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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

BRITAIN'S BIRTH CONTROL POLICY

One imagines that the recent report of a working party set up by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists *Unplanned Pregnancy*, will be well received by most freethinkers, particularly as it recommended "strongly" that a national birth control service should be set up under the N.H.S. and further proposed that the contraceptive pill should be obtained under the Health Service at ordinary prescription rates. The report also called for more thorough training in contraceptive methods to be given to doctors, midwives, nurses, and social workers in related fields. The report further points out the regional variations interpreting the intentions of the present Abortion Act; the R.C.O.G. calls upon the Government to clarify the 1967 Act, and let us hope that it will do so by further liberalising it.

Sober Perspective

One of the more sobering points made by this report is that unplanned pregnancies among married women are the major factor in population growth, as compared with unwanted pregnancies among the unmarried. Most welcome, too, is the report's advocacy of the provision of voluntary sterilisation, within the National Health Service, for couples who have completed their families, and this includes male sterilisation (vasectomy). Current practice, of preferring female sterilisation, involving deep abdominal surgery, to male vasectomy, which is far safer, quicker, and an almost superficial procedure, is a good example of just how irrational our mealy-mouthed and conceited age still is in regard to sexual matters.

Discouraging Large Families

Less encouraging, however, is the suggestion that has followed the publication of this report to the effect that the birth rate should be controlled by the Government's positively discouraging large families, for instance, by stopping family allowances after a certain number of children per family. Viewed superficially, the idea might appeal to those of us who are concerned by the population problem: make birth control attractive by providing it free; but babies not so attractive by making them expensive. Human society is not, however, so simple; and it would be a sad world without *any* babies!

Almost certainly legislation enshrining this approach to birth control would not work. The articulate advocates of large families (some Catholic intellectuals, for instance) would protest volubly and see to it that the policy was brought into public contempt. Secondly, a significant percentage of very large families are produced by people who are already insecure, feckless and near—or on—the poverty line. Deprive such people (already barely able to cope with the demands of normal living) of child allowances and their sense of anxiety and insecurity will almost inevitably be visited upon the children themselves, making

the whole social problem worse. Of course, this is not to say that we should not encourage the small family as the desirable modern norm. The argument is purely one of effectiveness, and ensuring that existing children are properly cared for.

... UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY ?

One of the more insidious manifestations of the new authoritarian backlash is the call by the Criminal Law Revision Committee for the abolition of what we decadent liberals had come to regard as the traditional safeguards of what we proudly and naively termed British justice. The Committee would abolish the accused's right to silence and give the courts power to compel a defendant to take the witness stand, and it would also allow juries to hear of an accused man's previous convictions before deciding upon their verdict. Also scheduled for abolition is the formal police caution given when a suspect is officially charged.

Putting the Clock Back

One associates this sort of legal process with long-dead anachronisms like the Inquisition, Star Chamber and the High Court of Commission. Apparently the Criminal Law Revision Committee wants to put the clock back because it thinks that the present system is too fair to criminals (can one be *too* fair?) and that too many guilty men are escaping rightful conviction in the courts. Perhaps the Commission would prefer to see all the guilty men convicted, and a few innocent ones as well, which is the situation the proposed changes would tend to produce.

The alleged "necessity" for the changes is the war against crime; and one generally imagines that a decent, civilised society has somewhat higher principles and ideals than its criminal minority. However, the motto for our brave new world, apparently, is to be "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Hardly an edifying prospect.

JESUS AND PAUL*

G. A. WELLS

* A reply to "Hamlet Without the Prince: Jesus and the Mythicists," by Philip HINCHLIFF (*Freethinker*, 11 March).

Mr. Hinchliff dates Paul's conversion to Christianity at about A.D. 30. I will not quarrel with this, although his argument for this date rests on a confusion. He points to Paul's statement in Galatians that he conferred with James and Peter in Jerusalem fourteen years after his conversion, and supposes that this James was the brother of John executed in Agrippa's lifetime, and therefore before A.D. 44. In actual fact Paul's conference was with the Jerusalem leader he himself describes as "James the brother of the Lord" (Gal. 1:19), who must be identified with the James introduced in Acts 12:17 (after the report of the death of the other James in 12:2), and whose conference with Peter and Paul is reported as a later event in a later chapter of Acts (ch. 15). He survives the events narrated in Acts, and Josephus tells that he was killed only in A.D. 62.

Acts places Paul's Jerusalem conference before his journey to Greece, where he is brought before Gallio, the proconsul at Corinth (18:12). The year of Gallio's proconsulship of Achaia is known from a pagan inscription to be A.D. 51 or 52, and so most theologians date Paul's conference at A.D. 48 or 49 and his conversion in the middle of the thirties. Mr. Hinchliff, then, has reached a substantially correct conclusion, albeit from a false premise.

