

part of the test for validity was a move away from the feudal view of marriage. Indeed, it is one of the merits of Helmholtz's fine reconstruction that he shows

marriage to be a good vantage point from which to explore the interaction of Christian self-understanding and a society's beliefs and structures.

ROBERT OMBRES OP

THE RELIGION OF ISAAC NEWTON, by Frank E. Manuel, *Clarendon Press*, Oxford, 1974. 141 pp. £3.50.

Before I read these Freemantle lectures I knew that Newton had written on prophecy, but I had no idea of the extent and distribution of his unpublished materials. Since they were sold at Sotheby's in 1936 they have been scattered over the world, but most of them are now assembled in three collections, one made by J. M. Keynes at King's College, Cambridge, another in Massachusetts, and the largest at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This is surprising, but it may be appropriate, for the immediate ancestry of Newton's prophetic researches is to be sought among Puritan divines concerned with Rabbinical and Cabbalistic learning. His method of interpretation was not original, but less traditional than Dr Manuel seems to suppose. My one serious criticism of these very lucid lectures is that, like so many others, Dr Manuel takes for granted that what we call fundamentalism was a part of traditional orthodoxy in the seventeenth century. Newton's researches in chronology were part of a process of investigation into the date of creation begun by Scaliger and continued by Petavius and Ussher. The question was still sufficiently open in 1740 for the editors of a new Dutch edition of Moreri's dictionary to plump for 4035. This throws some light on Newton's reluctance to publish much that he had evidently prepared with a view to publication. Believing as he did in the inspiration of the letter of Scripture, and of the science told to the children in it under figures and emblems that need to be unravelled, he did not want to be embroiled in controversy on such details as the date of the flood with those who revered the word as he did and yet remained in darkness on matters which the progress of science would elucidate in time.

Newton, like Milton, believed the Bible, but because he was a scientist, not a poet, he believed that the Bible was full of concealed science, Chaldean, Egyptian, Indian. Neither Newton nor Milton could see Nicene orthodoxy in it. Platonist metaphy-

sicians and papistical theologians had got it all wrong. But before long the Trinity 'would be considered as outlandish as Catholic transubstantiation'. Newton had no use for modern metaphysics either. He helped Samuel Clarke to write against Leibnitz, but he was no more Arian than Athanasian, and he took no risks for Whiston, who put *The Apostolic Constitutions* on a level with Scripture. Newton's Pantocrator was the God who laid the foundations of the universe when he set the stars in order. He will send his Messiah to inaugurate the rule of the saints in due course, without much more delay. Christ in Newton's science is a lieutenant of omnipotence, not a saviour or a sacrifice. Dr Manuel sees very clearly that in the divisions of the eighteenth century Newton was on the side of rational divinity, not of the Evangelicals, but his religion was not the natural religion of the Deists, and he had nothing in common with the Unitarians, who were in reaction against Calvinism. His God was the omnipotent Lord, and not the infinite ground. Blake, who detested both, was aware of this. He may have had some prophetic insight into the mind behind Newton's science, and it is significant that, like Coleridge, he took to the Platonists in search of relief from the tyranny of Newton and Locke.

Dr Manuel sees a clue to Newton in his search for the father who died before he was born, in the unhappiness of his childhood in Lincolnshire, where his mother married a country clergyman and had other children. I wonder whether the collapse of the Commonwealth may not be as important. Newton as a growing lad probably believed that the rule of the saints was coming through the Rump and Barebones Parliament, and I think he continued to dream of it while he forged for the Protestant middle classes their engines for ruling and civilising pagans and papists. Newton had no use for mystical enthusiasts, but in his interpretation of prophecy he thought of himself as a prophet to

whom secrets had been revealed in the last times. He identified with 'the priests and religious leaders of these ancient civilisations' who 'were also their scientists and philosophers. They had shunned subjective approaches to a knowledge of God, the trance-like states in which direct communion with divinity was supposed to be attained. . . . Their fervent belief in one God had led them to scrutinise the operation of things on earth and the movement of the stars in the heavens, and to record their observations in precious documents which, though marred by time, still held secreted within them some of

the fundamental truths discoverable about God's creation'. But Polytheism 'accepted the idea of contrary and contradictory causes in nature which it associated with false gods'. In the coming reign of Christ his saints would rule with him over mortal men. They would roam about the stars and appear on earth only at intervals, but they would direct the course of history in the millenium. This was perhaps a prophecy of the domination of the world by intelligent scientists with a Protestant ethic, but Newton made a mistake in identifying this with the reign of Christ.

GEORGE EVERY

A SEVENTH MAN, by John Berger and Jean Mohr. *Penguin*, 1975. 238 pp. including some 160 photos. £1.

It is difficult to enter another person's world, to see how it feels and its facts are constructed. This book does that. It gives us something of the experience of a particular kind of male migrant worker in Europe—the peasant from one European country who finds work in the urban centres of another.

There is no work for him at home. Being enterprising, he goes abroad to save enough to change his life on his return. Medically examined before entry to see if he is strong and healthy enough, he will do the unpopular manual work and probably live in a kind of barracks: 'You could call us the niggers of Europe'.

This is a convenient situation. A migrant of this kind is an ideal component for capitalism, part of a labour force that can be brought in or sent home as required. Rotated with his fellows, his only function is to work: his family have been left behind, he comes ready-made, and in sickness and old age will again be the responsibility of his own country. Most of the money sent home finds its way back in one way or another—the poorer countries are in a permanent state of economic dependence. Troublesome migrants can be sent home and receive little support from the trade unions—they are regarded as inferior by the indigenous population.

The migrants are not encouraged to

settle permanently. They do not want to anyway. Their values and hopes belong to the past they remember and the future they want to make when they return. The present has been blocked out for them. They are not recognised as anything now, not even as people making sacrifices. They have no life but work.

When the migrant finally returns home the situation there will not have changed. There will still be no work for him, he has learnt no skills and his experience is of no use in the village. In a few years' time he or one of his family will have to go abroad again.

These are the bones of the situation this book describes with insight and subtlety. The text (as readers of John Berger would expect) is very fine: a mixture of imagination, crisp statements, figures and quotations. The photographs too (mostly by Jean Mohr) speak expressively: we are made to realise that a picture of a Yugoslav boy brings him to us but defines his absence for his migrant father. Looking at these pictures and the descriptions of the metropolis and what is happening in it makes our world seem strange and alien. We are living in a kind of dream (or nightmare) from which the authors of this book want us to wake up, by showing how what has become our normal world uses and denies not only the migrant but us as well.

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