

FREETHINKER

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THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

ONE OF THE CURIOUS FACTS that Secularists have to accept is that, in the official Anglican view, no matter what non-Christians do, be it feeding the pigeons or throwing themselves into a burning building to rescue somebody else's children, their actions have "the nature of sin" because they are made without faith in the biblical "Christ". This is Article No. 13 of the 39, which contain what the Anglican Church holds to be a fair scriptural account of the leading doctrines of Christianity, together with the condemnation of what she considers to be the principal errors of the Church of Rome and of certain Protestant sects.

In the reign of Edward VI there were 42 articles. In 1562, under Elizabeth and Archbishop Parker, four of the articles were dropped. The remaining 39 have not been revised for more than 300 years, but Anglicans are just getting round to thinking about it. The Articles are, even we can see, a considerable embarrassment to the Church, and its only hope is that not many people know about them.

Until 1865 every clergyman was required to acknowledge before his ordination and again before each induction "all and every Article . . . to be agreeable to the Word of God" which, I suppose, makes them feel very important. Knowing what is "agreeable" to an "Almighty" is quite something. It's not always easy to know what is agreeable to one's husband or offspring. This "assent" was also required of every member of Oxford and Cambridge universities until the mid-19th century, and, as can be imagined, many rationalists objected strongly. Today clergymen are still required to give a "general assent", as indeed (by Canon Law) are all members of the Church of England, and "with a good conscience".

Individual clergymen protest now and again, referring to the Articles as "a fossil imbedded in the Constitution of the C of E". But, protesting or not, they still have to "assent". Perhaps it is better to say, "I don't really believe everything you do is wicked" before saying "I do believe everything you do is wicked . . ."; or is it?

In June 1966 the Dean-elect of King's College, Cambridge (the Rev David Edwards), who is also Editor of the SCM Press, said in his sermon that:

"The continuance of the clergy's obligation to assent in the articles is an unseemly farce which damages the good repute of the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments and mocks the consciences of most Christian laymen."

he went on:

"The end of compulsory assent would not alter the theological position of the Church of England as this really is. But it would alter the Church's image . . ."

This is hard for a Secularist to follow. Does it mean that the "leading doctrines" are the same as ever, but it would be better for publicity if the "image" gave a different impression, have all those doctrines about "justification" (faith), "Romish doctrines", "salvation" and so on, really changed? Or, is it that the clergy don't believe them anyway. Presumably what is most important is not how *true* the doctrines are but how Anglicanism can be made palatable . . . Like the Roman Catholics who have decided that their image of Index and dictatorship in mixed marriages is unattractive to outsiders and so have changed the "image" without seriously altering the facts of censorship or dictatorship, the Anglicans are faced with much the same problems.

"At present" the Rev David Edwards said, "sophisticated people know that any clergyman of the C of E is allowed to disagree with the articles". (Or, to put it differently, cynics know that Anglican clergymen are prepared to swear to a lot of things they don't believe.) "I have never concealed my own disagreements", he continued, but he still, we presume, *said* that he agreed. "A man contemplating ordination has to be told about this oath which would be required of him at one of the most solemn moments in his life . . ." (Well, at least they don't blindfold the ordinand, threaten him with a noose and a dagger, and force him to take an oath he has never even heard before, as do the Freemasons . . .) "A new rector or vicar has to mislead his most innocent parishioners into believing that his teaching will be based on the Articles . . ." (*Has to mislead?* But why . . .?) "And this assent seems dishonest" finishes the Dean. One can only gasp; surely this just *is* dishonest, and that's all there is to it? And these are the men who earn their living by teaching others how to live, and who recommend Christian ethics as the basis for morality. The Dean admitted that the Articles "give a picture of God whose ethics were lower than those of earthly fatherhood . . ."; a god who is "a monster whose 'justice' must be appeased by a sacrifice before he will be reconciled . . ." and his God isn't like that at all, or rather it's a rotten image for a Church that is losing its grip. When rationalists said those sort of things about the Christian God, they were, of course, blaspheming . . . In fact the Dean echoes many of our own arguments against the orthodox God, and thinks he can settle the matter by throwing out the Articles as so much junk. The Creed, the Prayer Book and the

INSIDE

- WINDOW ON THE WORLD *Otto Wolfgang*
 HOW I BECAME A HUMANIST *Margaret Oakley*
 OBJECTION TO DETENTION CENTRES *Mary Iles*
 MEDIAEVAL CHURCH AND STATE
F. H. Amphlett Micklewright
 CENTENARY RALLY AT NORTHAMPTON
 NEWS AND NOTES : LECTURE NOTICES : LETTERS

Bible, he believes, provide "enough authoritative material to stimulate and guide the dialogues between the old and the new in the Anglican conscience". But surely most Anglicans have got rid of those old "fossils" too? All three have been roundly condemned by eminent Anglicans at one time or another.

It is, perhaps, not the Secularists who are left in a vacuum without a religion, even if we ever had one to

lose. It is those Christians who cannot see that if you throw away the skeleton of a dinosaur in 1966 you are left with nothing at all. And for a mind that has been fuddled with this sort of self-deception and faith-defence, Secular-Humanism is too demanding an alternative. In the meantime the Christians cling to their symbol of the cross; they must understand why we are tempted to suggest that perhaps it ought to be a double-cross.

