

## NSS PUBLISHES REPORT ON THE RIGHTS OF OLD PEOPLE

"When our children look back at the years 1965-75, the decade in which the affluent society emerged, they will regard our treatment of old age with the kind of uncomprehending horror and anger that we feel in reading Charles Dickens' account of the Victorian Poor Law", writes Richard Crossman, MP (Secretary of State for Social Services in the Labour Government), in a foreword to the report of the National Secular Society's Working Party on Old People. It is entitled, *The Rights of Old People*, and was introduced at a Press conference in London on Wednesday. Mr Crossman says that the affluent society condemns millions of old people to grinding penury and shows a miserable lack of interest in the growth of voluntary community services designed to keep a living contact between those at work with plenty of money to spend and those in enforced retirement. "If the British people cared about justice for the old one-tenth as much as they care about the League Championship, they would have understood and accepted National Superannuation as a cautious first step and demanded a radical and faster advance towards justice for the elderly", he declares.

### Old People's Rights: an Indifferent Cause

*Michael Meacher, MP, writes:* Institutions for the aged—and some might say the very process of retirement itself—are devices to effect the shift from social death to physical death. Brutally tearing aside the veil of comforting and cosseting illusions leaves this stark reality exposed. But need this be so? Must old people necessarily be rejects?

The call for higher pensions or improved conditions for old people wrings an anguished sympathy from even the most hardened reactionary. But rights are another matter. Rights are the language of power and impose restrictions on the domination and freedom of action of others. And old people are not supposed to have rights. It is offensive to the suffocating paternalism in which they are wrapped, in the preservation of which younger generations have a distinct, if undeclared, interest.

In justification of that interest, those who usurp the positions and roles vacated by the retired can point to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Forcible removal from a job not only deprives the breadwinner of his economic function, but also undermines his social status with others and, more insidiously, his own self-respect. Because he is suddenly and permanently divorced from the web of job contacts and the physical and psychological demands of the employment routine, his drives are gradually enervated in the sands of dependency and sense of functionlessness, and health suffers. This is taken to justify his having retired and interpreted as irrefutable evidence that he has passed irreversibly from the position of a producer of services to one of recipient. This subtle but deadly change in the attitudes of others is quickly reflected in his own estimation of his powers and faculties. He thus is brought to embrace the role ascribed to him by the rules of retirement, and the retreat from acceptance as an equal partner in society has begun to develop into the vicious circle of decline.

### The Right to Contribute

The key to this situation is clearly the status and rewards of employment. It is possible, and indeed highly desirable, to assert the reasonable and proper claims of the elderly

at various stages of dependence, and this has been accomplished both eloquently and comprehensively by the current NSS pamphlet *The Rights of Old People*. It argues persuasively for the adoption of six rights—to independence, to respect from fellow citizens, to social and financial security, to adequate care and attention, to ample employment opportunities, and to creative fulfilment. The list may not be exhaustive—for example, it omits the crucial right to integrated acceptance within society and freedom from isolation and loneliness—but it surveys incisively most of the main areas of present need. What is missing is a ranking of these rights by order of priority or at least of logical derivation.

The fundamental right underpinning all the others is the right to reciprocity, the right to contribute as well as to receive. For this is an ineradicable component of full adult status in modern Western societies. However much the dues permitted to non-contributors are disguised as "entitlements", it will not conceal the awkward fact that they are concessions conditional on the charitable acquiescence of the rest of society and liable to withdrawal with impunity. The single most important right of old people therefore remains, from a state of normal independence through each stage of partial dependency, the opportunity positively to contribute to the full. Only then will our model for a successful old age shift from a defensive one of adjustment to an inevitable and all-pervading decline to the more assertive one of maximising respect and acceptance, financial security, physical health and personal fulfilment.

### Employment for the Elderly

Overwhelmingly employment offers the channel for contributing to society. Yet over the last decade the proportion of men retired at the age of 65 has risen from 47 per cent to about 72 per cent. This is despite the fact that in this same period Snellgrove in his study, *Elderly Employed*, found that 86 per cent of his sample at the time of their retirement felt they could continue with their ordinary jobs, though many preferred to take up different work.

(Continued on back page)

## RELIGION IN BRITAIN, 1871-1971

F. A. RIDLEY

During the last century, what may perhaps be termed a silent revolution has overtaken the British religious scene, the net result of which may be briefly summarised by saying that, whilst Britain in the 1870s was a Christian land in both name and fact, in the 1970s it is still so in name only (though rather dubiously), but has ceased to be so in actual fact. A brief survey of at least its major features may be not without interest in this precise connection.

