory," and the "continuous creation" theory of T. Gold.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Every Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, MURRAY and SLEMEN.

London (Marble Arch).—Meetings every Sunday from 5 p.m.: Messrs. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER and C. E. WOOD.

London (Tower Hill).—Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Deansgate Blitzed Site).—Every weekday, 1 p.m.: G. WOODCOCK. Sunday, 8 p.m.: Messrs. WOODCOCK, MILLS and WOOD.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Every Wednesday, 1 p.m.; every Sunday, 7.30 p.m.: Various speakers.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: Messrs. L. EBURY and A. ARTHUR.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square).—Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY. Sunday, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Bradford Branch N.S.S. (Mechanics Institute).—Sunday, November 30th, 7 p.m.: A Lecture.

Central London Branch N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1).—Sunday, November 30th, 7.15 p.m.: G. PLUME, "Darwinism and Marxism."

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Tuesday, December 2nd, 7.15 p.m.: R. LIGHTOWLER (Secretary, The Vegetarian Society), "The Ethics of Food."

Leicester Secular Society (75 Humberstone Gate).—Sunday, November 30th, 6.30 p.m.: Prof. H. LEVY, "What is Scientific Evidence?"

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Hall, Upper Parliament Street).—Sunday, November 30th, 2.30 p.m.: Lt.-Col. J. K. CORDEAUX, M.P., "Democracy: Its Strength and Weakness."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).—Sunday, November 30th, 11 a.m.: Mrs. D. PICKLES, M.A., "Black Africa—the Fifth Republic and Britain."

Notes and News

IN his "Reflections on the Papal Coronation (THE FREETHINKER, 21/11/58) Mr. F. A. Ridley referred to the way in which TV was proving invaluable to the Churches. Their determination to use it to the full was shown by the recent announcement—on November 18th—by Dr. Eric Fletcher, a director of ABC Television. Thirty-six clergymen—he said—twelve each from the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Free Churches, will next year attend the first of the courses in television technique which his company is organising for priests and ministers. Mr. Tom Singleton, religious programmes producer for ABC, explained the aim of the courses (*Manchester Guardian*, 19/11/58) as being "to achieve a greater degree of tech-

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £369 17s.; A. E. Stringer, £3 10s.; Miss E. Lloyd, £1; T. Roberts, 5s.; Anon, 2s. 6d.; A. L. Jones, £1 10s.; N. Horler, 10s.; S. Clowes, 5s.; J. McCorrisken, 10s.—Total to date, November 21st, 1958, £377 9s. 6d.

nical excellence in religious programmes, which up to now had often fallen well below perfection as pertained in other programmes, and thus *increase the size of the audience* (our italics). So, in 1958, is an outdated and discredited religion being artificially perpetuated through the most powerful propaganda medium yet invented by science. It is not the least of the ironies of our time.

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THE National Secular Society's letter of protest to the Director-General of the BBC (THE FREETHINKER, 24/10/58) after the radio and TV eulogies of Pius XII received the usual letter of acknowledgment from the usual "Kathleen Haacke" of the "Secretariat." (How uninteresting her typing must be! With slight variations, it seems to consist of: "I have been asked to thank you for your letter of ——— addressed to the ———, and to let you know that a note has been made of your comments." And, incidentally, what a lot of notebooks of comments she must have!) We are pleased to note that the N.S.S. letter was reprinted in the Esperanto section of *The Socialist Leader* of November 15th.

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THE Secretary of the National Secular Society had to pay 6d. the other day for a sealed envelope that was unstamped. Inside, a handbill advertising the Pius XII protest meeting on October 30th bore the repeated imprint: "God bless our Pope, the great, the good" and "May God have pity on all of you." Is it we who need pitying?

