

The Freethinker

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IT CANNOT too strongly be pointed out that, though in Europe generally the Crucifixion of Jesus is "celebrated" at Easter time, this event (if it ever took place) was on the eve of the Jewish Passover. And whatever the origins of the Passover may be (and we do not know them) Easter as such had nothing to do with it.

Easter was a Pagan Festival of Scandinavian origin celebrated in honour of the Goddess Eastre (or Eostre), not because of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus, but because the coming of Spring about this time brought the death of winter, the increasing warmth of the sun, and the appearance of nature's lovely flowers. And it should be added that many other names we use come from the Pagan north—the names of our days, for example. Tuesday is derived from Tiu or Tyr, Wednesday from Woden, Thursday from Thor, and Friday from Freya. Even the word "Hell" is derived from Hel, a Norse Goddess of the lower world.

Easter Eggs

Christians generally, though loth to do so, agree that the "Easter egg" is of Pagan origin, a symbol of fertility; and there is little doubt that it was used by many nations of antiquity, particularly Egypt. Moreover, the Jews even at this day use eggs for the feast of Passover—and here it is that there is a connection between Passover and Easter.

In the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, there is a long article on Passover, the gist of which is that it was a very ancient spring feast practised long before the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery by Moses which is the reason now given to the Jews for keeping it. Modern historical research has found no trace of the Israelites being held in bondage for centuries by the Egyptians, and "passing over" to Palestine after 40 years wandering in the wilderness so whatever the reasons given these days for keeping the Passover, the fact remains that it was a very ancient festival marking the coming of Spring.

Moreover, it was "astronomical", that is, it was part of the more or less prevalent Sun worship, and like our own Easter, it has to be calculated in terms of Sun or Moon worship. The early Christians and those Jews in particular who were converted, kept the Passover or the Paschal meal because Jesus is supposed to have kept it. But as time went on, with the influx of Pagans and because there was always a large proportion of "obstinate" Jews who refused to be converted, the Christian hatred of Judaism was intensified. Hence Christians, or at least some of them, denied that Jesus ate the Jewish Paschal meal on the eve of the Passover.

When Was The Last Supper?

This can be seen in the account given in the Synoptics. They declare that the Last Supper was the Paschal one on the eve of the 14th of Nisan, and that Jesus was arrested on the 15th of Nisan. On the other hand, John insists that the Last Supper was *not* the Paschal meal, but

just an ordinary meal eaten on the 13th of Nisan—that is, before the Passover. Strauss commented, "Our only course is to acknowledge an irreconcilable contradiction between the respective accounts without venturing a decision as to which is the correct one".

The truth is that the three writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, had never seen a full Paschal meal, as Jewish writers long since noted. The evangelists wrote from

hearsay, or from seeing the kind of meal which was kept up after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. It was a much shortened ceremony. It is interesting to note, however, the many contradictions between all the accounts. For instance,

— VIEWS and OPINIONS —

Easter or Passover?

By H. CUTNER

the Synoptics claim that the ceremony of the Eucharist was instituted at the Last Supper. John says it was "the washing of feet". The Synoptics know nothing about the washing of feet, while John knows nothing about the Eucharist. And here is a contradiction between Matthew and Mark on the one hand, and Luke on the other. In the first two, Jesus passed the cup *once*; in Luke he passed it *twice*. There are plenty more irreconcilable contradictions in God's Precious Word making it very difficult for pious theologians to harmonise Revelation with what really happened—if anything of the kind did really happen.

Was Jesus Crucified?

All Christians are, however, contradictions or not, quite convinced that Jesus was crucified. Even if it were uncontestedly proven that the Jews never "crucified" anybody, that it was not one of their punishments, Jesus on a Cross would not, nay could not, be given up. The Suffering Saviour dying for the sins of mankind, and thus "saving" everybody from eternal torture in Hell, is far too great an asset to the Christian religion ever to be given up. We might point out that Greek word "stauros" translated in our versions as "cross" is not a cross but a stake, and it would not make any difference. The suffering Messiah has to be shown on a Cross, always on a Cross, even though it never happened. So long as Christians worship Jesus, he will be depicted on a Cross never on a stake. And on Good Friday, the lingering death suffered by being "crucified" will be lamented to high heaven by the Christian world, and the hatred of Jews and Judaism as usual intensified to the utmost by the followers of gentle Jesus. And there never was a greater hatred in history.