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

Otto Wolfgang

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A JEW is no laughing matter in Israel, as Binyamin Gettye, 28, a "Black Jew" from the Falasha tribe of Ethiopia, found out. Since 1868, when the Falasha (who have considered themselves good Jews for 2,900 years) were "discovered" by a Turkish Jewish philologist, they have been suspected by the orthodox factions of having transgressed the Jewish law of consanguinity, which prevents certain marriages on more or less magical grounds. In fact, the 30,000 Falashas who call themselves *Beita Israel* (House of Israel), are so strict that even a visit to an "unbeliever's" house requires washing and change of clothing. (*Newsweek*, May 9th.) On Sabbath eve all fires are put out, and from then onwards until the end of the Sabbath all work, sexual intercourse, circumcision of children and burial of the dead are strictly prohibited. Yet despite their strict devotion, the rabbinical authorities in Israel refuse to recognise them as Jews.

When Gettye the Falasha wanted to marry Rachel Aboud, of Egyptian-Syrian parentage, he was told that Israeli law forbids unions between Jews and non-Jews. He married, nonetheless, without a rabbi, in a private ceremony, and has now petitioned Israel's High Court of Justice to force the rabbis to register his application to marry. "In Ethiopia I suffered as a Jew"—he wrote—"and here in Israel I still suffer as a Jew."

God is not a Democrat

In a Whitsun letter read in all the churches of the Diocese of Hertogenbosch (Holland) clergy and laity alike were asked to let the cathedral chapter know whom they wanted to have as their next Bishop. The Papal Nuncio has expressed his disquiet of such a move in "holy orders".

Questioned whether RC ethics permitted tax evasion, Msgr Lambruschini, Professor of Moral Theology at the Lateran University, answered in the affirmative, in view of the fact that the Italian State now considers taxing even Holy Mother Church.

"So long as such a system exists, no moral code can demand that the taxpayer makes declarations which would be at his disadvantage." (*Spiegel* No. 7, 1965.)

Celibacy in the Modern Church

is on the downgrade, despite the Pope's frantic struggle. Where there is a serious shortage of priests in Brazil, married men between 30 and 40 will in future be eligible for ordination as part-time Deacons. The Papal Nuncio in Brazil let it be known that the Pope will take part in the International Eucharistic Congress which will be held in Colombia in 1968.

In Detroit—reports *Newsweek* (May 9th)—nine RC priests formed a personnel board to hear complaints from local priests; a similar Ombudsman organization was set up in Chicago, and Father Wm. DuBay from the Los Angeles archdiocese proposed the setting up of a proper trades union in order to bargain collectively with their bishop employer.

Against the Current

When for years, even centuries, Nero, King Charles, and lately Quisling had been considered bad boys, opposing views had to be published; conversely, after the glorification of Churchill, Lord Moran had to try a different tune. And after Hochhuth's accusation, Pope Pius XII now has his turn for whitewashing. Ironically, it is a Jew, ex-Israeli diplomat Pinhas Lapide, who in his book *The Last Three Popes and the Jews* (to be published in Holland) credits Pius with saving 860,000 Jews from the Nazis, because they had been hidden in religious institutions. How the action of individual clerics goes to the late Pope's credit account is even more than Father Leiber, SJ, can explain. When asked by *Look* to comment, this erstwhile private secretary and confidant of Pius XII admits that his boss did not act as forcefully and courageously as he should have done. (*Der Aufbau*, New York, May 6th.)

The same paper reports that, at 74, Sepp Dietrich, SS General of Hitler's personal bodyguard and his most loyal lieutenant, had been allowed to die in freedom, thanks to the intercession of the late Senator McCarthy; the burial was the occasion for a big demonstration of former SS men from Italy, Holland, Germany and, of course, Austria, where at Jennersdorf (Burgenland) the Jewish mass burial ground is now being used as a—rubbish dump. This, reported the Centre of Documentation of the Federation of Nazi Victims, in Vienna, was not the only case of desecration in Austria.

No restrictions on rubbish

No Import Tax seems to have stemmed the flood of bad TV programmes from the US, where broadcasting companies view ratings in connection with stockholders' dividends. In *The Times* (May 18th) Jack Gould, TV critic of the *New York Times*, conceded:

"The central problem of American television is to find the means whereby commerce and culture can coexist on equal footing. At the moment culture is the pliable junior partner of commerce."

To end on a less pessimistic note: According to a poll carried out by the *Catholic Digest*, the number of Americans who describe themselves as atheists has risen from 1½ million in 1952 to 4 million in 1966.

"The Historical Jesus" and "the Christ of the Churches". The former—an invention of the unbelieving (liberal) parson, and the latter—an impossible composite concoction.—"Beyond question, this so-called 'Jesus of History', the 'real' Jesus in distinction from the Jesus of the Church's faith, is a creation of phantasy, the arbitrary invention of the unbeliever. Still, it always remains possible and quite intelligible that men should declare the Figure revealed by (biblical) scholarship to be impossible." (N. Micklem DD, in *The Christian Faith*, p. 180, London, 1936.)

Excerpted by G. S. SMELTERS

HOW I BECAME A HUMANIST

Margaret Oakley

LOOKING BACK in an endeavour to arrange the development of my interest in Humanism into a tidy sequence, I am still amazed at the enormous amount of propaganda and pressure to conform to an accepted religious pattern to which a young person can be subjected in the course of everyday life.

Between the ages of six and twelve, the weekly event to which I looked forward with the greatest pleasure was the Church of England Sunday School run by a retired canon and his wife. This was arranged by people who liked and understood children; furthermore, I had a talent for reading aloud, and, although I said my prayers carefully before going to sleep each night, I was far more impressed by frequent opportunities of reading the lesson and by the necessity of wearing a hat than by any problem of good and evil. Very little occurred to change this state of affairs. My parents were freethinkers, and I aroused only lukewarm interest when I announced portentously that I did not believe in the divinity of Christ. I wanted tangible results from my religious activities, and, since I was not rapidly developing saintly qualities and my prayers were not being answered, I began to think church-going a waste of energy.

