

{ } The Church of England and the Salvation Army: religion, remembrance, rede

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Nietzsche is an opponent of pity as well as Christianity. In my page on Nietzsche I defend humanitarian values and criticize some of the delusions, distortions and falsifications of Nietzsche - from a non-Christian perspective.

Aphorisms

Cambridge University

which includes a section 'Cambridge Christianity' and profiles of some Cambridge Christians.

Introduction

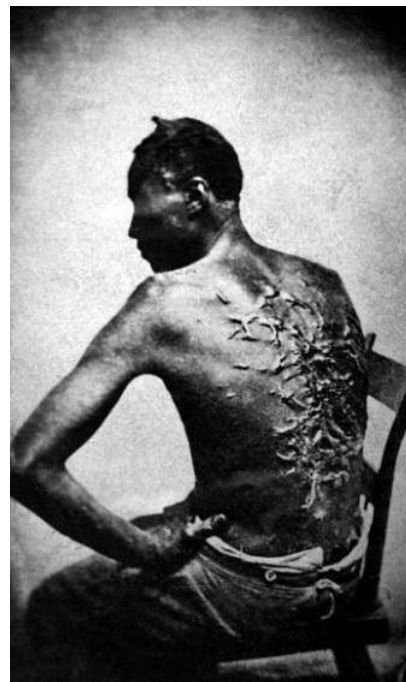


Above, believers in transubstantiation, in this case Roman Catholics - during the Mass, the bread and wine are converted to the actual body and blood of Christ. Many Anglicans believe in transubstantiation too. As I make clear in other places, the Church of England is hopelessly divided, with a chaotic mixture of incompatible views.

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<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/legalcode>

Threats to the mind aren't important to many people. If beliefs are deluded but the people holding them are

'For God so loved the world ...'



For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son., that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' (Gospel according to St John, 3:16, King James Bible.)

Were there two kinds of slaves who were flogged in the American slave-owning states before the abolition of slavery (one of them is shown here, after a flogging), the ones who accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, the ones whose sins were forgiven, the ones who did not perish but have everlasting life? And the slaves who were flogged - they may well include the slave shown here - who never gave much thought to Jesus or any thought to Jesus and for these or other reasons didn't believe in him. They were too preoccupied with other matters - enduring back-breaking work, enduring another flogging, the prospect of being parted from husband or wife or children, as could easily happen if members of the same family were sold and became the 'property' of different 'owners.'

Were there two kinds of slave-owners? The slave-owners who accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, the ones whose sins were forgiven, such as the sin of flogging slaves, who did not perish but have eternal life - and the slave owners whose sins were unforgiven, like the slaves who for one reason or another never made the all-important decision - to accept Jesus Christ as their saviour.

Of the three people shown here - a slave owner and her two slaves, which of them, if any, went on to 'everlasting life?' (ζωὴν αἰώνιον in the New Testament Greek of the text.) Which, if any, went on to 'everlasting punishment' (κόλασιν αἰώνιον)?



To suppose that it was obviously the two slaves, not the slave owner, is to ignore the 'teaching' of the Bible and the 'teaching' of the Church - although the interpretation of the Bible and the guidance of the Church are the subject of discussion, dispute and action - the 'action' includes, of

Remembrance Sunday



Commonwealth War Grave - cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Evelyn Sima geograph.org.uk/p/5706944



Commonwealth war grave - C

'The Church' is specifically th has a special status in Remem commemorations. The Church the commemorations is indefi an objection based on a clear an objection of wider scope. § Bishop of Sheffield on this p summary of my reasons for c England's role in Remembr

The work of the Commonwea is beyond praise. The contri

threats are viewed but the people making them are 'harmless' (not terrorists, not advocates of indiscriminate violence which threaten the body), then this is of no account. I regard threats to the mind as well as to the body as important, as far from harmless, as threats to be resisted. 'Threats to mind and body:' the phrase is a concise way of expressing the conviction that harmful forces may threaten not just the body, by killing and injuring, but the mind, by threatening free thought and free expression, artistic expression as well as intellectual expression.

There are still old-fashioned atheists who regard Christianity as the most harmful force in the world today. In the twentieth century, fascism and Stalinism and other forms of communism completely eclipsed Christianity as a threat to body and mind.

In the past, Christianity has often threatened mind and body. In the section on Pete Wilcox, the Bishop of Sheffield, I discuss some of the people burned at the stake - by the Church of England and by Calvin at Geneva - for disbelief in the doctrine of the Trinity and other failures of belief.

Hume, writing in the 'Treatise concerning Human Understanding: 'Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous.'

A partial updating of Hume's view: the errors in religion may be dangerous but the most dangerous errors come from non-religious ideologies. In the past, the most dangerous errors have been Nazism and Communism, and of communist ideologies, particularly Stalinist communism. The other-worldly aspects of religion, the stress upon ritual or correct thinking or a holy book, and all the other varied characteristics of religions, have lessened their capacity for causing harm. The cruelties of Christianity, such as the Inquisition and the cruelties sometimes carried out by Islamists, such as amputation of limbs and stoning to death, have never been on the same scale as the savagery of Nazism and Stalinism, or the atrocities committed by such regimes as those of Pol Pot in Cambodia.

There are still old-fashioned atheists who overlook the many, many impressive Christians and followers of other religions. Their assumption that non-religious people must always be superior to religious people could be called childish, but I use the word 'unformed.'

In the twenty-first century, Christianity is negligible as a threat to mind and body whilst the dangers of Islamism have become obvious, to anyone with any sense, and {adjustment} is needed to recognize these changing realities. But it isn't enough to recognize the chief threats, there has to be quantification of the threats. Even radical, terror-supporting Islamism is obviously far less of a threat to body than Nazism in the past. Its outrages are horrific but generally localized. No Islamic state or terrorist organization has perpetrated a fraction of the atrocities inflicted by Nazi Germany, again, despite the horrific atrocities they have inflicted, in part because radical Islamism generally seems to be incompatible with highly developed economies, social organizations and scientific and technological expertise. When an Islamic state is an exception to this - Iran is the prime example now - then the potential threat to the body is very great. If ISIS did have the power and the resources, then its atrocities would equal those of Nazi Germany.

On this page, I criticize not just the religious but some of their opponents, such as some humanists (supporters of groups such as the British Humanist Association.) To see through some illusions and forms of stupidity is no guarantee that someone will not be subject to other illusions and forms of stupidity. Illusion and stupidity aren't evaded too easily. A humanist who can see through the arguments intended to show that the gospel records are largely reliable, that Jesus rose again, that prayer works and is worthwhile (although not, nowadays, that praying for good weather works and is worthwhile), may well be in the grip of delusions more harmful than any of these.

In various places in this site, I argue against pacifism. A Christian who believes that Jesus rose again may well recognize the harsh realities that make pacifism unworkable and disastrous in some circumstances, may have delusions about prayer but recognize that to defeat Nazi Germany or the Taliban requires practical action. The humanist who airily dismisses the need for action by force of arms in some circumstances is suffering from a more severe form of delusion. The believer's common sense and good sense may be left unaffected by theological illusion.

I criticize the Anglican priest George Pitcher on this page. This is someone whose superficiality should be obvious. He shares the illusions of so many secularists in such practicalities as defence, Islamism, migration and other issues but he has religious illusions as well. They include his incredible belief that the Church of England can still be taken seriously - provided, of course, its Public Relations are conducted in a more sophisticated way, by making full use of social media, for instance. He would like other things to happen as well, things which are unlikely to happen.

The strengths of this age co-exist with stupidities. The stupidities of previous ages were different but often as bad or worse. When Protestant persecuted Catholic and

course, in the past, burning at the stake - but there's the inconvenient insistence that Christ came to save sinners, including, of course, the woman slave owner here. 'On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."' (The Gospel of St Mark, 2:17.) The Church is supposedly 'a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints.'

In 2006, the Church of England voted to apologise to the descendants of victims of the slave trade.

An amendment "recognising the damage done" to those enslaved was backed overwhelmingly by the General Synod.

During the debate, Rev Simon Blessant said, in connection with the Church of England and the slave trade, 'We were at the heart of it.' He gave information about the involvement in the slave trade of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which owned the Codrington Plantations.

These were two sugarcane growing estates on the island of Barbados. In 1710, they came into the possession of the Church of England 'Society for the Propagation of the Christian Religion in Foreign Parts.' The plantations were run by managers, nominally supervised by a Board of trustees of the Society headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and a committee of Church of England bishops.

The plantations depended upon a regular supply of new slaves from West Africa. For almost a decade after the 'Society for the Propagation of the Christian Religion in Foreign Parts' inherited the plantations, slaves were branded on the chest with the word 'Society.'

During the debate, the fact was mentioned that when

the emancipation of slaves took place in 1833, compensation was paid not to the slaves but to their owners. The information was given that the Bishop of Exeter and three colleagues were paid nearly £13,000 compensation for 665 slaves. This compensation was well over £1,000,000 in current values. The Bishop of Exeter, William Philpotts, had opposed the Abolition of Slavery Act.



Above, William Philpotts, Bishop of Exeter

It can safely be assumed that the Bishop of Exeter had a belief in the Son of God but that some - perhaps many - of the slaves had no belief in the Son.

Of course, throughout all the slave-owning period in this country - and throughout all the heretic-burning and witch-burning period in this country - at such places as St Paul's Cathedral and King's College Cambridge, as well as quiet and lovely village churches, sermons were preached, prayers were said, for the most varied reasons, including condemnation of heretics and witches, holy communion was taken, evensong sung.

The Gospel according to St John, 3:18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.' (King James Bible.)

One of the modern translations for the whole verse - like others, it updates the language but not the theology:

'Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has

founded the Commission in 1 cemeteries of the Commissio France, I've experienced the these places, the sobering an places. Each marked grave h national emblem or regiment unit, date of death and age of personal dedication chosen b includes a religious symbol, b atheists. In the vast majority (Christian cross, but not for fo such as the Jewish man who: above, Of course, the fact th Christian cross is no evidence life was a believing Christian. are you?' it was usual to ansv England.

The Commonwealth War Gra assume, then, that everyone Christian and has made an al Christian - at least nominal C other religions, or nominal be well as people who clearly ha

The Lions of the Great War s' Birmingham (which was vand unveiled) is one of a number statue shows a Sikh soldier. I statue 'honours the sacrifices personnel of all faiths from th fought for Britain in the First v conflicts.'

But in services throughout the Sunday, not the least attempt between Christians and non- present are expected to give people who disagree with Ch no interest in it to do? What a to do? Stay silent? Mumble ir expecting people to show bel shouldn't possibly be expecte may have its reasons for expi Christian service even when I Christianity, or to become sile the commemorations, by far t commemorations, in general. now, and so it may well try to such as this influence over th remember the fallen.

This is an Order of Service fo

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/share/hi/pdfs/26_08_05_order_of_s

It contains this:

'... through Jesus Christ our I

and this bit of Trinitarian theo

And the blessing of God Almi Father, Son and Holy Spirit b and remain with you always.'

What are the Unitarians, the agnostics and the atheists wr this? Is this an event they car wholeheartedly?

Any Anglicans present who a will have a their own interpret Jesus Christ our risen Redee rejects the risen Redeemer h past, Christianity was a hellfi so. That influence has waned amongst Conservative Evang atheists who are buried in the Commonwealth War Graves from salvation. They didn't ac Redeemer.' The status of the members and the Roman Cai the same. I'm very familiar wi even so, I'll be asking for clar Evangelicals and others.

If, as I argue, Services of Rer Sunday - the ones held in the members of the public with w religion, not, of course, the se indefensible in their present f This involves difficulties, but t can be continuity with the pas part in the event and I see n playing of such resonant piec past' and 'Abide with me,' but from Elgar's Enigma Variatio Remembrance Sunday event words, only its intense beauty

Alternatively, a choir could be a hymn - just so long as the pi words as well. The music is f words to all but committed Cfi in a decently committed Christ

Catholic persecuted Protestant and both Catholic and Protestant persecuted non-believers and believers in other forms of Christianity, tolerance was an overwhelmingly important necessity. Today, tolerance can be stupid and dangerous, as is increasingly recognized. Giving sanctuary to the persecuted is noble but giving sanctuary to the persecuted who would be only too glad to persecute, given the chance, is usually very mistaken. To distinguish between people worthy of a safe haven in a liberal democracy and people who aren't in the least an asset to a liberal democracy, who are a threat to a liberal democracy, may be very difficult, but the attempt has to be made.

But this isn't in general a tolerant age. Political correctness has replaced Christianity as a threat to the mind.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that only religious beliefs which are aggressive or grossly intolerant are dangerous, that religious beliefs which are placid and tolerant can never be dangerous, or that philosophical beliefs can never be dangerous - with {restriction} of attention here to physical dangers, the dangers to body. Only a little thought and reflection are needed to realize that Buddhism and Quaker beliefs (which are peripherally religious) can be potentially dangerous and actually dangerous. This is for the reason that any set of beliefs, religious or otherwise, which fails to recognize and to act against dangers by giving support to inaction is itself dangerous. If ruthless militarism is a great danger, so is pacifism in the face of ruthless militarism.

David Hume, the 18th century philosopher, the greatest and most influential of English-speaking philosophers and a very versatile writer, was born in Edinburgh, studied at Edinburgh University, was a librarian at Edinburgh University and lived for much of his life in Edinburgh - but he didn't secure a chair at the university. Edinburgh ministers petitioned the town council not to give the chair to him on account of his atheistic views.

This is from Richard Wollheim's introduction to 'Hume on Religion,' which contains the classic 'Dialogues concerning Natural Religion' and other texts, including 'Of Miracles' (Section x, An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding.)

'Looking back upon eighteenth-century Edinburgh, we tend so readily to think of it as bathed in that soft 'Athenian' light, in that glow of radiant liberalism, which distinguished its middle and later years, that we quite forget at how narrow a remove it stood, both in time and place, from fanaticism and intellectual barbarism.'