### Victorian England

Broadly speaking, the England of the 1870s, the English Establishment of which Queen Victoria herself and Mr Gladstone both piously orthodox Christians, represented the best known figures, was essentially a Protestant England. The same description also even more closely fitted its Celtic fringe, Wales and Scotland, the lands of the chapel and kirk. The Established Church of England was still predominantly evangelical with the Bible being virtually compulsory reading at least among the self-styled upper classes. Protestant Christianity extended downward amongst the working class (the Victorian proletariat) via the agency of Non-conformity, and even into "the submerged tenth"—the down-and-outs, through the activities of the Salvation Army, the then newly founded Protestant "Company of Jesus". Practice kept pace with belief a century ago; "the English Sunday", a legacy from the Puritans, was a byword on the European continent!

Victorian Christianity was an orthodox Protestantism, cemented by both doctrine and practice; by the verbal inspiration of the Bible in theory, and by the rigid observation of the Sabbath in practice. It was founded upon what its most representative figure, Mr Gladstone, confidently termed as "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture". Neither the heterodox idea of evolution then just applied to human origins (Darwin's *Descent of Man* was published in 1870), nor the iconoclastic Higher Criticism of the Bible then recently imported from Germany, had as yet made more than a superficial impression upon this "Impregnable Rock". Victorian fundamentalists would have thoroughly agreed with their American opposite number, in that they "would rather trust in the Rock of Ages than the age of the rock".

### Victorian Religious Minorities

Direct religious persecution of the medieval type had already ceased to exist before the Victorian era. The laws against heresy had been abolished long before Victoria ascended the throne, and the civil disabilities against Catholics and Jews had been removed by parliamentary enactment earlier in the century. Consequently, dissident religious minorities existed in the 1870s. The most important of these was probably the Roman Catholic Church which, after three centuries of obscurity and insignificance since the Reformation, by 1870 had already entered its second spring. This revival is usually associated by conventional historians with the High Church (of England) Tractarians, many of whom went over to Rome with Newman and Manning, both later to become cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church. But at least when considered as a mass movement, this Catholic revival owed far more to the Irish immigration which began after the potato famines of the mid-19th century. Newman and company wrote the books, but it was the Irish who formed the lay congregations, without which, as Newman himself ironic-

ally remarked, "the Church would look rather odd". It is paradoxical but true that "English" Catholicism has been predominantly Irish for the past century. It owes more to the "transubstantiation" of the potato than to the eloquent apologetics of Cardinal Newman or even (speaking with all due reverence!) to the transubstantiation of the bread and wine in the Catholic Mass.

Apart from the Roman Catholics (and of course the Jews, now full citizens in common law), the most important dissident minority was probably the secularist movement. Charles Bradlaugh drew larger audiences in Victorian Britain than anyone else except Gladstone, though his vast contemporary vogue was partly due to his close association with the then vigorous republican movement. The "fringe" sects of today, Spiritualism, Theosophy, Witchcraft, etc., were either non-existent or at most nine-day wonders. Rather ironically, it was a former secularist, Annie Besant, who later launched Theosophy upon its esoteric path.

### Survivals

Turning to this year of grace, one observes a widely different scene. Officially, the England of the second Elizabeth, like that of the one and only Victoria, is still a Protestant land, in at least a technical sense, for the Church of England is still the Established Church. Whether and how far the Anglican Church (and England itself) can still be called Protestant in these ecumenical days is perhaps a moot point. But the Church of England, though often in doubt as to whether it is Catholic or Protestant, has at least always known it is English. And if England is still Protestant, it is so with a difference, since the twin pillars of Victorian Christianity, the sacrosanct Sabbath and the infallible Bible, are nowadays mere shadows of what they once were. The third, almost equally indispensable foundation of the Victorian religious establishment, the pyramid of prohibitive sex taboos culminating in the indissoluble sanctity of the marriage tie, appears to be rapidly heading for a similar oblivion.

With regard to institutional religion, the old militancy still appears to exist only among fringe sects like Jehovah's Witnesses. The current decline of orthodox Protestantism, presumably under the impact of a better informed private judgement, has been accompanied by an undesirable revival of Roman Catholicism. It is still largely in an Irish form, but one looks in vain for a Newman in its ranks! At present, British Catholicism is rent by internal crisis, but this is of a cosmopolitan character and appears to be common to the whole Roman Catholic Church just now. It certainly did not originate in Britain, nor in Irish Catholicism, traditionally the extreme Right wing of the Church of Rome.

### New Arrivals

However, the religious feature that most distinguishes Britain in the 1970s from that of the 1870s is, what that formidable champion of Rome, Hilaire Belloc, once aptly described as "survivals and new arrivals". For simultaneously we have the advent of a largely non-Christian minority in this country; one presumably as offensive to Christianity at large as it is to that devout individual Christian, Enoch Powell.