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WE are receiving many reports of excellent National Secular Society meetings and regret we cannot print or even notice them all. But our old friend, Mr. W. J. O'Neill—alas, all too seldom seen in London these days—paid another visit to Edinburgh and crowded in afternoon and evening meetings on two Sundays on the Mound, as well as a debate with a member of the Baptist Church. All of them drew "great crowds" and when Mr. O'Neill's voice began to feel the strain the local Secretary had a *Scotch* remedy to hand. A dram did the trick.

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MR. F. J. CORINA, who recently visited Leicester and Cardiff, was in Glasgow on November 23rd and spoke on "Darwin and Damnation" in commemoration of the centenary of the Darwinian theory. On the same day Mr. J. M. Alexander addressed Central London Branch of the National Secular Society on "Evolution and the Last 100 Years." On the previous Tuesday, West Ham and District Branch continued their "At Home" experiment with another friendly gathering of Freethinkers and Christians. The speaker on this occasion was Executive Committee member Mr. Jack Gordon. Meanwhile, London outdoor propaganda remains in the capable hands of Mr. Len Ebury, Mr. J. W. Barker and Mr. A. Arthur.

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CONGRATULATIONS to Mr. C. H. Hammersley, Secretary of Leicester Secular Society and indefatigable writer to the press, for fine letters on the Turin Shroud in the *Sunday Pictorial* (16/11/58) and on Roman Catholic censorship in the *News Chronicle* (18/11/58).

Five 'Isms

By G. H. TAYLOR

[*Five 'Isms*, by Canon Norburn; published by the Modern Churchmen's Union; 2s. 6d.]

CANON NORBURN OF BOLTON is one of the few Churchmen who are prepared to grapple with the contemporary challenge to Christian doctrine at the level of Philosophy. In this excellent work he considers the impact of (1) Logical Positivism, (2) Existentialism, (3) Historicism, (4) Thomism, and (5) Mysticism on the metaphysical tradition and in particular on the theistic case.

His argumentation is of necessity extremely condensed but he has managed the condensing with skill and with the minimum of loss to his themes. Indeed, I do not recall reading, on this subject, a book with so much essence in so few words. There is none of the woolly analogising one finds in so many Christian apologists and the author is not one of those Churchmen who "look the difficulty squarely in the face and then pass on." He gives full status to anti-theistic presentations and makes genuine attempts to ward off their implications. As he never loses lucidity it is a pleasure to disagree with him in certain matters, the more so as we are on common ground in regarding ontological judgments as having been too hastily thrown out by some contemporary trends in Philosophy, notably in Linguistic Analysis (the original label for which was Logical Positivism.)

A fuller description of the latter was given in a previous article of mine in these columns ("Logical Positivism," May 22nd, 1953), but for present purposes a few general observations must suffice. A complete survey of the development of this line of thought would trace through Russell and Mach back to David Hume, but the Logical Analysis of Russell's disciple Wittgenstein presents a convenient starting point. The analysis is not of "things" but of facts, after the manner of Russell's "Events," which are, or were, basic to his Neutral Monism. (It is many years since Russell made any philosophical pronouncement of a fundamental nature.) The world of Wittgenstein consists of mutually exclusive "atomic facts," their constituents being "simple objects."

This, however, is surely to make what Levy would call false isolates: in other words, impossible self-existents, coming from nowhere, going nowhere, and known by nobody. The interdependence of phenomena would appear to be a prerequisite of thinking. There could be no common ownership of appearances emanating from a matrix of island points. What, however, is held in common ownership is the language with which we speak about our experiences, and the importance of Wittgenstein is now that of progenitor to Carnap, for whom "Philosophy is to be replaced by the logic of science, by the logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of the sciences, for the logic of science is nothing less than the logical syntax of the language of science." (Carnap: *Logical Syntax*.)

