

The Freethinker

Volume LXXXII—No. 9

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

I HAVE NOT read Gordon Shepherd's latest book, *Engelbert Dollfuss* (Macmillan, 1961); nor am I anxious to do so. But when in the Christmas issue of *The Observer* I read a review by Christopher Hollis, headlined "The Martyr of Austria", I got hot under the collar and immediately wrote to the editor: "As a born Austrian and former political refugee who had taken an active part in his native country's politics, I take exception to your critic whitewashing a

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

Was Dollfuss a Martyr?

— By OTTO WOLFGANG —

Fascist as 'The Martyr of Austria'; if anything, Dollfuss was rather her grave-digger". When the writing of history was in the hands of monkish chroniclers they viified those whom the Church disliked (such as the Norman King of England, William Rufus); and so long as religion is still with us, personalities like Julian the Apostate and the Roman emperors reputed to have persecuted the Christians will be upheld as examples of depravity and infamy; *vice versa* sympathy will be evoked for all "godists" however black their record. This tide has now reached the Fascists, not yet quite Hitler, Goering and Goebbels, but the lesser criminals like Mussolini and his Sancho Panza, Dollfuss.

In any paper of the millionaire press I would not have been surprised at the "martyr" epithet. But *The Observer!* Nowadays even in Popish Austria, pious Engelbert Dollfuss is no longer mentioned: he had too many lives on his conscience when he lost his own. And the "martyr" adjective was a desecration of the dead of 1934, the desperate workers of Vienna.

No Fairy Tales

"No Fairy Tales about Dollfuss" — that is the headline of a newspaper cutting I was recently sent from Vienna; no date or the name of the paper was given, but the article was signed "Ernst Epler" and it began: "A book on Dollfuss was recently published, written by Gordon Shepherd, an English journalist; it is not worth reviewing". But the author of the article then goes on to recall the life and deeds of our "martyr" for the benefit of the new generation. In 1892 he was born at Texing, Lower Austria, the son of relatively well-to-do and very devout peasants who had intended him to be a priest. After elementary school he entered the Oberhollabrunn Archiepiscopal Seminary for Boys, but later found that law appealed to his adventurous mind better than theology. So he read jurisprudence at Vienna and Berlin and, with a view to a political career, entered a duel-fighting association of Catholic Students (membership of which has ever been the indispensable entry visa for any Austrian civil servant or politician). When war broke out, he volunteered for a crack mountain regiment — because of his diminutive size (which later earned him the nickname of *Milli-Metternich*) he would ordinarily have been rejected. After the Austrian débâcle he found friends in the feudal circles who were able to "launch" him in that "Good Society" from whence fascist terrorists graduated. This promising and particularly ambitious young man soon took the fancy of the Rev. Joseph Sturm, director of the Peasants' League

of Lower Austria, who declared him his "heir apparent" and made him director of the Lower Austrian Chamber of Agriculture (1927). Via the post of Chairman of the State Railways he became Minister for Agriculture (1931) and Federal Chancellor 14 months later. After Hitler's ascent in Germany, Dollfuss construed a technical irregularity as a pretext to suspend Parliament and reign as an autocrat. The World Economic crises of 1929/30 shook in particular the weak fundamentals of post-war Central Europe, and the "Spectre of Communism" knocked on several doors. In their desperate predicament, the ruling stratum made a pact with the underworld to share the spoils.

This brought fascism to rule in the guise of a political party. Conditions in Austria after the bankruptcy of the Credit-Anstalt were particularly desperate; the majority of the working class were unemployed and underfed, their existence depended upon black-marketing and occasional "black" jobs. A ridiculous dole was given for three years only; after that you had to fend for yourself or die.

Loyal Catholic

Dollfuss, the loyal son of the Roman Catholic Church, had no following in the masses, so he made a pact with the *condottiere* Fey and Starhemberg who maintained their paramilitary terror bands (*Ostmaerkische Sturmsharen*, and *Heimwehr*). Starhemberg, a noble prince, even paid his blackguards 1/6d. a day, and such was the misery of the masses, that he gathered regiments of *lumpenproletariens*. All three "Fuehrers" appealed to the patriotism of the Austrians to secure their special brand of fascism in the teeth of bigger competition from abroad. Great Britain, France and particularly Mussolini Italy had staked on this illusory rampant against the *Anschluss*. *Pre-Anschluss* Austria had been a pawn in the struggle for hegemony between Hitler and Mussolini; Dollfuss, the avowed disciple of Prelate Seipel, the mass murderer of 1927, always tended towards Rome as his spiritual centre. The majority of the Austrian population was either German-orientated, with strong sympathies for Hitler, or left-wing Socialist. The Social Democrats also maintained a defence organisation (*Schutzbund*) but they were wary to put it into action, particularly as Dollfuss maintained sham negotiations with their leaders. With his success in 1934, the Social Democratic leaders ingloriously capitulated, and unorganised bands of desperate workers alone put up a defensive resistance. They retreated into Council estates and party centres where they were besieged by the military forces and bombed out with artillery.

"On the Run"

This was the culmination of a period when I, like thousands of other anti-fascists, was in and out of prison and "on the run" to evade the Concentration Camp. We were also expelled from our Council flats (although I had never been in arrears with my rent), for political reasons. Any wonder that hatred soared to the highest pitch! When Hitler eventually marched in, many people took comfort

in the thought that it couldn't get worse, that incorporation in Greater Germany might at least mitigate unemployment and hunger. Dollfuss promulgated his authoritarian constitution on the Vatican-Mussolini pattern of the Corporate State; for the rest he copied Hitler in a rather ludicrous and operatic way, considering the inner hollowness of his regime. For him the Nazis were dangerous competitors, but his enemy was on the left. So it was that he jailed but never executed Nazis. The gallows were only for the Socialists, and one of them, Muenichreiter, the wounded hero of the Vienna resistance, was even carried on a stretcher to be hanged. Who, I ask Mr. Hollis, is the real martyr of Austria? The fact that Dollfuss met a violent death must not distract from his guilt. If so Mussolini, Hitler and Trujillo, too, could claim martyrdom.