Readers of course know that I am a stout defender of the "non-historicity" of Jesus theory, and therefore I do not believe a line of the Crucifixion story. The "event" is purely "astronomical" and the fact that it is always commemorated on a different date is proof that it never happened. Nobody knows when the Crucifixion took place for a very simple reason. It did not take place. The reader can test at least one incident which we are told happened at the Crucifixion for himself. Jesus proclaimed that he was "the Light of the World" (that is, the

Sun) and so when he died "there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour". Of course if Jesus is really a "personification" of the Sun (like Mithras, for example) darkness would spread over the earth, a *literary* darkness. It is just as simple as that.

Visiting Hell

But the various biographers of "our Lord" were not content to leave it at that. Many of them made Jesus "descend" into Hell. You will find this hinted at in 1 Peter 3, 17-19, but fully explained in some of the Apocryphal Gospels—which are, in my opinion, quite as "authentic" as the canonical ones. And if you examine the biographies of some of the other Gods, you will find they also descended into Hell. This is the case with Zoroaster, Osiris, Horus, Adonis, Bacchus, Hercules, and Mercury. If numbers count, then there certainly is a Hell.

Space prevents me at the moment from dealing with the Resurrection which, in spite of their Divine Revelation, Christians fondly imagine was the only case in history.

An Immortal Atheist

By F. J. CORINA

THE RECENT FESTIVAL held in Bradford to mark the centenary of the birth of Frederick Delius, one of the city's musical gifts to the world, was the most civilised event of its kind it has ever been my pleasure to observe.

Owing to the uncompromising freethinking of Delius, and his own insistence on the description, "atheist" (not for him the more reverent "agnostic") it was not possible in the official proceedings for the usual religious clap-trap to be introduced by the Churches. The absence of any nonsense about "divine inspiration," "interpreting God through the beauty of music," and so on, was a welcome change, and resulted in a festival that was wholly sincere, dignified, and lacking only in the customary hypocrisy of such celebrations.

True, the Anglican Bishop of Bradford, the Catholic Bishop of Leeds, and the Moderator of the Free Church Council were at the principal event of the festival, but one suspects that this was for the status-symbol of presentation, among other "notables," to the Queen Mother. They had no official mumbo-jumbo to perform for Delius, and one wonders how they felt for the rest of the evening paying tribute as simple members of the audience to the man who scorned their beliefs and rejected their doctrine, including the idea that music is one of God's greatest gifts to man!

Outside the official proceedings, the Bradford German Evangelical Church tried to capture a reflection of Delius's glory for their Church (he was the Bradford-born son of a German immigrant merchant) by holding a special centenary service. The excuse for this was that some relatives of Delius had been members of the church, which has three stained-glass windows presented by them. But it was a flimsy pretext, and it is to the credit of the *Telegraph and Argus*, the Bradford newspaper, that in referring to this event it made clear the fact of Delius's atheism.

Delius had little to thank God for, anyway. He became totally blind and partly paralysed, and it was a tribute not to the benevolence of God but to the indomitable courage of man that, even under such tremendous handicaps, the atheist composer continued to tap out his music on the arm of his wheel chair, creating beauty to leave behind for the benefit of those who were to follow him. In that way I think Delius will prove to be immortal—

They should turn to the Bible and there in Matthew 27, 51-53, they can read,

And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his [Jesus's] resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Every Christian is almost forced to believe this marvellous story as genuine *history*—particularly the bit about coming out after the Resurrection. I think it was Ingersoll who pointed out that the dead saints when resurrected waited for Jesus to come out of his grave *first*, out of sheer politeness, in spite of having to wait for the joyous and perhaps unexpected excursion into the old, and familiar, places.

However, let us enjoy our Easter eggs even if they are made of chocolate, and eat our Easter buns even if the cross marked on them does not necessarily indicate a better quality. Our last Holy Day—beg pardon, holiday, was after all four months ago.

the only way in which the term makes sense—though it is unlikely that, so long as the tradition of this country remains nominally Christian, he will be remembered for his "Mass to Life", in which he uses words selected from Nietzsche.

