

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Sir,—“It is impossible,” writes Mr. P. Campbell, “in my opinion, to determine a significant correlation between science and religion.” What are his proofs? First, science is atheistic—“it knows nothing of God . . . does not bother about God; its triumphs are achieved by leaving God out of account.” If this statement is to have any force as an argument it must be shown that science compels disbelief in God, that a scientist cannot believe in God. In fact, science does nothing of the kind, but it leaves God out of account in its methods because it would be improper from science's own principles to do otherwise. Science deals only with sensible matter. Secondly, a certain number of scientists in a certain year did not believe in God. The survey proved that and nothing more. There is no evidence that science compelled disbelief, that the scientists who were atheists and agnostics had ever thought about the problem or considered the proofs for God's existence. To prove that “it is impossible to determine a significant correlation between science and religion,” it is essential to show at least that the proofs and evidence for God's existence are, if not fallacious, improbable.

Dick Southon writes at length on reasons why “the religious outlook commits itself to belief without analysis. Clearly, religious faith is not accepted by a conscious process of reasoning.” What does he mean by this? What does he mean by faith? If he means that religion depends wholly on faith and not reason, then he dismisses Augustine, Aquinas, Barth and Maritain. If he means portions of religious belief depend on faith, what are those portions? His suggestions for an exploration of subconscious forces as a basis for East-West understanding are too lacking in substance to appeal to those most hard-headed rationalists, the Christian philosophers.

The talks in the series *Where Science and Faith Meet* may be criticised, I think, on these grounds: This question has already been discussed at length and Christians no longer believe there is a conflict nor do many scientists; other more vital issues merit discussion (e.g., are there absolute values, morality and tolerance, Christian dogma in a democracy?); too many of the speakers rely on proving God's existence by experience alone, which will not do for atheists and agnostics, rather than by reason plus experience. Only those ten years behind the times see a live controversy in this issue. M.F. McI. (Gisborne).

Sir,—When scientists have discovered all the universe has to offer they will still have God to contend with. There is no conflict between science and religion, as scientists are only finding out what God already knows.

T.J.P. (Hawera):

Sir,—Your correspondent P. Campbell quotes with evident approval Auguste Comte's statement that science is “conducting God to its frontiers.” A more realistic statement in our own intimidating age might be that men, denying God, and using the weapons which science has put at their disposal, are conducting themselves to the frontiers of existence.

Until scientists can see the larger framework within which their real but limited values can be set, we are all in jeopardy. The scientific method, so successful in its own field, can no more discover this larger framework than a colorimeter can evaluate a sunset, or a nuclear weapon choose its own target.

N.Z. LISTENER, JUNE 11, 1954.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Another faculty is needed before this larger framework, which can set life in its true setting, can be apprehended, the faculty of faith—not faith as an abstract quality, but faith as a human response to a God who reveals Himself in Jesus Christ. Faith is as appropriate to this all important task as the inductive method is to the more limited field of science.

One marvels at the credulity of those who, finding that a key fits one lock, declare that it must fit all locks. One hardly knows whether to laugh or weep at the pathetic spectacle of little man supposedly conducting the God who made him to the frontiers of His own world. SELWYN DAWSON (Takapuna).

SPELLING OF WHANGAREI

Sir,—As one born in Whangarei and a grandson of one of the first settlers, James Main, I am interested in this controversy. The first rate book and ledger of Whangarei have been in my family's possession since 1868, and record relevant matters since 1850. The old official books give different spellings on different dates to 1868. Until 1866 rates were paid to the WANGAREI Highway Trust, in 1867 to the WHANGAREI Trust, and in 1868 to the WANGAREI Trust—the last entry. The ledger also records that the WANGAREI Highway Trustees in 1862 used a room for their meetings in the WHANGAREI hotel, and paid 2/6 room hire. So there are three different forms of spelling in the old official ledger, whether by mistake or otherwise.

My grandparents, who settled in Whangarei in the early 1850s, always spelt it WANGAREI, but, like the early missionaries, pronounced it WONG-A-REE. My father, who spoke Maori fluently, told me the correct Maori pronunciation of Whangarei is FONG-AH-RAY. ALEX MAIN (Remuera).

Sir,—A. H. Reed, of Dunedin, asks: “. . . If WHANGAREI is correct, how explain the phonetic spelling of the early missionaries—WANGARE?” I have often wondered if anyone could explain the “phonetic” spelling of the early missionaries. Their spelling certainly gives one no clue to the correct pronunciation of Maori place names. It appears to be a law unto itself. In the first edition of Captain Cook's journal his spellings of Maori place names, as they sounded to him, are much nearer the mark. If they had been adopted many horrible distortions would have been avoided.

It is the same with Chinese place names and other words. The arbitrary spelling of the early missionaries there gives us pronunciations which are very wide of the mark. For instance, in Mandarin (the official language of China from the Manchu conquest until the end of the Empire in 1911) Peking is pronounced BAYJING, Moa Tse Tung is MOW DZER DUNG, and Chiang Kai Shek is GEEANG KAI SHEK.

ARPAD SZIGETVARY (Auckland).

NEW ZEALAND CHEESE

Sir,—I thoroughly enjoy Dr. Turbott's talks and think they should be very helpful, but I am afraid he is starting at the wrong end of the stick in this matter of eating more cheese. Why is cheese so much less popular? I can tell you why, because it is a horrid soaplike acid article, and not fit for human consumption.