I epitomised these facts in a short letter to *The Obser-*

ver whose Assistant Editor replied, *inter alia*:

Your letter makes some strong points and we are in sympathy with a good deal you say, but I hope you will excuse us for not starting a controversy about Dollfuss in our hard-pressed correspondence columns . . . The difficulty with Dollfuss is that radically different views of him can be sincerely held, according to the political angle from which he is approached. True indeed, if fascism is a "political angle" to be tolerated. By suppressing and decimating the only section of the Austrian population willing and able to oppose Hitler, Dollfuss opened the gates to Nazism. Hitler, Dollfuss and Mussolini were hailed by the princes of the Church as saviours, men of Providence and tools of the Lord. Today, the leaders of the Social Democrats and of the Roman Catholic Church work together, and successfully rely on how quickly the public forgets. In addition the good services of the professional whitewasher are useful.

History Versus Myth

By JOHN CHRISTOPHERS

OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM may be criticised on various counts, but surely the thing to be most deplored in it is the lack of faithfulness in religious instruction. It is curious that in an age, when so many advances are being made, there persists an unwillingness and often a refusal to divulge certain facts, which are vitally important, if the pupil is to receive a clear and a fair understanding of the religion he is being taught (i.e. the Christian—no other being regarded worthy of consideration). For the most part only one side of the story is told, and many, many facts are hushed up. Some instructors of religion will however admit some details, which are embarrassing to the Church and its doctrines, but only when these matters are raised by pupils and brought to the notice of the whole class. Wherever possible the motto is, "God is beyond criticism!"

However the ill effects of this religious propaganda may be remedied by a glance through some books, which refer to the religions of the ancient Mediterranean. Here one can find many a revealing and startling piece of information. And it is more detailed reading, which can replace the gap in religious education. More often than not, this will excite the mind to query more than ever the rubbish taught in RI.

Superstitions quickly flee when it is discovered that our canon of the Old Testament dates from the second century AD, and that those particular manuscripts are conveniently not to be found (as is always the case). This version of the Old Testament was translated from a Greek text, not a Hebrew one, and there is no earlier copy (other than the Dead Sea Scrolls, which do not comprise the whole OT), for the Jews burnt their old copies whenever a new one was made. The Old Testament itself was compiled after the exile in Babylon (c. 500 BC), hence most of the early parts are unreliable. They may have been compiled in the reign of David, under royal command "to provide the nation with a historical and religious origin", but there is little likelihood, and as always no evidence, that any such books survived the exile in Babylon.

Where Egypt is concerned we are remarkably fortunate in having a detailed and authentic history, for the events of a Pharaoh's lifetime were recorded on papyrus and upon the walls of his tomb, all in a most meticulous fashion. Hence to obtain a detailed account of Moses and the Israelites, we go to the Egyptian records. Surprise upon surprise, they seem to have left out this momentous piece of history! No mention of Joseph or his brethren,

no mention of the Israelites in the Land of Goshen, no mention of Moses or Aaron, no mention of the seven plagues or the crossing of the Red Sea, or indeed of numerous Jewish slaves—for even accounts of the slaves are given in the lists of a Pharaoh's possessions, etc., which used to be paraded at certain religious ceremonies.

Egypt may negatively suggest that parts of the Old Testament are completely mythical, it may also provide the origin of Israelite ideas. One could say that the Egyptians were God's super-chosen people, for they had a version of the Ten Commandments long before Moses received them. It appears that the Israelites, as with many other things, borrowed the Egyptian law, which is to be found in the Book of the Dead (earliest copy of this c. 3000 BC). The dead person must recite before his heavenly Judge, "I have done no wrong, I have not robbed, I have not been covetous, I have not stolen, I have killed no man, I have not given short measure of corn . . ." and "I have done what is pleasing to the gods. I have given bread to the hungry and water to the thirsty and clothes to the naked and passage to those with no boat". We must face the facts. Israel can never have been of much consequence in the ancient world. What glory it did have, it copied from other nations, particularly Egypt. Israel was literally a product of its surrounding nations.

Because Israel is part of the Middle East, it can be considered an archaeologists paradise, but this is not the case where attempts to verify the Bible are concerned. Imagine an archaeologist's report on Jesus Christ—it would comprise some very good sheets of blank paper! However the Old Testament provides inaccurate history, myth and nonsense. It does contain some very good literature (e.g. the Psalms, the Book of Job), but if this is a justification for reading it, why not read the exquisite poems of an ancient Egyptian writer from about 2500 BC? That way one will find that the Hebrews thought and wrote in similar fashion to other nations in that part of the world. So they are not unique. Similar reading will show that Jesus taught, acted, performed miracles and prophesied in the same way as other saviours. He is not unique either, nor is there one shred of evidence to indicate that he ever lived.

—NEXT WEEK—

MARGHANITA LASKI AND JESUS

By COLIN McCALL

F. A. Ridley, S.J?

By F. A. RIDLEY

SINCE THE ERA of the Protestant Reformation and the ensuing Catholic Counter-Reformation, a leading, even at times, a dominant role in the Roman Catholic Church has been played by the Jesuit order, or (to give it its proper title) "The Company of Jesus". Indeed, it is to the versatile activities of this famous body founded and organised on military lines by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1534-40, that some historians have ascribed the fact that the Church of Rome was eventually able to ride successfully the storms unleashed by the Protestant Reformation. Since which now distant date, the great Spanish quasi-military ecclesiastical order has been concerned with most of the activities of the Vatican in very various fields. So much so in fact, that the great French historian, Jules Michelet, has pronounced upon the activities of the "Company" (a term which bears a definitely military significance in the original Spanish) this apt definition: "Ask the man in the street, the first passer-by, 'What are the . . . Jesuits?' He will immediately reply, 'The Counter-Revolution'" (cf. Jules Michelet — *The Jesuits*; also my book, *The Jesuits — A Study in Counter-Revolution*). Loyola was of course, a former soldier in the service of the King of Spain; he belonged to a military family, and his military code forms the basis of his "Company".