This was David Hume's attitude to illusion and ignorance and people in the grip of illusion and ignorance:

'... it might be possible to liberate them from this illusion or that, but it would only be replaced by another. 'In a future age,' he wrote, a propos of the doctrine of transubstantiation [the belief that during the Catholic mass, the bread and wine are transformed into the literal body and blood of Christ, without any alteration of appearances] 'it will probably become difficult to persuade some nations, that any human two-legged creature could ever embrace such principles.' Then with characteristic wryness he added, 'And it is a thousand to one, but these nations themselves shall have something full as absurd in their own creed ...'

Many, many Catholics and other Christians have been and are not just people of good sense but outstanding, to give just one example, the Christian people who sheltered Jews facing extermination, at enormous risk to themselves. A belief in transubstantiation can co-exist with clear-sighted views - and humane views, as well as great abilities in the sphere of practical action. Many, many secularists, who can see the absurdity of transubstantiation have views which are ridiculous and stupid.

This isn't in the least a scholarly page, but I can claim knowledge of theological scholarship, including study of the New Testament in Greek, as well as extensive study of wider theological debate and discussion.

The King James Bible

'TO THE MOST HIGH AND MIGHTY PRINCE JAMES, [BY THE GRACE OF GOD,] KING OF GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND IRELAND, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, &c.

'The Translators of the Bible wish Grace, Mercy, and Peace, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

'GREAT and manifold were the blessings, most dread Sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon us the people of [England], when first he sent Your Majesty's Royal Person to rule and reign over us.'

This is from the introduction to the King James translation of the Bible, also known as the 'Authorized Version.' Here, I don't discuss grandeur of language or the importance of the Authorized version in the history of language but some of the vile context: including the failure of the Church of England to oppose persecution at the time and its active

not believed in the name of the only Son of God.' (English Standard Version.)

The Gospel according to St John, 3:36 in the King James Bible:

'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him.

It seems clear that slaves without belief in the Son of God are condemned and subject to the wrath of God, whilst slave owners with belief in the Son, such as the Bishop of Exeter, aren't condemned but have everlasting life.

The Church of England's acceptance of slavery, with exceptions, wasn't in the least in conflict with Biblical ethics. After all, Jesus Christ preached the gospel in a slave-owning society, one in which slaves were flogged, worked to death and crucified, and never at any time, according to the Biblical record, declared that slavery was an evil and had to be ended. Jesus Christ was supposedly without sin but the Church has never claimed that the knowledge of Jesus Christ was without limitations. He had no knowledge of the measures necessary for adequate public health, for example - the provision of safe drinking water - or the measures necessary to end the Malthusian nightmare of pregnancies far in excess of the replacement rate and very high levels of infant mortality, or the agricultural measures needed to avoid the cycle of famine. Jesus Christ shared the limited knowledge of the people of his time and also shared many of their views, including an indifference to the horrors of slavery. If Jesus wasn't indifferent to the horrors of slavery, why is there no record at all in the Biblical account that he opposed slavery?

St Paul showed such energy in promoting the doctrines of redemption and complete indifference to slave ownership. His epistle to the Galatians, 3:28, in the 'Good News' translation.

'So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus.'

St Paul was interested only in the fact - or the fact in his theology - that slaves who accepted Christ as their saviour and free people (including slave-owners) who accepted Christ as their saviour were in this respect, this all-important respect, according to him, the same - their sins were forgiven. The sins of the two groups would be very different, of course, but not in every way. The sins of the slaves might include, in this despicable theology, swearing, the sins of the slave owners might also include swearing. There's no record of St Paul, or Jesus Christ, claiming that flogging a slave or breaking up a family of slaves - selling the parents to one new owner and the children to a different new owner - was a grave sin.

From the section on this page on the King James Bible:

'In his epistle to the Galatians (5:19-21) St Paul condemns various sins, 'works of the flesh' in the King James translation, including, in this translation, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, drunkenness, revellings - and, also, witchcraft and heresies. St Paul doesn't condemn slave-owning or any of the abuses which accompanied slave-owning, such as flogging of slaves.

What of the people who campaigned to end the evils of slavery? They couldn't, of course, claim Biblical Backing for their campaigning, any more than the people who opposed the persecution of alleged witches. The Bible is silent about so many very important matters, including the ending of slavery, and gives hideous rulings on others, including the persecution of witches. The King James Bible, completed in 1611, saw the scriptures rewritten to further the King's agenda. Exodus 22:18 in the King James version: "Thou must not suffer a witch to live." The Good News Translation is 'Put to death any woman who practices magic.'

Were there two kinds of anti-slavery campaigner, the campaigners whose sins were forgiven, and the campaigners whose sins were unforgiven? Were there two kinds of people opposed to slavery? See the section on Michael Dormany, the evangelical chaplain of Christ's College, Cambridge, which includes information about Charles Darwin's opposition to slavery and about his abandonment of belief in Christianity.

Quakers played a very important part in ending the evils of slavery, but Quakers are without the all-important belief in Jesus Christ. Evangelicals and many other Christians would be confident that the Quaker reformers didn't qualify for eternal life. William Wilberforce, in contrast, was an evangelical Christian and did qualify.

William Wilberforce's contribution to the ending of slavery

important to committed Chris

In the Christmas season, I've often - the very popular carol jubilo,' 'Es ist ein Ros entsprungen' bounden.' And, of course, Ba Again, the music is far more i most people.

Remembrance Day commemorates involvement of the Church of than before, but the commem Consideration could be given service of men and women in directly after the commemora previous conflicts. At present, late June. Moving these even Sunday would make sense. Armed forces attend Remem they would obviously take pai commemorate the service of general public would be free i commemoration of the fallen commemoration of the present parts.

Christian believers would, of religious service later in the d Park in Sheffield, a wreath lay commemorate the crew of the which crashed in the park on ceremony is held on the Sun's little later, a service takes place which is not far from the crash but not the Church service, as This is the pattern which sho

A replacement for the present services (again, the ones attended not the ones in Churches) is November 11, 2018, I attended service in a nearby park, as I usually attend, in Sheffield city the religiosity dispiriting, but it this year which marked the cent First World War, there had been much more about the soldiers' part in this war, but for most of upon human life but upon the generalities. Not in evidence: complexities, of harshness, it have probed. The achievement written about the First World more widely recognized. Their high level, so often - magnificent event isn't a suitable venue for complexities, but a Remembrance place for a clergyman to give of historical events, present in fact.

This is what the clergyman did his address, he claimed that peace had replaced war. This replaced war, for the time being hope had replaced 'futility.' The First World War had been a fight have contested this claim and evidence that the claim is mis

In the booklet which gives the text which forms the main words of the Reverend Canon's response expected of the put

Examples from the booklet:

After each prayer the following was given to proof-reading] w

Officiant Lord, in your mercy. All hear our prayer

So, people at the commemoration expected to make an exception with the expectation that God

Later:

Officiant Will you seek to hear All We will

The officiant, like most of those them, has no way of healing t

Officiant Will you work for a j All We will.

Any idea that injustices in violence in liberal, enlightenment that all humanity has a just future deluded. Any idea that people be expected to give assent to

The service included five 'Requ delivered by the officiant. This

involvement in persecution. The birth of this literary masterwork (a literary masterwork to some extent) was accompanied by hideous torture and burning at the stake.

From the Website of the British Library
<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/king-james-vi-and-is-demonology-1597>

'In 1597, King James VI of Scotland published a compendium on witchcraft lore called *Daemonologie*. It was also published in England in 1603 when James acceded to the English throne.

'The book asserts James's full belief in magic and witchcraft, and aims to both prove the existence of such forces and to lay down what sort of trial and punishment these practices merit – in James's view, death.'

From the site

<http://www.wondersandmarvels.com/2014/07/king-james-i-demonologist.html>

'James personally oversaw the trials by torture for around seventy individuals implicated in the North Berwick Witch Trials, the biggest Scotland had known ... The trial resulted in possibly dozens of people burned at the stake, although the precise number is unknown.

'In 1597, James published *Daemonologie*, his rebuttal of Reginald Scot's skeptical work, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, which questioned the very existence of witches. *Daemonologie* was an alarmist book, presenting the idea of a vast conspiracy of satanic witches threatening to undermine the nation.

'In 1604, only one year after James ascended to the English throne, he passed his new Witchcraft Act, which made raising spirits a crime punishable by execution.

...

'In 1612, the King's paranoid fantasy of satanic conspiracy, planted in the minds of local magistrates eager to win his favor, culminated in one of the key manifestations of the Jacobean witch-craze—the trials of the Lancashire Witches, accused of plotting to blow up Lancaster Castle with gunpowder. Eight women and two men were executed.

James's legacy extends even into our age. The King James Bible, completed in 1611, saw the scriptures rewritten to further the King's agenda. Exodus 22:18, originally translated as, "Thou must not suffer a poisoner to live," became "Thou must not suffer a witch to live."

The reference to 'poisoner' here is mistaken. The Hebrew word does not mean 'poisoner.' The translation is subject to some dispute but all plausible translations give an instruction which will be condemned, rightly so. The Good News Translation is

'Put to death any woman who practices magic.'

In his epistle to the Galatians (5:19-21) St Paul condemns various sins, 'works of the flesh' in the King James translation, including, in this translation, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, drunkenness, revellings - and, also, witchcraft and heresies. At the time of the translation, witches were burned alive and heretics were burned alive.

Whether the translation of the Bible has grandeur or is plain and contemporary, Biblical Christianity is a hideous thing.

Below, the Apotheosis of King James I by Rubens, at the Banqueting House, Whitehall



was very, very important, although believers in the Bible doctrine of salvation will obviously regard his contribution as far less important than the fact that he accepted Christ as his Lord and Saviour.

Wilberforce had some serious faults - although believers in the Bible doctrine of salvation will regard them as unimportant.

The radical writer William Cobbett pointed out that Wilberforce campaigned for slaves but not for workers in Britain. He wrote, 'Never have you done one single act, in favour of the labourers of this country. Wilberforce opposed the granting of the right to workers to organise and join unions. In 1799, he spoke in favour of the Combination Act, which suppressed union activities. He called unions 'a general disease in our society.'

Very much concerned by what he thought of as the degeneracy of British society, Wilberforce campaigned against 'the torrent of profaneness that every day makes more rapid advances. He considered this issue as important as the abolition of the slave trade. At his prompting, and the prompting of a Bishop, King George III was requested by the Archbishop of Canterbury to issue in 1787 the Proclamation for the Discouragement of Vice, which urged the prosecution of those guilty of 'excessive drinking, blasphemy, profane swearing and cursing, lewdness, profanation of the Lord's Day, and other dissolute, immoral or disorderly practices.' To this end, he founded the 'Society for the Suppression of Vice.'

A contemporary example of an evangelical Christian's obsessions and his neglect of horrific abuse and cruelties.

Stephen Holland isn't a member of the Church of England. He's an evangelical minister who has many Youtube videos to his credit - or many Youtube videos where his mediocrity and stupidity are obvious. One of them has the title,

'Objection to the Bishop of London Sarah Mullally, and some good books.'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=k8tNbOnVDoQ

He's protested at services where women are consecrated. This is from the site 'Christian Today.' It includes some of his comments.

'It is not my intention to prevent these ungodly practices, but rather to voice a public objection to them.'

He makes his objection during the part of the consecration service where the question is asked of the congregation: "Is it now your will that they should be ordained?"

He answers: 'No, in the name of Almighty God I protest. There are no women bishops in the Bible.'

All the books visible in the Youtube fiasco are Biblical commentaries.

The case of John Smyth: an evangelical Christian's obsessions - ones much worse than the obsessions of Stephen Holland - and his infliction of horrific abuse and cruelty. He was a leader in the evangelical Iwerne Trust which was active in promoting evangelical holiday camps. He subjected boys to lashings with a garden cane, thousands of strokes each.

A report on the incidents was made by the Trust in 1982 but not made public until 2016. It was not until 2013 that the claims were reported to police. After the horrific abuse came into the public domain, the Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson, released a statement accusing Smyth of giving him a 'violent, excruciating and shocking beating' as a young man on a single occasion.

There's abundance evidence that John Smyth was sadistic

prayer for the York and Lanc opening is another instance c

'Almighty God who cans't save bid us to endure to the end th strengthen we pray thee, The Regiment, that, as our perseve wanting in battle, so we may l temptations, and at length, re through Jesus Christ our Lorc

All Amen.

This is a prayer which among strengthen The York and Lan defences are badly in need o insufficient recruits, there's in forces aren't given the resour challenges they face. Nations by well-known means, finding decision has been taken to t countries) by changes to the rest. Is it worth asking God to defences? Surely not, and it's God to strengthen the York ai

The Collect makes clear refer of salvation: '... that we migh of Christian doctrine which I've Which people, according to t Justin Welby, to name just tw are the criteria? The evangeli restrictive. The saved are far damned.

I do, though, commend the la booklet and specifically the la

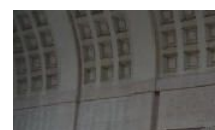
'Lest we forget. The First Wor am on 11th November 1918. ended on 8th May (Europe a East.) Let us also remember : Forces who are currently dep wide.

As I've explained, a dual com day service of the British arm commemoration of those whc me to be a promising develop

Not all the prayers used in the booklet. There was, for exam leaders, asking God to grant i political system be strengther to grant wisdom to Theresa M Would it help Jeremy Corbyn to grant him wisdom as well? realities of politics are far aw: exercise of prayer and respor take part in the charade is no

The Church of England may v some of the people who alter service and who aren't church goers. It would be unf: the primary motivation of the this may happen, but far more people who attend who have who have a more general inte major conflicts, the enormity effects of much smaller confli deterred by the nature of the public activity confined to the the clergy, the saying of the L the singing of hymns. This is respond to the upsurge in put this Centenary.