The "Brethren of the Lord"

Paul also mentions an earlier Jerusalem meeting with Peter and James the brother of the Lord three years after his conversion. Mr. Hinchliff comments: "If there were active discussions in the middle thirties between Paul and the Jewish Christians, it is surely impossible to imagine that Paul could have emerged from them without a clear notion of just when Jesus lived and died." If the Peter and James whom Paul met had been companions of an historical Jesus who had been recently executed, then this inference is just. But its premise is precisely what I am calling in question. Of course, if Paul's "brother of the Lord" means "brother of the historical Jesus", then Paul was in touch with Jesus' family and must have learned when he lived on earth. But I argue in my book *The Jesus of the Early Christians* that James is a brother of the Lord because he belongs to a group known as the "brethren of the Lord" (1 Cor. 9:5), a term which is perfectly intelligible as the title of a fraternity of zealous Messianists. Paul complains (1 Cor. 1:11-13) of Christian factions who bear the titles "of Paul", "of Apollos", "of Cephas" and—most significant of all—"of Christ". If there was a group at Corinth called "those of the Christ", there may well have been one at Jerusalem called "the brethren of the Lord", who would have had no more personal experience of Jesus than Paul himself. The vizier of the Nabataean kings regularly bore the title "brother of the king", and this accords well with my suggestion that the Lord's brothers were those most eminent and zealous in his service, rather than his kinsmen. Furthermore, there is no correlation between the "brethren of the Lord" mentioned in the epistles as leaders of the Jerusalem Church, and the family of Jesus mentioned later in the gospels, who, so far from supporting

Jesus, seem to have had little time for him. Some theologians have dealt with this difficulty by supposing that the brothers of Jesus named in the gospels were converted to the faith only after Jesus' death!

Mr. Hinchliff is following many theologians when he explains Paul's silence concerning Jesus' biography by saying that he was seeking some basis to his faith that would make him independent of the Jerusalem Christians led by James who—so it is assumed—stressed the historical Jesus. The Marburg theologian Professor Schmithals has recently urged us not to exaggerate the differences between Paul and James. He shows that both agreed that salvation comes from faith in Jesus, not from keeping the Jewish law; but that James, indeed Judaeo-Christianity generally, could not openly disregard the Jewish law, still less preach against it, without inviting persecution from the Jewish authorities; whereas Paul, whose appeal was to gentiles, had nothing to fear from the Jews if he persuaded pagans, who had never kept the Jewish law, to embrace a kind of Christianity that dispensed with it. Paul does, after all, insist that here is but one true Christian doctrine (Gal. 1:6-9), and it must be this same doctrine which he agrees (Gal. 2:9) that the Jerusalem leaders are to preach to the Jews and he to the gentiles. What divided Paul and James could thus not have been a radically different conception of Jesus. It is therefore surprising, adds Schmithals, that no one has yet given consideration to the possibility that "the Jerusalem Christians might be equally ignorant [of the historical Jesus]." He adds that "in primitive Christianity Paul's attitude to the historical Jesus seems to have been by no means peculiar, but was much more likely to have been typical." In a lecture of 1962 he candidly acknowledges this silence as a "problem to which no satisfactory solution has been given over two hundred years of historical and critical research, and to the solution of which great theologians have sometimes not even attempted to contribute."

The Home of Christianity

Paul provides us with the earliest extant Christian documents, but there were still earlier Christians whom he persecuted (Gal. 1:13) prior to his conversion. In my book I accept the common assumption that the victims of his persecution were Jerusalem Christians. Acts (8:1) represents him as conniving at the martyrdom of Stephen in the city, and then (9:1) seeking the permission of the Jerusalem priests to proceed against Christians in Damascus. It is, however, typical of the author of Luke-Acts to make Jerusalem the centre from which Christianity develops. Paul's own (much earlier) statements inform us that he was in fact unknown by face to the Christian community there, and was moved to persecute by zeal for his native traditions (Gal. 1:14, 22; Phil. 3:6). This implies that his victims were lax in their observance of the Jewish law and cult requirements, whereas the Jerusalem Christians—so he complained after his conversion—were too strict in these matters. Professor Conzelmann has recently argued that Paul persecuted Hellenists—Jewish Christians whose mother tongue was Greek and who believed that salvation comes from Jesus, not from the law. This would suffice to provoke the hostility of a Paul zealous for his "native traditions", whether the Jesus in question was clearly con-

ceived as a historical personage or as a mystic sacrifice. Such an antinomian party could not have originated in Jerusalem, and so, as Schmithals says, "the home of Christianity is not Jerusalem, nor orthodox Judaism, but 'Galilee of the Gentiles', permeated by syncretism", whence the new religion spread through Syria.²

Mr. Hinchliff concedes that my thesis that there was no historical Jesus in Pilate's Palestine would appear plausible if there were a substantial interval of time between the Pauline letters, with their mystic Jesus, and the gospels, with their historical portraiture; that is, if the gospels could be dated "comparatively late, at the turn of the century." Now this is precisely what I believe to be the case. Mark, the earliest extant gospel, is admitted (e.g. in the Rev. Dr. V. Taylor's 1966 edition of the text) to be not an eye-witness report but a redaction of earlier documents; and the late Professor Brandon, who dates the work at A.D. 71, says that its references to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 exclude an earlier origin. Brandon however never faces the problem as to why, if Mark was available from A.D. 71, and was also (as he holds) written at Rome, Clement of Rome writing in A.D. 96 is silent about details in it which would have suited his purpose well (I try to indicate how well on pp. 166-67 of my book). As for Matthew and Luke, it is generally agreed that they are later than Mark, and I show in my book (p. 90) that Luke was obviously writing at a time when it was no longer possible for him to refer to the fall of Jerusalem as a recent event. I further show that Clement of Rome knew none of our gospels, that Ignatius (A.D. 110) knew Matthew but not Luke, while Polycarp (A.D. 135) knew both. These gospels, then, represent what Christians of the early second century thought and believed of Jesus, whereas Paul has nothing to say about Jesuine miracles, or gospels teachings or clashes between Jesus and Roman or Jewish authorities.