In recent years I, too, have been privileged to become a kind of (shall I say?) crypto-Jesuit; at least to the extent that nowadays I receive with gratifying regularity the quarterly bulletin of Heythrop College, a Jesuit seminary (in Oxfordshire) for advanced studies entitled, *To Our Friends*. On the cover of this well-produced journal, we are informed that: "This Bulletin is sent out four times a year to all parents of Jesuits, and to members of The Friends of Heythrop Jesuit Seminary Association". I must confess that I am not quite clear how, or why, I qualify for so regular reception of this notable ecclesiastical publication, since I am certainly not "the parent of a Jesuit" — no doubt an enviable role and one, I believe, shared *inter alia* by Dr. Adenauer and the late John Foster Dulles—nor, at least to the best of my recollection, have I ever joined, or paid a subscription to the Friends of Heythrop Jesuit Seminary Association, which would have entitled me to receive their quarterly bulletin.

In point of fact, my only relations hitherto with the Jesuit Company, is that I have written a book about them (now alas out of print) plus a few articles, besides having had the pleasure of debating with Father Christie and Father Maloney, both SJs. I also learned recently from an unexpected but probably accurate source, that another eminent Jesuit, the late Father Day (of Farm Street) was once kind enough to pay me the compliment of referring to me as "a very clever and witty agent of the Devil". Obviously a compliment to *someone*! Anyway, I can assure the reverend Fathers at Heythrop — and in particular their editorial board, that I regularly read *To Our Friends* with both pleasure and profit and from cover to cover, and that I sincerely hope they (or whoever the anonymous donor may be) will continue to send it to me regularly. I cannot, at my time of life, very well hope ever to become "the parent of a Jesuit", but I may eventually manage to raise the requisite cash for a subscription to that no doubt deserving body, the Friends of Heythrop Jesuit Seminary Association.

Since I am afraid that I have by now finally parted with the Devil, I cannot honestly reciprocate the late Father Day's kind reference to myself in my infernal capacity,

but I can truthfully assure my unknown Jesuit correspondents that I have always taken a very great interest in the versatile activities of their order and that I have in the past and not once but several times, referred to the Jesuits collectively as "the GHQ of the Vatican", "the old guard of Catholicism", etc., and if I cannot reciprocate the compliment (or whatever it was intended to be) by saying that they are "clever and witty agents of the Devil", I am certainly always prepared to describe the Jesuit Company as I did in my book as "the Genius of Counter-Revolution", as "the classical exponents of demagoguery" and incidentally, as the authentic "Godfathers of Fascism" (e.g. Hitler was an admirer and Goebbels a pupil of the order). I trust that the Reverend Father will take the above references in the precise spirit in which they are intended!

In the course of their four centuries of activity, the Jesuits have conducted many enterprises in the service of the Vatican *ad majorem Dei Gloriam* ("to the greater glory of God"), the motto bequeathed by St. Ignatius of Loyola, "that combination of Napoleon and Don Quixote" as I have described him, who has stamped his dynamic genius upon the great Spanish order which it was his life's work to found. Even in a small journal such as the Heythrop one, one gets instructive glimpses of the multifarious activities of the order.

In the current issue we find ourselves transported from the Italy of Galileo to the Africa of 1962. In the former connection incidentally, we learn that Father Christopher Clavius SJ, (1538-1612), a noted astronomer of his day, "hailed with enthusiasm Galileo's first telescopic discoveries, and wrote to encourage the rising scientist, to continue his researches in the hope that 'perhaps you will find other new things in other planets'". We learn further, that, "When Galileo came to Rome a year before Clavius's death, the ageing Jesuit professor eagerly discussed the discoveries and held a solemn convocation in his honour". Finally, and in rather startling contrast to what one is normally accustomed to think about the Jesuits in connection with the *cause célèbre* of Galileo, we learn that to the end, Father Clavius in face of much opposition, urged the acceptance of Galileo's discoveries on the learned world without much success, unfortunately.

Incidentally, whilst we do not of course query the *bona fides* of the Jesuit writer of the above, yet if it is really a fact that the Jesuits accepted Galileo's epoch-making discoveries in his lifetime, it is rather difficult to understand how, in that case, the great astronomer could ever have been convicted by the Roman Inquisition, since at this time (early 17th century) the Jesuits were all-powerful in Rome.

Be that as it may, in my unsolicited capacity of a crypto-Jesuit, I shall continue to look forward to future issues of *To Our Friends*.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY 56th ANNUAL DINNER

Guest of Honour: T. M. MOSLEY

Dancing : : Entertainment by Les Parcs Puppets

SATURDAY, MARCH 3rd, 1962

at The Mecca Restaurant, 11/12 Blomfield Street, E.C.2

RECEPTION 6 p.m.

DINNER 6.30 p.m.

Vegetarians catered for

Evening Dress Optional

TICKETS 21/- from the Sec., 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1

This Believing World

To "go slow" for the Church (or Churches) is half advocated by the Rev. O. Sutton of the Shepherd's Bush Methodist church. He thinks ministers of the Gospel haven't enough time for praying or "tackling some of the great texts or themes". In fact, "what is wanted most is some hard thinking". We heartily agree — a little more hard thinking is the big need for parsons and priests; though, in truth, it might "think" them out of the Church. For example, do they really believe, in these days of astronomical science, that Jesus flew straight up to Heaven? And if hard thinking results in hard heresy here, what about complete unbelief in other parts of Holy writ engendered by similar hard thinking?

★

Was it hard thinking which made Miss Joyce Harding, an official of the Church of England Children's Council, sadly insist that "the old pattern of Sunday School is finished and dead . . ." ? Sunday schools were once hailed as one of the greatest triumphs of Christendom. Although there was always something of the kind before Robert Raikes introduced them in Gloucester in 1780, and the Rev. R. Hill in London in 1784, it was really due to their efforts that there were 300,000 scholars in Sunday schools by 1789. And at the centenary in 1880, it was estimated that there were nearly 1,426,000 teachers, and twelve million Sunday schools scholars. And now—how have the mighty fallen!