The Menin Gate Memorial at names of 54 389 officers and and Commonwealth Forces v before 16 August 1917 and w





Below, Edward Wightman being burned alive. He was the last person to be burned alive for heresy in this country, in 1612. Only three weeks before, Bartholomew Legate had been burned alive for heresy. Both had denied the doctrine of the Trinity. Edward Wightman had also questioned the status of the Church of England. The charges against him included these:

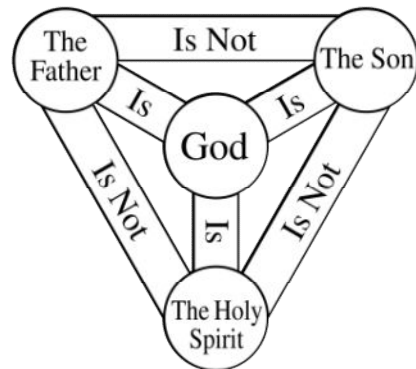
That there is no Trinity;

That Jesus Christ is not God, perfect God and of the same substance, eternity and majesty with the Father in respect of his God-head;

That Christianity is not wholly professed and preached in the Church of England, but only in part.



Below, a diagram which is supposed to explain the mysteries and paradoxes of the Trinity: why Michael Servetus, Edward Wightman and Bartholomew Legate and all the other disbelievers were mistaken, according to Trinitarians.



Feeding the hungry and the Sermon on the Mount

and abundant evidence that he believed in the Son of God. Since the Church is 'a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints,' in the opinion of many, and since he seems to have satisfied the criteria for redemption laid down in St John's Gospel and so many other sources, it seems that, unlike so many, he qualified for eternal life.

Outwardly, he had a successful conventional career and led a conventional evangelical life. His Alma Mater was Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He was called to the Bar at Inner Temple and had a senior legal post, as a Recorder.

In July 1977, Smyth acted for Mary Whitehouse, the Christian morality campaigner, in her successful private prosecution for blasphemy at the Old Bailey against Gay News, which had published James Kirkup's poem 'The Love that dares to speak its name.' In 2005, he opposed the legalisation of same-sex marriage in South Africa. He claimed that to introduce same-sex marriage, would result in 'violence to the mind and spirit' of the religiously devout and that it would discriminate against them. On this occasion he was unsuccessful.

Church Society, a Conservative Evangelical group in the Church of England:

'... all people are under the judgement of God and his righteous anger burns against them. Unless a person is reconciled to God they are under His condemnation and His just judgement against them is that they will be separated from Him forever in Hell. (Romans 1 v18, 2 v16, Revelation 20 v15)

'Jesus will come back and the world will end, there will then be a final judgement where those who have not accepted Jesus will be cast into hell with Satan and his angels. Christians will receive new bodies and live in eternal bliss in the presence of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. (Hebrews 9 v27, Revelation 20 v11, 1 Corinthians 15 v51)

'The biblical way of salvation has often been attacked over the centuries, however it is stated clearly in the 39 Articles of the Church of England:

Article 6: Of the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation.

Article 1: Faith in the Holy Trinity

Article 9: Of Original or Birth-sin

Article 2: The Word, or Son of God, who became truly man

Article 4: The resurrection of Christ

Article 11: Of the Justification of Man

'Unless a person is reconciled to God they are under his condemnation ...' Good works are no defence. Article XII 'Of Good Works' states

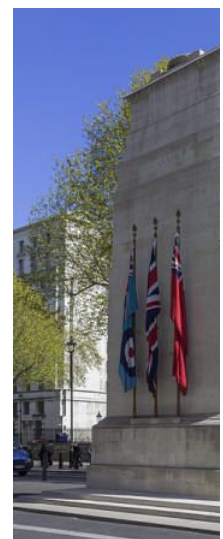
'Good Works ... cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgement.' Whether the good works include bringing safe drinking water to people ravaged by water-borne diseases such as cholera by means of massive engineering works, or rescuing Jews from the Nazis, or opposing the Nazis by heroic action in battle, or everyday goodness and self-sacrifice, if there's no belief in Jesus Christ, the good works are ignored, in this loathsome scheme, and there's no salvation.

On this page, there's a profile of the Bishop of Sheffield. He describes himself as an evangelical, with conservative tendencies. A public statement of his faith would be useful -- the aspects which concern salvation and redemption and who qualifies for salvation.



The Conservative Evangelical names here is utterly repulsive. Evangelicals happen to believe all attached to disbelief in Jesus. Lack of interest in Jesus Christ more liberal Anglicans can try disadvantages there can be to or an atheist.

In all this, I must stress, I feel Christians who share my view remembrance than with those that wearing a poppy is 'glorify' Christians can share a common vast numbers of Christians with outstanding. One of them is a Canterbury, Robert Runcie, with his acts of courage. He was a soldier to enter Bergen-Belsen liberation by the British army.



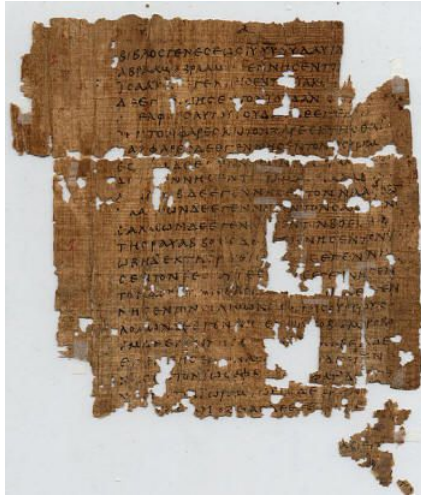
Dan Snow, 'Remembrance dominated by religion.'

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/06/r-secular-presence>

'After the first world war the Cenotaph as a secular monument dead were from a dizzying array of creeds. The prime minister, Lloyd George, insisted on a secular proposal. The government rejected an alternative proposal. The government of England proposals that it should be on it or a cross on top of it. At November 1919, the King's speech was two minutes silence. He was appalled by the lack of ritual.

'The Cenotaph is a state monument. About 26,000 serving men today describe themselves as makes the non-religious the service (after Christianity). We cannot representative of these serving men the tens of thousands served in the world wars -- many of his comrades.

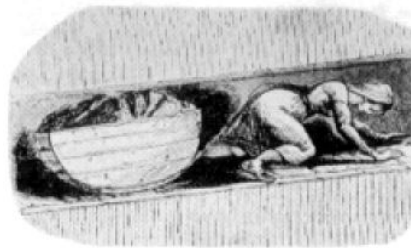
'Remembrance is one of our citizens. The act itself must be relevant and profound today conceived. It must reflect the



Above, a page from The Gospel according to Matthew, from Papyrus 1, c. 250 AD

Justification by faith and justification by works are too very different positions in Christian theology. In that chaotic work 'The Bible' there's support for 'justification by works' in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats: good deeds are the way to salvation, not so much belief in the saviour. Given the hideous complexities of reality, even an omnipotent God would surely be unable to direct people to the grossly simplified alternative of 'sheep' or 'goat.' The Bishop of Sheffield has made it clear that the Bible is very important for him - perhaps he could make clear some of the chaotic contradictions of the Bible?

When God takes into account the competing claims of Bible-reading, praying to Himself, attendance at Church services, eliminating the agents of Satan, eliminating witches, engineering work to provide safe drinking water, bacteriological advances to identify and reduce the risk of pathological bacteria, advancing pure mathematics, furthering enlightened administration, overcoming or failing to overcome a hideous childhood, how does he decide to award the coveted status: 'Worthy of eternal life?'



Until the abolition of child labour, for so many, childhood, and youth, was the time for back-breaking work in almost complete darkness, youth was the season for hauling almost impossible loads, for inhaling coal dust, for risking crushing, drowning in the underground waters, and for being torn limb from limb.



Above, a combine harvester

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Were there two categories of child labourers in the coal mines - the ones who accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and the ones who may have heard about Jesus at Sunday School, if they ever attended Sunday School, but who gave no further thought to the salvation of their souls, being too preoccupied with the horrors of life underground?



Above, tractor working the land in Norfolk

Christianity makes human sin (a form of human error) responsible for a vast amount of human misery. In the past, human sin was often supposed to be responsible for earthquakes, but present-day Christians are far less likely to believe in that, more likely to believe in the scientific explanations for earthquakes, in this case, seismology. Traditional Christianity gave explanations for the occurrence of coal seams and copper ore - 'In the beginning, God created Heaven and earth.' Science gives explanations for the occurrence of coal seams and copper ore too. The traditional Christian explanation leaves us wondering why the coal seams and the copper ore should have been placed in such a way as to require back-breaking, dangerous work to make use of them.

This is a very brief survey of some of the issues, but none the worse for that, I'd hope. In my page on Nietzsche, I quote this, from his book 'Twilight of the Idols':

'... my ambition is to say in ten sentences what everyone else says in a book - what everyone else does not say in a book...'

I'd claim that the arguments I give here are ones which are missing from much longer discussions of the issues. In my page on Nietzsche, my loathing for him will be obvious. I criticize his criticism of pity. I criticize him for his neglect of the material conditions of life, which is the focus of attention here:

Are there two categories of builders and other skilled trades - including the builders and others who have built churches - plasterers, roofers, scaffolders - and two categories of architect, structural engineer and mechanical engineer - without whose work people would be living in the open or in crude shelters - the believers in God's 'one and only son' and the rest, the majority, deprived of 'eternal life?'

Are there two categories of loving mothers and loving fathers, the ones who never qualified for eternal life, and the ones who did meet the Christian criteria?



'He criticizes the Christian tendency to overlook the needs of the body but largely ignores the material conditions of life. It was impossible to satisfy the fundamental needs of the body until the industrial revolution transformed the material conditions of life.'



Above, Selwyn College

The Sermon on the Mount isn't concerned with the material conditions of life. These are addressed in the margins of the New Testament. The feeding of the hungry is a practical problem which is addressed only in two 'miracles' of Jesus reported in the Gospels.

Ian McFarland is a Fellow of Selwyn College and the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University. He's the author of 'In Adam's Fall: A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin.' There's a remarkably revealing interview with him which was published in the 'Church Times.'

The first 'miracle,' the 'Feeding of the 5, 000' is reported by all four gospels: Matthew 14: 13-21, Mark 6:31-44, Luke 9:12-17, John 6:1-14.)

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/20-april/features/interviews/interview-ian-mcfarland-regius-professor-of-divinity-cambridge>

The second 'miracle,' the 'Feeding of the 4,000', with seven loaves of bread and fish, is reported by Matthew 15:32-39 and Mark 8:1-9.

Some statements he came up with:

The accounts in Matthew of the feeding of the 5, 000, the feeding of the 4, 000 and the Sermon on the Mount all refer to 'multitude' or 'multitudes,' in the original Greek ὄχλον and τοὺς ὄχλους. The word can be translated in ways which are very different: crowd, populace, throng, mob, the masses.

I was the oldest of three, in a comfortable childhood in a standard US nuclear family.

During term, pretty much all my time is devoted to teaching and administration.

These 'miracles' are irrelevant to the practical problems of feeding the hungry. Doctrines of salvation can easily be constructed from the New Testament record, but not practical advice to do with the prevention of famine or the prevention of plague or the healing of disease or the death of women in childbirth. Christians have taken it for granted that people subject to such terrible burdens as these can overlook their burdens and are free to consider the welfare of the soul, the merits of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. So, Jesus came to earth and gave advice about all kinds of spiritual matters, but gave no advice about such problems as feeding the people, releasing people from the Malthusian nightmare of too many births and insufficient resources. Release from the consequences of sin is adequately covered - at least to the satisfaction of people convinced that the doctrine of salvation they believe is the true one - not so release from the scourges of infectious disease.

One reason Cambridge was attractive to me is that terms are short and vacations relatively generous, and, during vacations, I can devote myself pretty much full-time to research.

Original sin teaches that all human beings are equal in their captivity to sin.

On original sin I'm pretty Augustinian.

The confession that Jesus is the saviour of us all means we all need saving — we're all caught up in the dynamics of sin.

For me, the experience of God comes when I hear the Word preached and receive the sacrament. That's God addressing me — if I have the wit to listen.

Here, I concentrate on release from the scourge of famine. From the page where I criticize Green ideology:

Professor McFarland has many advantages, it seems: a comfortable, sheltered life, now including very generous vacations (not 'relatively' generous vacations, surely), and also, the assurance of salvation. The people I mention in various places on this page and on other pages on this site, the slaves, the child labourers, the miners, and others, led lives which were different in every way, dominated by dangerous, back-breaking work and without the assurance of salvation, except for a few. Unbaptized babies and infants too young to work went to hell as a consequence of original sin, according to St Augustine. An extended study of the theology of St Augustine would make it clear that his statement, 'On original sin I'm pretty Augustinian' has very, very disturbing implications.

'On the back cover of Peter Mathias's 'The First Industrial Nation': 'The fate of the overwhelming mass of the population in any pre-industrial society is to pass their lives on the margins of subsistence. It was only in the eighteenth century that society in north-west Europe, particularly in England, began the break with all former traditions of economic life.'

Ludwig Wittgenstein's 'Philosophical Investigations' (which begins with an extended quotation from Augustine, 'Confessions,' I.8, to introduce the discussion of issues in the philosophy of language) contains this claim,

'In the 'Prologue,' this is elaborated: 'The elemental truth must be stressed that the characteristic of any country before its industrial revolution and modernization is poverty. Life on the margin of subsistence is an inevitable condition for the masses of any nation. Doubtless there will be a ruling class, based on the economic surplus produced from the land or trade and office, often living in extreme luxury. There may well be magnificent cultural monuments and very wealthy religious institutions. [There are many images on this page which show 'magnificent cultural monuments' and 'very wealthy religious institutions,' the images which show King's College Chapel and St Paul's Cathedral] But with low productivity, low output per head, in traditional agriculture, any economy which has agriculture as the main constituent of its national income and its working force does not produce much of a surplus above the immediate requirements of consumption from its economic system as a whole ... The population as a whole, whether of medieval or seventeenth-century England, or nineteenth-century India, lives close to the tyranny of nature under the threat of harvest failure or disease ... The graphs which show high real wages and good purchasing power of wages in some periods tend to reflect conditions in the aftermath of plague and endemic disease.'

'[philosophy] leaves everything as it is.'

All the advances and nuances of Professor McFarland in his quest to understand sin, including original sin, leave so much of dead doctrinal content intact.