A Freethinker tribute to Delius was paid at a meeting of the Bradford Branch of the National Secular Society, when it was observed that the Bradford composer was one of a notable list of musical people who had rejected religion, despite the Christian supposition that music expressed the "soul" of man.

THEATRE

"THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE"

Many present-day—but in my view outdated—critics cry out against commitment in the theatre and in literature. Theirs is a sad plight, for the two greatest European playwrights of our time, Bertolt Brecht and Jean-Paul Sartre—as well as a number of the most promising—are unashamedly "committed". Anyone who doubts Brecht's greatness should visit the Aldwych Theatre, London, where the Royal Shakespeare Company is presenting *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in a translation by John Holmstrom. Here, with theatrical "illusion" reduced to a minimum (as was Brecht's aim), Director William Gaskill brings out the full force of the play. And Brecht not only makes no effort to lull us into thinking it is anything but a play, with his story teller, his masks and his songs, he deliberately and continually keeps us aware that it is a play we are watching. It is the mark of his genius that the result is one of the great human dramas of our time. It is not extravagant to call his effects Shakespearean. Like Shakespeare he achieved realism without naturalism.

The Caucasian Chalk Circle is, as Mr. Kenneth Tynan alone seems to have pointed out, a play about property, Brecht's view being that property should belong to those who would make the best use of it. The same attitude applies whether the property is land (the dispute over the valley at the beginning) or a child, as in the final scene, employing the famous "chalk circle" idea that Brecht took from an anonymous Chinese play of about 1300 AD. These two quite different expressions of the same basic approach to property have been called unnecessarily repetitive, but this is silly. They are essential and complementary. And between them we have four long episodes telling the stories of Grusche, the kitchen maid, and Azdaz, the judge, in Brecht's typical, un sentimental, but fundamentally humane way.

It is hard to see how Patsy Byrne and Hugh Griffith could be bettered in the two principal roles, and they are very well supported. I was particularly pleased to see Declan Mulholland given a good part, having seen and admired him some time ago at Unity Theatre in Gorki's *The Lower Depths*. The whole production, in fact, is memorable. C.M.C.C.

WITHOUT COMMENT

He [the Bishop of Southwark] presented the Pope with a chocolate Easter Egg. They talked in general terms about Christian unity.—*Sunday Telegraph* (8/4/62).

Jesus, Paul and Marcion

By F. A. RIDLEY

RECENTLY, I RE-READ a short, but extremely interesting book on that intriguing intellectual crossword puzzle, the historicity or otherwise of Jesus Christ; that is, of course, the Jesus of the Gospels. The book in question was one in the Thinker's Library, *Jesus, Myth or History?* by Archibald Robertson, whose regretted death last October left such a gap in the ranks of Rationalist writers and scholars. His small, but comprehensive book is in the singularly lucid and forceful style that his readers had learned to expect. It also possesses the not inconsiderable merit, from my point of view, at least, that I am to a very considerable degree in agreement with its basic thesis, and certainly this always predisposes one to take a favourable view of any book, particularly on such a highly controversial subject.

The conclusion about this knotty problem of the historicity of the traditional founder of Christianity originated from not one, but from several sources, one of which may have been—indeed, in Robertson's opinion, certainly was—a Galilean prophet and would-be Messiah, named Jesus. In general, I must confess that I do not take much interest in detective stories, including such certainly intriguing, but at this time of day, largely futile problems as are involved in, say, the Shakespearian controversy or the historicity of Jesus.

With regard to the latter question, so far the controversies that have raged around it appear to have usually been more conspicuous for heat than for light. Failing some unlikely, but perhaps not impossible documentary discovery on the lines of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which may contain a direct reference to Jesus as an indubitably historical person, I do not see any way of proving, or equally, disproving, the point at issue by mere conjecture. But I must admit that it seems to me to be easier to explain the origins of the initial Christian movement so closely connected with the name of Jesus, if one assumes that there was an actual man of this then very common Jewish name actually mixed up with the origins of the movement. From which angle, I am inclined to look with favour on Robertson's conclusion that Christianity had an historical, composite origin. Only I sometimes wonder whether one ought not rather to go even a step further and finally pronounce the Jesus of history to have been himself a composite character. In which case the Gospel story would then be made up partly of obvious myths and partly of sayings and doings of not one but several Jewish preachers and alleged wonder-workers, one of whom at least was presumably called Jesus. At any rate, such a speculation is an interesting, if unverifiable one which, in my submission, fits the relevant facts better than the purely mythicist one does.