Paul's Silence Significant

I know that caution is required with arguments from silence. The book of Acts, for instance, which details the travels of Paul, shows no knowledge of the mystical theology so prominent in his epistles. Similarly, the earliest gospel has no knowledge of, nor interest in, the most prominent ideas of Paul's epistles (such as union with Christ and life in the spirit). But this silence is readily explicable as due to incompatibility of theological standpoint. Evangelists who represented Jesus as recently active in Pilate's Palestine would naturally be concerned with his human biography, not with mystical union with him. Again, the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is practically ignored in the extant Christian literature of the first century, and there is no unambiguous reference to it outside the gospels. This is because the other surviving documents were written primarily for gentile Christians with little interest in Jerusalem.³ The silence of a writer concerning a person or event is of significance only if that person or event is relevant to issues which concern the writer. Paul's silence fulfils this condition—for example, he fails to mention teachings of Jesus (known to us from the gospels), even when these teachings would have helped him establish the case he was arguing. His silence is the more significant because it is no isolated instance, but is shared by all the earliest Christian writers. The table I give on pp. 210-211 of my book shows that no extant Christian epistle, or Jewish or pagan document, earlier than A.D. 110 brings Jesus into connection with Pilate.

NOTES.

¹ SCHMITHALS, W. 1965. *Paul and James* [Engl. transl.]. London: p. 104, n.

² SCHMITHALS, *op. cit.*: p. 34, n.

³ See GASTON, Lloyd. 1970. *No Stone on Another*. Leiden.

THUNDER FROM OLYMPIA

DAVID TRIBE

Literary historians will recall the Olympia Press (and its precursor the Obelisk Press) as first publishers of *avant-garde* notabilities of the twentieth century like Lawrence Durrell, Henry Miller, Vladimir Nabokov, J. P. Donleavy, William Burroughs, Alexander Trocchi and many others. Now its proprietor, the legendary Maurice Girodias, hopes to be first among British publishers (a couple of years ago he established an offshoot of Olympia here) to confront police harassment.

Last November the Obscene Publications squad of New Scotland Yard raided his London premises and took away copies of *The Homosexual Handbook* (the first book I have read which really does make the "gay" world sound gay), *The Sexual Life of Robinson Crusoe* (probably better written and certainly more entertaining than the original *Life*) and *Satyr Trek*. Recently the police made several other raids on Olympia, its production agent, printers and putative printers, and distributors Tandem. These yielded a swag of Trocchi's *Helen and Desire* and *Seven Erotic Minutes*, files and correspondence. Work was disrupted and attempts made to "warn off" all the publisher's collaborators. Usually such attempts are successful: the publisher "reforms" his list or goes out of business.

Girodias is however an exception. With his overseas enterprises—especially American film-making—he has

ample assets behind him, and after years of fighting de Gaulle and Tante Yvonne in his native France he has equal reserves of determination. Through his solicitor Bruce Douglas-Mann, M.P., he has demanded the return of all the material seized—which has not at the time of writing led to any charges—and compensation for loss of business, which his assistant, Ann Rosenberg, estimates as running into five figures. "England", he says, "is one of the last countries where you have a situation like this."

If Girodias is surprised by what he has run into in "liberal" England, the English police must also be wondering what hornets' nest they have stirred up. It is not often that a publisher operating from two rooms in Soho announces at a press conference that he is prepared to spend up to £50,000 fighting against censorship; and if *The Homosexual Handbook* should be brought before the court there may be greater shocks for the English establishment. In the book's last chapter, "Uncle Fudge's Grape-Vine Lineup", among a number of popes, artists and authors is named a former British monarch, and at another place in the alphabetical record is the entry, "Deleted to protect the Royal Family". Not only could this deletion be restored under the absolute privilege of a court hearing but other distinguished names, male and female, could be added.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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London: Collets, 66 Charing Cross Road, WC2; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, King's Cross, N1; Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street (Angel Alley), E1; Rationalist Press Association, 88 Islington High Street, N1; Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1; Freethinker Bookshop, 103 Borough High Street, SE1. Glasgow: Clyde Books, 292 High Street. Manchester: Grass Roots Bookshop, 271 Upper Brook Street, 13. Brighton: Unicorn Bookshop, 50 Gloucester Road, (near Brighton Station).

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

Freethought books and pamphlets (new). Send for list to G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd., 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1.