★

Miss Harding however is not dismayed. For her "the Church's ministry to children has a great future". But has it? Where are the hundreds of thousands of teachers necessary to make "the great future"? The truth is, whatever the lip-service doled out by so many people in the Church (or Churches) to the Church, the fact remains that there is an appalling apathy to Christianity in the country, and the Churches are at their wit's end to combat it.

★

The most famous river in India is the Ganges and is revered by all Hindus as "holy". It actually is as holy (whatever that much abused word may mean) as the river Fleet, and not much cleaner. However, not to be outdone, Christians look upon the river Jordan also as "holy", and at one time it could be bought in bottles shipped from Palestine; until — according to the *Evening Standard*, (February 6th) one bottle sold to "a crowned head in Europe was found to be green and slimy and evil smelling". Will this stop true believers from buying "genuine" Jordan water? Not on your life. It still represents everything pure and holy, and may perhaps even work a miracle. It can still be bought . . . !

★

Miss Marghanita Laski has on TV and the radio never shirked saying she was an atheist — but in her discussion recently on TV with the Rev. Leslie Timmins on ethics and Christianity, while still claiming to be an atheist, she most enthusiastically proclaimed her love not only for the teachings of Christ, but for the part played by the Christian Church for nearly 2,000 years. It would be interesting to see how Miss Laski could have supported her beliefs, say against her uncle the late Harold Laski? Perhaps now she might prefer to be known as a Christian Atheist.

★

It should not surprise anybody that Mr. Colin Wilson, who made such a reputation with his first book, *The Outsider*, told the *Daily Express* (February 12th) that he has had "a deep sympathy for Catholicism for some years" and that he "still thinks seriously of becoming a Catholic". After

all, he will, if converted, join quite a distinguished band of converts — Graham Greene, Compton Mackenzie, Evelyn Waugh, as well as many lady authors whose names are too numerous to mention. As far as we can gather, none of these has bothered to examine the question (or problem) of the truth of Catholicism. It was so convenient to have a religion, no matter what that religion's social record was. For humbug, intolerance, persecution, ignorance, witchhunting, and burning at the stake, Roman Catholicism surely stands supreme?

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged, £124 16s. 6d. T. Owen; 2s. 6d.; J. Scarlett, 10s.; Dr. S. Hoddes, 10s. 6d.; S. Hessey, £1; Mr. Fields, £1; North London Branch, £1 1s.; W. Maybank, £10; In memory of W. J. Parnall, £5. Total to date, February 23rd, 1962, £144 0s. 6d.

Priests Wanted

WE HAVE FROM TIME TO TIME, drawn attention to the shortage of priests in the Roman Catholic Church. This has now become a "critical dilemma", according to the American magazine *Newsweek* (February 19th, 1962). With an estimated need of 130,000 new priests, only 4,328 were ordained throughout the world last year.

The Future Priest Club (FPC) is doing its best to fill the need and, under the directorship of the Rev. Kenneth Reed has 15,000 members in the United States and 4,000 abroad. It enrolls any boy who shows interest and gives him "a membership card, a pin, and a free subscription to the club's organ *The Shepherd*, which extolls the glory and sacrifice of the priesthood". The boy promises, in return, "to receive Holy Communion once a week and recite a daily prayer to the Virgin Mary and one for his vocation".

Once enrolled, according to *Newsweek*, "a boy is paid a series of follow-up visits" and "the visiting priest or seminarian follows a standardised approach borrowed from sales procedures developed by the State Farm Insurance Companies". Father Reed thinks that the FPC has vast potential and believes that if he advertised in some of the Catholic newspapers, "we could double membership overnight". He doesn't do so because he hasn't the personnel to handle them all.

One catholic magazine, *Avé Maria* (quoted by *Newsweek*) asked in an editorial why there was no great rush for the seminaries if American youth is looking for job security. Then inadvertently it conjured up a delightful picture. The priest, it said, "is one person who will never be replaced by automation". But why not? Surely his job is ideally suited to automation! Movement, gesture recitation: what could be more automatic? So, helpful as ever, we recommend robots as the answer to the priest shortage.

PAPERBACKS

- A Dictionary of Biology (Penguin Reference Book) 3s. 6d.
- A Dictionary of Psychology (Penguin Reference Book), 4s.
- The Human Body by Cyril Bibby and Ian T. Morison. (Puffin Book). Ideal for young people. 2s. 6d.
- A Woman Doctor Looks at Love and Life by Dr. Marion Hilliard, 2s. 6d.
- Against the Law by Peter Wildeblood, 2s. 6d.
- Hanged by the Neck by Arthur Koestler and C. H. Rolph, 2s. 6d.
- Hanged in Error by Leslie Hale, 2s. 6d.
- The Plague by Albert Camus. (This French Freethinker's greatest novel). 3s. 6d.
- Common Sense and The Crisis by Thomas Paine (double vol.) 7s. 6d.
- Miss Lonelyhearts and A Cool Million by Nathanael West (double vol.) 2s. 6d.

And a large selection of other paperbacks.
Available from the PIONEER PRESS, Postage 8d.

THE FREETHINKER

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, S.E.1
TELEPHONE: HOP 2717

THE FREETHINKER can be obtained through any newsagent or will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One year, £1 17s. 6d.; half-year 19s.; three months, 9s. 6d. (In U.S.A. and Canada: One year, \$5.00; half-year, \$2.50; three months, \$1.25).

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1

Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1. Members and visitors are welcome during normal office hours. Inquiries regarding Secular Funeral Services should also be made to the General Secretary, N.S.S.

Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch N.S.S. (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: Messrs. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m. MESSRS. L. EBURY, J. W. BARKER, C. E. WOOD, D. H. TRIBE, J. P. MURACCIOLE. (Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: Messrs. J. W. BARKER and L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch N.S.S.. Thursday lunchtimes, THE FREETHINKER on sale, Piccadilly, near Queen Victoria Statue.

Merseyside Branch N.S.S. (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch N.S.S. (Old Market Square, Nottingham).—Every Friday, 1 p.m., Every Sunday, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY

INDOOR

Conway Discussions (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Tuesday, March 6th, 7.30 p.m.: IAN LESLIE, M.A., "The Ethical Basis of Anarchism".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, March 4th, 6.30 p.m.: 81ST ANNIVERSARY: Speaker F. A. RIDLEY; Musical items.

