

CROSSES, CROWNS & SOVEREIGNTY

1. Christians get so used to the Cross that its symbolic power may escape them. It was a healthy reminder to Christians when some time ago a non-Christian protested against wearing a badge with the Queen's crown upon it because it was topped by the Cross.

The narrow issues I'll ignore here, but there are aspects of much wider interest and importance.

2. What *actually* tops Elizabeth's crown is not a cross but a ball-and-cross. That's very different! The ball is not a symbol of football, tennis or snooker, but of the WORLD.

3. This globe-and-cross (or 'orb' as it is called) indicates the sovereignty of Christ the Lord over the world. The symbol of Elizabeth's sovereignty - her crown - comes deliberately *under it*. This indicates the authority *under* whom she acts and *to whom* she is answerable.

4. I can understand a non-Christian disliking the Christian Coronation of 1953. But no non-Christian can re-write that particular bit of history - there were too many witnesses!

5. Tyrants do their own thing - as the newspapers so regularly tell us, and feel answerable to no one but themselves. There is no check upon them. In contrast, the orb symbolises a check on the Queen's sovereignty – she rules 'under God' who is 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords'. She is not free to misuse her power; she cannot be a tyrant.

6. To remove the symbol of the orb from Elizabeth's crown would make it a symbol of a secular monarchy, and would deny her specifically Christian Coronation.

7. One does not have to be a Christian to appreciate a society which is committed to freedom from religious persecution. This is just one sign of the attempt to model the kingdom on the Kingdom of God – with mercy as well as the justice.

8. Religious freedom seems in world-wide decline. I sincerely hope the protester always lives in a country in which he and his family may enjoy it.

I do not share his protest, but his freedom to do so matters greatly to me. His freedom from religious persecution is something that I am privileged to share, and I value it very greatly.