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

Humanist Holidays. Details of future activities from Marjorie Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey. Telephone: 01-642 8796.

EVENTS

Ashurstwood Abbey Secular Humanism Centre (founded by Jean Straker), between East Grinstead and Forest Row, Sussex. Telephone: Forest Row 2589. Meeting every Sunday, 3 p.m.

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1. Sunday, 16 April, 11 a.m.: H. J. Blackham, "Man as Myth Maker." Tuesday, 18 April, 7 p.m. John Shotter, "Human Potentialities: Wrestling Culture from Nature."

Welwyn Garden City Humanist Group. Saturday, 15 April, 8 p.m.: informal play-reading evening c/o Torben Hesselbo, 12 Elmwood, Welwyn. Thursday, 20 April, 8 p.m., Backhouse Room, Handside Lane, Welwyn: Allen Jackson, "The Relevance of Faith as a Component of a Personal View of Life."

NEWS

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

On Monday evening, April 1st, Mr. Bradlaugh appeared in the City Hall, Glasgow, and delivered his lecture on "Monarchy v. Republicanism," under the auspices of the Republican Club . . . Following the intimation of the Republican gathering which was placarded throughout the city, a bill containing very inflammatory language was posted with equal prominence. This document may be worth reproducing, as to it—with which it is right to say the Orangemen as a body disclaim any connection—the cause of the excitement may to a great extent be traced. It was as follows: "Treason! Treason! Loyalists to the Rescue! Orangemen to the Front! Down with the Traitors! . . . Meet in your thousands and stop the approaches to the City Hall on the evening of Monday 1st of April. God Save the Queen."

—From *The National Reformer*, 14 April 1872.

LETHAL HOLY WATER

According to the Belgrade newspaper *Novosti* the present smallpox outbreak in Yugoslavia (from which, at the time of going to press, 22 people have died) was caused by infected holy water brought back from the Middle East by a Moslem pilgrim. The first reported case was the pilgrim's seven-year-old niece, to whom he gave the water. Assuredly the blessings of God and Allah transcend the ken of mere mortals and infidels.

LUMPA REVIVAL

Anyone remember the newspaper reports of Alice Len-shina and the Lumpa Church whose followers, armed with muzzle-loading guns, arrows and automatic weapons, triggered off a rebellion in Zambia and the loss of 800 lives in 1964? The Lumpas believed that death in battle ensured a safe passage to heaven.

Well, there appears to have been an attempted revival. Zambian police recently raided the mining town of Kabwe after receiving reports of Lumpa prayer meetings there and arrested a number of wailing and chanting suspects. The Zambian military are also worried about reports that Lumpa exiles in Zaire (formerly Congo-Kinshasa) have found several caches of Katangese arms hidden from the days when Katanga was an independent state.

Perhaps we should be thankful that at least in this country we only have to contend with the "church militant" in the form of the Festival of Light.

COMPEL THEM TO COME IN

Writing in the February issue of the Church Missionary Society of Australia's magazine, the Rev. F. G. Engel, Secretary of the Australian Council of Churches, says: "The granting of land rights is now a condition without which Aboriginal culture cannot be adequately preserved or developed, their self-respect be enhanced, their humanity properly acknowledged, nor justice and compassion be more than travesties."

Commendable and progressive sentiments, but, alas, not shared by other Christians in Australia. We quote, for example, the words of Sister Mary of the New Norcia mission:

ISSUES AND NOTES

"I have worked with natives for 42 years and I still cannot understand how their minds work. The person who can understand these people has not yet been born. They cannot understand nor accept the moral code set up by whites and few accept the religious beliefs we teach them . . . The only way we can get the Aboriginal to live like us is to take the children away from their homes when they are babies, put them in good white homes and never let them see their parents."

I suspect that the Aborigines understand Christian "civilisation" a little better than Sister Norcia understands them . . . Perhaps a little *too well*. And to say that the person who can understand the Aborigines "has not yet been born" is dogmatic tripe. For a start there was the Irishwoman, Daisy Bates, C.B.E., known to the Aborigines as Kabbarli ("Grandmother from the Dreamtime"), and who lived and worked among them from 1899 to 1945 and wrote a book, *The Passing of the Aborigines*, in 1935. She died at the ripe old age of 92 in 1951, still wearing Victorian dress and never appearing in public without her gloves!

MALICE IN WONDERLAND

"Among California's marvels are Disneyland, beautiful downtown Burbank, Haight-Ashbury, Death Valley, and a Constitution Revision Commission which is proposing to change the state constitution to allow 100% public support for parochial schools and denominational colleges.

"The Commission's chairman . . . outdid Lewis Carroll when he wrote in September that the Commission does not advocate tax aid to parochial schools but only that the Constitution be amended to allow such aid. See the difference? . . . The proposed amendment would require parochial schools to admit all students without regard to creed or race, but it would allow the parochial schools to select teachers along credal lines and to permeate the curriculum with a particular denominational ideology."

—From *Church & State* (Silver Spring, Maryland), December 1971.

THE JOYS OF R.E.