At school, I was in a doubter in a nest of Christians, parsons' children, prospective clergymen and missionaries, potential converts to Roman Catholicism. Our preoccupations were religious preoccupations and arguments following the weekly RI lessons were long and bloody. I could not bring myself, other than by "an act of faith", to accept the tenets of Christianity, but I was unable to rid myself of the conviction that the believer, deluded or not, was morally a better person than myself. Unselfishness, self-discipline, concern for other people's troubles, were firmly associated with Christian views, and at this stage it was impossible to separate the one from the other.

University is supposed to transport the teenager into a new world. Intellectually, this world is as new as one cares to make it, but the adventurous possibilities of thought lie side by side with narrow and unbending ways of life, especially for women students. A number of notes on the newcomer's letter-rack invited her to participate in every kind of religious activity. It was impossible to ignore the Student Christian Movement and its solemn pronouncements and judgments on every aspect of college life. But I had seen it all before, and soon dropped out of the supper-parties and discussions which seemed to attract like a magnet the lonely and the ill-at-ease, who had found no other set or niche for themselves in student life.

Isolation

The majority of people with this kind of experience find themselves spiritually alone at an early stage in life. We enjoy the company of others of our own age-group, and only the most self-contained are unconcerned at an inability to subscribe to the accepted rituals of life in the community. Nineteen is an early age at which to solve the problems of the world and of one's own philosophy, but the energy and curiosity of youth force one to make the attempt. I had been instinctively attracted by the thinkers, the writers who asked questions rather than by the poets. "Where do we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?" asked Voltaire. While we believe in God, everything can be explained in some way through its

relationship to the divinity. The absence of a God forces the doubter back to the basis of things, and here a process of hard thinking begins; nothing can be taken for granted, each step must be tested before we dare to advance an inch, we cannot express an opinion without having tried the experience itself on our own pulse, no secondhand view must ever be accepted. The self-imposed self-education of the agnostic is a course in philosophy in itself, and many of us advance through the same processes of thought before a chance word or a book or an advertisement brings us into actual contact with other Humanists.

I finally became a Humanist when I clarified two problems which now ceased to bewilder me. My brief experience of life had made it difficult for me to divide ethical behaviour from Christianity. I looked at this problem objectively, starting from my dislike of the Christian assumption that virtuous acts on this earth are performed in the expectation of a reward hereafter. This explained the cool kindness of many Christians with whom I was acquainted, and the feeling that they were being kind on principle, with little thought for the essential human importance of the person with whom they were dealing. Surely acts carried out on a basis of respect for the humanity of man were preferable to a preoccupation with the kind of status one might attain in Heaven.

Mutual Aid

My second clarification concerned the Cavaliers and the Roundheads. Could they never sit down at table together? Must colour, music, gaiety of spirit, appreciation of the beautiful, be forever divided from a serious view of life, the wish to serve the community, to improve conditions of existence? Must unhappiness and self-denial be the laws of virtue? Any worthwhile course of life, I decided, must, in great part, be based on service to one's fellow human-beings; but this should not be allowed to preclude grace and responsiveness to all that the outward world has to offer.

Apart from this, there probably never was a definite conversion. I had consciously decided both to allow morality to stand on its own feet apart from conventional religion, and to integrate what seemed to be the two incompatible parts of my own personality into one person—myself. It was a discovery of my own identity, and, at some point during this period, I saw an advertisement in the *New Statesman* which led me towards people of like experiences and like minds.

[Next week Michael Gray who is in his twenties ends the series "How I Became a Atheist".]

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY
SEVENTH AND LAST IN THE SERIES OF CENTENARY LECTURES ON
THE MEANING AND VALUE OF FREETHOUGHT
FREETHOUGHT AND THE ARTS
OSWELL BLAKESTON PETER COTES
JOHN CALDER DONALD OGDEN STEWART
CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, WC1
FRIDAY, AUGUST 5th, 7.30 p.m.

NEWS AND NOTES

ONCE AGAIN Secularists owe a debt of gratitude to Miss Brigid Brophy, who has so admirably continued to state and defend our opposition to the government's proposals to increase the subsidy to church schools. Her letters to the *Times* emphasised that "most unbelievers would strenuously resist any attempt to suppress the churches' freedom to preach their message and the parents' freedom to take their children to hear it . . . on the 174 non-school days a year. But what", she asked, "entitles the churches to get their job (as they conceive it) done for them by public employees on public premises . . . ? What entitles sectarian parents to lay their fellow citizens under levy for 80 per cent of the cost of schools where their sectarian children are kept segregated from the presumably contaminating influence of the children of their fellow citizens?" The *Catholic Herald* pays Miss Brophy the compliment of reporting "A Skirmish on Schools" ignoring these vital points and concentrating on the futile reference made by Angus Maude (and others) who thought they could justify injustice by calling secularists "monstrous", denying that segregation exists, and calling the Secularist protest a "delightful Victorian period piece". But there is, of course, in democratic terms, no answer to our protest that they could produce. What is sad is that no support seems to have come from the BHA; but then, I suppose, if one is busy with a dialogue with one's opponents, it is extremely hard to step back and protest at their behaviour.