Marble Arch Branch N.S.S. (The Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, March 4th, MAJOR C. DRAPER, "Religion in the Services".

National Secular Society (Mecca Restaurant, 11/12 Blomfield Street, London, E.C.1), Saturday, March 3rd, 6 p.m.: ANNUAL DINNER, Guest of Honour, T. M. Mosley.

Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society (Co-operative Education Centre, Broad Street), Sunday, March 4th, 2.30 p.m.: S. MIDDLETON, "The Modern Novel".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, March 4th, 11 a.m.: PROF. D. G. MACRAE, M.A., "The Economics of Christian Humanism".

Tyneside Humanist Society (100 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, 1), Wednesday, March 7th, 7.30 p.m.: W. FOWLIS, B.Sc., "Science is Human by J. Bronowski".

Notes and News

ALL THAT CAN BE SAID about Colonel John Glenn's space flight has been said already. We can only add our small voice to the great chorus of appreciation for a magnificent human achievement. President Kennedy has said that "The success of this flight, the new knowledge it will give us and the new steps which will now be undertaken will affect life on this planet for many years to come". But the best thing that could come from it would be USA-USSR co-operation in the peaceful exploration of space. We therefore welcome Mr. Khrushchev's proposal for pooling the two nations' efforts and Mr. Kennedy's willingness to discuss it.

★

IT IS DIFFICULT, as the President remarked, "to transform these general expressions into specific agreements", but America and Russia have co-operated before on great scientific projects and we hope that they will do so in the exploration of space. "We believe that when men reach

beyond this planet they should leave their national differences behind them", said Mr. Kennedy. "All men will benefit if we can invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors". For his part, Mr. Khrushchev, would "like to hope that the genius of man, who penetrated the depth of the universe will be able to find a road to an enduring peace and to ensure prosperity to all people of our planet earth which in the space age, though it does not seem to be so large, is still dear to all its inhabitants". Could it be that peaceful co-operation in space will lead to peaceful co-operation on earth? We dare to hope so.

★

THIS YEAR'S National Secular Society Dinner is sure to be a happy occasion, with one of the Society's most loved and respected speakers as Guest of Honour. Many will attend specially to pay tribute to Mr. T. M. Mosley, who has represented the Society in many parts of the country — invariably with distinction. But Saturday, March 3rd, will be an opportunity for young and old to mix informally and to enjoy the amusing antics of Les Parcs Puppets. Will those who intend to be present at the Mecca Restaurant, 11/12 Blomfield Street, London, E.C.2., please get their tickets from the Secretary right away. The price is one guinea, and the address, of course, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

★

POOR LONDON! Last week we gave you the Rev. Denis Duncan's description—"a modern Sodom and Gomorrah". This week we turn to the Rev. Roy Deasy, Vicar of All Saints' Church, Harrow Weald, who referred to the "pagan capital". Recording in his church magazine that there are fewer children per thousand baptised in London than anywhere else in the country and that "Less than 50 in every thousand over the age of 15 take Easter Communion", Mr. Deasy described the situation as "most tragic and desperate". Five hundred parishes with 800 clergymen! "Is there any other group or organisation with such resources of building, men, money and goodwill available that makes so little effective impact upon the community in which it is set?" he asked. We confess we can't think of one.

★

"BORN AT FARNBOROUGH, KENT, and baptised a Roman Catholic . . . brought up in a respectable and religious home . . . He found school lessons difficult and could not keep up with other boys at the Catholic primary school he attended in Stanmore, Middlesex" (*Sunday Express* 18/2/62). Whether or not James Hanratty murdered Michael John Gregsten, he was admittedly a car thief and housebreaker from the age of 16 onwards and had spent five of his 25 years in prison. What then, of the moral importance of religious education and environment about which we hear so much? We don't say that Hanratty was a criminal because he was a Roman Catholic; that would be foolish. But we do want to emphasise that a Catholic upbringing didn't prevent his criminal development.

THE YEAR'S FREETHOUGHT		
The Freethinker for 1961		
NOW READY		
BOUND VOLUME	32/-	(Post free)
Limited number only		
THE PIONEER PRESS		
103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1		

On the Truth of the Bible Again

By H. CUTNER

CHRISTMAS IS THE HEAVENLY TIME when any religious journalist can hope to pick up some very good winnings if he can persuade the Editor of a national journal that he can once again prove that our Infallible Bible is infallibly true. Not of course with infallible arguments called from Archdeacon Paley of blessed eighteenth century memory—now, alas, discredited in all our pious universities—but from the solid modern work of “scientists, historians, and astronomers”.

This was the promise given in the *Daily Sketch* (December 18th, 1961). “The evidence”, we are told, “is inescapable, and will confirm for millions the basis of their belief that the Bible is Right”. Considering that so many Bible champions have in the past so egregiously failed we looked forward to these articles. What we did not want was the *opinion* of a scientist, an historian, or an astronomer. We have no doubt whatever that numbers of these gentlemen are ready to *believe* that, for example, angels and devils have existed in the past, and still exist—but what we need these days is *evidence*. And we ought to thank the Editor of the *Daily Sketch* that he promised to provide us with “inescapable” evidence.

The writer of the articles is a Mr. Neville Randall—and I must confess I could find no proof in those I read that he knew very much about the Bible, about any scientists, historians, or astronomers, or even what the word “evidence”—inescapable or otherwise—really meant,

For example, he completely defends the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and at the outset he tells us that “God rained fire and brimstone on them”. But how does he know this? Has he got the inescapable evidence of the event from scientists, historians, or astronomers, or what? It is quite true that he describes seeing “shimmering green depths” in the Dead Sea, that “a crack runs for hundreds of miles from Turkey to Africa” the result of a “gigantic earthquake” and he adds that the Bible says, “Like the smoke of a furnace”, and that unnamed geologists say this was in the time of Abraham. We are also told that “anyone who escaped alive from the scene of the disaster might well have been suffocated by the poisonous fumes”, and that “everything in the neighbourhood is rapidly covered with a crust of salt”—that “probably” accounting for Lot’s wife being turned into a pillar of salt! Could ignorant and stupid twaddle be better expressed?