(Continued foot of next page)

## SEX, LOVE AND JESUS

ANGELA GILHESPIE and  
BEVERLY HALSTEAD

In many Universities there is a revival of Evangelism. Proselytising Christians abound, and among them there is talk of the Fellowship. There is an air of mystery surrounding it—some members of the Evangelical Christian Union attend once only, as they find it “disturbing”. No one seems to be able to describe what actually happens. The adherents of this sect, from undergraduates to research students and even lecturers, are “baptised in the Spirit” and have achieved “spiritual union with Jesus”. This is a very real and powerful experience. Before going on to discuss the role of the Fellowship, it is worthwhile describing what takes place at one of their meetings.

To begin with, everyone assembles at a member's home. There is a little cursory conversation, then everyone sits more or less in a circle. There is silence and a marked tenseness in the air—one of expectancy. A faint humming begins and this is taken up. Some speak in tongues, others sing in tongues. Speaking in tongues is a gift of the Spirit. Each person sings or chants or speaks individually but the summation of all these voices is very moving and very beautiful. The participants call out in differing tones depending on the individual such words as “glory”, “love”, “Jesus”. These words are said with real feeling, expressing a deep commitment. The emotional content increases until the air is supercharged. By this time the faces of the participants are flushed and their ears scarlet. The sequel varies with the individual. One girl with half closed eyes and parted lips moans in ecstasy and cries out her love of Jesus. “Ooh, Jesus, I love you”—the intensity of her passion is quite overwhelming. A man passes into a quivering spasm. The people experience the Spirit of Jesus in different ways but most reveal an intense climactic passion. Following the climax of spiritual union, the tension having been released, the atmosphere of passion subsides, to be replaced by one of fulfillment and an inner peace.

### Contempt for Science

Hymns are sung, passages are read out of the Bible and individuals bear witness to the ways in which Jesus has helped them in their everyday lives. A girl was frightened of one of her teachers with whom she was to have a tutorial but she told herself that she was dead, she had achieved Spiritual union with Jesus, she was now perfect and it was the Spirit of Jesus that was there and not her, hence her fears were unfounded. She went in and the tutorial was a success! Another asked for prayers for a fellow student who it was felt was coming to Christ and so that she might be baptised in the Spirit. A research student spoke of the scientists that worshipped the creation instead of the Creator. To understand the former it was only sufficient to know Jesus. One person asked the assembly to pray for her cold to be cured. All contributions were interspersed with “halleluiahs” and “Jesus” and “glory” and “amen”.

There was a constant emphasis on their own perfection in union with Christ and contempt for science. Each individual experienced independently his or her own personal union with the Spirit of Jesus. As individuals they had ceased to exist, they were now one in Christ. As far as it is possible to judge, any form of human contact is denied during the meeting. Indeed, where a man and woman are together, seems to be the point at which Satan comes on to the scene.

### Sex Symbol

Besides merely attempting to describe what happens,

we would like to outline the atmosphere communicated. There is no warmth or compassion. The Fellowship is concerned only with bringing people to be baptised in the Spirit. There is talk of love but it is conspicuously absent. Sex is denied, human contact between individuals is denied. Yet the whole atmosphere is intensely sexual. But almost pure sex, sex without warmth, affection, love. Essentially what happens is that a group of people get together and build up an erotic atmosphere to such a pitch that each individual is able to masturbate by means of his or her love of Jesus. Jesus is their sex symbol and sex substitute. It is a private indulgence, it is a turning inwards on self, not a venturing forth into life. It is a real and deep experience, but it is emotionally crippling—a fetish of the Spirit. Sexual satisfaction is achieved without any physical contact. It involves an individual and his or her concept of the loving Jesus. This is a fantasy with which an orgasm can be achieved. The orgasm itself is certainly real—the visual and aural evidence is convincing enough.

Sex, however, is something shared, it is a union of two separate individuals. One gives of self and one receives. There is a communion of two beings. There is warmth and there is love.

The masturbation in the meetings of the Fellowship is a drug of the Spirit. It is a perversion which can so infect a young person that it can prevent them being able to establish a normal relationship with another human being.

The theory is love and no sex; the practise is sex and no love. To all who have experienced the heights of sexual love the Fellowship is impotent; to virgins it provides an alternative life and love, to Christians it is blasphemy.

## RELIGION IN BRITAIN, 1871-1971

*(Continued from Previous page)*

We witness also the revival of several ancient, even pre-historic, cults such as astrology, spiritualism and most recent (and perhaps most ancient) of all, “the religion of the Stone Age”, as a presumably bona fide witch recently speaking on the radio, defined the cult of witchcraft, recently legalised by the abrogation of the medieval laws against necromancy.