'Original sin teaches that all human beings are equal in their captivity to sin.' Professor McFarland, do you really believe that the people who rescued Jews at immense personal risk, the people who fought to liberate the death camps, the people who fought to end the Nazi nightmare, are 'equal in their captivity to sin' with Himmler and other architects of the Final Solution, with Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz and other implementers of the Final Solution?

'Larry Zuckerman, 'The Potato': 'Famine struck France thirteen times in the sixteenth century, eleven in the seventeenth, and sixteen in the eighteenth. And this tally is an estimate, perhaps incomplete, and includes general

an estimate, perhaps incomplete, and not only general outbreaks only. It doesn't count local famines that ravaged one area or another almost yearly. Grain's enemy was less cold weather (though that took its toll) or storms, which damaged crops in localities, than wet summers, which prevented the grain from ripening and caused it to rot.'

Desperate poverty in pre-industrial societies and the early period of industrialisation required that 'every member of a family who could work did so, down to young children.' ('The Potato'). And child labour, 'though among the industrial revolution's evils, wasn't restricted to factory or home workshop. Farm workers' six- and seven-year-old children toiled long days too.'

'What ended grinding poverty (the poverty of being clothed in filthy rags as well as the poverty of not having very many clothes), what eventually freed these children from work in mines, factories, workshops, the fields, what gave men, women and children increasing relief from back-breaking work, was greater productivity.'

The problem of thirst - material thirst - was addressed in a magnificent way, by the construction of reservoirs, which has involved large scale civil engineering. At last, clean drinking water was available in large quantity. The most significant cause of human disease is lack of clean drinking water and lack of adequate sewage disposal - problems which Jesus neglected.

The Sermon on the Mount doesn't mention material hunger, or material thirst. Instead, we have this (Matthew 5:6):

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.'

This has the advantage of resonance, to an extent. It sounds good, to an extent. In the modern Church, as previously, sounding good and looking good have the advantage over approaches which are ethically good or realistically good. The translation here is the King James Bible, examined and criticized on this page. I point out that King James was a persecutor of women he considered witches.

Our dilemmas and difficulties aren't solved and aren't treated realistically by producing a Biblical quote, such as some superficial words of Jesus - overlooking, of course, the difficulties of deciding if the words were used by Jesus at all. The 'teaching' of Jesus recorded in the gospel according to St John which doesn't appear in the synoptic gospels - this is a reminder of the difficulties. Any idea that the synoptic gospels are a reliable source of information is ridiculous. The simple faith of ordinary people requires a recourse to complex matters to do with advanced textual scholarship. Before any claim that 'Jesus said ...' or 'Jesus taught, the word 'allegedly' should be inserted. An additional source of difficulty and confusion is to do with translation. One translation may convey one impression, a different translation a different one. The King James bible gives 'blessed' as a translation of the New Testament Greek word Μακάριοι the plural of μακάριος. The word can also be translated as 'happy.'

Familiarity with the original languages hasn't protected Christian commentators from misrepresentation and outright stupidity. Christian commentators have often claimed, for example, that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is supported by the fact that the word for 'God' in Hebrew is a plural word, אֱלֹהִים. The word appears in the first verse of Genesis, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'

Of course, 'heaven' and 'earth' here belong to a simple, superseded cosmology and to accept that God created these is to ignore all the scientific evidence. If it's claimed that this is a literal approach and that anyone who takes it is ignoring the depth of the original, perhaps claimed to be symbolic rather than literal, I'd say that it's not profound, and that to take this approach is ruinous for clear-sighted thinking. Honest thinking and honest feeling are both distinct from manipulated and superstitious thinking and from the feeling which flourishes when unchecked.

The connotations of 'happy' are very different from those of

'We all need saving — we're all caught up in the dynamics of sin.'

Has Professor McFarland considered some of the implications of this claim?

'We all need saving,' according to Professor McFarland, but only some will be saved. Above, I discuss the salvation of slaves, the salvation of mine workers, including child mine workers, and other groups. Cambridge undergraduates, graduates, academic staff and other staff are obviously in need of salvation too, according to Professor McFarland.

The perspective which views people in this way is hideously distorted. Does he really believe that applicants to Selwyn College should be viewed first and foremost as candidates for salvation (or damnation)? Selwyn's reputation for intellectual integrity - and reputation for intellectual common sense - is compromised by allowing these hopelessly bad views on sin, original sin, salvation and damnation to go unchallenged.

The fellows of Selwyn College pursue research interests in fields as varied as nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, palaeobiology, computational fluid dynamics, digital fabrication, compressible gas flow and topology, whilst one fellow, Professor McFarland, pursues a research interest in original sin. He's the author of the book 'In Adam's Fall: A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin,' and not from a skeptical perspective, one which finds the doctrine unable to explain the imperfections of our world.

This could be called incongruous, grotesque, deeply depressing and many other things. Given the hideous implications of the doctrine - which include the ignoring of a person's contributions to magnificent areas of human achievement in science, engineering, music, historical study, literary study and many more, since salvation and damnation have nothing to do with such things, since the sin of the sinful contributor to science, engineering and the rest is far more important - I think a much harsher word is called for.

Why anyone should be expected to waste years studying theology at Cambridge University under the guidance of such people as the Regius Professor of Casuistry is a mystery. Why Selwyn College appointed Professor McFarland as a Fellow of the College is a mystery.

The unfortunate fact is that some of his Augustinian views are reflected in mainstream Christianity, including the verse which opens this section

For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' John 3: 16 (World English Bible).

Supplementary material:

This is one of the 'unsaved sinners.' From my page on the death penalty:

'Chronically psychotic and brain damaged, Johnny Garrett had a long history of mental illness and was severely physically and sexually abused as a child, which the jury never knew. He was described by a psychiatrist as "one of the most psychiatrically impaired inmates" she had ever examined, and by a psychologist as having "one of the most virulent histories of abuse and neglect... encountered in over 28 years of practice". Garrett was frequently beaten by his father and stepfathers. On one occasion, when he would not stop crying, he was put on the burner of a hot stove, and retained the burn scars until his death. He was raped by a stepfather who then hired him to another man for sex. It was also reported that from the age of 14 he was forced to perform bizarre sexual acts and participate in pornographic films. Introduced to alcohol by his family

'blessed.' Happiness, unlike blessedness, has rarely been prominent in Christian belief before contemporary times. Happiness began to count in the Age of the Enlightenment. Louis de Saint-just, prominent during the French Revolution, claimed that 'le bonheur est une idée neuve en europe' ('happiness is a new idea in Europe.')

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus allegedly said, according to Matthew (5:4), 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.'

In times of war as in times of peace, those who mourn for loved ones they have lost have no reason to be comforted, if the loved ones they have lost never accepted Jesus Christ as their personal lord and saviour. The confused and contradictory theology of the Bible is clear enough about this. The belief of St Paul and countless other followers of Christ is that these loved ones are lost.

The words of the Bible never give an adequate treatment of any issue of any complexity. The alleged saying of Jesus, 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's' (Matthew 22:21) is useless as a guide to the many, many problems to do with the relationship between Christian duty - or 'duty' - and practice and the demands of a secular state. The alleged words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God' are useless in guiding those who try to end a war. Ending the First World War and ending the Second World War entailed issues of vast complexity, to do with military realities, economic and financial realities, the competing claims of humanitarianism and harshness, the realities of displaced people, and so much else.

The combine harvester - one of them is shown at the beginning of this section - is a very versatile machine, capable of harvesting a wide variety of grain crops, including wheat, oats, barley, maize soya beans, flax and sunflowers. It's one of the most important labour-saving inventions (and human suffering-saving inventions, freeing humanity from the suffering which arises from hunger and famine, the suffering which arises from limited agricultural productivity).

The straw which is left can be chopped up and spread on the field, or converted into straw bales. I've a great interest in straw bales, which I use in my allotments for construction and other purposes. To me, they have aesthetic as well as practical importance. This is an image from my page Gardening, construction: introduction, with photographs.



The combine harvester and the tractor shown in the photographs at the beginning of this section are working in good weather conditions. If bad weather is forecast, the Church of England has helpful advice for Anglican combine harvester and tractor drivers. It makes use of the prayer-phone to God.

photographs which introduced to children by the family when he was 10, he subsequently indulged in serious substance abuse involving brain-damaging substances such as paint, thinner and amphetamines. The US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld a state court finding that his belief that his dead aunt would protect him from the chemicals used in the lethal injection did not render him incompetent to be executed (for a murder committed when he was aged 17.)

Did God decide that Johnny Garrett deserved to be included with the sheep or the goats? Were his good works sufficient for him to be included with the sheep? According to the alternative criterion, did God decide that Johnny Garrett should not perish but have everlasting life, since he'd accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour? Very, very unlikely.

What of his executioner, the one who pressed the button to end his life? Was this a good act or a bad act, was the executioner a sheep or a goat? Or, alternatively, according to a contradictory aspect of Christian theology, was the executioner someone who believed in Christ or not?

Eternal damnation isn't stressed nearly as much in Christian circles now, but every Christmas, Christians - the ordained in fancy dress at the King's College Christmas service and the less lucky ones in vandalized city churches - insist that being a Christian gives certain advantages. What advantages, exactly? Are there long-term consequences (eternal hellfire or lesser disadvantages) for non-believers, the ones too busy to believe or to investigate the advantages of belief, the ones too chronically abused to believe or to investigate the advantages of belief, all the others who fail the test?

From my page Poems, a poem on the sufferings of children working in the mines. The poem is discussed in the section strata poetry of my page on Concrete Poetry.

Mines

The mines are mined, full of damp and firedamp

waterfalls, rock falls, rocked by explosions,

flooded with poisonous afterdamp.

Their bodies are like roof timbers,

rotting and groaning with the weight.

Everything here is heavy and hard,

they are heaving and hauling constantly.

They work as fast as they possibly can,

painfully slowly.

Here is where they come, the children,

to become useful members of society,

here is where they work,

where not even moss can grow.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons/agricultural-year>

'Prayer in Times of Agricultural Crisis

'Two forms of prayer are provided. The first is a prayer that can be used as a basis for corporate response to a time of crisis. The second is for seasonable weather, and may be used in times when heavy rain or flooding or indeed lack of rain prejudices the crops, or when severe or extreme weather endangers the harvest and the welfare of animals.'

The book 'Atmosphere, weather and climate' (Sixth Edition) by Roger G Barry and Richard J Chorley includes this:

'The most notorious type of cyclone is the tropical hurricane (or typhoon). Some 80 or so cyclones each year are responsible, on average, for 20,000 fatalities, as well as causing immense damage to property and a serious shipping hazard, due to the combined effects of high winds, high seas, flooding from the heavy rainfall and coastal storm surges.' The book outlines the science which underlies cyclones, including such branches of science as atmospheric physics. An example:

'Enhancement of a storm system by cumulus convection is termed Conditional Instability of the Second Kind ... the thermally direct circulation converts the heat increment into potential energy and a small fraction of this - about 3 per cent - is transformed into kinetic energy ...

'In the eye, or innermost region of the storm, adiabatic warming of descending air accentuates the high temperatures ...'

The physical processes which underlie the world's weather are of vast complexity. Scientific advances have made possible control in innumerable cases, but not so in the case of weather systems. Scientific advances have made it possible to forecast adverse weather in many cases, and the advance warning often enables lives to be saved and property to be safeguarded by taking preventive action.

Praying that God will change the weather to benefit the people praying is futile, ridiculous and stupid, and by mentioning this on the Church of England Website, the Church is making itself look futile, ridiculous and stupid. What are the mechanisms by which God changes the weather when prayer reaches him? Does God alter adiabatic warming, or the fraction of potential energy transformed into kinetic energy?

Calming the storm is one of the miracles of Jesus, reported in all the Synoptic gospel accounts - this is reporting which bears no resemblance to the reporting which can be found in good or moderately trustworthy newspapers.

This is the account in Matthew, 8: 23 - 27 in the King James Bible:

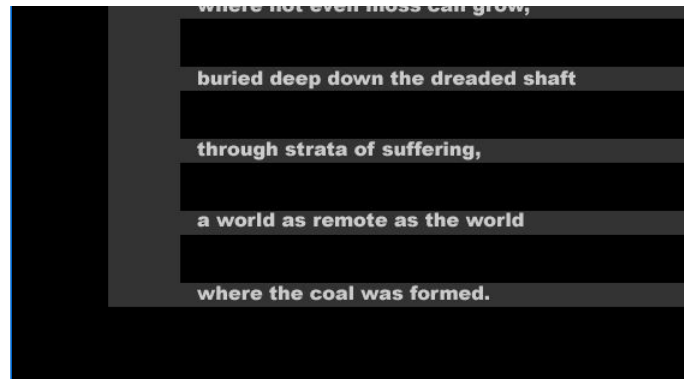
23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!



The Bible authors neglected almost entirely the issue of cruelty to animals. Soon after the slaves in the British empire were freed, bull-baiting and bear-baiting were made illegal. The frenzied attacks of the dogs on tethered bulls and bears in cities, towns and villages which had never bothered the vast majority of the population, including the vast majority of Roman Catholic clergy and Church of England clergy, was at an end.



Credit: Jules and Jenny

Bear-baiting, depicted in this misericord in St Mary's Church, Beverley.

From Schopenhauer's 'Parerga and Paralipomena,' the chapter on 'Religion.'

'I heard from a reliable source that, when asked by a society for the protection of animals to preach a sermon against cruelty to them, a Protestant clergyman replied that, with the best will in the world, he could not do so because in this matter religion gave him no support.'

This is a contemporary translation, to be found in The Good News Bible. As will be obvious, a translation into contemporary English doesn't translate a superstitious world view of natural processes into a contemporary world view.

3 Jesus got into a boat, and his disciples went with him.
24 Suddenly a fierce storm hit the lake, and the boat was in danger of sinking. But Jesus was asleep. 25 The disciples went to him and woke him up. "Save us, Lord!" they said. "We are about to die!"

26 "Why are you so frightened?" Jesus answered. "How little faith you have!" Then he got up and ordered the winds and the waves to stop, and there was a great calm.