No evidence has ever been produced that “God rained fire and brimstone” on the cities. All we know is that at various periods in the history of our earth, earthquakes and floods have occurred—as indeed they do now. And yet people talk so knowingly about “God” raining down “fire and brimstone” just as easily as a gardener squirts water on flowers.

Or let us take the Biblical Flood which Mr. Randall undertook to prove actually happened. He got his “facts” from *The Bible as History* by Werner Keller, and from *The Bible was Right* by Hugh J. Schonfield, works which anybody with the most elementary knowledge of science and history could annihilate. To their “facts”, he adds the archaeological discoveries of Sir Leonard Woolley. What Mr. Randall should have done was to give us the *exact* quotation from his book in which Sir Leonard claimed, “We have found the Flood”. It is impossible for me or for anybody else to guess what Sir Leonard said and where he said it.

When any archaeologist says he has “found the Flood”,

he can only mean *the one* described in the Bible with Noah as its hero. Where does Sir Leonard tell us that he has discovered the inescapable evidence for the existence of Noah, then *over 600 years old*, and the existence of the Ark big enough to take pairs of every mammal, bird, insect, etc., then existing on the earth? Where is the *evidence* that the waters of the Flood covered the highest mountains on the earth—covered, for instance, Mt. Everest? Where is the evidence that the 2500 millions of people so diverse in colour and capabilities, inhabiting our world now, are all descended from eight people living as recently as 2500 BC?

Does Sir Leonard Woolley really believe that the Flood destroyed everything living on earth except eight people and the animals in the Ark? Is there a scientist or an historian or an astronomer who can provide “inescapable evidence” for the truth of any statement whatever in the Bible on the Flood?

Mr. Randall tells us in his first article that he thinks he is “going to surprise us”. How right he is in this instance! If he said nothing else he certainly would surprise any sane person if he insists that he can produce evidence that God rained down fire and brimstone at any time anywhere!

Anybody who can write like this puts himself out of court immediately. He has a right to say that he *believes* in God, and in a rain of fire and brimstone; but to say that he can produce *evidence* is like saying he can produce evidence for Aladdin’s Lamp.

Mr. Randall was not, however, concerned so much with the Old Testament as he was with the New. Christmas is not usually the time when believers are asked to vouch for the truth of the Old Testament and its fantastic stories. He set out to prove with inescapable evidence that the story of the birth of Jesus Christ, as given in two of the Gospels, was literally true, though the two accounts differ in almost every particular.

Just to take one small example. Luke distinctly says that Mary “brought forth her first born . . . and laid him in a manger”. Nothing can be clearer than that—until we come to Matthew who says nothing whatever about a manger, but tells us that, “And when they were come into the *house*, they saw the young child with Mary his mother”. Which of the two is right?

Why, according to Luke, did Joseph and Mary take shelter in a stable? Because “there was no room for them in the inn”. Yet, according to an out-and-out believer like the Rev. Dr. Geikie in his *Christmas at Bethlehem*—“We must not moreover think of Joseph seeking an inn at Bethlehem, for inns were unknown among the Jews”.

Mr. Randall should produce the inescapable evidence that Jesus was called Jesus of Nazareth *because* he was born at Bethlehem; and he should *prove* that when Jesus was born, there *was* a place called Nazareth. Outside the Gospels, there is literally no record of Nazareth anywhere. Why then call “our Lord” Jesus of Nazareth?

Moreover, will Mr. Randall tell us why “the wise men from the East” are mentioned *only* in Matthew—why does not Luke mention them? Inescapable evidence please?

As befits a fervent Christian like Mr. Randall, he is among other things a stout believer in *Angels*. Without them, the story of Jesus in Luke would be almost flat; with Angels as common as blackberries, Luke puts *life*

and colour in his narrative. Of course, an Angel was bound to come across shepherds, "and the glory of the Lord shone around them". Not only did the Angel tell them that a Saviour was born—they had no difficulty in fully understanding what a Saviour meant—but they were not a scrap surprised at meeting an Angel or indeed many Angels. We are asked to believe this kind of ignorant twaddle; though exactly where is the inescapable evidence? Why are we not given chapter and verse about these Angels from the works of archaeologists, historians, and astronomers? In an article with the flaming headline, "Fact or Fable?" not one name is given except those of Keller and Schonfield—who as authorities are of no more worth than any lady member of the Salvation Army.

(To be concluded)

Points from New Books

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

LECTURES delivered by Bernard Shaw between the years 1886 and 1946 have been collected by Dan H. Laurence in *Platform and Pupil* (Hart-Davis, 30s.), and it's good to be reminded of Shaw's iconoclasm. Why, he asked, should there not be a Chief Prostitute to balance the opinions of the Chief Priest? Why, Shaw wondered, should people think that nudists are immodest, when the author was convinced that if he was standing with the Pope in a church and they saw a nun in a habit and a harlot with as little dress on as possible "we would fight one another for the piously-dressed woman"? Why should people think of Christ as "the crucified one" when the cross is but an emblem of what the Romans called justice? (Sixty thousand people were crucified just before Christ because they had revolted against their conditions as slaves and gladiators.) And why shouldn't contemporary citizens appear at reasonable intervals before a properly qualified jury to justify their existence? (And how many clerics would survive?)

Sir Cedric Hardwicke's theatrical reminiscences *A Victorian In Orbit* (Methuen, 25s.), are packed with delightful anecdotes. One of the best concerns Dean Inge. It seems that the "gloomy dean" was tone deaf and once remarked, "I cannot distinguish between 'God Save The Weasel' and 'Pop Goes The King'."