In perhaps the most important work on these lines, *Language, Truth and Logic* (Ayer, 1936), there are three basic kinds of sentence, which may briefly be called tautological, empirical and nonsensical. The first involves an *a priori* judgment (e.g., Quadrupeds have four legs). The second records an observation, remarks "what is the case" (e.g., Water boils at 100°C.). This latter needs no logical deduction: thinking on its own cannot establish it; it cannot be inferred without actual experience. All other sentences go into the Nonsense Box, and among them Ayer

included sentences about God, the word God being merely an emotive noise without reasonable or empirical content. This I take to be more or less the position also adopted in a most valuable article which appeared in these columns on September 26th, where Dr. Axel Stern summarised with brilliant brevity the complicated categories of non-existence.

The development of Logical Positivism by Linguistic Analysts shows a tendency now to grant God-sentences some status, but at a price. Among the more general types of linguistic structure are the distinctions between *descriptive* and *prescriptive* sentences. The former record facts, the latter record impressions. Prescriptive sentences criticise, praise, blame, exhort, recommend, appeal, demand, thank, hope, etc., etc. "It is raining" would belong to the former category; "We've had enough rain" to the latter.

Certain of the linguistic philosophers (not, I think, Ayer) are ready to class God-sentences as prescriptive, and it is precisely here that Canon Norburn is prepared to accept this half-loaf as better than no bread but at the same time to press for a recognition of God-sentences as something more than merely prescriptive. His interpretation of "prescriptive," as applied to sentences about God, is that they are "indirect recommendations advocating a certain ethical attitude to life." He calls to witness R. B. Braithwaite's *An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief* (1955), in which the Knightsbridge professor at Cambridge asserts that to say that God is Love is to decide to follow an agapeistic way of life. Religious stories would therefore have an allegorical, and not a literal, significance. In other words, religious doctrines would be no more than psychologically useful; they would not be literally true. They would not adumbrate "what is the case"; sentences about them would not be *descriptive* of facts.

Canon Norburn, as an eminent Christian apologist, is naturally not prepared to accept theological discourse as having meaning only at the price of demoting it to the level of prescriptive language only. "After all," he says, "clarity is not everything, and simply because God-sentences are not—are never—clear is not sufficient reason to dismiss them as allegorical stories. They must be held to indicate, in however halting a manner, something that really exists; that is the case." He adds that if he "had the task of trying to show, in the modern idiom, how God-sentences might be *both* descriptive and prescriptive; that is, might be symbolical; I think I should start with the fact that the real mark of religion is not conduct but worship and prayer. And accordingly I should try to show that God-sentences are as much descriptions of a non-inferential awareness of God which is developed by worship and prayer as they are also prescriptions of an attitude of reverence and obedience."

In support of this contention Canon Norburn—who, I think, would probably accept the Neo-Kantian label—suggests another kind of knowledge other than the rational and empirical, namely, "moral knowledge" which leads to the belief in God, free will and immortality.

Recourse to such private sources as prayer, worship and conscience, however, leaves the Christian case once more open to the inroads of linguistic analysis. The subject who says "I contacted God in my prayer," or "in my vision," or "in my conscience," may think he is describing a fact, stating what is the case; but what of the psychological investigator who examines him and says "This subject has

been worked into a state of suggestion and imagines he has contacted God," or, "He has fasted and had a vision in which he believes he contacted God." May *he* not be said to be stating what is the case? As for "moral knowledge," the contrary dictates of conscience from person to person are legion. No conscience is trustworthy until it has been educated. Neither "moral knowledge" nor "conscience," in fact, have literal existence. They are convenient literary fictions.

I believe the Canon is on much stronger ground when he upholds the validity of ontological discourse against the Logical Positivists who banished it from the realm of possibility, and he quotes Dr. Waismann's recent pronouncement, "To say that metaphysics is nonsense *is* nonsense." (*Contemporary British Philosophy*.) Here I would, in part, agree, with the proviso that it is usually the case that metaphysicians make nonsense of their subject.

(To be concluded.)

Radio Freedom in New Zealand

By DAVE SHIPPER

THOSE CONCERNED in the fight to obtain a fair measure of broadcasting time for British freethought and humanist groups will note with interest the activities of the Radio Freedom League of New Zealand.