Both Islam and primitive Voodoo are rapidly becoming acclimatised here by Asiatic and African immigrants. Voodoo rites periodically become headline news in the national Press, while in whole areas of the Midlands, the Koran has superseded the Bible and Mohammed Jesus Christ. This phenomena that would presumably have been repugnant to both Bradlaugh and Gladstone, not to mention that devout “Defender of the Faith”, Victoria.

As regards our second group, in terms at least of numbers, astrology appears today to have more practising followers than has Christianity. More people actually appear to read “What the Stars Foretell” more often than the Bible! The “Royal Art” of ancient Babylon is the latest Fleet Street immigrant.

Simultaneously, “the religion of the Stone Age”, complete with covens and broomsticks, appears once again to be flourishing in Britain. Certainly, all this represents a change from the prim Protestantism of a century ago. It would be very interesting to know what further changes we may expect during the next century. But the star that could “foretell” that would indeed be an unusually “lucky star”!

## FREETHINKER

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High St., London, SE1. Telephone 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the NSS.

Humanist Postal Book Service (secondhand books sought and sold). For information or catalogue send 5p stamp to Kit Mout, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

## EVENTS

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, Salisbury Hotel, King's Road, Brighton. Sunday, 4 April, 5.30 p.m. Fanny Cockerell: "The Feminine Feminist".

Humanist Holidays. Easter Holiday at Belgravia Hotel, Bourne-mouth, is now fully booked. Details of other holidays from Mrs. Mephram, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey. Telephone: 642-8796.

Leicester Secular Society. Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, Sunday, 28 March, 6.30 p.m. Gillian Hawtin: "Education and Society".

South Place Ethical Society. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 28 March, 11 a.m. Richard Clements: "Robert Owen—Social Pathfinder". Tuesday, 30 March, 7 p.m. Christopher Evans: "New Trends in Religious Belief".

Worthing Humanist Group, Morelands Hotel, The Pier, Sunday, 28 March, 5.30 p.m.: "The Evil of Apartheid" (speaker to be announced).

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

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# NEWS

## LIFE ENDS AT 25

David Tribe, president of the NSS who chaired the Press conference to introduce the new publication *The Rights of Old People*, recalled that a few years ago the Society produced a report on the rights of children. Whatever indiscipline may exist in some schools and homes, but as far as the formal position of children is concerned, "our liberal recommendations remain as valid now as then". But after young people leave school they become targets for advertisers and manufacturers and provide the greatest market for impulse buying. Especially is this true in the world of entertainment, where instant riches come to middle-aged promoters and youthful performers alike. The market caters perfectly to the prejudice of its consumers, and one recent pop song soulfully informed its audience that life was finished at 25.

Mr Tribe continued: "Change may be no more than fashion and, in everything from skirt-length to tastes in theology, shows a cyclical pattern; while without apprenticeship there can be no craftsmanship. Not only is this forgotten, but few communicators stop to ask what, in a world of growing longevity (in England and Wales the life expectancy of females is now 74.9 and males 68.7), is to be the social status and psychological state of those who, whether they be above 25, 35, 45, 55 or 65, are told that they are expendable and spent, useless, redundant, worthless.

"Most of today's pensioners gave their working lives, which for many began at 12 to jobs whose wages, hours, holidays, conditions and fringe benefits would cause consternation among modern school-leavers. I am sure that, on the whole, they do not begrudge the greater opportunities for education and comfortable employment that now exist, and they may even look back with nostalgia to some social aspects of the 'good old days'. The insight into life that they gained through experience, often harsh experience, could be valuable to us all if we were willing to use it. For they best understand how fashions change and booms come—and go. But what, in the great majority of cases, they were unable to do in the past was to amass vast savings for their retirement. Particularly tragic in those days of roaring inflation is the fate of those hard-working, frugal, independent-minded old people who had with difficulty accumulated what seemed then would be enough to live on, only to find that, through forces beyond their control, in the last few years its purchasing power has been eroded at an unforeseen and disastrous rate. Through misfortune or improvidence or forecasting the declining value of savings, many old people were unable or unwilling to save at all and are entirely dependent on their state pension. Materially their plight is the worst of all."

Mr Tribe said that inflation vies with the population explosion and racialism as the great social problem of our age. Company directors can vote themselves higher fees, professional men gain higher salaries by threatening to emigrate, and workers in essential or prestige industries gain higher wages by striking. Old people have no such sanctions. In a world which values only power and status and readily yields to the noisy and the inconvenient, they are always at the bottom of the queue for increased benefits.

# AND NOTES

"The Government has promised a pension rise next autumn, but it is unlikely, at the present rate of inflation, even to restore the purchasing power the pension has today. Unfortunately lack of concern in official circles simply reflects widespread attitudes throughout the country. In the hope of influencing public opinion on behalf of old people we have therefore issued this pamphlet."