The *Times Educational Supplement* recently published a letter about the sad case of a little girl of mixed Jewish/Protestant parentage who was brought up as a member of the Church of England. It therefore "seemed natural for her to take her place among her classmates as they formed a line to attend their local parish church for their school's annual service towards the end of the summer term. On seeing her there, however, her teacher asked: 'Aren't you a Jew?'"

Since then, she has had no peace.

Although she went through primary school and spent her first 10 months in . . . high school without any sign of prejudice or being made to feel "different", she is now insulted daily, even in the classroom. It takes only one remark like "Your house must be over-run with Jews" or "Trust a Jew to be good at . . . or mean about . . .", from one child, to set off a chorus of insults.

Suddenly, she "smells", has a "funny face", and the fact that she is pretty, kind and inoffensive is quite overlooked.

And for the first time since starting school, she has a dread of one lesson, religious education.

How comforting it must be for anti-Semites to know that R.E. is still officially blessed by the present Education Act as the only compulsory school subject, and that the State is financing good Christian schools to the tune of 80 per cent and more of their costs.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT ?

"In my position I have been called all sorts of names, even a murderer. But I deny such allegations. I have endeavoured to put into practice my Christian beliefs in order to bring about peace and goodwill in the country . . . From the mass media . . . propaganda has been put over to the population extolling the virtues of socialism—in other words, equality . . . If by removing a person from circulation we will entitle other persons to live in peace, then surely it is a Christian's duty to remove such a person."

—Mr. Desmond Lardner-Burke, Rhodesian Minister of Justice, speaking on "What is a Christian" in Salisbury's Anglican Cathedral on 22 March last.

NINETY YEARS AGO

"Cardinal Newman is perhaps the only Catholic in England worth listening to. He has immured his intellect in the catacombs of the Romish Church, but he has not been able to quench it, and even there it radiates a splendor through the gloom. His saintly character is as indubitable as the subtlety of his mind, and no vicissitude has impaired the charm of his style, which is pure and perfect as an exquisite and flawless diamond; serene and chaste in its usual mood, but scintillating gloriously in the light of his imagination."

—G. W. Foote in *The Freethinker*, 16 April 1882.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

The Church of England poses as the friend of Labour, and one hymn for the working-class is graciously included in the hymnal. Hence we are surprised to find the Church Army offering situations to women with no salaries attached, but only "pocket money". Truly, in this instance, religion is "without money and without price."

—From *The Freethinker*, 16 April 1922.

FREETHINKER FUND

We should like to thank the 22 readers who kindly sent donations to the Fund during March. *The Freethinker* operates with both limited resources and the minimum of staff; and its printers are doing all they can to keep costs down. Considering today's high, and rising costs, 3p is pretty good value for an 8-page paper. *The Freethinker* is the world's only English-language weekly of its kind, and if it is to continue the struggle against superstition, authoritarianism and the Gathering of Gloom, as well as be within the range of everyone's pocket, it needs *your* help and generosity.

Our thanks to the following: H. A. Alexander, 35p; J. H. Budd, 45p; R. L. Chrismer, 30p; Sidney Clowes, 25p; A. Foster, £1.70; E. Graham, 70p; U. C. Mann, £1; John Manus, £1.16; Mrs. Juanita Monrad, 24p; C. J. Morcy, 45p; W. C. Parry, 68p; George Penezich, £6; E. Pettit, 34p; R. B. Ratcliffe, 45p; G. Samuel, 40p; H. R. Scobell, 10p; John Sutherland, £1.06; G. Swan, 20p; J. Sykes, 20p; Kenneth W. Thomson, £1; Mrs. Lily Van Duren, 25p; E. Wakefield, 17p.

BOOKS

THE ROOTS OF COINCIDENCE.

By Arthur Koestler. Hutchinson, £2.00.

Arthur Koestler is one of the most interesting and stimulating writers of today. He has an impressive knowledge of many fields of scientific research and an exceptional capacity for presenting current thinking in clear and concise language. But he has a restless mind, adventuring into byways of speculation that often take him beyond the boundaries of scientific thinking. It is as if the rigours of scientific thinking, the careful testing of each step, the unwillingness to abandon the familiar and well-tryed for the new and often more exciting theory, are felt by Koestler as intellectual shackles to be impatiently shaken off. This is the impression I have received from his latest book.