27 Everyone was amazed. "What kind of man is this?" they said. "Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Compare and contrast the miracles of Jesus which amount to faith healing and scientific medicine. It's sometimes claimed that historical progress is an illusion. Although there are vast numbers of credulous people now, including vast numbers of credulous Christians, the credulous Christians of past centuries were more credulous, far more dangerous in their credulity, than the Christians of today.

This is the storm as depicted by Rembrandt in one of his lesser great works:



Art and architecture do nothing to demonstrate that a religious doctrine is trustworthy (there are wider implications.)

To confine attention to great artists, the art of a great artist can't demonstrate any of these:

That Jesus calmed a storm on the Sea of Galilee
That Jesus was crucified as a matter of historical record, or
that Jesus was crucified for our sins
That Jesus was born in a stable, or that Jesus was born
anywhere else
That St Peter founded the Roman Catholic Church
That the Assumption of the Virgin Mary took place

See also my discussion of art works of music as well as pictorial art) and architecture in King's College Chapel. The architecture of King's College Chapel doesn't validate Christian belief, either pre-Reformation belief or post-Reformation belief. The quality of the choral singing in King's College Chapel doesn't validate Christian belief, in any of its contradictory manifestations.

These are instances of the {theme} {separation}.

My pages on literature should leave no doubt that there are ways of looking and ways of thinking which are separate from economic and technological (and humanitarian) perspectives. In the case of grain, this is one of them, a well-known example. From Thomas Traherne's 'Centuries of Meditations:'
'The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting.'

The C of E, a broad, divided church: a time to leave

The Labour Party, like the Church of England, has often been described as a 'broad church.'

The Labour Party has members who want to 'smash capitalism' and members who are happy to maintain an economy with a mixture of private sector and public sector components. The Labour Party has members who are outright anti-semites and people who belong to the organization 'Labour Friends of Israel,' people who are Brexiteers and people who are remainers, supporters of Corbyn and loathers of Corbyn. Some differences can easily be tolerated in this broad church, but most of these are far too deep to be tolerated. The people holding one set of opinions should belong to a completely different organization.

Of course, some Labour Party MP's have decided to leave - people who detest antisemitism, the Labour Party leader and brexit, particularly leaving the EU with no deal.

The divisions in the Church of England are no less marked. There are evangelicals who believe in hellfire and people whose faith is very vague. Not only are there evangelicals, anglo-catholics and 'liberals,' there are people with a lapsed faith, people who are no longer believers but who choose to remain in the church.

This is passive avoidance. The broad church is grotesque. The time has come to leave. Evangelicals can get out, or the liberals or the anglo-catholics, or some combination of these.

Profiles

Pete Wilcox, Bishop of Sheffield

This is a copy of a letter I wrote which was published in the Sheffield newspaper 'The Star' on January 28, 2019. It can also be found at

<https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/your-say/can-public-c-of-e-services-be-defended-1-9560350>

The letter gives a brief summary of my reasons for opposing the Church of England's role at Remembrance Sunday commemorations. The letter contains this direct question: '... does he believe that C of E Remembrance services for the general public can be defended?' It may be that the Bishop doesn't read the newspaper, or didn't see this particular issue of the newspaper, or that some of the clergy at Sheffield Cathedral did see the letter but thought it might be tactless to bring it to the attention of the Bishop, or that the Bishop did read the letter and thought that the matter wasn't important enough for him to reply, or that he couldn't think of a defence. I won't speculate any further. The letter published in 'The Star:'

'According to the British Social Attitudes Survey, affiliation with the Church of England (C of E) has never been lower in all age groups: it amounts to only 2% of young adults.

'What can justify the C of E's dominant role in Remembrance Sunday commemorations, then? I attend the event in the city centre or at Weston Park. Like ones throughout the country, it takes the form of a C of E

service.

'There are many, many prayers and after each one, this is the expected response (as given in the Order of Service booklet):

'All Hear our prayer

'What is a non-believer or a believer in another religion to do? Mumble insincerely? Stay silent? Should non-believers pretend to believe in the power of prayer, or in the Trinity - the doctrine that there's God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (also in the booklet)? We attend to remember the fallen, to show gratitude for their sacrifice, to show gratitude and appreciation for present members of the armed forces, not to witness a C of E service.

'Sometimes, a decline in support for an organization is unfair, but not in this case. There are and have been many, many exceptional C of E members but the catalogue of C of E failings is long.

'Edward Wightman was the last person in this country to be burned alive for heresy. He had denied the Trinity and questioned the status of the Church of England. The C of E still remembers and celebrates John Calvin, who denounced Michael Servetus (also burned alive after denying the Trinity). The Bishop of Sheffield's doctoral thesis was on the subject of John Calvin! The C of E remembers and celebrates to this day St Augustine, who actually taught that unbaptized babies are in hell.

'A large number of Anglicans believe in hell, of course, although not for unbaptized babies. This is the view of the C of E conservative evangelical group 'Church Society.' (There are obvious implications for the fallen and for those who attend Remembrance events.)

' '... all people are under the judgement of God and his righteous anger burns against them. Unless a person is reconciled to God they are under His condemnation and His just judgement against them is that they will be separated from Him forever in Hell.' The Society claims this is 'clearly stated in the 39 Articles of the Church of England.'

'I understand that the Bishop of Sheffield has evangelical beliefs, with a conservative tendency. Perhaps he may be able to comment on this doctrine, perhaps on John Calvin as well. And does he believe that C of E Remembrance services for the general public can be defended?'

'Pete Wilcox describes himself as 'an evangelical, and quite a conservative person.' He says that 'The bible matters to me a great deal.' These comments were made in an article published un 'The Star.'

<https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/star-interview-the-new-bishop-of-sheffield-on-women-priests-the-church-s-big-challenges-and-why-his-wife-s-books-aren-t-raunchy-1-8714378>

Church Society, a Conservative Evangelical group in the Church of England:

'... all people are under the judgement of God and his righteous anger burns against them. Unless a person is reconciled to God they are under His condemnation and His just judgement against them is that they will be separated from Him forever in Hell. (Romans 1 v18, 2 v16, Revelation 20 v15)

' Jesus will come back and the world will end, there will then be a final judgement where those who have not accepted Jesus will be cast into hell with Satan and his angels. Christians will receive new bodies and live in eternal bliss in the presence of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. (Hebrews 9 v27, Revelation 20 v11, 1 Corinthians 15 v51)

' The biblical way of salvation has often been attacked over the centuries, however it is stated clearly in the 39 Articles of the Church of England:

Article 6: Of the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation.

Article 1: Faith in the Holy Trinity

Article 9: Of Original or Birth sin

Article 3: Of Original or Birth sin

Article 2: The Word, or Son of God, who became truly man

Article 4: The resurrection of Christ

Article 11: Of the Justification of Man

' Unless a person is reconciled to God they are under his condemnation ...' Good works are no defence. Article XII 'Of Good Works' states

'Good Works ... cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgement.' Whether the good works include bringing safe drinking water to people ravaged by water-borne diseases such as cholera by means of massive engineering works, or rescuing Jews from the Nazis, or opposing the Nazis by heroic action in battle, or everyday goodness and self-sacrifice, if there's no belief in Jesus Christ, the good works are ignored, in this loathsome scheme, and there's no salvation.

Are the Bishop's Conservative Evangelical views the same, or are they different in some ways? The Church Society statement has obvious implications for Remembrance. Does Pete Wilcox believe that those who fell in war are separated from God forever if they never accepted Jesus Christ as their personal lord and saviour ?

This is from The Church of England Website (A Christian presence in every community)

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-in-daily-prayer/morning-prayer-contemporary-saturday-26-may-2018>

¶ Morning Prayer on Saturday
Saturday, 26 May 2018

Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, 605 [Lesser Festival]
John Calvin, Reformer, 1564 [Commemoration]
Philip Neri, Founder of the Oratorians, Spiritual Guide, 1595 [Commemoration]

The service begins with this:

O Lord, open our lips
All and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

The doctoral thesis of Pete Wilcox was on the 'thought and practice of John Calvin:

'Restoration, Reformation and the progress of the kingdom of Christ : evangelisation in the thought and practice of John Calvin, 1555–1564.'

As is well known, Calvin denounced Michael Servetus as a heretic. Michael Servetus had denied the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine that God consists of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Michael Servetus was burned alive.





Above, John Calvin



Above, Michael Servetus being burned alive

My own view is that Calvin has obvious historical importance, for people interested in Reformation theology, and historical importance in the history of humanitarian thought and practice, as a hideous example of cruel intolerance. I haven't been able to consult the Bishop of Sheffield's thesis, but his interest is obviously in Calvin's place in Reformation theology. Is this aspect of his background, obviously important to him, of any use whatsoever in approaching the problems of this industrial city and the people who live and work here?

Sheffield's industrial past and present will be of far less importance to the Bishop of Sheffield than the theological controversies of the past and present, but industry has always presented problems for theology, generally unrecognized, and continues to do so. This is just one example. From Friedrich Engels, 'The Condition of the Working Class in England (1844) described conditions at the time. Here, he compares conditions in Sheffield with conditions in Manchester:

'In Sheffield wages are better, and the external state of the workers also. On the other hand, certain branches of work are to be noticed here, because of their extraordinarily injurious influence upon health ... By far the most unwholesome work is the grinding of knife-blades and forks, which, especially when done with a dry stone, entails certain early death. The unwholesomeness of this work lies in part in the bent posture, in which chest and stomach are cramped; but especially in the quantity of sharp-edged metal dust particles freed in the cutting, which fill the atmosphere, and are necessarily inhaled.'

I live near to a valley where a large number of industrial operations flourished during the industrial revolution and in some cases later. The work included the manufacture of cutting tools, absolutely essential tools, without which society would have ground to a halt. The grinding operation was an essential step in their manufacture, and the workers paid the price. They were exposed to these dangers but they weren't exploited. It was impossible to protect them. Modern methods of protection depend upon technical advances which lay in the future. The Articles of Faith of the Church of England are relevant to these workers if you accept these articles of faith. They aren't relevant in any way if you regard them as hideous. They are given on the Church of England Website - so much the worse for the Church of England.

Dr Alan Billings: Beliefs and Crime

**Dr Alan Billings, *Peace and Justice*
Commissioner**

I'm a non-believer. Dr Billings isn't a non-believer. He describes himself as a retired Church of England priest. In 'Keeping Safe,' very unwisely, he includes, on Page 2, in very large, very prominent letters, this quotation from the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah:

'Seek the well-being of this place ... for in its well-being you will find your own.' Jeremiah 29:7.

His Foreword ends with this:

The overriding message for the coming year (2019-20) is that we must get better at working together for the common good. The prophet put it this way: 'Seek the well-being of the place where you are set ... for in its well-being you will find your own'. (Jeremiah 29:7.)

Jeremiah's words had a specific reference. Dr Billings ignores this and ignores the context. The complete text of Jeremiah 29.7, in the translation of the King James Bible:

'And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.'

The New International Version translation:

'Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.'

There was, of course, absolutely no need for Dr Billings to include this quotation from an Old Testament prophet. He should have realized that he was writing for a community made up of many different groups - not just Church of England believers and other Christian believers but non-believers, people with no belief in God or the Bible, either the Bible as the inspired word of God or the Bible as a good guide to contemporary problems, a community which includes people with a wide range of religious but non-Christian views.

On 28 January 2019, a letter of mine was published in the Sheffield newspaper 'The Star,' with the heading 'Can public C of E services be defended?'

An extract:

'According to the British Social Attitudes Survey, affiliation with the Church of England (C of E) has never been lower in all age groups: it amounts to only 2 per cent of young adults.

'What can justify the C of E's dominant role in Remembrance Sunday commemorations, then? I attend the event in the city centre or at Weston Park. Like ones throughout the country, it takes the form of a C of E service.

'There are many, many prayers and after each one, this is the expected response (as given in the Order of Service booklet):

'All Hear our prayer

'What is a non-believer or a believer in another religion to do? Mumble insincerely? Stay silent? Should non-believers pretend to believe in the power of prayer, or in the Trinity – the doctrine that there's God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (also in the booklet)? We attend to remember the fallen, to show gratitude for their sacrifice, to show gratitude and appreciation for present members of the armed forces, not to witness a C of E service. '

Dr Billings made a comment on the Website of the newspaper but declined to address the problem. His view seems to entail a view of the Church of England as having a privileged position in the civic life and wider activities of this country. In addition to receiving his view of South Yorkshire Police's conduct in my case, whether he chooses to defend the force or to criticize it, I'd be interested in receiving his view of the Church's role in Remembrance Sunday events - does he support the continuance of the status quo or not? Perhaps he thinks that the views of non-believers like myself can safely be disregarded.

I intend to add to this profile a discussion of two of Dr Billings' publications, 'Secular Lives, Sacred Hearts' and 'God and Community Cohesion.'

Adrian Dorber, Dean of Lichfield Cathedral

See also my page Israel, Islamism, Palestinian ideology
All the instances of bias I document on the page, some of it deluded, psychotic bias, come from non-Christians. The Church of England's record in relation to the state of Israel isn't in the least bad. The case discussed here isn't typical in the least. It's a rare exception.

The very critical letter I quote in my profile of the Bishop of Sheffield on this page does include this, 'There are and have been many, many exceptional C of E members ...' Michael Igrave, the Bishop of Lichfield, is certainly one of these exceptional people - but I'm thinking primarily of his mathematical abilities and not at all of his theological and ecclesiastical work.

Adrian Dorber has been heavily criticized for his role in a blatantly biased conference which was supposed to shed light "on the Israel/Palestine Conflict and the prospect of peace" but which obviously did nothing of the kind. From the graphic account written by David Collier of the conference 'Holding Palestine in the Light,' held at Lichfield Cathedral. The full account is at

<http://david-collier.com/?p=2328>

An extract:

... sitting next to me with her hand raised is Mandy Blumenthal. Zionist to the core, Mandy had asked a question of Yossi Meckleberg earlier in the day. She had wanted to know why Yossi had seemed to imply settlements, rather than Arab rejectionism and violence was a (the?) major stumbling block. This time, with the knowledge that Mandy was a Zionist, the Chair was visibly ignoring Mandy's raised hand.