The Working Party which produced the report consisted of Margaret McIlroy, Kevin Page, Martin Page, Jan Thomas, David Tribe and Ethel Venton.

## POLICE AND PUBLIC

Police harassment of people of unconventional appearance has been once again brought to public attention by a letter published in *The Times* last Saturday. The signatories were Dr Brian Barrett, a social psychiatrist and senior registrar at Henderson and Maudsley Hospitals, Dr Robert Doig, senior registrar at North Middlesex and St Bartholomew's Hospitals, and Ruth Watson, a student.

They wrote that while in a Kensington shop Dr Doig was stopped and searched by a police constable "in a most offensive and bullying manner". They said their concern as sociological psychiatrists is the possible effects on young people of this kind of police behaviour. "Such an incident would increase the social alienation of the young and negate the effort of parents and teachers to produce a positive attitude towards the police and law and order."

Such incidents are commonplace; unfortunately for the police they picked on three people who are not easily frightened or silenced. The incident is being investigated by Scotland Yard, but surely it is entirely wrong that the police themselves should investigate complaints against members of the force. It cannot be beyond the wit of the authorities concerned to devise a system for examination by independent tribunals of complaints against the police.

Although there are high-ranking police officers who are capable of investigating complaints with detachment and fairness to all concerned, it really isn't surprising if the public is beginning to interpret the announcement "Scotland Yard investigates", as "Scotland Yard whitewashes".

## SPLIT

The Theological Committee of the Roman Catholic American Church Union has lost nine of its 12 members who have resigned because they feel they can work more effectively in an independent capacity. The chairman said there has been a sharp cleavage in thinking between the Theological Committee and the ACU Council.

The resignations are believed to be a revolt by progressives against the backwoodsmen who have dominated the ACU for many years, and were opposed to changes of any kind.

## FREE CHURCHES IN DECLINE

The report of the Free Church Federal Council, presented at the annual meeting last Monday, revealed a substantial drop in the membership of Britain's Free Churches. The continued existence of some of them is in doubt. The Council represents all the main Free Churches, and the total membership of all the member-Churches is down by nearly 14,000.

Membership figures for the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Wales, the Presbyterian Church in England and the Union of Welsh Independents, are substantially down on the previous year. The Methodist Church and the Congregational Church of England and Wales remain the same, and only the Free Church of England shows a slightly increased membership.

The Countess of Huntingdon's Connection, which at one time had several thousand members and several fine churches, is reduced to a membership of 925. It is already engaged in talks with two small denominations, and it may be that a merger is being discussed.

## FREETHINKER FUND

One of the result of the recent postal strike was a serious decline in donations to the *Freethinker* fund. Only £13 was received during January and February. We hope that readers and organisations will make up for this during the coming months by organising collections and donating generously.

It is also of vital importance that the circulation of the *Freethinker* increases substantially. Some readers do take supplies of the paper to sell at meetings, and purchase quantities for distribution. This is very effective, and we hope more sales will be organised. But it is also necessary to build up a net work of *Freethinker* agents all over the country. There must be many readers who could be agents, accepting responsibility for receiving and distributing a number of copies, and sending the money to this office. This will increase the *Freethinker's* circulation, and represent a saving in postal charges.

In the meantime we thank the following readers for their donations to the fund: J. Manus, £2; J. Dwyer, £1.57; J. McPail, 92p; A. W. Harris, 20p; J. Little, 50p, T. O'Connell, 50p; E. Ponting, 25p; Mr Channon, £1; E. McGue, 50p; S. Axenfield, £1.50; C. J. Gazolas, 40p; E. Scholl, 42p; F. G. Shaw, 15p; Mrs Taylor, 50p, A. Scott, 12p; K. M. Mercer, £2.50. Total for January and February: £13.03.

### THE RIGHTS OF OLD PEOPLE

Report of the National Secular Society

Working Party with a foreword by

**RICHARD CROSSMAN, MP**

15p plus 3p postage

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

103 Borough High Street, London, SE1

## BOOKS

## THE OXFORD MARTYRS

by D. M. Loades. Batsford, £2.50.