It is largely an account of theories of extra-sensory perception, of telepathy, precognition, psychokinesis, given in terms of enthusiastic support. The experimental evidence from Professors Rhine and Soal is clearly set out—in fact this book would make an excellent introduction for anyone wishing to know what work is going on in the field of extra-sensory perception. The evidence is largely statistical and seems to me highly inconclusive. For this evidence seems to turn upon a theory of probability of an *a priori* character, i.e. dependent not so much on the facts of experience, as on what seems theoretically probable. Thus in terms of this theory the probability of a coin coming down heads is 1/2. But to say this, before we go on to toss, is not to say anything more than that the coin has two faces one of which is heads. Empirically, it is true that if we toss often enough heads will tend to show as often as tails. But on the way to this equalisation—and this is the important point—there are likely to be runs of heads and runs of tails. This may very well apply to the card-guessing games on which much of the evidence for telepathy is based. The cards that are used have five different designs. Out of 25 guesses the chance expectation of success is five. Anyone getting eight out of 25 would achieve a significant result according to the proponents of telepathy. But—as with coin tossing—with a large number of people guessing cards, you are likely to get a range of different results, some well above the expected figure of chance, some well below it and most around it (rather like the distribution in a normal curve). And, in fact, with the most successful guessers there comes a point where they tail off, where the “decline effect” shows itself. Koestler tries to pass off this decline effect as due to tiredness or boredom but it seems to me that its existence is a very damaging argument against telepathic claims. I do not wish to decry the work going on in this field. There are clearly forms of communication in other animals that we do not understand and which may have their counterpart in human life, perhaps as an archaic residue of pre-human experience. My point is that statistics seem a most unreliable guide to their existence. It might even be argued that the development of telepathic powers, if they exist, may be socially disruptive. It would not do for us to know directly what other people are thinking of us. The atrophy of telepathic communication may have been an essential step in human evolution.

Precognition seems to be of a different order of things. Statistically it is subject to the same objections but in addition it seems to involve a conception of time based on a

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spatialisation of it as a dimension. As space stretches before us to be travelled along, so events in time, in this conception, are ahead of us to be discerned by precognitive or clairvoyant techniques. I find this fascinatingly incredible.

One of the best chapters in the book is entitled “The Perversity of Physics”. In it Koestler handles the very difficult concept of modern physics with skill and knowledge. He comes down on the side of indeterminacy, citing, in support, the discovery in modern physics that it is impossible both to define the location and velocity of an electron. The more accurately one is defined, the less accurately is the other defined. This comes under the heading of Heisenberg’s *Principle of Uncertainty* which Koestler, with many others, renders as the *Principle of Indeterminacy*. It seems to me that there is a logical error involved here. For from the fact that an event is unpredictable, it does not follow that it is undetermined. On the macroscopic level there are many events—such as the outcome of the Grand National—that are unpredictable. But there certainly are determining factors which cause one horse rather than another to get to the winning post first. And this may well be true on the sub-atomic level.

Koestler’s books are always worth reading. He assaults our common sense and scientific notions, bombarding them with ideas of his own which, while they do not always stand up to rigorous examination, compel us to think and re-think about our own pet ideas.

REUBEN OSBORN

PATTERNS OF CHRISTIAN ACCEPTANCE: Individual Response to the Missionary Impact, 1550-1950

by Martin Jarrett-Kerr, C.R. Oxford University Press, £4.50.

Books about missionary activities have been standard fare for Sunday School or Church School prizes for about a century, and many of us still have, as part of our domestic legacies from the Victorian past, large and rather tired-looking volumes about David Livingstone or William Carey. Even today, when the whole climate of British Christianity has so radically changed, it is relatively easy to make a moving and exciting story out of any of the records of overseas missionary work—even if the factors of an engaging faith are now so much weaker and less applicable.

Father Martin Jarrett-Kerr, however, has evidently based his book, not on any pallid reflections of the Victorian hagiography, but on a prolonged, careful and detailed study of the impact of missionary work in some of the countries of the “Third World”, such as Japan, China, India, Africa, and the Philippines. He has also concentrated upon personalities, instead of statistics or movements. The result is a valuable shift in the perspectives of Christian advance, and, in particular, the discovery of “the new centre of gravity of the People of God”. Christianity loses its familiar, Western interpretations and settings, and it recovers its Oriental origins, and its world-mission. It follows that, by so doing, the divisions between the Churches dwindle almost into insignificance.

R REVIEWS

This is an heroic and scholarly book, filled with personalities previously little known to most Western readers, such as André Kim in Korea, Sergei Seodzi in Japan, and John Chilembwe in Nyasaland. All of them are well documented and detailed: based, too, essentially upon the indigenous needs and events, without recourse to the European connections or conventions. They bear witness to much more than Christianity alone; since many of the accepted principles of our own times—no racial discrimination; equality, self-government, freedom, and justice—needed the seed-bed of Christianity out of which to grow.

Patterns of Christian Acceptance discloses the origins of many of the political and social patterns of the Third World today; and these origins may not be any the less memorable or important because they sprang from a sort of faith which is not given to everyone, especially in 1972. In fact, this book is frankly free from any direct theological or ecclesiastical apologies: for most of its readers, that must be amongst its highest merits—it recounts the sober facts, of heroism and dedication, in distant and usually harrowing circumstances, so that one is, for the most part, content to read on and on, forgetful perhaps of the acts of faith, and remembering only the exhibitions of sheer humanity, in all their luminous and enduring inspirations. Other versions of the "Martyrdom of Man" constantly enthral us in these crowded pages; and the tedious conflicts of the Churches or theological dogmas disappear behind the horizons of human insight and dedication.