Clergyman speaks up for the rights of Humanists

IN A BBC TV programme from Plymouth on July 12th, the Rev Ronald Adkins, MA (while speaking for the Cosmo Group), said that whereas Christians seem usually to want only religious broadcasts, many listeners and viewers are not Christians and have just as much right to their own programmes. The Humanists, Agnostics and Atheists he knew, said the rector, were willing for there to be religious programmes, so long as they, too, had the freedom of the air. Well said, Mr Adkins, and thank you . . .

On the other hand

THE *Western Evening Herald* excelled itself in an editorial, with

"Under the leadership of the Pope, the world trend towards Christian unity has hitherto achieved impressive progress. . . . The lesson from all efforts so far . . . is that other faiths, although of course not so good as our own, are not necessarily wrong. Those whose ideals are high enough should therefore be respected as moral partners."

Such "respect", however, only extends to those whose "faith" is religious rather than rational, and a Humanist reports that the paper refuses to report the activities of the local Humanist Group.

The pity of it all . . . ?

WHEN THE BBC announced that Queen Fabiola was at last expecting a baby, they mentioned that she had recently been to Rome to pray for an heir. When the sad news came that she had had another miscarriage, no more was heard about the prayers. Is it really the duty of the Corporation to advertise by implication a method of promoting fertility and then fail to admit failure of the method? The Brighton *Evening Argus* reported a recent outing for fifty-one thalidomide children and a small boy who asks why he has only one leg. "I have to tell him", the mother explained, "that God gave it to another little boy who needed it more. Perhaps this is the wrong attitude, but how can you explain to a child of five . . . ?"

Secular-Humanists may feel that such an explanation would be lethal to any faith in a loving deity, but what could we say that might not equally destroy faith in man?

Honesty rarely the best policy in our Christian country . . .
IN AN ARTICLE ON ADOPTION in the *Sunday Times* (July 17th) Hugo Young reported that, in choosing adoptive parents, "Orthodoxy seems to be the cardinal virtue, and religious belief its surest touchstone. . . . 'I wish people weren't so aggressively honest', said the head of one Church of England agency: 'I've had so many excellent prospects who can only with difficulty be persuaded not to put down agnostic on their application . . .'. A London society, handling all sorts of children, replied: 'If you cut out idealists you cut out at least half the best adoptors.'"

War as a disease

THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF WAR has just held its annual conference at Oxford, to study the *causes* of war. Psychiatrist Dr Ismond Rosen said,

"Deprivation of security and the opportunity for harmonious development are the sources of a psychological defence system in both nations and individuals. These lead to systems dominated by suspicion, to the projection of responsibility on to another, and the maintenance of repressive legislation and the establishment of false ideals and racial supremacy. For a while these mechanisms contain the situation, but then violence breaks through."

Another of the association's approaches to the war problem has been through

"the study of animal warfare, ritual war in primitive societies, the 'holy' war or *jihad* and the theory of the just war originating with St. Augustine in Western Christendom."

There was also a paper on patriotism as a war-causing factor.

Meanwhile the war goes on

EVEN THOSE who are not in sympathy with anarchy can find the weekly *Freedom* refreshing to read amid the howls of the anti-Americans and anti-Communists. On June 18th Jeff Robinson wrote,

"Most of the opposition to the Vietnam war in this country . . . seems to think that the Vietcong and North Vietnamese are morally superior to the Americans and South Vietnamese. At first sight they seem to have a case. All the horror weapons . . . are employed by the Americans. But does anyone seriously believe that if the Vietcong possessed napalm, 'joy bombs', 'lazy dog', etc., they would refrain from using them on moral grounds, if to use them was to their military advantage? . . . It seems that the only choice facing the South Vietnamese is a corrupt, right-wing, coca-cola dictatorship with (once the fighting stops) a small degree of liberty or else a guaranteed two bowls of rice a day and the completed regimentation of Communism."

Mr Robinson attributed the failure of the campaign against the Vietnam war and the anti-nuclear movement in this country to their "blatant absence of impartiality".

Tribute to "Vicky"

THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL was crowded with more than 3,000 people for the memorial concert to Victor Weisz, the cartoonist, who felt so deeply that the British government had failed in its duty against the Vietnam war, that he ended his own life. Mr Michael Foot, MP, quoted Heinrich Heine, the Rationalist poet, "I was a soldier in the war for the liberation of humanity . . ." Vicky, he said, "was a soldier in the same army".

Curious casting . . .

"STRIKE A LIGHT" at the Piccadilly theatre, the second musical this year dealing with the 1888 strike of the Matchgirls, is continuing in spite of poor reviews and rumours to the contrary. It is difficult to imagine Evelyn Laye as Annie Besant. So long as the winter doesn't bring us "Tom Paine on Ice" . . .

OBJECTION TO DETENTION CENTRES

Mary Iles

"Detention Centre discipline appears to have no obvious purpose except perhaps to break the will of the offender" (Friends' Evidence to the Royal Commission).

"79 per cent Reconviction rate" (Advice to Magistrates, 1964.)

IF FRIENDS' EVIDENCE, and Home Office statistics are true, can Detention Centres any longer be tolerated?

So far Detention Centres have been pushed into the background of our Penal Reform consciousness: partly because the numbers concerned (4,700 per year) seemed comparatively small; partly because most Friends, not having had army experience, don't really understand what the disciplinary punishment entails; and partly because, even in our Society, there is such a fear of aggression, when it means aggressive lads, that reactions become irrational.

Since the publication of the White Paper, however, Detention Centres have become a matter of much more immediate urgency, because this punishment is now to be imposed on any 16-21 year old, aggressive or not, who receives a custodial sentence of up to 6 months.

When some gentle Quaker Magistrate sends a lad to a Detention Centre, what happens to him?