I have been a cheesemaker in a community where it graded highest among

superlative cheese makers “in the good old days,” so I know what I am talking about, you must admit. In those days we had a pride in our work. Today cheese is hustled and it will not stand these tactics; it is a temperamental product, highly affected by many factors—weather, cleanliness and temperature in the factory. Ask any old-time cheesemaker and he will say that that is why New Zealand cheese has deteriorated. It is the reason why our English market is restive, when they can import a quality they prefer from Denmark and Canada. I heard a radio talk recently on this subject, which showed that the English are at last awake to the fact that they are being held up to ransom, and they are urging their own farmers to resort to home manufacture, where they can produce the world's very best cheddar, and where conditions are not subject to these rush tactics.

It is the women of English farms who turn out superlative cheese. I learnt the business on a model dairy farm under the supervision of the Somerset County Council and we two women helped farm wives around the district with demonstrations. Our hard-working farmer-employer saw to it that the conditions of the cowshed produced the best quality milk worthy of our efforts.

Our farm dairy was typical of many in the Southern Counties, and whilst we could only turn out one 60-70lb. cheese daily from our own herd, we knew the conditions of our product from start to finish; that is what the factories can never know, and why they must treat the milk they receive in drastic fashion before they start to turn it into cheese. It only needs one flick of a dirty cow tail to ruin the cheese from a whole herd; so co-operation is required from everyone concerned.

By all means let us continue with our expensive dairy research, and Massey College bursaries for students; but, believe me, it is the not-so-humble farm worker, be it owner or hired hand, on whom the product really depends.

I. F. COOPER (Katikati).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

THE DESCRIPTIVE ATLAS

Sir,—As yet another ex-worker on the deceased Historical Atlas, and therefore slightly acquainted with some of the problems of atlas making, I am awed by the optimism of the team undertaking to produce the new Descriptive Atlas. It is particularly impressive as two important members, the editor and the writer of the letterpress, have other jobs already, and will be working on their atlas only part-time. Granted that they are confining their attention to the economic aspects of New Zealand's development, omitting all the Maori and purely historical matter that the Historical Atlas included, they still have an unwieldy task before them. Most of the Historical Atlas work that comes within the field of the Descriptive Atlas, e.g., population and economic maps, will, on the latter's proposed page size, be unusable, so they will have to start from scratch. Of course, it can be urged that for small-scale maps accuracy does not matter, and rough approximations can be quickly produced—but are such maps really worth doing?

Certainly there is a large need felt in many homes and schools, let alone universities, for good geographical maps of New Zealand, and presumably the Descriptive Atlas would attempt these. But again there is the question of size. A good geographical map of either island needs to be over two feet long, and cut-

ting the islands up on several pages lessens the effective showing of relief, communications, etc. The Lands and Survey Department in their recently-issued sheets of the North and South Islands on the scale of 1:1,000,000 have already provided a most useful map. The social science bulletins of the School Publications Branch, produced by authors already possessing special knowledge of their subjects, will in time cover many of the fields proposed for the Descriptive Atlas. Would it not be better to widen the facilities of these existing institutions, and make their work more easily available to the public, rather than to embark on another atlas voyage? FRANCES PORTER (Wellington).

A RECENT “LISTENER”

Sir,—Your May 21 issue deserves special praise. Thank you for printing Alan Mulgan's fine poem, “Late Bliss.” Thank you for James Bertram's model review of Antony Alpers's magnificent book on Katherine Mansfield. Thanks for the editorial on the issues raised, concerning our responsibilities towards our artists. Thanks for Sundowner's “Axe and Knife,” cutting nearer the bone than usual. And thank you for Dr. Scholefield's review of a century of Parliamentary government.

In all these contributions a quiet conservatism which I have frequently found irritating, amply justifies itself: there is sense and sensibility without sentimentality, pride and dignity without jingoism or hauteur.

ANTON VOGT (Lowry Bay).

POETRY IN NEW ZEALAND

Sir,—To Mr. J. C. Reid, ten for urbanity, and nine for good sense. Now perhaps is the time to say that far from demanding unreasonable attention in his review I was struck dumb with joy to be mentioned at all. For a minuscule poet such as myself, it was like a draught of heady wine. I merely wanted to ask what he meant. He has now made himself clear, and I thank him for this service. May a suitable Muse guard him.

BRUCE MASON (Wellington).

“BORIS GODOUNOV”

Sir,—In connection with the correspondence on *Boris Godounov* it is interesting to note that, according to the *World's Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* (second supplement) the recent Bolshoi Theatre recording is still based on the Rimsky-Korsakov version, apart from a solitary scene from Moussorgsky's original. So we would appear to be back where we started.

INTERESTED (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

L.S. (Waipukurau).—Many thanks. V. C. Funnell (Wellington) and *Pure Water* (Queenstown).—Your letters have appeared elsewhere.

Weather-Conscious (Nelson).—Different officers at different times. Under close consideration.

Dorothy Smith (Christchurch).—(1) In the fairly near future; you will be advised. (2) “Original music composed and conducted by Sidney Torch” for the serial; no other titling.

Regular Listener (Riccarton).—March, 1953-1954; Auckland 17, Wellington 28, Christchurch 4, Dunedin 4, National Contest 3, and Patea, Hawera and Levin 1 each.

Play and Serial Fan (Raumati).—(1) With all respect, many do say Wai-ra-rapa and not Wire-rapa or Weirapa. What can be done to correct the mispronunciation has been done. There is no absolute safeguard of the microphone against common error. (2) Such collisions or overlaps are avoided, so far as they can be, by correlation of YA, VC, and XD programmes. In practice it is not possible to extend the correlation to ZE without multiplying difficulties.