

# Capital Punishment---A Selective Bibliography

CHARLES S. MILLIGAN

**I**NTRODUCTORY comments: Many church groups and others are raising the issue of the abolition of capital punishment. Many books—a surprisingly large number—have appeared in recent years. It is therefore regrettable that much of the current discussion takes place without benefit of available information. This is made the more unfortunate since this issue is highly charged with emotion. It is not possible to eliminate emotion from the subject, but few people would desire to reach conclusions based wholly on emotion. The purpose of this bibliography is to be useful rather than exhaustive. It is hoped that it will be helpful to those looking for resource material.

The books have been selected for their recency and excellence. The articles have not been selected on the basis of quality, although a few of them are of high quality. They have been selected to indicate the wide range of sources, since different people have access to different periodicals and libraries. It will be noticed that the case against abolition of capital punishment is not adequately represented in the listings. This is regretted but unavoidable. Such articles are few in number and repeat one another. They are also briefer. I do not know of any document favoring capital punishment, which gives statistics or detailed information. Nevertheless, much of the material favoring abolition includes statements of the opposition. For example, the Massachusetts Commission Report both gives such careful consideration and includes a minority report by Mr. Sennott and Monsigneur Riley, which is one of the best statements available

of the position of those opposed to abolition.

I am indebted to the bibliography of Hugo A. Bedau for calling to my attention a number of books and articles that I had not known of. (This is found at the conclusion of his article in *The Prison Journal*, October, 1958, and was reprinted in the Massachusetts Commission Report.) However, I have added several items and have aimed at a useful, selective list rather than a complete one, which was Professor Bedau's purpose. For those interested in older literature, Bedau gives sources where such lists may be found. In the older material one should not overlook Victor Hugo's, *Le Dernier Jour d'un condamné*, published in 1829.

As a further attempt toward usefulness, an asterisk indicates books that are especially recommended. These choices are quite debatable. No doubt some of the other books are as good or better than those which are asterisked, but any of the publications so marked would be a good place to begin the study of this subject.

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CHARLES S. MILLIGAN is Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, The Iliff School of Theology.

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