In 1962, a nineteen year old member of CND was sent to New Hall Detention Centre, Wakefield. My husband and I visited him there and have questioned him since, because he is a person whose word we can trust. He says that: the circuit training was so severe that boys used to black out—about 9 boys in the first week—they were put under the shower and back on PT again. Boys near the end of the course were set on to "knock around" a newcomer, e.g., banging his head on the floor during dress-ups, or throwing him against wall bars.

Because our CND friend refused to "knock round" a newcomer, he was himself thrown against the wall bars by officers. His knee was injured, so that he had to have 7 days in sick bay, and 14 days "light duties". There was no proper doctor, only an officer who had taken a 1-3 month course in Pentonville.

There were 4-5 attempts per month at suicide (e.g. by swallowing razor blades).

In addition to the extremely rigorous and repressive régime, punishments are given for any little thing, fatigues of up to two hours, for laying out equipment incorrectly, or omitting to say "Sir".

Complaints to Visiting Magistrates can only be voiced in the hearing of an officer. Our friend heard a lad complain about an officer's bullying conduct. He was told it would be "looked into". Nothing was done and the officer took it out on the lad.

Another lad, sentenced for petty thieving, reported to us about Buckley Hall Detention Centre, Rochdale, 1964.

In the first 5 minutes of Reception he was thumped in the face, "I'm the boss, do as I say". PT was extreme, to the limit of endurance, the officers "looking glad when you were in pain". Bullying was encouraged by the officers, and lads were set on to newcomers. The officers treated you as if you "were something that had crawled out from under the stones".

In the latest Home Office sponsored survey (*Young Men in Detention Centres*, Dunlop and McCabe 1965), a quoted

comment on the officers is "They treat you like animals, and expect you to treat them like gentlemen". Some comments on the circuit training are:

"It is cruel for those not used to it." "It sends you daft." "It is impossible for the weak." "It is too much for my offences."

The truth of such experiences will not, I think, be seriously questioned by anyone who has any behind-the-scenes knowledge; but on talking to such people, including Friends, I have found that they push aside the matter because of the difficulties and dangers encountered in deterring aggressive lads.

How aggressive, in fact is the Detention Centre population now, even before the all-inclusive White Paper legislation comes into effect?

According to this last Home Office sponsored Survey, out of 107 Detention Centre inmates, only 18 were sentenced for any kind of violence; and of these 18, only two were sentenced for serious offences. The remaining 89 were sent to Detention Centres for "dishonesty", "taking and driving away", "driving while disqualified". The officers described the typical inmate as "immature, uncertain, badly brought up, stupid".

Therefore clearly the people subjected to the Detention Centre punishment were not at the time of their conviction, of the aggressive type.

That they left the Centre full of violent and resentful feelings is no argument for Detention Centres; yet this repressive punishment is now to be legally extended, without even the pretence of discrimination.

Magistrates may perhaps think, when sentencing that between Prison and Detention Centre, Detention Centre is the lesser evil. Prison is grim enough, but it does less damage to the personality. The inventors of the Detention Centre régime realised this when they wrote (HMSO, April 1964), "The intention of Detention Centres is primarily deterrent. The object is to stretch the offender to the limit of his ability. This is *far more taxing* than mere conformity with a strict discipline".

How did we come to introduce such a regressive régime into our penal system? Such a punishment originates from the army, from which three-quarters of the prison service officers come. In 1952 the officers at a borstal for 15-17 years olds asked for the régime to be altered so that it should be solely disciplinarian and punitive, and therefore simpler to organise.

In 1954 a second Detention Centre was opened, this time for 17-21 year olds. The Public was told that this blitzkrieg short, sharp, shock was to be applied only to tough, aggressive thugs. In 1957—a third Detention Centre, 1960—three more. By now, 1965, there are *eighteen*, and the Home Office plans to convert more of the borstals into Detention Centres. The White Paper says there is to be "no change in the organisation and methods of Detention Centres". All this in face of a 79 per cent re-conviction rate. No wonder the Norwegian Parliamentary Committee was "shocked by the military type discipline at British Detention Centres the re-conviction rate being twice as high as at a Norwegian Centre where there is *no* military discipline".

(Continued on page 239)

MEDIAEVAL CHURCH AND STATE

F. H. Amphlett Micklewright

THE RISE OF CHRISTIAN EUROPE by H. R. Trevor Roper (Thames & Hudson, 35s; paper 18s) is the first volume in a series on the history of western civilisation in which a number of attractive future volumes are promised. It is also the first departure of a distinguished historian of the seventeenth and twentieth centuries into the very different world of the Middle Ages. Certainly, it is a book to be commended to the general reader who may not have the opportunity for exact research or the time to devote to larger volumes. Professor Trevor Roper has clearly paid a great deal of attention to the great masters of the period. There are reflections of Sir Ernest Barker on the Crusades, of F. M. Powicke on mediaeval politics and of Dr G. G. Coulton upon the mediaeval church. The result is a book which provides a general sweep of the centuries commencing with Charlemagne and ending with the fifteenth century. A series of first-rate illustrations accompany the text and bring it to life.

Mediaeval heritage

Too often, the student of later periods or the secular humanist is apt to overlook the legacy of the Middle Ages. Yet he does so at his peril. Continental legal systems can be properly understood only in the light of Roman Law as it was finally shaped by Justinian and living on in the barbarian world. Problems of the Near East have their roots in the steady decay of Byzantine bureaucracy after the eleventh century and the consequent falling apart of the East and West typified in the treachery of the fourth crusade. Land law in England even today demands some understanding of feudalism if it is to be properly evaluated. The crusades were an interesting essay in baronial land-grabbing opening the door for the colonialism which followed the discovery of the New World. They marked the development of the Venetian cities with all that this was to mean; opening up new avenues of trade and discovery both material and in the world of ideas.