*So they go out of the world, the fools,  
For the sake of telling a lie;  
What does it matter to them who rules  
The distant courts of the sky?*

The cynical rhyme reminds us how difficult it is today to enter sympathetically into the feelings of 16th century martyrs—whether the Catholics recently canonised for what under Elizabeth I was regarded as treason; or the subjects of this book, Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley. The latter have been sentimentalised in the Protestant and Whig tradition of historical writing in which most Englishmen were brought up and against which it is right to react. It is therefore good to have Dr Loades redressing the balance in this cool and detached volume: "From the historian's point of view it is as unprofitable to assume that Cranmer and his fellows were deluded or wicked men as it is to regard them as the vehicles of divine grace". He reminds us that Archbishop Cranmer and Bishops Latimer and Ridley were not opposed in principle to the burning of heretics (though they never practised it on the lavish scale of Queen Mary's reign). Cranmer helped to burn a heretic whose beliefs he later came to share; Latimer publicly argued that the courage which Anabaptists showed at the stake was no evidence for the truth of their views. As Dr Loades wryly writes, apropos Henry VIII's propagandists, they "had to defend the King's actions as being consistent with divine law, and were therefore compelled to seek a definition of divine law which would fit the circumstances". For the rulers of the Henrician church, "if the deviant was a conservative, he would be put beyond the pale by being dismissed as a 'papist'; if he was a radical . . . he could be dubbed 'anabaptist'".

Nevertheless, it is too simple just to write off *both* sides in the great conflicts of the 16th century, from a point of view allegedly "beyond ideology". Dr Loades is helpful when he writes "we are in a better position than most previous generations to accept with equanimity that Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer died because they were revolutionary leaders whose ideology was temporarily in eclipse". "Should protestant doctrine become widespread, declared Sir Thomas More, 'then shall all laws be laughed to scorn, then shall servants set naugh by their masters, and unruly people rebel against their rulers'". The social consequences of popular protestantism were an advance on the political and social doctrines alike of the Marian persecutors and the episcopal martyrs. The Roman Church, wrote a Catholic propagandist, "exhorteth all men to bear Christ's cross in hardness of life, trouble and affliction; the other persuadeth to embrace liberty, bellycheer and all pleasure". (An agreeable comment on modern idealisation of a Catholic "merrie England" destroyed by killjoy Protestants!) The Oxford Movement which attacked the memory of the Marian martyrs in the 19th century was also consciously anti-democratic and anti-socialist.

The value of this book is that it analyses the tortuous ways in which the Reformation, almost of its own momentum and against the wishes of its theological leaders, forced men forward into the modern world. Cranmer intended to replace the supremacy of the Pope by the royal supremacy; but then he was faced by Mary on the throne, issuing commands which he could not obey,

## FREETHINKER

and he was forced to look elsewhere, inwards, for his authority. Once the rights of the individual conscience had been established, all constituted authority could be called in question. Whilst in prison Cranmer and the other two bishops built up an underground organisation which was politically most effective. Although the concern of the martyrs was to establish the faith of their flock, they had to undertake activities which were undoubtedly seditious. English protestantism was rescued from developing in a very radical direction indeed, as Dr Loades points out, only by the providential death of Mary and the succession of Elizabeth. The latter was as conservative as it was possible for a hereditary protestant to be. The Anglican *via media* was the result, social and political radicals continuing to fight on, first as sectaries, then as nonconformists.

In the last resort, the human story of the Marian martyrs still makes its mark. The vast majority of them were humble artisans. But the bishops died well too. Latimer's famous words, "We shall this day light such a candle . . . as I trust shall never be put out" are true in more than a narrowly doctrinal sense. We can feel for the more complex and timid Cranmer, who desperately did not want to die, and recanted more than once in his lonely prison. But at the end he recanted his recantations, to the fury of his executioners, and held out into the flames the hand which had written them until it was consumed. Latimer was no doubt right to argue that courage is no evidence of the truth of a doctrine, but the way in which the martyrs died certainly helped to ensure the survival of popular protestantism in England alongside the much less popular State church. Dr Loades' analogy with contemporary ideologies is relevant.

The historical approach is hostile to absolutes. It is not enough to say that both Roman Catholics and Protestants burnt heretics, nor even that Protestants burnt significantly fewer. We must look at the two ideologies in terms of what was historically possible in the social context of the time. Protestantism opened doors which would otherwise have remained closed, through which much more than theological Protestantism crowded its way. From this point of view the Marian martyrs seem to me, sharing none of their beliefs, to be men to whom I look back with a gratitude which I do not extend to the Catholic martyrs under Elizabeth whose courage I can equally respect.

CHRISTOPHER HILL

## FREEDOM IN A ROCKING BOAT: CHANGING VALUES IN AN UNSTABLE SOCIETY

by Sir Geoffrey Vickers. Allen Lane The Penguin Press, £2.50.

In an era marked by the deepening of divisions and the sharpening of conflicts, Sir Geoffrey Vickers is unashamedly a "regulator". His theme, no less, is the collapse of traditional models of man and society and the consequent need to impose order on the accelerating social and technological changes which threaten to engulf us. This is hardly a new thesis, and I don't think Sir Geoffrey's curiously lifeless prose conceals anything original in the

# REVIEWS

way of either analysis, or remedy for the ills he discusses. I read the book in a state of mounting irritation with its turgid word-spinning, of which the following is a fair example; the "web of mutual expectations" of men in society, according to Sir Geoffrey, "... evolves by an historical process which is neither reversible or repeatable, because it generates those constantly changing standards to which I have referred and in consequence is constantly resetting its own regulators".