The Chair was desperately seeking questions from elsewhere in the audience. The questions had dried up. It was a stand-off. Mandy became vocal:

'why won't you let me speak?'

'Because you spoke earlier' came the reply.

As an answer it did not suffice. Several people had asked more than one question. The situation was absurd. There were no more questions. Only Mandy's hand remained aloft. There were still 10 minutes left till the end of this session.

Several people became visibly agitated. A member of the audience asked why the chair was ignoring Mandy's question. Mandy spoke up again:

"Isn't this a conference, why is only one side allowed to be heard?"

Open confrontation. This was not what the Dean had

wanted, he stepped in to soothe the situation and offered Mandy Blumenthal the microphone. Yet as he did this and as Mandy stepped up, the Chair led Kamel Hawwash off the stage. The 'Jew' question need not be answered. An awful, vile slur. In the end, Hawwash did return but only to claim that Blumenthal had lied.

It was break time again. There were several cries of "shame on you", but I am not sure to who it was directed. Someone came straight up to Mandy to apologise. 'This is my town and I am Christian but that was unacceptable'. 'I do not know why it happened'. Others started to get involved, some suggested they had not expected this conference to be so one sided. This time as I mingled I was approached by a young activist. He identified himself quite quickly as a 'BDS supporter.'

My comment, published below David Collier's article:

The Church of England is often regarded as naive, blundering, ineffectual – but some naive, blundering, ineffectual people in the Church can cause real damage. Adrian Dorber, the Dean of Lichfield Cathedral, is one of these.

The Bishop of Lichfield claims that he couldn't have stopped the Conference, but it was naive of him – more than that, a serious blunder – not to have realized that a Conference on this topic would be controversial. He ought to have intervened and made sure that the Conference would be fair-minded and balanced but failed to do that. Justin Welby says that 'He has no direct authority over the Dean,' but he's admitting, in effect, that he, the Archbishop of Canterbury, is sometimes unable or unwilling to do anything about the anti-Israel propaganda which is allowed to go unchallenged far too often in the Church of England.

A sermon preached at St Marks Church, Sheffield in 2014 included this:

'The Revd Dr Stephen Sizer, who has researched and published broadly in this area, concludes 'that Christian Zionism is the largest, most controversial and most destructive lobby within Christianity. It bears primary responsibility for perpetuating tensions in the Middle East, justifying Israel's apartheid colonialist agenda and for undermining the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.' '

What? The intractable problems of the Middle East, the atrocities in the Middle East, largely caused by Christian Zionists? The Revd Stephen Sizer is yet another naive and blundering Anglican, but a particularly dangerous one. He gave a link to an article which claimed that Israel was responsible for the 9 / 11 attack on the World Trade Center!

The Bishop of Guildford acted decisively: he made it clear that Stephen Sizer was in danger of losing his job, as reported in 'The Church Times' and other places,

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/13-february/news/uk/not-anti-semitic-just-stupid-stephen-sizer-ordered-offline-to-save-his-job>

The Bishop of Lichfield failed to act at a time when he should have acted. If he'd acted, he could have prevented this embarrassing and ridiculous but very harmful series of events.

Bishops, like so many other people, have their specialities.

Michael Ipgrave, the Bishop of Lichfield, has a great interest in the relations between Christians and other religious groups. You'd think, then, that he'd take a very close interest in this conference, where the relations between Christians, Jews and Moslems play an important role. He was appointed Diocesan Chaplain for relations with people of other faiths in 1992. Later, he became Inter-faith Relations Advisor to the Archbishops' Council and Secretary of the Anglican Church's Commission on Inter-faith Relations. In the 2011 New Year Honours List, he was appointed an OBE 'for services to inter-faith relations in London.' And, he's the author of a book on inter-faith dialogue and has contributed to other publications on inter-faith matters. He was Bishop of Woolwich before he became Bishop of Lichfield.

Despite all this experience, general and specific, he failed comprehensively in this instance. He failed to do what was within his power, he failed to ensure that there was some degree of fairness in this disastrous conference.

President Harry S. Truman had a sign 'The buck stops here' on his desk. Recommended: that the Bishop of Lichfield has the same sign on his desk to remind himself of his responsibility.

My view of human imperfection is very different from the Christian one. I don't accept the Christian view of sin but I do accept the reality of human imperfection. (My view is very, very different from most others. (See my page {restriction}). I think that the Christian view takes far more account of realities than some non-Christian, atheistic views - and not just the ones which are utopian. The Christian view that a person can put aside faults, including very serious faults, can go beyond them, can evolve, in moral terms, deserves to be treated very seriously. We must often criticize and condemn, but compassion is one of the most important of all virtues - and not, of course, a purely Christian one.

Professor Kamel Hawwash didn't like David Collier's account one bit.

Compare and contrast the cool, supposedly 'objective' tone of this

'Reflections of a diaspora Palestinian' Professor Kamel Hawwash'

and this, the Professor's mini profile

'Professor Kamel Hawwash: a British/Palestinian and a long standing campaigner for justice for Palestinians'

both to be found on Lichfield Cathedral's Website page on the recent conference on Israeli-Palestinian issues

<http://www.lichfield-cathedral.org/news/news/post/123-conference-holding-palestine-in-the-light>

- and the article written by Kamel Hawwash which has this headline, 'Lichfield Cathedral stands strong in the face of bullying by the pro-Israel lobby' and which refuses to consider any possibility of reasoned dissent, dissent based on arguments and evidence, and was published in that well-known purveyor of ideological claptrap the 'Middle East Monitor'

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20161015-lichfield-cathedral-stands-strong-in-the-face-of-bullying-by-the-pro-israel-lobby/>

and also published on the evasive Website of Professor Kamel Hawwash

<https://kamelhawwash.com/>

who has every reason to be taken seriously as an academic civil engineer but has no reason to be taken seriously as a commenter on such issues as the politics and military conflicts of this particular area of the Middle East and the ethical issues which arise from them.

Lichfield Cathedral too has abandoned the basic principles of fair-mindedness and has become a purveyor of ideological claptrap, at least in this hideous fall from grace. But the organization's distortions and evasions and selective use of evidence and misuse of evidence are often much more serious than this simple incompetence. For example, 'Labour Friends of Palestine' claims that Israel has sentenced prisoners 'without a proper trial, which includes the right to present evidence, call witnesses and be represented by a lawyer who can visit them freely' but the safeguards of the Israeli legal system are vastly greater and more effective than those in Gaza. On 22 August 2014, 18 suspected collaborators were executed by Palestinian firing squad in different parts of the Gaza strip, without representation by a lawyer, without a proper trial or any trial at all. In the legal system of Gaza, homosexuality is a criminal offence, punishable with imprisonment for up to ten years. A mother may be imprisoned for having a baby when unmarried.

George Pitcher, Anglican priest

The Wikipedia entry for George Pitcher can be strongly recommended. It makes clear that this is someone with a record of substantial, sustained achievement, including achievement in an unexpected but very important field, industrial reporting. If my own account draws attention to some shortcomings, I recognize his achievements. The shortcomings don't cancel his achievements or diminish his achievements. He's not in the least one of those ineffectual clerics with no interest in practical matters.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Pitcher

George Pitcher is a very unusual, unconventional priest of the Church of England - but a priest with some of the usual, conventional faults and failings, I think.

A very brief, very revealing introduction to some of his 'thinking' is published in the 'Church Times.'

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2011/14-october/comment/ten-media-tips-for-the-church>

So, 'ten media tips,' not ten commandments. In his 'top tips' article in the top Anglo-Catholic megaphone (not that it can transform negligible thoughts, of next to no interest, into resounding, convincing demonstrations of Truth), he accuses critics of Islamism and left-wing thinking of cowardice:

'Islamophobic, blogging rightards had gone strangely quiet.' (Here, 'blogging' seems to be yet another insult, like 'Islamophobic' and 'rightards'.)

His claim is ridiculous. Nothing like that had happened. Is he quite sure that all or most - or any - opponents of Islamism and left-wing views had 'gone quiet?' Could he name a few? Could he name a large number? Can he be sure that if a few had 'gone quiet' there wasn't an alternative explanation?

I'm a critic of Islamism and left-wing thinking too, and a critic of George Pitcher. I don't think it's likely in the least that he'll give serious answers to the criticisms I make of Islamism, left-wing thinking and George Pitcher. Most of the criticism (but not the criticism of George Pitcher) is on other pages, not this one. If he can spare the time, he could read some of it . -

Let's make a direct challenge to George Pitcher and find out if he can answer the objections or if he'll go 'strangely quiet.'

His top-tip number 2:

'Stop being a victim: get on the front foot, and stop whingeing about how badly you are treated. This is not Pakistan or Palestine, and you are not being persecuted.'

When he refers to Palestine, he's not referring, of course, to any oppression by Hamas or to oppression of homosexuals in Gaza (homosexuality is illegal there, and women who have children whilst unmarried can be imprisoned and are imprisoned.) Of course, he's referring to the Israelis.

My page Israel, Islamism and Palestinian ideology gives a comprehensive discussion of some of the faults of Palestinian society.

In the same 'top tip,' he writes,

' ... use your freedom. Head-butt the bullies, by which I mean give as good as you get: journalists respect, albeit grudgingly, those who fight back.'

I'm not a journalist but I'll respect George Pitcher all the more if he decides to fight back, to oppose me and my views - if he can, that is.

I don't regard myself as a bully, and I think that the advice to head-butt is disastrously misguided. He leaves unexplored the glaring contradiction between this advice and Christ's commandment to 'turn the other cheek.' The people he calls 'bullies' include people of very different kinds. Most of them, I'm sure, are anything but bullies. They're often people who, unlike the head-butter, give arguments and evidence, but arguments and evidence he doesn't like at all.

In general, the profiles on the more developed pages are very critical, but I try and find out a great deal about the people I criticize. I've removed profiles and decided not to write profiles when I've found out that the profiles concern people who suffer from a very serious health condition, or have a relative with a very serious health condition. It's essential, I think, that polemics, like the waging of war, shouldn't be unrestricted. Human values should inform polemics. George Pitcher's bright and breezy, unformed and superficial advice to 'head-butt' the bully - the alleged bully - is wrong.

His 'top tip' number 8 is this: 'Rapid rebuttal: don't whine that you have been misrepresented. Hit the phone and tell the journalist in monosyllables. It not only does good, but feels good.'

Geoffrey Hill, Christian poet

From my page The poetry of Seamus Heaney: flawed success

Geoffrey Hill has been phenomenally industrious in creating the essays which make up his large volume, 'Collected Critical Writings' but it has been peculiar, obscure, murky, subterranean, mole-like work, largely unrelated to our very different world above-ground.

Peter McDonald, writing in 'The Times Literary Supplement,' claimed critical greatness for the Writings: 'The publication last year of Hill's Collected Critical Writings (reviewed in the TLS, July 18, 2008) made it clear that he is a thinker about poetry (and of course about more than poetry alone) who can stand beside the very greatest – beside Dryden, Johnson, Coleridge, Arnold, Empson and Eliot – regardless of his status as a poet.' Peter McDonald was making a mountain out of a mole Hill.

The 'Collected Critical Writings' are a challenge to almost any reader, but the above-ground world challenges us in ways that the Collected Critical Writings largely evade (and Dostoevsky's 'Notes from Underground' don't evade.) He's made a labyrinth of tunnels, tunnels that connect with other tunnels and tunnels that lead nowhere. One tunnel led him to 'Mombert, in the 1884 Preface to his edition of Tyndale's Pentateuch ...' ('Of Diligence and Jeopardy') but there are not enough tunnels that lead to the surface, either directly or indirectly.

As we read, we're being lulled, tranquillized. We are all like Tennyson's lotos-eaters now and again, and welcome the chance to be lulled, particularly if we can be lulled without any feeling of guilt. The difficulties of the book assuage any guilt or misgivings. How can we be lulled and tranquillized if we're reading a book which demands such concentration? But we are.

One of its main deficiencies is the lack of organizing principles, organizing concepts. The ones he uses are unsuitable and inadequate. Non-scientific subject matter can't dispense with organizing principles and organizing concepts to make sense of the accumulation of experiences and thoughts, even if it doesn't have available the body of scientific theory which makes sense of scientific data. (Wittgenstein's 'Philosophical Investigations' are a case in point, not a counter-example.)

In 'A Pharisee to Pharisees,' a discussion of the poetry of Henry Vaughan, he makes a comment which shows that his grasp can be very insecure: 'It would perhaps be generally agreed that a 'poetic' use of language involves a release and control of the magnetic attraction and repulsion which words reciprocally exert. One is impelled, or drawn, to enquire whether that metaphysical rapport felt to exist between certain English rhyme-pairings is the effect of commonplace rumination or the cause of it.' And, later, 'In Vaughan's poetry a rhyme which occurs with striking frequency is 'light : night', or 'night : light'. Here, too, basic mechanics assume ontological dimensions.'

Magnetic forces don't in the least constitute an adequate explanation for the linkages and contrasts between words. This is a poor and misguided 'organizing principle.' It involves ignorance of or the ignoring of the vastly more suitable explanations of linguistics. Metaphysics and ontology have a technical meaning and use in philosophy, and again, the use of these concepts clarifies nothing: 'metaphysical rapport' and 'ontological dimensions' contribute nothing but a superficially impressive sound to the discussion.

He turns to theology far more often than to any other study to make spurious sense of the world and his theology is backward-looking - a forward-looking theology would be no more impressive. He even turns to original sin in his exploration of defects in the Second Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (in the essay 'Common Weal, Common Woe' in the 'Collected Critical Writings'.) This is the ending of the essay:

'Most of what one wants to know, including much that it hurts to know, about the English language is held within these twenty volumes. [The 'most' here is completely unwarranted. The most comprehensive treatment of any subject of any size is sure to leave out so much that it can't possibly include 'most of what one wants to know.' The treatment is subject to extreme {restriction}.] To brood over them and in them is to be finally persuaded that sematology is a theological dimension: the use of language is inseparable from that 'terrible aboriginal calamity' in which, according to Newman, the human race is implicated. [quoting one 'authority' or to be more accurate one Roman Catholic writer who made very contentious claims about original sin and linked matters, such as venial and mortal sin, shows nothing] Murray, in 1884, missed that use of 'aboriginal'; it would have added a distinctly separate signification ['distinctly' is pleonastic, of course] to the recorded examples. In 1989 it remains unacknowledged.