Modern imperialism had its mediaeval roots. The Protestantism which has shaped modern Europe can be properly understood only against the background of the historic church to which it was a valid reaction. Great movements such as monasticism had their justification in the twelfth century and their nemesis in the fifteenth. The high ancestry of Puritanism is to be found in the Benedictine revival.

Author a Protestant

All of these points—and a great many more—are explored and evaluated through the method adopted by Professor Trevor Roper. He is sympathetic to the mediaeval centuries, seeking to enter into them and understand them. But his studies in Coulton and others who have gone into the details lead him to many valid and valuable criticisms of the mediaeval church and its theology. Professor Trevor Roper is essentially a Protestant. In the world of the Middle Ages, his sympathies are with Wycliffe and the Lollards, with John Huss, with the men whose intellectual restlessness brought about the downfall of feudalism and monasticism as well as ushering in the Renaissance and the Reformation.

It is too often forgotten that the Renaissance was a movement which had its roots in the twelfth century or that the Reformation was itself a movement rather than an event. In England, reform was under way by 1529 and did not reach finality until the settlement of 1662. Pro-

fessor Trevor Roper paints a picture which goes far towards refuting Roman Catholic pictures of history as they have been set forth by such noted partisans as Cardinal Gasquet, Fr Bridgett or other writers favoured in past days by the Catholic Truth Society. The Roman Catholic Church has sought a great deal of modern support by an adroit use of the romanticised mediaevalism of the Romantic Revival of the last century or by the historical gymnastics performed by "Merrie England" writers of the Chesterton-Belloc school of mediaevalists in this. Too often they have escaped criticism merely because the non-Catholic world has lacked a knowledge of the obvious replies provided by competent historians.

Lesson for today

The humanist of today, seeking to understand the historical roots of his present problems, should certainly read Professor Trevor Roper's excellent introduction as he seeks to get his bearings. He will not have wasted his time. If he is to undertake dialogues with the Vatican, he will be in no position to do so unless he has a thorough grasp of the mediaeval scene. Modern views of Papal infallibility call for some understanding of the evolution of mediaeval Papism and the significance of the Conciliar movement. The world of Pope and anti-Pope, of Rome and Avignon, can teach much about the significance of nineteenth and twentieth century reforming movements within the church. Even the contemporary relationship of hierarchy to laity is not without some illumination from the age when a Lord Dacre could build the great priory of Lanercost and then treat it as a weapon in his feudal armoury.

Above all, the church of the Vatican lives throughout the Middle Ages as the symbol of political power, seeking by means of the concept of the two swords to stand beside the Emperor within the two great mutually interlocking dictatorships, that of the sacred and that of the secular. For mediaeval Europe, the Vatican meant an authoritarian and totalitarian power. It means exactly the same today. The freethinker of the twentieth century can do far worse than to step aside for one moment from a pre-occupation with his problems in the present in order to trace out their roots with Professor Trevor Roper in the world of the past. For this reason, we commend his book very highly to our readers.

Common Atheism: Both the god Yahweh of the Bible and the God of the philosophical theists do not exist, i.e., are nowhere at all.—"Schleiermacher (1768-1834) insists that the 'being there' of God has no continuous connection with the 'being there' of the data of Science and of Morality. As I pointed out in Chapter I, it is taken for granted that the data of Science and, in some sense, the data of Morality exist, i.e. 'are there'. Consequently, existence ('being there') is judged in accordance with this norm. But the existence of God is specifically excluded from any sort of continuity with this norm. So God (the God of Theism) must be taken for granted as not existing. Apologetic difficulties about the God of the Bible and Christianity have combined with ontological difficulties about talk about such a God to produce ontological impossibility. God does not, and cannot, exist." (D. Jenkins Chaplain, *The Queen's College, Oxford, in his Guide to the Debate about God*, p. 49, London, 1966.)

Excerpted by G. S. SMELTERS

FREETHINKER

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LECTURE NOTICES, ETC

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

- Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.
Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.
Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.
Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

- British Humanist Association, Fourth Annual Conference, City of Leicester College of Education, August 26th-29th. RICHARD HAUSER, MARGARET KNIGHT, JOE SANDERS, MICHAEL NICHOLSON, "Aggression". Details from 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W.8.
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, July 31st, 11 a.m.: RICHARD CLEMENTS, "H. G. Wells and the Making of the Modern Mind".
West Ham and District Branch NSS (Wanstead and Woodford Community Centre, Wanstead Green, E11). Meetings at 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month.
Humanist Letter Network (International): send s.a.e. to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

OBJECTION TO DETENTION CENTRES

(Continued from page 237)

Why is there such an irrational persistence? Is it that the Home Office is afraid of progressing too far ahead of a public opinion affrighted by the bogey of aggressive lads?—a bogey inflated out of all proportion to the total percentage.

If our Quaker witness on aggression is to mean anything, it must be applicable also to aggressive lads. With this minority also, there must be no violent compulsion. Instead there must be some form of treatment that will effect an inward change. Such a treatment would have to counteract whatever aggressions the lad himself had suffered, either from his parents, or lack of parents; from the corporal punishment ridden secondary schools; from early and harsh rough labour.

The Home Office stated in 1960 that it was continuing to build Detention Centres because there had been "no public outcry" against them. We cannot have all our young offenders punished like this.

LET THERE NOW BE A PUBLIC OUTCRY.