In a newly-issued statement, the League declares that its objectives are "the democratic control and use of the radio" and to advance "the right of minority groups, whether political, religious, secular, health, humanist, etc., to expound their views and philosophy." A wide variety of organisations are affiliates, as will be seen from a study of the following: The New Zealand Rationalist Association; the Anti-Fluoridation Society; the Unitarian Church; the N.Z. Communist Party; the Anti-Vivisection Society; the Women's Union; N.Z. Peace Council; etc., etc. Other societies and numerous individuals have expressed sympathy and given support.

Both the chairman, Mr. A. O'Halloran, and secretary, Mr. F. C. Jordan, are well-known Auckland rationalists.

Acting for the League, Mr. O'Halloran recently petitioned Parliament asking that legislation be passed which would allow minority groups the right of appeal at court when making allegations of discrimination after having been refused radio time. The League asked that access to the air should be an enforceable right following a successful appeal. After the petition was presented to Parliament by the Hon. W. T. Anderson it was passed to the Public Petitions Committee.

On 16/7/58 Messrs. O'Halloran and Jordan appealed to this committee, the Director of Broadcasting and the Programme Director appearing at the same time. After the broadcasting authorities had read a detailed statement opposing the petition, the League's case was presented. The League representatives were not permitted to take the Broadcasting Service statement out of the room and have been refused a copy as "against regulations."

Mr. O'Halloran declared in his evidence that the League believed that within the canons of decency there should be complete freedom in subjects discussed and presented on the air. Minority groups and unorthodox viewpoints were discriminated against and refused broadcasting time. This applied to several political groups at the last N.Z. General Election and the Special Maori Party—although with four candidates—was refused time.

Turning to religion, Mr. O'Halloran pointed out that eight or nine churches were allowed to broadcast repeatedly, while other religious groups were forbidden. The

R.C. Church exceeded the share due to its 15% of the population. Rationalists were attacked without the right of reply.

Mr. O'Halloran concluded by asserting that the Radio Freedom League did not wish to *remove* any organisation from the air, but to widen the field of discussion and secure justice for all.

Secretary Jordan pointed out that many great ideas bringing invaluable benefits to mankind had emanated originally from an individual or a small group. *Everyone* was entitled to take part in settling national problems.

The petition asked that Parliament pass an Act promoting principles of justice and fair play and the courts should enforce those laws in exactly the same way as they enforce all other laws of the land.

The deputation expected the Broadcasting Department to find ways and means of liberalising the service.

Those engaged in a similar struggle here will commend the efforts of our New Zealand colleagues.

CORRESPONDENCE

A REPLY FROM DR. DUHIG

May I reply to Mr. J. M. Crowley (19/9), who strikes me as not a careful reader. To refer to an opponent's "dogmatic beliefs" does not seem to me much of an argument; anyhow, beliefs are *ipso facto* dogmatic. I believe that on the balance of probabilities, the *piscine* at Lourdes is supplied from the Gave de Pau. When Mgr. Théas protested against Electricité de France weiring off the river, it was specifically stated that this would endanger the supply of *eaux miraculeuses* to which people resorted for cures. I cannot give the exact date of the dispatch in *Paris-Match* on the matter, but anyone with access to its files could turn it up. And *Paris-Match* is strongly pro-Catholic, unless it too is, of course, one of the stooges the diabolically clever Church uses, so picturesquely and credulously noted by Mr. Crowley. The Church has never denied the fact, and the *Paris-Match* item strongly implies an admission. My French colleague worked in a hospital among pilgrims and would be expected to know a lot. I did not express "my views" on the apparitions. I merely related a story current in the countryside. An exactly similar story appeared in *Le Canard Enchaîné*. These local legends may possibly furnish some ground for supposing an actual presence but may simply express contempt and ridicule for the ignoble racket. In reply to an enquirer (22/8), I made exactly the same suggestion as Mr. Crowley, though he seems to overlook that. If river water to the hospice, as I suggested might happen, is piped to the *piscine*, I fail to see how this latter does not hold river water.