However, whether Jesus Christ existed or no, it is obvious to every serious critic of Christian origins—and this includes both the late Archibald Robertson, and the present writer—that the Christian religion is actually older than the Gospels, and that it owed its distinctive doctrines to people independent of the Jesus of the Gospels and even quite possibly ignorant of his existence. Among these it is customary to place Paul first, an assumption with which Mr. Robertson appears to agree. Certainly as far as Christianity, whether as a movement, or as a theology, has any known foundations, they are to be

found in the Pauline Epistles which make up so large and important a part of the New Testament. Whether these historically and theologically important Epistles were actually the work of Paul himself, or a Pauline school of his theological pupils is perhaps a moot point, but in my submission there is no case for denying either the historical existence of Paul or his commanding influence in and upon the evolution of Christianity. Pauline mythicists have (again in my opinion), a much weaker case than have critical disbelievers in the historical existence of Jesus. The fierce theological controversies occasioned by the Epistles from their own day down to ours, mark the intervention of a powerful and original tendency associated since their inception with the name and fame of Paul of Tarsus.

Even if we assume, as is quite conceivable, that the Epistles of Paul were actually written by his disciples, this does not disprove his existence; quite the contrary. If for example a whole school of writers should call themselves after Dickens, this surely could not be held to prove that Dickens did not exist, but rather that he did and that his name and fame were so great that later writers were eager to shine in his reflected glory. From about 150 AD onwards when Paul—who appears to have known little if anything about Jesus—was borrowed by the Christians from hitherto rival Gnostic sects, the influence of the Pauline theology has been so great in both the Catholic and Protestant Churches as fully to merit his modern soubriquet as the "Second Founder of Christianity".

However, if the modern Higher Criticism of the New Testament has established any one fact beyond reasonable room for doubt, it is that Paul and his immediate followers (the presumed authors of the Pauline Epistles) were not Christians, at least in the initial sense of the term. It seems quite clear that Paul and his school of Gnostic theologians knew, and cared nothing about an historical Jesus—or Jesuses—whether in Galilee or anywhere else: their Christ Jesus was a God and never anything else but a God.

Historically, the Christian religion began probably around the middle of the 2nd century, before which date nothing for certain is known about it, and its operative cause was represented by the fusion of the original Messianic Jewish heretics who believed in the Messiah Jesus as historical but not as divine, and the Pauline Gnostics who believed in a "Christ" who was divine but was never regarded as historical. As Archibald Robertson indicates, the final fusion was reached in the 4th century, with the Christ of the Creeds described as "perfect God and perfect man", both divine and human! The actual circumstances of this fusion are still very imperfectly known, but its principal agent seems to have been the Asiatic heretic, Marcion (2nd century), who edited and apparently originated the first Christian New Testament, and who first introduced the name and writings of Paul into Christian circles where hitherto they had either been unknown or rejected. For example, Justin Martyr, the leading writer of the Church of Rome (c. 130-160) never even mentioned Paul, whilst even later, the unknown author of the Second Epistle of Peter warned his readers that in Paul's Epistles there are "things hard to understand which the heretics twist to their own damnation."
(Concluded on next page)

This Believing World

We wonder what the pious viewers on TV (April 5th) thought of Father M. Jarrett-Kerr's attack on at least some parts of the New English Bible? With the aid of two very reverent readers, he contrasted the Authorised Version as a translation with the NEB—very much indeed to the latter's disadvantage—though it is only fair to point out that he never attacked a single point of theology. All he tried to show was that it was far better put and the meaning was just as clear in the AV. Why then was it changed?