Reprinted from evidence in the Quaker Penal Affairs Committee Progress Report, February 1966.

GENTENARY RALLY AT NORTHAMPTON

The National Secular Society centenary celebrations continued with a rally at Northampton on July 17th. It was this Midland town that Charles Bradlaugh, the Society's founder represented in the House of Commons. Members and friends who came from London, Bradford, Manchester, Brighton, Leicester and Birmingham were joined by local supporters, and Northampton Labour Party and Northampton Liberal and Radical Association were officially represented by Mr Eric Littlewood and Mr Graham Knight respectively.

At the luncheon Mr Reginald Paget, QC, MP, proposing a toast to the memory of Charles Bradlaugh said he was proud to be Bradlaugh's successor. Although not himself a Socialist, he said that Bradlaugh had had a considerable influence on the development of British Socialism which derives much of its concern for ethics instead of mere political expediency from him.

Replying, Mr C. Bradlaugh Bonner (President of the World Union of Freethinkers and grandson of Charles Bradlaugh) said we were gathered to honour not only Bradlaugh, but also the men and women of Northampton who had supported him so firmly in his fight. Bradlaugh's personal qualities had also won him many supporters among people who did not share his views on religion.

Mr David Tribe (President of the NSS) proposed a toast to the town and citizens of Northampton. He said that Bradlaugh represented the genuine, radical non-conformist tradition better than Harold Wilson. Labour Councillor R. P. Dilleigh said in reply, that the Bradlaugh campaign, when Northampton set itself against Victorian narrowness and bigotry was the most glorious part of the town's history.

In the afternoon there was a procession to Abington Square where the Bradlaugh statue stands. Floral tributes were laid by representatives of the Rationalist Press Association, Leicester Secular Society, the Thomas Paine Society, Northampton Liberal and Radical Association, Northamptonshire Humanist Group, the Bradlaugh family and the National Secular Society (Executive Committee, Manchester, Marble Arch and Birmingham branches and Brighton members).

After the ceremony, the procession re-formed behind the NSS banner and proceeded to Carnegie Hall where a public meeting was held. David Tribe (chairman) said that the NSS was often described as Victorian in order to disparage us, but a study of the radical struggles and intellectual achievements of the period reveal a Victorian origin as something to be proud of.

Mr Hector Hawton (editor of *The Humanist*) declared that it was an achievement to have survived for 100 years. Despite ecumenism, the most striking feature of the late 20th century is the startling decline of religion everywhere. The Roman Catholic church declares secularism the enemy, and in his opinion "dialogues" with the Roman Catholics were a mistake, as the church was disarming opposition with pleasant words while continuing to hold back social reforms. We must continue to keep our humanism secular.

David Collis (secretary of Northamptonshire Humanist Group) said that secularist ideas were highly relevant today in achieving the reform of antiquated laws and removing unnecessary fears. Secularism has now a new rôle—in furthering world government to which religion is an obstacle.

Professor Walter Arnstein of Roosevelt University, Chicago, and author of *The Bradlaugh Case*, said that Bradlaugh always saw freethinking as a means to an end for social reform. He was proud of Northampton's radical tradition, its honesty and educational progress, and that Bradlaugh was not forgotten in the town.

Dr David Kerr, MP, the final speaker, described Bradlaugh as a great political prophet. His pioneer work for the birth control movement was of great importance. Dr Kerr went on to say that today we are still failing to deal with the problem of birth control on an individual level. The World Health Organisation has been prevented by Roman Catholic pressure from assisting the development of family planning, and because of the Organisation's success in preventing death from epidemic diseases it has now created terrible social problems. In our society sexual titillation has been divorced from sexual gratification. We need a new attitude to sexual relationships which should be seen as part of human relationships. Today, social pressures are making for the isolation of the individual. Families are broken up as the result of housing shortages and labour mobility. Leisure activities tend to be derisive and competitive. Violence is growing, and the acceptance of violence by the community is equally disturbing. Improved methods of communication between individuals are necessary, and here secularism has much to contribute.

The rally was widely reported, and next day there were three items on BBC Midland radio and television programmes.

LETTERS

Detention Centres

WITH REFERENCE to your July 1st editorial, about reforming social injustice: "that this is much better left in the hands of the Howard League for Penal Reform", I would point out that these hands *must be supplied with evidence*, without it they cannot build up a case strong enough to impress the Home Office. This is especially true as regards the social injustice of Detention Centres—very few people seem to know what goes on there, and yet, if nothing is done, all young offenders with short custodial sentences will very soon be sent to Detention Centre to "learn their lessons": of violence.

Secular-Humanists are vitally needed:

1. To obtain evidence from *truthful* ex-Detention Centre inmates. [My evidence so far is from New Hall, Wakefield; Buckley Hall, Rochdale, and Medomsley, Consett, Co. Durham, 1965.]
2. To endeavour to visit their nearest D.C., having first obtained permission from the Commissioners to "communicate with the inmates *out of sight and hearing of officers*", and obtain evidence.
3. To press the *Home Office* from every known direction, asking for an independent investigation, and, while that is going on, for the Home Office to undertake that:
 - (a) No new Detention Centres should be built;
 - (b) No existing Borstals should be converted into Detention Centres;
 - (c) Courts should be directed against sending any further offenders to D.C.s;
 - (d) The Girls' D.C. should be immediately closed.

Your readers could either act independently, or could send their evidence to me (Mary Iles, 381 Marine Road East, Morecambe, Lancs.); or to the Howard League. If they would be interested in the detailed evidence on Medomsley D.C., I will send it to your paper.