Father Jarrett-Kerr has left few loopholes for criticism of his scholarship: his book has ample notes and 12 pages of bibliography, including texts in French and German, as well as in English. It ranges widely and perceptively across the world, from Turkey to Japan and Vietnam, Korea to Africa and Guatemala. It demonstrates the astonishing diversity of the Christian impact, both personal and social; and so it must help to re-orient the Christian experience after its centuries of European capture and suburban retreat. Doubtless many will quarrel with the supernatural implications of all of these missionary faiths. But *Patterns of Christian Acceptance* is almost wholly devoted to the least objectionable features of Christianity: neither its dogmas nor its professionalism, but its practicalities, and especially its contributions to the needful liberation and renewal of the world. "By their fruits, ye shall know them": it is an old and much-worn remark; but on such a basis even rationalists may study from this book the lives of Joseph Vaz of Ceylon and Rachel Sebulimba of Uganda, with something more than a cynical amusement.

ERIC GLASGOW

THE SLAVE TRADE: The Study of Transatlantic Slavery

by Oliver Ransford. John Murray, £3.50.

Until the late eighteenth century the enslaved African, hauled across the Atlantic in ever increasing numbers to feed the labour appetite of the slave economies, was the true pioneer of much New World development. This enforced movement of population was to remain one of history's most dramatic inhumanities, until the greater efficiencies of the present century put even greater possibilities within man's reach. In the African in-

terior, on the coast, in the hell of the slave ships and finally (if the slave was lucky?) in a lifetime's toil in the New World, generations of Africans were subjected to a series of devastating physical and psychological traumata. The simple truths and the bold facts of the iniquitous Atlantic trade, which was not finally eradicated until the late nineteenth century, speak for themselves. Unfortunately, the historical tradition has been to allow the truth of the slave trade to be hidden by moral outrage or buried beneath a welter of colourful but misleading evidence.

Large numbers of writers have recently added to our expanding knowledge about the slave trade; about its impact on Africa, the West Indies and on the Americas, while others have examined the middle passage itself. Why then do we need Dr. Ransford's book? It is deliberately "popular", written in a lively and engaging way, designed presumably to appeal to the general reader and to extract from him the pained reactions which desiccated scholars have presumably lost. This book is a remarkable work of industry and devotion, a rare achievement for a medical man whose spare time must be precious.

It is none the less a very poor book indeed. Ransford falls victim to the pitfalls inherent in the material he handles. He homes in on the spectacular and often fails to see the essence of a point; he often cites evidence from different periods, places and times as if it was all contemporary. Equally he seems to give credence to very mixed material, some of which is notoriously unreliable.

Ransford seems not to have read a great deal of recent work on his chosen area. More serious however is the fact that he perpetuates old myths (about the African's "natural cheerfulness" for example) and sometimes creates new ones. The most amazing involves his comments on Africans in general—"a more amiable people than my own"—though it is not clear if he means the people of Bradford where he was born, or the people of Bulawayo where he lives. In places Ransford is quite wrong, for instance on the origins of the slave trade, on the price of slaves and, a crucial point, on the numbers involved. Often the author reaches conclusions which are not derived from the evidence he cites (which may or may not be accurate). No one familiar with the slave trade would deny its dramatic impact on West Africa, but Ransford assumes that every aspect of life there, from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, can be explained by reference to the slave trade. More seriously however the author unconsciously hides a series of personal views and assumptions beneath a veneer of scholarship. At times his personal opinions are indistinguishable from what he offers the reader as verifiable historical analysis.

If he is confused when dealing with West Africa, he becomes even more so when he crosses the Atlantic (as did the artist who drew the illustration for the dust-jacket; a scene which bears no resemblance to people living or dead). In branching out into the modern consequences of the slave trade, although Ransford is correct to draw our attention to these, he once again spins off into the realms of speculation. But he presents it in the form of revealed historical truth. Other reviewers have accepted Ransford's precepts, his framework (and his use of evidence) and have consequently seen the book as an indispensable guide to an understanding of modern race-relations. In fact there many splendid historical analyses of slavery and the slave-trade (in fact the subject is a major "growth area" of historical work)

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LETTERS

Magistrates and the Law

A Glasgow mother, accused of the heinous crime of failing to clean a flight of steps in accordance with a local by-law, was remanded in custody two weeks ago for eight days. The magistrate who sent her to prison, depriving ten children of a mother's care, was no doubt embarrassed by the prospect of unexpected newspaper publicity, and made two excuses to reporters: first, that he had been unaware the woman had any children, and secondly that the week in prison was imposed not so much for failure to clean the steps but for failing to turn up at court when first summonsed to do so.

Does the magistrate never bother, then, to find out the home circumstances of anyone, particularly a woman, that he is about to commit to prison? Has it never occurred to him that many women around the age of forty have children who need them at home? Above all, can a magistrate be unaware that the law does not permit refusal of bail to be used as a means of punishment?

In theory, prisoners are remanded in custody only when they might be expected to escape justice by fleeing the country or committing suicide or something of that kind. But this case, although a particularly bad instance of unjustifiable and unlawful imprisonment, is unfortunately only one of thousands every year in which magistrates in our courts abuse the law in this way.

I would like to see all magistrates do a week or two in prison, *incognito*, before being allowed to sit on the bench at all. And I would like to see this particular Scottish bailie additionally sentenced to clean a flight of steps every Saturday for one year.

BARBARA SMOKER.