All who read Sir Osbert Sitwell's magnificent five-volume autobiography know that the author is the remarkable son of a remarkable father. Now Sir Osbert has collected some further memories about the late Sir George Sitwell in *Tales My Father Taught Me* (Hutchinson, 25s.); and what glorious stuff it all is! One can, perhaps, get a faint glimmer of the cantankerous exuberance of Sir George's personality from his views on Robin Hood: "I don't object so much to his robbing monks, who were no doubt bigoted and self-indulgent and thoroughly deserved it, but he should have kept the money for the rich. Of course, it is true that there was no income-tax in those days, still it was such a mistake to give money to the poor, whereas the rich were the only people who knew how to spend it. They could always have found a use for it. Most selfish of Robin Hood not to have grasped that! You couldn't trust him. No, no, they were a very unpleasant set. I'm afraid, and Friar Tuck and Little John were two of the worst of it, selfish and disreputable. I hope, dear boy, you'll be careful to avoid the company of people like that".

The bemused son replied, "Where could I find it?"
I have only just caught up with a novel that appeared last year, Peter de Vries's *Through The Fields Of Clover*. (Gollancz, 16s.). I am a great admirer of Mr. de Vries's

wisecracking brilliance; and I can recommend all his books to people who respond to dazzlingly outrageous American humour. Here is a sample of dialogue:

"... What beats me is what comfort people can find in the idea that somebody dealt this mess. There can't be any god, can there?"

"I'm not the Answer Man, Cotton."

"There is no Christ."

"That is our Cross."

As another flash-back, I am still grinning over The Tenth Beatitude, as recorded in Paul Roche's merry fantasy, *O Pale Galilean* (Harvill, 10s. 6d.). "Blessed are the cross-eyed, for they shall see God twice".

Finally, a foot-note for connoisseurs about a most recent publication, Anatol Stern's *Europa* (Gaberocchus Press, 21s.), with illustrations by Miercyslaw Szezuka. This is a facsimile reproduction, in English translation, of the first Polish futurist poem; and the typography and design offer an interesting representation of the art of the 1920's. The poem still has a contemporary message, for it is an attack on power-politics and war-mindedness. The present edition carries two new prefaces: one by myself in which I stress the free-thinking ethics of the work, and one by Michael Horovitz. An appendix is lavishly illustrated with stills from an avant-garde film, produced by Stefan and Franciszka Themerson, which was based on Stern's poetical protest.

CORRESPONDENCE

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

Mr. Blake is correct in his assessment of Esperanto and of the apathy to the question of international language in general. We should not be surprised at this. People generally have other interests like football, racing, pools or TV, and their time is usually taken up with these.

There are in existence one or two organisations trying to interest Humanists, Secularists *et al*, in Esperanto, and to interest Esperantists in Atheism, Secularism, Humanism (or what have you?) I am Secretary of an organisation with such aims, known as the Brita Esperanto Humanistavo; there is a similar organisation in Germany, and bulletins are published from time to time in Esperanto. It is well known that Esperanto has proved over more than half a century that translations, whether vertical, horizontal or diagonal, are quite unnecessary. G. DICKINSON.

I would not discuss international language in a freethought paper if Mr. Blake had not made his challenging remark on Ido (the reformed Esperanto). Let me therefore say that, as a language, Ido is incomparably superior to Esperanto. It is more elegant, more precise, and easier to learn.

HENRY MEULEN.

"OPUS DEI"

May I add some details to the article on *Opus Dei* in the issue of February 9th?

Last September this organisation opened a hostel for students at number 46 Roemer Visserstraat, Amsterdam (Telephone 87730), under direction of the Rev. Doctor Steinkamp, provoking the mistrust of a liberal newspaper, *Het Vaderland* ("The Fatherland"). (It is a symptom of the power of Dutch Catholicism: *Het Vaderland* was the only daily daring to touch an institution belonging to the sacrosanct Catholic Church.) An anonymous author then defended *Opus Dei* in the Catholic journal *De Tijd-De Maashode* ("The Time—The Messenger of the Meuse") of October 7th, 1961, but in a manner, which was in fact a bitter attack upon it.

According to his article (entitled "Opus Dei, sign of contradiction. The kingdom of God on earth by means of key-positions?"). Spain, where it was born and where it has its strongest positions, is the basis of training for those members assigned to found establishments in other countries. The anonymous author—probably belonging to a hostile order—revealed that *Opus Dei* is entirely assimilated with the Franco-régime. It controls or possesses enterprises, banks, an advertising-agency, daily-, weekly- and monthly-papers and publications, the film-industry, the State-Publishing-Office; it censors new books, it finances the University of Pamplune and other schools of higher education and, moreover, it monopolises scientific research. Some

SHOE REPAIRS—First class service (Postal C.O.D.).—S. HESSEY, 133 Windsor Street, Liverpool. Telephone: Royal 1630.

of its members occupy key-positions, e.g. the Minister of Trade, the Director-General of Information. In brief, *Opus Dei* controls the whole cultural and a big part of the economic and political life of Spain.

After these revelations the author addresses some kind words of welcome to the representative of *Opus Dei*, "who has ventured(!) among us".

In the Italian monthly review *Studi Cattolici* of May-June, 1961 (Via Federico Cesi 30, Roma, Telephone 355.253-310.167), Professor Giuliano Herranz, Prefect of Studies of *Opus Dei*, defends his Institution against its enemies and gives a very extensive list of writings on *Opus Dei* in several languages, including English. But this bibliography does not mention the "Enquête du Canard Enchaîné" [*Le Canard Enchaîné* is a satirical and often anti-clerical French weekly—Ed.], published on August 31st, and September 7th, 1960.

The Parisian weekly *L'express* (February 8th of this year) announced that an important member of the OAS, Levèvre, actually living in Spain, is protected there by *Opus Dei*.

A. M. van der GIEZEN
(Middelburg-Holland).

"HUMANIST"

May I quote from *Newsweek* (19/2/62) in support of Mr. Robert Dent's remarks on the ambiguity of the word "humanist" in THE FREETHINKER (2/2/62)? *Newsweek* is reviewing a collection of essays (*Cain, Where is Your Brother?*) by "the world's most renowned Roman Catholic writer", François Mauriac, and it states: "And in the evening of his life this great humanist still has faith that the 'miracle of miracles', Grace, will conquer events", etc.

MARY JEFFEREY.