It is of extreme urgency to act before the D.C. section of the White Paper can be implemented.

(Mrs) MARY ILES

Teenage marriage in Italy

POPE PAUL'S DECISION that in exceptional cases boys of 15 or girls of 13 may marry is really not "another attempt on the part of the enforced celibates to make marriage intolerable", as was suggested in July 1st "Notes and News". The exceptional cases are those where a child has been born, and the minimum are regulations preventing a couple who are already parents from making a home for their baby. This is particularly serious in Italy because there a married man with a child is exempt from military service, and recently a man who was supporting his fiancé and their child was threatened with call-up because the girl was legally too young to marry. It is cases like this that the new authorisation is intended to assist.

MARGARET MCILROY

"Old Guard"

IT WAS quite nauseating to read Charlotte Smith's letter in the FREETHINKER (10th June). She writes of "silly attacks on religion". If she doesn't know, then let me tell her that Catholics are fighting tooth and nail to destroy our Protestant Constitution and replace it with their own, and they don't regard that as silly, but as a "must". And, enlightened people know what the result would be. My opinion is that the Humanist element should remain as they were, the "separated brethren"!

Finally, I dislike the new lay-out of the FREETHINKER, and am not the only one either.

L. RALEIGH-GILBERT

AT LEAST the "Old Guard" added scintillating argument based on scholarship to the occasional abuse which appeared in the FREETHINKER. Charlotte Smith in her praise and damnation is downright insulting. "Arrogance and Ignorance" indeed! But her letter needed to be printed, *now* I hope the "OG" will have the right to reply. Thank you, Mrs Mouat, for some excellent editions of the FREETHINKER.

BRIAN KHAN

Workers and Fingerprints

CONGRATULATIONS on your humane and sensible editorial. In this country, at any rate, with a few exceptions, the workers are no longer down-trodden and exploited. But there still are some people, as you point out, who experience real poverty and deprivation. And they cannot organise any protest movement.

But your editorial on finger-printing seemed to me to miss some

of the dangers in the proposed scheme. At best it would be a waste of money and time to little practical advantage; at worst, a political menace. Of far more use in, for instance, uncovering any future "spies for peace" than identifying burglars, most of whom already wear gloves. Just think how much more efficient the "final solution" would have been in Nazi Germany and its occupied countries if such a universal record of finger-prints had been available! Moreover, prints can be faked, so that a clever criminal can leave at the scene of a crime the prints of someone he wants to incriminate. The NCCL objections are by no means merely emotive

BARBARA SMOKER

Vengeance of the Lord . . .

YOU MAY BE INTERESTED to know, Harold Legerton, of the LDOS, who had a message from "on High", that a national catastrophe would overtake this land of ours, if Sunday Cricket ever came to pass, has had his prognostications fulfilled. Or so he says! It's taken him a long time to work out the connection between the two events, but in *Joy and Light* he writes: "For the first time in history, a professional cricket match between Somerset and Essex was played at Ilford on Sunday, 15th May, 1966." Wait for it and bide your breath, "and at midnight, *on the same day*, the Judgment fell. The *Seamen's Strike* began at the stroke of twelve." Is not a ruined economy evidence that the Cup of Wrath is being felt? Believe it or not, the *F.A. Cup* is mentioned, too, in the same breath! And he goes on "Thunderbolts and earthquakes are not always God's way of vengeance, and may not be so devastating as this *and* other Judgments which must follow as we—as a nation—go our wicked way of Sabbath-breaking." . . . Dear Editor . . . "Lord, what fools these mortals be"!

JOHN SHEPHERD, *The Sunday Freedom League*

Tribute to Mr Woodcock

AS A MANCHESTER BRANCH member, and speaker on Sunday nights in Victoria Street, Manchester, I wish through our paper to record my very deep and sincere affection of Mr Woodcock, who has recently retired. He is over eighty and has merited his well earned rest with the highest honours possible. Indeed, through him I met Mr Collins our ever-hard working secretary, and saw the Light of day. I am proud to be a friend of his, and hope he will at least, in spirit, be with us for a long time. But the fight will go on, with Mr Collins, Mr Mills our chairman, and myself, speaking on Sunday afternoons and nights in Manchester. I hope our branch will record Mr Woodcock's services in a very real, and practical form, no movement ever had a more hard working, more loyal devoted worker.

To conclude, Editor, I am sure all Manchester branch members will want to join me, in wishing him a happy retirement.

VINCENT J. WOOD

Anti World Government

THERE HAVE BEEN several letters in the FREETHINKER recently advocating world government, world police, etc. This is just what I do not want to happen as it would increase bureaucracy and authoritarianism. Minorities would have to be ignored and injustices would increase. In a world of 3 billion inhabitants centralised government would be inefficient and out of touch with most of the population. The United Nations has proved how ineffective this system is.

The goal to work for is international co-operation and not world government. I believe the way to go about this is by supporting Anarchism and working towards the abolition of all governments. It is possible to live in communities with no government, police, laws and coercion of any kind and still be organised. The best example of this was during the Spanish civil war, especially in Barcelona, where Anarchism proved to be a workable policy.

ROBERT HALSTEAD

The "criminal" or the "crime"?

THE LEADING ARTICLE (July 8th) concluded by saying, "The Humanist slogan is not 'Workers of the world . . . but 'peoples of the world, unite!' fight injustice, hypocrisy, intolerance, superstition and suffering, but not each other". Surely, the things that you quote are caused by people, and as such, it is necessary for those who are opposed to such things to "fight" those, who by their support and action, would perpetuate such evils.

STAN MILLS

Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717.