I conclude that Mr. Crowley has not looked as long and as deeply into the appalling depths of Catholic chicanery as I have; it is not diabolically clever as he thinks; it is just downright corrupt.

J. V. DUHIG.

CATHOLIC PUBLICITY

I pen these few words of friendly criticism of F. A. Ridley's remarks on the crowning of the Pope. He asks the pertinent question, "Is England still a Protestant country?" Don't worry! In spite of the overwhelming press publicity regarding the election of the new Pope, the Church of Rome will never regain temporal power in this country. Lest we forget: Catholics and Protestants have one thing in common—a vitriolic hatred of the Gospel of Freethought.

R. G. FORSTER.

The Papacy received a wonderful press here in the U.S. Every breath Pius XII drew at the end was noted and reported by the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*—in fact, all the papers in New York. Every detail of the medieval pomp and ceremony during the election of the new Pope was listed, purple silk slippers, bejewelled tiara *et al.* No other news was headlined for three weeks here. Why?

Certainly these barbaric rituals, the toe-kissing, smoke burning—all of it—must be repulsive to anyone pretending to be a modern man. But what happened? Even the so-called liberal clergymen of Protestant faiths got aboard the bandwagon to worship Pius XII and hail John XXIII.

HUGH DOLLARD (U.S.A.)

CRITICISM AND APPRECIATION

Please note an atheist's protest against space being allotted to Mr. Bennett's article on Schweitzer's Jesus. It is more suited to a church magazine.

People who are interested in the missionary are Christians, not secularists. Your secularist and atheist readers expect criticism of religionists and religion, not whitewash.

He tells us that Schweitzer never laboured as a missionary with self-regarding motives. What nonsense! No Christian ever labours for aught else. They all expect a great reward in Heaven.

Surely there are enough real secularists to fill your few columns. When such pseudo-secularists have been swept out of the N.S.S., it will be possible for us real secularists to enter in full force. Then we can attack and destroy the Churches, rendering a signal service to the country and the world.

Thanks for Manhattan's article, and congratulations on securing it.

W. E. HUXLEY.

THE SALVATION ARMY

The other Sunday I strolled along to the Market Square in Buckingham, where I now live, and listened to the Salvation Army. Through their usual preaching and bandplaying not one single person stopped to listen or even appeared to take any notice. I could not feel sorry for the "Army" because those who went out must have been doing so as a break from humdrum existence in a glorious but gloomy—on Sunday—town. While I admit that Salvationists do quite a lot for humans, they spoil it all by trying to put the fear of God or Christ into people. One consolation is they are succeeding less and less in doing so.

I have also been listening to the BBC "Lift up your hearts" recently. The producers of this are getting very clever—or at least they think they are. They often start with someone relating his experiences in connection with gatherings or clubs, demonstrating how successful these can be in encouraging self-help and pleasant relations among members.

Then suddenly, without rhyme or reason, the speakers bring in God and/or Jesus, asking him (or them) to give them the necessary faith and strength to carry on what they are doing. I often think that anyone who has not got the faith and strength in himself to do good must be a poor specimen.

One "lifter-up" of hearts recently chose the words "2 and 2 make 4" as his text, particularly amusing when the same fellow tries to make you believe that 3 times one is one!

And so the fun goes on.

M. D. SILAS.

NEW RELIGION ON OFFER

It is remarkable how many old religions had a man-god or a god-man who did not have a human father. One reason for that may be that if he *did* have a known father, too much might be known about him.

In days when women did not count so much as they do now, it was probably accepted that one's godlike qualities were derived from the father, and that the mother contributed little or nothing, she acting merely as a carrier or a transmitter, but certainly not being a 50 per cent. contributor as modern genetics inform us.