MR. BENNETT'S REJOINER

It is curious that an ex-cleric like Mr. Micklewright should accuse me, a freethinker from adolescence, of "following ecclesiastical patterns". I am guilty, he says, of misrepresentation, even of legal defamation, vulgarity, and abuse; and I am, to boot, a "literary opportunist". For myself, I don't care very much what he calls me. But is it he or I who write recklessly and without due regard for the facts of the case? Let readers go over our correspondence published in THE FREETHINKER. I am content that they should judge.

Mr. Micklewright's attitude is now one of surprise that I should imagine that he would impugn the Golden Rule. Yet if he didn't, then am I or is he to blame for this? In his former letter he referred to the "so-called 'Golden Rule'". That to me smacks of derision, or at any rate of disbelieving dismissal.

Actually, this isn't the place to continue a discussion about a controversy in another journal that many FREETHINKER readers have probably not had the opportunity of following. But the fact remains that the corpus of Mr. Micklewright's writings in *The Monthly Record* justifies my saying that "sex is never far from his thoughts". A man, or a woman for that matter, may say: "I believe in free love. I am very doubtful about the satisfactoriness of marriage as an institution". I don't object. I am, in fact, interested in an elaboration of this point of view. But the Ethical and Freethought movements must not be drawn in to buttress it. These movements will rightly give it a hearing, but they obviously cannot be committed to a position concerning which their members are divided.

What Mr. Micklewright means now by his plea that sex should be treated "as an open question" I don't know. No subject is more difficult so to treat. Two or more people are involved in a sexual relationship. Emotional, psychological, and physical well-being, social security, and all-round happiness may well be bound up with it. It's hard to be clinically detached about it. Anyway, Mr. Micklewright doesn't achieve clinical detachment. He heaps contempt on what he calls "the conventional sexuality". By this I take it he would banish ethical standards from sexual affairs. I think this is the way of free-lovers. If Mr. Micklewright is one, then I say he would be wise not to pontificate about it in the mistaken idea that he does so in the best traditions of freethought.

G. I. BENNETT.

YOGA

In "The Reliability of the Gospels" (THE FREETHINKER, February 9th), Dr. Edward Roux says: "... the Gospels record 'events' that could not possibly have taken place in the real world: water turns to wine, dead men become alive, a fig tree withers when cursed, etc."

I would like to quote from the *School of Yoga* course. Firstly, here are a few references. William James said: "The most venerable system and the one whose results have the most voluminous experimental corroboration, is undoubtedly Yoga". Thomas Mann, Nobel Prize-winner referred to "contact with Yoga, its mental superiority and its spiritual discipline" being "very instructive to me". He was, he added, "grateful for an

insight into this fascinating world". Major F. Yeats-Brown (author of *Bengal Lancer*), Sir Francis Younghusband and Madame Galli Curci, renowned singer also praised Yoga, while, according to Dr. Julian Huxley: "The phenomena of Yoga are remarkable and their reality is a matter of empirical fact. Yoga does appear capable of acting as an integrating influence upon those who practise it. Its importance cannot be denied".

Secondly: "the Yogis of the East have already proved to scientists their absolute mastery over physical forces. They have proved their ability to stop at will the heartbeats and breathing—by being buried alive. They have proved their ability to eliminate pain—by submitting to surgical operations without drugs or anaesthetics. They have proved their ability to eradicate fatigue—by their astonishing feats of physical endurance. They have proved their ability to withstand the elements—by developing immunity to intense heat and cold. They have proved their ability to transcend space and time—by their amazing powers of telepathy and clairvoyance . . ."

"Again, within the past twenty years, famous western scientists like Rutherford, Nils Bohr, Cradwick and others, have stumbled on another 'discovery'—which was known to the Yogis for centuries—that all matter has a central origin and that in a glass of water there is sufficient energy to drive a train a hundred miles".

Thirdly: "The famous Yogi, Narasingha Swami, in the presence of a distinguished gathering at the University of Calcutta, in December 1934, drank fatal doses of nitric acid, sulphuric acid, and carbolic acid".

J. C. SUTHERLAND.

OBITUARY

William John Parnall, who died on February 6th at the age of 80, had been a reader of THE FREETHINKER for 60 years, and was also a member of the National Secular Society. His last letter to the General Secretary early this year gave no indication of failing health and was written in his usual fine flowing hand. William Parnall will be sadly missed, and we send our deepest sympathy to his widow.

In accordance with his wishes, the cremation was private, with no service.

FREEDOM'S FOE: THE VATICAN. By Adrian Pigott. Illustrated. Price 3/-; postage 6d.

A SHORT HISTORY OF SEX WORSHIP. By H. Cutner. Price 2/6; postage 6d.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK (11th Edition). By G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball. Price 5/-; postage 8d.

AGE OF REASON. Thomas Paine's masterpiece with 40-pages introduction by Chapman Cohen.

Paper cover 3/6, Cloth 5/-; postage 7d.

THE THINKER'S HANDBOOK By Hector Hawton. Price 5/-; postage 7d.

PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE. 18 of Chapman Cohen's celebrated pamphlets bound in one Volume. Indispensable for the Freethinker.

Price 5/6; postage 8d.

THE WORLD MENACE OF CATHOLIC ACTION, By Alexander Stewart. Price 1/-; postage 4d.

FAMILY PROBLEMS AND THE LAW.

By Robert S. W. Pollard. Price 2/6; postage 6d.

MATERIALISM RESTATED (Third edition). By Chapman Cohen. Price 5/6; postage 7d.

MEN WITHOUT GODS. By Hector Hawton.

Price 2/6; postage 5d.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF GOD. By Grant Allen. Price 3/6; postage 8d.

THE CULTURE OF THE ABDOMEN. By F. A. Hornbrook. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

THE LIFE OF JESUS. By Ernest Renan.

Price 2/6; postage 5d.

THE ORIGINS OF RELIGION. By Lord Raglan. Price 2/6; postage 5d.

PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN

THOUGHT. By Chapman Cohen

Paper cover 3/-; postage 4d.

BRADLAUGH AND INGERSOLL. By Chapman

Cohen. Price 7/6; postage 8d.

THE MEANING AND VALUE

OF FREETHOUGHT

A 7-inch Gramophone Record by Chapman Cohen,

18s. 6d. including postage and packing.