'In what sense or senses is the computer acquainted with original sin?'

A substantial reference work such as the Oxford Dictionary can never attain complete accuracy, comprehensiveness and up-to-date information. It's subject to inevitable {restriction}. The concept of sin is irrelevant here. My own concept of {restriction} is vastly more useful in conveying human imperfection, including the imperfection of evil, human error, the human failure which is willed and the human failure which is beyond human control, and the inconveniences and difficulties, including the extreme difficulties, which are inherent in the natural world and beyond human control, such as agricultural difficulties and the difficulties of mining, but its scope is very much wider than that - which can be expressed by quantification of {restriction}:- (scope). My page on {restriction} gives a selection of illustrative instances. Flaws in the poetry of Seamus Heaney are instances of {restriction}:- (poetic success) and flaws in Geoffrey Hill's 'Collected Critical Writings' are again instances of {restriction}.

.. .. .

Non-religious stupidity

'For Christianity and all existing creeds Hume had, and always displayed, the greatest contempt: and he used the attribution of orthodoxy as a standard form of abuse. Writing for instance, to his old friend, the Moderate minister, Hugh Blair, Hume referred to the English as 'relapsing fast into the deepest stupidity, Christianity and ignorance.' (From Richard Wollheim's introduction to 'Hume on Religion,' which includes 'Dialogues concerning Natural Religion' and other essays by David Hume.)

When Hume wrote these words, and for many centuries before, stupidity took the form of Christianity more often than not in this country and the rest of Europe. In a largely post-Christian age, stupidity more often takes other, secular, forms. Many of the English, and other nations, have relapsed fast into the deepest stupidity and ignorance which are completely unreligious. Even so, the prevalence of Christian stupidity in the United States can't be ignored.

One of the post-Christian stupidities - there are many more - is extreme hedonistic stupidity. A sticker seen on a car near here: 'If it's not fun, don't do it.' (The temptation was strong to go home, print out a large poster and stick it on one of the car doors, the poster containing just these words: 'If removing this poster isn't fun, don't remove it.)

'The sentiment of the sticker is ridiculous, infantile in its view of the world, hopelessly unformed and mindless. The defence that it's nothing but a little fun in itself won't work. There are many, many people who believe it, believe in it, or something ridiculous and infantile but less stupidly ridiculous and infantile. If very many people followed it - but that would be impossible - then societies of any worth would be impossible. These societies would certainly be incapable of defending themselves.

Religious people have included many, many mawkish sentimentalists, but they have often had a view of the world which is strenuous, which recognizes duties, such as caring for the sick even when the duties involved no gain for the carer, let alone 'fun.' The objections to 'If it's not fun, don't do it' are obvious and include the objection that when people who believe this fall sick, they will be looked after by people with very different views. Secular views, like religious views, may be clueless, secularists, like religious people, may be clueless.

Richard Wollheim, on Hume's attitude to the ignorant: 'He was convinced that the ignorant ... would always have their superstitions: it might be possible to liberate them from this illusion or that, but it would only be replaced by another. 'In a future age,' he wrote, à propos of the doctrine of transubstantiation [to people unfamiliar with the Catholic doctrine, the notion that during the Mass, the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ - not symbolically but in actual fact the body and blood of Christ] 'it will probably become difficult to persuade some nations, that any human two-legged creature could ever embrace such principles.' Then with characteristic wryness he added, 'And it is a thousand to one, but these nations themselves shall have something full as absurd in their own creed, to which they will give a most implicit and most religious assent.'

Since Hume wrote, the creeds have usually been of an informal kind. Stupidity has often been too vague-minded for inclusion in a creed. Hume seems not to have anticipated the dangers and stupidity of some non-Christian and post-Christian beliefs, which now dominate our world.

Aphorisms: religion and ideology

I share, to an extent, Nietzsche's view of the possibilities and the importance of the aphorism form, but I don't share his high opinion of himself. The section which contains this (section 51 in his book 'Twilight of the Idols.')

'the aphorism ... in which I am the first master among Germans ... my ambition is to say in ten sentences what everyone else says in a book - what everyone else does not say in a book ...'

also contains this ludicrous claim:

'I have given mankind the profoundest book it possesses, my Zarathustra.' (R J Hollingdale's translation.)

From my page Aphorisms which gives most of the aphorisms I've written.

The great achievements of religious architecture, painting, sculpture and literature are no evidence for religion but

sculpture and literature are no evidence for religion but evidence that people with artistic gifts may have far less talent for critical thinking.

This world is inexhaustible and unfathomable. We need speculate about no other.

Mystics who are 'deep' are out of their depth.

Humanity can be explained only partly in natural terms but not at all in supernatural terms.

The horrific imperfections of the world foster courage and ingenuity. Why not skepticism?

DEUS ILLUMINATIO IGNIS FATUUS

The understandable fear of becoming lost, of leaving behind roads and paths, helps to explain the refusal to follow an argument wherever it leads, the reassurance of religions and ideologies.

The Christian revelation has taken away from life the mystery which for non-Christians remains. For skeptics more than for Christians, this is a mysterious world and sometimes a magical one.

The Christian God has become softer and gentler, a God who's 'only human,' although no more so than the old vengeful God.

My atheism is far from being the most important thing about me, otherwise there would be a strong linkage between me and the atheist Stalin.

To know that someone is a Christian or an atheist tells me almost nothing about the person.

Self-evident untruths and half-truths will always be popular.

Honest people may well reinterpret their lives at intervals as drastically as totalitarian regimes reinterpret their own history.

I detest your ideology and the ideologies you detest.

Oppose mindless tolerance as well as mindless intolerance.

If the world were imperfect in the way that Christians or communists suppose, Christianity or communism might be true, but it's imperfect in a way that refutes them. And so for other theisms and ideologies.

The world, like some faces, can look better seen in a distorting mirror.

What is an ideology?

I explain my conception of ideology here. In this section, I make use of {themes} in a few places. These are introduced in my page Introduction to {theme} theory.

'Ideology' derives from the Greek *λόγος* and *ἰδέα*. Liddell and Scott give three basic meanings for *ἰδέα* in the Greek

and *eidōla* give three basic meanings for *eidōla* in the Greek Lexicon, (1) form (2) semblance, opposed to reality (3) notion, idea. The third is taken to be the meaning applicable in 'ideology,' but an ideology makes use of the second meaning. Liddell and Scott include an interesting illustration for this second meaning, from Theognis: γνῶμην ἐξαπατῶν ἰδέσθαι 'Outward appearances cheat the mind.'

Of course, etymology isn't a reliable guide to meaning, or the range of meanings in the case of a complex term.

A number of disparate conceptions of ideology have been employed since the term 'idéologie' was coined by Destutt de Tracy in 1796. He envisaged ideology as a general science of ideas, their components and relations - or (linkages), as I would term it.

The word ideology is predominantly given a normative meaning now. An important stage in the transition to a normative meaning occurred in the 1840's. Marx and Engels in 'The German Ideology,' ('Die deutsche Ideologie'), criticized the Young Hegelians. Their view, it was claimed, regarded ideas as 'autonomous and efficacious' and failed to grasp 'the real conditions and characteristics of socio-historical life.'

Karl Popper regarded Marxism, and the views of Freud and Adler, as pseudo-scientific. His account in Chapter 1 of 'Conjectures and Refutations' has great importance in the study of ideology. The book's index reference to this material is 'total ideology.' I don't endorse in its entirety his view of Freud and Adler. I regard his criticism of Marxism as valid. I don't provide amplification here.

From Introduction to {theme} theory:

Expansion brackets are useful for the process I call 'amplification.' A writer who is pursuing a main argument will sometimes make claims or comments or provide evidence which amount to a brief mention, without any attempt to substantiate the claim or comment or to explain such matters as the degree of reliability of the evidence. Very often, it would be impractical to do so. It is not always possible to present every aspect of an argument thoroughly.

Popper writes,

'I found that those of my friends who were admirers of Marx, Freud, and Adler, were impressed by a number of points common to these theories, and especially by their apparent explanatory power. These theories appeared to be able to explain practically everything that happened within the fields to which they referred. The study of any of them seemed to have the effect of an intellectual conversion or revelation, opening your eyes to a new truth hidden from those not yet initiated. Once your eyes were thus opened you saw confirming instances everywhere: the world was full of verifications of the theory. Whatever happened always confirmed it. Thus its truth appeared manifest; and unbelievers were clearly people who did not want to see the manifest truth; who refused to see it, either because it was against their class interest, or because of their repressions which were still 'un-analysed' and crying out for treatment.'

All of the criticism here is applicable to the feminist views I criticize, although the 'unbelievers,' of course, are the non-feminists who refuse to see 'the manifest truth' because it was against their gender interest, as males, or because of some deep-seated psychological conditions. Feminist 'consciousness-raising,' when successful, is held to open the eyes of the woman (or man), who now sees confirming instances everywhere of the deadly effects of patriarchy and the truth of feminism. The world is full of verifications of feminist theory. Women who act in non-feminist and anti-feminist ways, for example, are held not to falsify the theory. Their behaviour is due to the malign influence of patriarchy.

Popper adds, 'A Marxist could not open a newspaper without finding on every page confirming evidence for his interpretation of history.' The corresponding feminist will find confirming evidence for an interpretation which finds 'sexism,' not perhaps everywhere, but permeating so many areas of reality, including personal, social, historical and economic reality.

In Chapter 9 of 'Unended Quest,' he explains the development of his thought during an early period of his life: 'I developed further my ideas about the demarcation between scientific theories (like Einstein's) and pseudoscientific theories (like Marx's, Freud's, and Adlers). It became clear to me that what made a theory, or a statement, scientific was its power to rule out, or exclude, the occurrence of some possible events ...' This is the concept of falsification which he elaborated in 'The Logic of Scientific Discovery' ('Die Logik der Forschung.')

Falsification is a concept which has very great importance

falsification is a concept which has very great importance in the study of philosophy of science but its applicability to the study of ideology, including the ideology - as I see it - of feminism hasn't been adequately explored. I introduce two technical terms which I think are useful in discussions of falsification and attempts to falsify: 'falsificans,' the falsifying arguments and evidence, and 'falsificandum,' the application-sphere of the falsificans. The falsificandum is more general than scientific subject-matter. An ideological falsificandum is, however, falsified less conclusively than a scientific falsificandum.

The two terms, like the word 'falsify,' come from late Latin 'falsificare,' from 'falsus' and 'facere'. They have a linkage with the established terms 'explanans' and 'explanandum,' from 'explanare.' Carl Gustav Hempel and Paul Oppenheim proposed a deductive-nomological model of scientific explanation (not given expansion here):

'... the event under discussion is explained by subsuming it under general laws, i.e., by showing that it occurred in accordance with those laws, by virtue of the realization of certain specified antecedent conditions' and 'By the explanandum, we understand the sentence describing the phenomenon to be explained (not that phenomenon itself); by the explanans, the class of those sentences which are adduced to account for the phenomenon.' ('Studies in the Logic of Explanation,' 'Philosophy of Science,' XV, p. 152.)

Popper's concept has been criticized by a number of philosophers. One of them is the Australian philosopher David Stove, who was strongly anti-feminist. Some limitations of David Stove's approach have been very well explored by Patrícia Lança in her article

David Stove against Darwin and Popper: The Perils of Showmanship. (Originally published in 'The Salisbury Review,' Summer 2001.) I don't include her discussion of David Stove's criticisms of Darwin and Darwinism, but I do include her brief, critical, mention of feminism and her criticism of relativism. Many feminists include science in their relativistic views. What she has to say about the manner of criticism is very important for critics of feminism, although I favour a mixture of styles, including ridiculing the ridiculous. She writes:

'THERE IS ALWAYS something immediately enjoyable about watching, listening to or reading apparently outrageous attacks on received opinion. Reductio ad absurdum is, after all, a time-honoured trick of rhetoric. The attempted dictatorship of 'political correctness' nowadays makes the trick even more liable to work. According to those who listened to the lectures of the Australian philosopher David Stove, he was a virtuoso in the genre. Professor Michael Levin says: 'Reading Stove is like watching Fred Astaire dance. You don't wish you were Fred Astaire, you are just glad to have been around to see him in action'.

'There is, however, a problem with ridicule, especially if we ourselves have our own reasons for not liking its victims. It is liable to obscure solid grounds for criticism and play into the camp of the adversary by providing facile, spurious or distorted arguments. This would seem to be the case with some of Stove's writing as exemplified in the two books under review. Not that he isn't worth reading. His provocative style is such as to make many readers stop, think and re-examine their own preconceptions. On the other hand, those unfamiliar with the subject matter, especially among the younger generation, are likely to be seriously misled about some of his targets and to mistake rhetoric for serious argument.. Stove, who died in 1994, was a conservative, an anti-communist and desperately at odds with the fashionable Left-wing views prevalent in the academy ...

[On his criticism of Popper]

'It is not easy here to produce a rebuttal of the required brevity or to embark on a boringly technical argument for and against Popper's epistemology, but justice does require some attempt to be made. It must first be stated quite unequivocally that certain of Popper's epistemological positions, once widely accepted, have in recent years come under forceful criticism from many quarters ... Nevertheless it is one thing to criticize and quite another to misrepresent.

...

'It is indeed ironic that the anti-communist Stove should find Popper so objectionable when there is probably no academic figure in the last half century who has done as much to combat their common enemy. In fact on many matters Stove and Popper were on the same side. Against irrationalism and relativism, against Freud, against philosophical idealism, against scepticism, critical of some aspects of Darwinism, and, much else.