So how about a brand new religion, in which the man-god or god-man would, for a welcome change, have a father, but not a mother? The father, to make it still more religiously acceptable, would have to be, in addition, a *virginus immaculatus*. (Please overlook my dog Latin, but it does sound so much more impressive in a classical language, does it not, even if the first word had to be manufactured?)

I won't go into anatomical details, but just consider the implications! It would out-miracle any of those old miracles invented so far, and I present the idea gratis to any of those enterprising Americans desiring to found yet another world religion. If any corroborative plaques or bronze tablets are needed, to convince the sceptics, I am afraid I cannot supply them, as yet, as archaeological discoveries and the engraving or forging of them is not in my line.

CORVO DA BUNKO.

VERY FRANKLY SPEAKING

In a recent edition of the radio programme "Frankly Speaking," the celebrity was Baroness Barbara Wootton. I don't know whether these interviews are unscripted or not, but it seems certain that this one was not. Things had been in progress for about ten minutes and I had been listening in an easy sort of way, when something was said which made me sit up and take notice. It went like this:

Announcer: "About religion. Do you take part in any activities?"

Baroness Wootton: "Oh, no, I have no religious beliefs or any form of belief in the supernatural."

Announcer: "Oh." [He seemed surprised and also shocked.] "Oh, but you haven't always thought like this?"

Baroness Wootton: "Oh, no I was brought up very religiously and retained my beliefs until—let me see—I think I was about twenty. Then I finally discarded them and the older I get"... [here the announcer tried to interrupt but she drowned him out] "...the older I get the more foolish it seems to me are beliefs in heaven and immortality and similar superstitions."

The announcer quickly changed the subject at this point. The

above account may be taken as factually accurate. Barbara Wootton spoke clearly and emphatically and indeed just as if she would have liked the conversation to continue on those lines. But, of course, the announcer headed her off. Congratulations, while I am at it, on the contents and make-up of THE FREETHINKER.

CLIFFORD OAKES.

APPRECIATIONS

I should like to express my appreciation to you for publishing Mr. Avro Manhattan's article "Pius XII: Man of Peace or Ally of Dictators?" It is an admirably crisp and factual indictment of a man who was as far from sainthood as mortal man can be. It is some years ago that I read Joseph McCabe's forthright exposé of Cardinal Pacelli in his book, *The Papacy in Politics Today*, but it left an indelible impression on my mind. A "Pope of Peace" indeed! What a damnable falsification of the truth! It is most refreshing to have Mr. Manhattan's clear-cut recital of the facts.

I know little about Pius's successor, but I entertain the hope that he will be a much better man. From what I have read of him, I think he may well be. What is certain is that he could scarcely be worse.

G. I. BENNETT.

Avro Manhattan's interesting article on the late "Pope of Peace" is relevant and topical. Today, as in the 1930's, many are looking to the Vatican to exercise its political influence (disguised, of course, as "moral guidance") as a "bulwark against Bolshevism."

In pre-Munich days an eminent politician publicly "thanked God" for Hitler, the contemporary "bulwark against Bolshevism." Today's fulsome flattery of the late Pius XII and the reverential allusions to the "spiritual authority" of Rome are political in character.

S. W. BROOKS.

Congratulations to Avro Manhattan on his concise and masterly indictment of Pope Pius XII. Is there in this country or abroad a single admirer of the late Pope with sufficient courage and ability to attempt to answer the indictment?

J. GORDON.

FREEMASONRY

The very few adverse criticisms of my short article on Freemasonry appeared to be a strong dislike of Freemasons helping one another. But isn't this exactly what Trade Unionists, Communists, Catholics, Jews, and many more "closed shops" do?

As for Mr. P. G. Roy's naïve mixture of "mercantile bourgeoisie," "initiation rites" and "puerile reactionary affair"—I prefer to leave him and them severely alone.

H. CUTNER.

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