Capitalism, Nationalism and the First World War

Sorry to disappoint Mr. C. Doran—I have heard of Colonel Repington, and from what I have heard I would not decide that capitalism caused the First World War just because the good Colonel said so (if his book was called *The First World War 1914-18*, how came Mr. MacNeil to be "armed" with it "over forty years ago"—before there had been a Second?).

Mr. Doran says "the main and only reason" for the war was to prevent Germany beating Britain in the world's markets. Well if that was the "main" reason, it could not have been the "only" one!

I am afraid Mr. Doran's allegations are so vague and muddled that a lawyer would say they reveal "no case to answer". Certain sinister people plotted the world war but we are not told how they accomplished this except that they resorted to bribery—which did not work! "Only a few were in the secret of the plotting"—then the British capitalist class as a whole could not have been involved. The plotting was "always in Paris"—suggests they wanted to go to the Folies Bergères! Then they bribed the Russian Foreign Minister, who would not do what they wanted, the dirty dog—these plotters seem incompetent!

There is evidence that the British government was getting anxious about Germany in the 1870s—before German economic power became a threat but soon after German *military* power had been revealed in the Franco-Prussian war.

If the war was caused by the struggle for markets why did Britain not fight the U.S.A.? There was a fierce quarrel over oil between these countries in 1914. On the other hand, in the same year, there was an agreement between Germany and Britain over oil. G. W. Stocking in his *Middle East Oil* says that on 19 March 1914, "the British Foreign Office sponsored an agreement with the Turkish Petroleum Company fusing German, British and Dutch interests."

But even if what Mr. Doran says is true, what does it mean? Simply that, if there is national sovereignty, you have wars for economic as well as strategic reasons. Germany and Britain would have clashed over markets even if both had been Communist because they had to export. But if they had been united politically they could not have gone to war even if they had been capitalist.

Therefore—we should try to get World Government.

Finally Mr. Doran says a certain Admiral Consett could not stop war material going to Denmark in the First World War, presumably because of wicked British capitalists (as usual Mr. Doran

is vague—suspiciously so). Well this contradicts his main argument. If Germany had to be smashed to have British capitalism, why did British capitalists do things that helped Germany avoid being smashed?
I. S. Low.

Low, Lenin and Imperialism

Like a well-whipped cur I. S. Low returns, tail-wagging and cautious, yet repeating his unconscious simpleton errors that tempt one to extend an affectionate pat. One withdraws from doing so, sensing that such kindness may well hurt his masochistic make-up.

The extremely fatuous remarks he made in his article were without exaggeration adequately summarised in his mind-blasting observation: "Lenin had a problem after the revolution"—i.e. Stalin. Having tried to explain the absurd simplicity of this expression when set against the background of events at that time, I find his unenlightened reply is one which is to be found at any time on the refuse tip of popular prejudice and ignorance. To talk of Lenin not being aware of "... other dangers besides capitalism ..." is the most inexcusable nonsense, it reveals the writer's barren concepts of political theory.

He complains that his main argument was not answered, i.e. "Imperialism was caused by something" (too true, too true!) and if capitalism was not the cause, he suggests that national sovereignty was. But if I. S. Low only understood: *no single factor can possibly constitute a cause*, he would not make such silly statements.
TREVOR MORGAN.

Representation and Democracy

I suppose only "nut-cases" could take Peter Cadogan's letter of 1 April as an "April Fool." Yet a consensus of sensible readers of *The Freethinker* might perhaps support the finding that Mr. Cadogan's letter makes more stimulating than lucid reading. To be fair, one should not expect detailed lucidity in a short letter, and it is quite possible that the following general questions only display this reader's unclucid reading.

The message that "we need a higher and better form of Democracy" is fine in its way, but how in the name of reality can there be any form of democracy without "the representative principle"? Whatever it may mean in practice to have a "volunteer principle" and publicly recognise the *professional* principle as well, how can any serving volunteer (who either "offers" or is "chosen by lot" to serve) actually serve democracy by disregarding the representative principle? Surely, in most of our current "voluntary organisations", the serving members are governed by responsibilities to some specific representative principle—and cause.

As regards "the answer to Westminster" it is unclear how 44 British republics and a vast complex of non-political national agencies" would in practice improve services "that require national treatment." Surely, it is obvious to all but "nut-cases" that what is needed is more rather than less of the representative principle: Regions without regionalism, Nations without nationalism, World Government with a humanly democratic representativeness!

CHARLES BYASS.

I should, perhaps, point out that Mr. Cadogan's letter was intended for the 25 March number of this paper, but publication was delayed by the volume of correspondence at that time. (Ed.)

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and upon these, notably Philip Curtin's work, we can begin to build a historical context for contemporary problems (if indeed we feel that history must serve this purpose). Ransford's book does not belong to this genre however.

Bad history is worse than no history at all, for, unconscious or not, it deceives us about the past and misleads us about the present. The hideous truth about the slave trade remains untarnished no matter what historians and writers do to it. The saddest feature of the present book however is that it makes the task of presenting truthful, untarnished historical reality even more difficult than ever.

JAMES WALVIN