'So, Popper concluded, scientific laws are not immutable but 'are always hypotheses. All you can have are better or worse theories and the scientist's work is to produce ever-better theories. The only logically and practically acceptable way to do this is to try to falsify your theory by appropriate testing: the method of trial and error. This, Popper says, is what scientists actually do in real life.

Scientific method is basically one of testing, making public and criticizing. Failed theories are abandoned and the search begins again, either by trimming or adapting the old theory or formulating a new one. So a good scientific theory should be framed in such a way that it is testable, in other words falsifiable. If this is not the case then the theory is neither a good theory nor even a scientific theory.

'Demarcating science

Popper was interested in finding a criterion for demarcating science from non-science and he concluded that such theories as Marxism, Freudianism or astrology do not meet the criteria required of a genuinely scientific theory. They are couched in such broad terms that they are invulnerable to falsification. Whatever happens their proponents regard them as either corroborated or unfalsified. They are theories against which no arguments or criticisms can count.

'Whatever the justice of his views on induction, Popper's conception of falsifiability proved a rich field and he mined it for theories in the realm of his other passion: politics and social questions.. Having thrown out positive corroboration as crucial in favour of its negative, namely falsifiability, and having made criticism the essential method for this, he proposed a similar approach in the political and social spheres. The aim of government, of the State, should never be the positive one of trying to make people happy, a quite impossible aim. Happiness is a private matter and conceived of differently by each individual. On the contrary the only feasible objective of government is the negative one of reducing misery. Suffering, starvation, disease and the rest are objective, public and measurable and it is the State's job to try to minimize them because the only justification for the existence of government is the protection of the citizen. To this end freedom to criticize, to discuss and debate solutions is essential. So for Popper democracy means freedom of criticism and institutional arrangements that provide for the removal of unsatisfactory rulers without bloodshed. He deduced from this position the enormous importance of institutions and an institutional tradition, of gradual reform as against revolution, and wrote and lectured widely on these subjects, declaring untiringly that the political systems of Britain, America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were the best models so far known.

'Popper's philosophy of science

Now none of this can be unacceptable to a reasonable person, least of all to a conservative. What has stuck in the throat of many people is that Popper makes his anti-inductivism bear too much weight. To deny the possibility of inductive knowledge is to fly in the face of everybody's everyday experience, including that of our dogs, cats and most other sentient beings. If we did not start by assuming regularities and their more or less indefinite replication none of us would survive for a moment. Indeed, we would be unable to learn anything at all. It would seem, in fact, that all of us, including animals, have an innate predisposition to use induction. Popper did not accept this: he thought that what is innate is the predisposition towards using methods of trial and error. However, to object to induction on the grounds that it does not use the rules of entailment of deductive logic, is to extend the criteria of formal systems and mathematics beyond what is appropriate. Deductive logic is one thing, inductive logic is another and their modes of justification are distinct. In science both logics would appear to have their place. Indeed in the areas of logic and epistemology we can find an ever-growing literature in which even deductive logic is questioned and alternative logics proposed.

'Popper's great contribution to the philosophy of science was to highlight the importance for good theorizing of the need for clear articulation so that it is immediately, or as immediately as possible, apparent what would be the conditions for falsification. Such procedure is both practically and intellectually economical and nurtures the critical approach and in no way encourages relativism.

'Stove will have none of this. In a dizzying dithyramb he inveighs against Popper, not only ignoring his closely woven arguments, but accusing him of such crimes as denying the accumulation of scientific knowledge, of irrationalism and of self-contradiction. The aim of science in Popper's view, Stove alleges, is not to seek truth but to find untruth. Popper's insistence on the provisional nature of scientific theories, on what he calls 'conjectural knowledge' is regarded by Stove as irrational in the extreme. Popper, in effect, denies the accumulation of scientific knowledge because, if it is all provisional, then it cannot be knowledge. Knowledge, for Stove, always means knowledge of the truth, and truth cannot bear the adjective 'conjectural' (as though truth were absolute). He implies that to talk about 'conjectural truth' is rather like talking about somebody being 'a little bit pregnant'. So the concept of 'conjectural knowledge' is a nonsense, a contradiction in terms and meaningless, and leads to the denial of objective truth found in the relativists. Stove makes much of this with his usual darting wit. But his objections are unconvincing. Without entering into the sorely disputed question (among philosophers) of what constitutes truth it seems no more unreasonable to talk of 'conjectural knowledge' than to talk of 'partial knowledge', which everybody does without batting an eyelid. All Popper means by 'conjectural knowledge', is 'the knowledge we have so far on the basis of our unfalsified theories', that is, those theories which when tested are found to have

verisimilitude with empirical facts. This is something we hear every day when we are told about 'the present state of knowledge'. So the proposition that absolute truth is unattainable does not entail relativism and, indeed, seems undeniable to most people.

'That Popper believed fiercely in objective truth (in its non-absolute sense) is evidenced from his constant stress that the job of the scientist is the quest for truth. He also thought that this was an unending quest, for our ignorance is infinite before the infinity of what is to be known and the finite nature of our knowledge. This is not the place to examine Popper's somewhat bizarre theory of 'epistemology without a knowing subject', what he called World Three, that mysterious sphere in which are stored books and all man's artefacts, but any serious study of this shows just how much Popper believed in the objectivity of knowledge.

'So, because of his misreading, Stove sees Popper as the ultimate progenitor of the real irrationalists including the unspeakable Feyerabend whose relativism led him quite openly to declare that schoolchildren should be taught astrology and myth as equally valid explanations of the world along with science. Popper's frequent and extended criticism of these attitudes is regarded by Stove as mere quarrelling between inmates of the same stable. He totally ignores the historical fact that the actual forerunners of relativism in philosophy of science were the sociologists of knowledge going back to Mannheim, examined and combatted by Popper himself in many writings. Today, of course, relativism in science studies, rather than coming mainly from Stove's three musketeers has sadly been given a new boost by philosophers of cognitive science in conjunction with artificial intelligence theory such as Stich, the Churchlands and their disciples.

'Those who wish to have a more informed and balanced view of Popper's ideas would do well to read Anthony O'Hear or Susan Haack. The latter should be of especial interest also to adversaries of all forms of relativism, gender feminism and the corruption of the academy.

'For anyone acquainted with what Popper actually wrote, Stove's wholesale condemnation, can only be regarded as dogmatic and unjust. This is serious because in the present academic atmosphere of relativism, irrationalism and sub-marxism, there could be no better antidote for today's students than to read what Popper has to say about these matters.

'Reading Stove's opinions about him will do little to encourage them in this direction. The trouble is, as indicated at the beginning of these comments, that Stove's style is frequently so engaging and humorous that many readers will be taken in.'

Popper's account of 'pseudo-scientific' theories is a suitable starting point in explaining my own view of ideology. I regard the concept of falsification as important in demarcation, although not the demarcation which Popper employs. The demarcation here is demarcation between two non-scientific interpretations, ideological and non-ideological. I replace 'demarcation' with the {thematic} operation of {separation}, symbol '/' which has material as well as non-material application-spheres. As my concern on this page is feminism rather than Marxism, I give no account of my reasons for thinking that Marxism is ideological, or the views of Freud and Adler.

Outside science, falsifiability has a legitimate use in deciding which views to do with human nature, human achievement, and other aspects of humanity - I'll refer to 'human studies' - are securely grounded or the product of ideological distortion. If the distinctive conclusiveness of scientific falsification is lacking, the claim that an argument has been falsified may have great cogency, the argument that an argument has withstood the process of testing far less cogency. 'People are benign' is a statement which can't be tested, or falsified, by the methods of science, but it can be tested, and falsified, to a high degree of probability, by non-scientific methods. 'Women are benign' is a statement which can be tested and falsified too.

Facts are used differently in ideological and non-ideological theories and views. Facts in non-ideological theories and views may often be problematic but they are assessed by using independent methods and techniques, such as comparison of source materials, avoidance of demonstrably unreliable witnesses.

Facts in ideological theories and views avoid the use of methods and techniques external to the ideology. Ideological theories and views are based on the distinction between appearance and reality. Facts belong to the world of appearance, which is regarded as illusory. Facts which are demonstrably true, passing the most thorough and comprehensive tests, belong only to this world of appearance if they conflict with facts which support the ideology. If not in conflict, they are admitted to the world of reality.

It's essential to distinguish between facts and the explanation for those facts, the context of those facts. The

sphere of facts, although far from straightforward, is much simpler than the sphere of explanations and context. I don't accept that facts are themselves interpretations, that there aren't many, many well-grounded facts in human studies.

A feminist could claim that the generalization 'all women lack serious vices' (without {restriction} to sexual vice, of course) should be considered in context, which supplies a cause. The many women who could be cited as counter-examples, the women who obviously have serious vices, are so on account of the manipulation and control exercised by men. A wide variety of other claims about women which seem to challenge feminist views could be countered in a similar way. The feminist would then have to explain, or explain away, the unflattering view of many women which is required here - women as weak and malleable.

If X is the subject matter - class in society, women in history or whatever may be treated in an ideological or non-ideological way - then the crucial difference is that the ideological and the non-ideological way are different in the reasons for {modification} and the use of counter arguments and contrary evidence. {modification} has / {revision}, an example of a 'specific' {theme}, with {restriction}:- general applicability, and the capacity for / {revision} is the term in non-thematic form 'revisability.' Revisability is common to scientific theory and a non-scientific theory, as well as, more loosely, a 'view,' which is non-ideological. {modification}:- [ideological theory or view] has as agents not counter arguments and contrary evidence but, as examples, the forces which change an ideology and give it different forms, perhaps as a result of the very different social contexts in which the ideology is found. Similarly, the language in which an ideology is expressed may develop different 'dialects,' for similar reasons.

An ideology may exhibit drastic and abrupt {modification}, as in the case of the communist supporters who abandoned criticism of Nazi Germany, but this was not as a result of counter arguments and contrary evidence but the fact that Soviet Russia entered into a pact with Nazi Germany at Stalin's instigation.

If counter arguments and contrary evidence lead in all cases to no, or practically no, /{revision} of a theory or view, then the theory or view is likely to be ideological.

/ {revision} of a non-ideological theory or view, like / {revision} of a scientific theory, allows of quantitative differences. The most drastic form is abandonment. Of course, there may be abandonment of an ideological theory or view, as in the case of communists who became non-communists. Counter arguments and contrary evidence of value may be rejected for a time but eventually have an effect.

'The God That Failed,' published in 1949 book, contains six essays by prominent writers and journalists who became disillusioned with communism and abandoned it. The six were Louis Fischer, André Gide, Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Stephen Spender and Richard Wright.

A critique of a possible feminist defence is only given in outline here. On this page, as in so much of the site, evidence and argument is often given in a dispersed form. I examine feminist arguments in many places on this page and there are many places in other pages of the site where material can be found which has relevance to this page.

I see the need not to confine attention to the arguments and evidence but to the factors which may prevent the arguments and evidence from being understood or appreciated. This is particularly necessary when considering the totalitarian ideologies, above all Stalinism and Nazism, the subject of Hannah Arendt's 'The Origins of Totalitarianism,' in three parts. Evidence may require insight and sometimes empathy to appreciate. Hannah Arendt could obviously enter the world of totalitarian ideology. She possessed a far deeper degree of distinctively personal insight, over a far wider range, than, say, Karl Popper. Intellectuality of very great distinction, such as he possessed, can probe some things far more effectively than others.

In the last chapter of the third volume of 'The Origins of Totalitarianism,' significantly entitled 'Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government,' she gives, too late in the book, it has to be said, a formulation of ideology. The formulation isn't a good one: 'Ideologies - isms which to the satisfaction of their adherents can explain everything and every occurrence by deducing it from a single premise - are a very recent phenomenon and, for many decades, played a negligible role in political life.' No ideology explains everything or every occurrence. This is much too wide a claim. Ideologists don't claim to explain, for instance, most natural phenomena. The use of the logical term 'premise' isn't appropriate, and ideological

explanations and directives may be derived from a small number of basic beliefs, not necessarily a single one.

Hannah Arendt elicits very different responses. Two very different responses, those of David Satter and Bernard Wasserstein, are given in an excellent Symposium: Is Hannah Arendt still relevant? I very much believe that she is.

In general, ideologists see no need to defend a thesis against the arguments and evidence which comprise a legitimate anti-thesis. The reference to 'ideology' can be removed, since the claim that the thesis is ideological is often part of the claim of the anti-thesis. I think that these terms 'thesis' and 'anti-thesis' are useful in examining the reaction of feminists to criticisms, and their lack of reaction.

The evidence and arguments put forward by opponents of feminism amount to a substantial case to answer, surely, and I claim to have added to the evidence and arguments. I think that the thesis is substantial but that the anti-thesis is far from substantial.

Argument and the presentation of evidence and the giving of counter-argument and counter-evidence are of fundamental importance and my terms 'thesis' and 'anti-thesis' express these necessities of debate concisely. If the views often summarized as 'political correctness' seem to avoid debate on these terms, it's cause for particular alarm that this is so often the case in universities and colleges.

Thesis can become anti-thesis and anti-thesis can become thesis. If a feminist criticizes the arguments I use and denies that the evidence I put forward is convincing, then this anti-thesis becomes the thesis which it is for me to answer as an anti-thesis.

It's possible that a synthesis will emerge from the contending thesis and anti-thesis, but often this is not the case.

When a very powerful thesis - one with very strong arguments and accompanied by very strong evidence - is challenged by an anti-thesis which has neither, a synthesis is very unlikely. In this case, I use the simple symbolism (thesis) >> (anti-thesis). If the anti-thesis is better supported, then (thesis) > (anti-thesis).

This simple scheme, using this simple pair of terms, has to be supplemented and extended when there are more than two opposing viewpoints, but it can often be used if single aspects are the focus of attention: this is to practise {resolution}. Often, a practical decision is the issue. A measure may become law or not and there may be support for the change in law or opposition to the change.

Supporters of the status quo and opponents of the status quo may have various reasons and may supply different arguments and evidence but the decision may well be a clear-cut one. Support for the status quo is the thesis and opposition to the status quo is the anti-thesis. All that is needed is to distinguish the diverging views which make up the composite thesis and anti-thesis.