I read this a number of times and am still not sure what it is supposed to mean. The book goes on like this, in its peculiarly woolly way, until the last two chapters, when Sir Geoffrey talks some meaty, if unexciting, common sense about the need to "legitimise" authority in an age which demands evermore extensive and comprehensive governmental regulation. Not everybody accepts this as the "conventional wisdom", even now, and unless resolved the present gulf between government and governed will grow worse.

One way to curb, for example, environmental pollution without a whole new network of red tape would be to throw the social costs incurred on to the manufacturers and producers who despoil the environment (and thus, ultimately, on to the consumers of their products). This would be to use the market mechanism of costs and benefits to achieve the desired end rather than resort to government fiat. Again, not a new idea; the main problem is that it entails a change in the legal framework within which companies operate. At present, their liability is to their shareholders; to make them financially accountable to the community for their activities would be to alter radically the whole nature of the limited liability company. I suspect, also, that the techniques of cost-benefit analysis developed by welfare economists in recent years have not yet reached the required level of sophistication for this suggestion to be practical.

And yet something like this is essential, as Sir Geoffrey reminds us, if social progress is to continue. As against the technologist's habit of waiting until a crisis of some sort occurs and then devising ad hoc plans to cope with it, Sir Geoffrey maintains that an "adaptive" system should foresee what might go wrong, whether in the field of pollution or population explosion or whatever, and take preventive measures accordingly. He draws a conventional picture of the powers and capabilities of government, but fails to outline any new method—so far as I can discover from repeated wading through his soggy prose—of enabling government to look beyond the next election. Indeed, this dream of an adaptive, self-regulatory "system" derives from the success of computer installations in business which set out to regularise their environment. One remains sceptical about making human activity self-regulating in this way, not because—as is often alleged—"you never know what people will do next", but because it is extraordinarily difficult to reach agreement on what the goals and methods of a self-regulatory society ought to be. Thus it would be fairly simple to devise, for example, a so-called negative income tax which would take care of poverty by automatically increasing the benefit payable to the recipient as his normal income fails. But people will never agree that there is, or can be, a single, comprehensive way to tackle a complex problem such as poverty;

and this failure to reach agreement on what social policy should be accounts for the incoherence of governmental attempts, in all western nations, to solve this apparently intractable blight on our society. Or take the total inability to reach agreement on a prices and incomes policy, when the "sensible" view is clearly that a planned growth of incomes is better than the wages jungle. This difficulty that people do not agree about the goals and values of society is, to my mind, a major difficulty in the "cybernetic" dream of a self-adaptive social system. You can't run human affairs in a "value-free" way and it is silly to attempt to do so.

PHILIP HINCHLIFF

## THE CENSOR

by Richard Gardner, New English Library, £1.75.

This is a novel about the struggle to get a book which some members of society would call obscene, published in the face of opposition from a leading political figure and ultimately the Department of Public Prosecutions. It is therefore a pity that Richard Gardner, despite having his plot handed to him on a plate by recent events, produces the most abysmal piece of work I have encountered since I tired of Agatha Christie. Gardner's book amounts to no more than a rehash of actual events, taking the most un-subtle points about each character's stereotype and embellishing them with a pathetic attempt at Freudian psychology. Thus we get the puritanical public figure, shown to be sexually inadequate, with the classical Freudian corollary a nymphomaniac wife, who have between them, again classically, produced a lesbian daughter. The plot as if it couldn't stand up on its own, is embellished with crudities. The publisher's young mistress falls in love with the amazingly stereotype American author. The nymphomaniac woman is at last satisfied by a man she picks up in a hotel, a man who quite by coincidence turns out to be a professor of English Literature who is going to testify that the book has much literary merit at the coming trial. And so it goes on ad nauseam, written in a style devoid of any merit, a style which caricatures all that is good about contemporary writing. Mr Gardner should have been told by his publisher that in order to write good sentences without verbs, it is first necessary to be able to write good sentences with verbs. It is a cruel paradox that a novel on this subject should be written by a man who seems to believe that a novel must be peppered with innumerable meaningless and plastic passages of sexual description in order to be worthwhile.

Perhaps I should not waste any more space. The whole thing is shoddy and an insult to those who have opposed censorship in earnest, people to whom writers like Mr Gardner should be indebted.

DAVID REYNOLDS

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# LETTERS

(Continued from front page)

## Sick

Having noted your article, *Odd Protection* (*Freethinker*, 27 February), I am pleased to report the Nationwide Youth Protection Movement has now over 1,000 members. I have been nominated to stand as Conservative candidate in the forthcoming local council elections. The issue will be a cleaner Britain. To ignore the nation's problems is to undermine law and order.

The British nation is crumpled-struck, and as such is a sick society. Britain's open door policy has made the British people a target for sexual exploitation. We now lead the world as a vice empire. Our country is flooded with American draft-dodgers, and queers from every part of the globe. Britain is being deliberately degraded and indoctrinated into vice and decadence for political purposes. Britain's youth have become political pawns in the power game.

PAUL A. DANIELS, *Director General*,  
Nationwide Youth Protection Movement.

## Facade

James O'Hanlon writes of "cracks in the Roman Catholic facade". But what kind of "crack" or "facade" is it when such as Father J. G. Vink not only views central doctrines as "mythological" but (wait for it!) does not "believe in a supernatural God". Is belief in a natural God the latest with-it facade of theology?

CHARLES BYASS.

## Paisley and School Religion

In a recent exclusive interview given to the New University of Ulster Television (closed circuit), the Rev Ian Paisley said that he was in favour of community schools for all children, regardless of religion, on a secular basis. The teaching of religion, he said, was the job of the Churches.

In the interview, Dr Paisley said that he had only entered the field of politics because it had been "thrust upon" him. He had no aspirations to be prime minister of Northern Ireland, but if the people offered him the post he could hardly refuse. On the question of Irish reunification Dr Paisley said he would welcome the return of "Southern Ireland" to the jurisdiction of the Crown and the United Kingdom.

On the subject of theology Dr Paisley said that he thought that the (orthodox) Presbyterian Church in Ireland was slipping away from the ideals of the Reformers in abolishing those passages in the Westminster Confession which declare the Pope to be the Anti-Christ. Heaven, he said (quoting scriptural justification), was open only to those who were "born again", and this did not even include all the members of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. The Catholic Church, he said, was not really a Christian religion at all.

NIGEL SINNOTT.

## Freedom

Mr Pat Sloan thinks that the composers of the *Evening Standard* should be "free" to direct the policy of the journal. But if Mr Sloan engages a man to redecorate his rooms, would he grant that man the right to a voice in the decision as to what use Mr Sloan makes of his house? Goodness knows—the man may be a Tory workman who objects strongly to Mr Sloan's unwearying efforts to give this country the blessings enjoyed in the USSR.

HENRY MEULEN.

## Public Lending Rights

To see this matter in perspective, one must remember that public libraries simply store for the community books which have already been bought by the ratepayers. The non-think argument is that a book costs, say, £2 and can be lent out at least 50 times, and the author gets only an original royalty on the single copy. But unless the book could be lent out 50 times it would never be bought, for communal buying (now that books are so costly) is the one hope for the author who is not a popular star. To do anything then to upset the current transactions is both unfair to ratepayers and a stab in the back for authors who are not establishment "musts".

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

Furthermore, a large-scale Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance study revealed that of men retiring at 65, only half did so because of ill-health, yet more than a quarter because of pressure from their employers, while of those staying at work more than half did so for non-economic reasons.

In view therefore of the substantial latent unmet demand for employment, how can suitable job openings be extended? First, by abandoning the earnings rule, even at the cost of £110 millions, and thus ending the confinement of choice between full-time work, so often not available, and retirement. This could lead to a massive expansion of part-time opportunities, particularly in the service trades, and end the demoralising concentration of elderly workers in cleaning, sweeping and other menial tasks. Secondly, all central employment exchanges should have a specialist officer committed exclusively to finding, and indeed advising employers how to create, suitable vacancies for the older worker. Thirdly, as part of the enormous expansion required in general in Government retraining centres, priority should be allotted to the claims of elderly workers for places, together with perhaps a day release system at age 60 so as gradually to develop new skills. Fourthly, to encourage the spread of work at higher ages or at least to offset the higher sickness insurance risk, the Government might offer private employers subsidies graded by the proportion of workers over 65, backed if necessary by a quota requirement as for the disabled.

Of course, not all are fit enough to work after 65 and none can do so indefinitely. But subject to an extensive and varied enough range of opportunities to enable all to do so for as long as they wish, the same basic principle of contributing should be preserved in every subsequent context. To reciprocate family services, housing should be available near their families. To make some return for the benefits offered by the wider community, old people should not be segregated alone with other old people in some tucked-away home, but integrated within the local society where a valued exchange of services remains possible.

Nothing is more debilitating than constantly and exclusively being obliged to play the role of recipient. Nothing to day is more important for old people than the systematic removal of all the crushing restrictions on their right to contribute.

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