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Lots of parsons must have thought the same. Even with the best will in the world, you cannot infuse the proper reverent and devout atmosphere into *modern* English. Try as hard as he can, a modern university graduate, even with the appropriate parsonic voice, simply cannot get that religious touch when reading the NEB as he so easily can with the AV. The times are out of joint. To put it another way—lots of good Christians always feel that they are literally in touch with Almighty God when reading the AV. Whereas, when reading the NEB, they feel they are in touch not with God but with the translators. It's a horrible predicament—though in the ultimate, neither the AV nor the NEB will save Christianity, as Fr. Jarrett-Kerr must well know.

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A little item in the "Daily Express" (April 6th) caught our eye the other day—it was that the Bishop of Southwell, Dr. R. Barry, confirmed five prisoners in Nottingham Jail all serving six years or more. To get such a sentence, they must have been old lags though we do not wish to infer that they were in prison because of their complete faith in Christ Jesus. But why, oh why, did not their Christianity save them? Perhaps only Dr. Barry can answer that one.

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His brother Bishop, the Bishop of Lichfield, Dr. A. S. Reeve, put up a brilliant idea, never thought of before, when addressing the House of Lords the other day on how to achieve "a great spiritual awakening in Britain". It was simply that the Government should call upon *the clergy* to help them, because all the time "we are dealing with human beings", and who can possibly know as much about human beings as the dear clergy? And Earl Bathurst, who is Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Home Office, took up the suggestion with the utmost enthusiasm. He thought the Bishop had made "a remarkable and interesting contribution", and he would see what the Church of England and other denominations could do about it.

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Thus, "the Establishment" was again boosted up, and perhaps one day we shall have a clerical Prime Minister, and a clerical Cabinet, and a few hundred other clerics all dealing with "human nature"—a commodity the average non-clerical member of Parliament knows literally nothing about. In any case, Dr. Reeve wants the "matter of prayer" to be taken up very seriously in order that "God may lead the nations unto the ways of peace and understanding". How brilliantly, and with what originality, can our Bishops speak in the House of Lords! The tit-bit about prayer is so very outstanding.

★

The London "Evening News" (March 29th) seems rather surprised that a new kind of church has been built at Lewsey Farm, Luton. It is in the form of a pub—"like

the new public houses built to serve the estate"—but instead of an inn sign, it carries a cross. The idea, according to the Rev. R. C. C. Pattison, was to give the building "an atmosphere of welcome" which he obviously thought was not given by a building which looked like a church. In any case, it is a matter of wonderment that the idea was not thought of before. After all, Jesus not only consorted with publicans—who certainly were "pub crawlers"—otherwise there would have been no point in emphasising the association—but when liquor was scarce, he performed one of his most celebrated miracles, and gave a number of drunken wedding guests a delightful feast of more and more wine. Whether our Christian temperance champions will welcome a church which looks like a pub is another matter. After all, they are in a very small minority.

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ITV's "Sunday Break" managed to get a profound thinker in Dr. W. Neil of Nottingham University on the engrossing subject, "Can People be Raised from the Dead?" in which three equally believing Christians took part. Of course people can be raised from the dead—did not Jesus prove this once for always? The people be brought back to life were *dead*—and they became alive, though Dr. Neil did not know what became of them afterwards; and, while believing in "eternal life", he refused to say what these words really meant. But there was no doubt he was a complete believer as were the other people who spoke. And no pious Christian viewer would want more than that on ITV—especially on a Sunday.

THE ALDERMASTON MARCH

THERE WILL BE a National Secular Society banner in this year's Aldermaston March arranged by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. All NSS members and FREE THINKER readers who support CND are asked to look out for the banner and to walk behind it. The time table of the March is as follows: Aldermaston, Good Friday, April 20th, Falcon Field, 12 noon; Reading, Easter Saturday, April 21st, King's Meadows, 9 a.m.; Slough, Easter Sunday, April 22nd, High Street, 9.30 a.m.; Acton, Easter Monday, April 23rd, Acton Green, 9.30 a.m.; Hammer-smith—Kensington—Hyde Park Corner (Lunch and mass rally 12.30 to 3 p.m.)—Sloane Street—Kings Road—Victoria Street—Parliament Square—Whitehall.

JESUS, PAUL AND MARCION

(Concluded from page 123)

tion". Even after 200 AD, Tertullian described Paul as "the Apostle of the heretics".

In 144, the Catholic Church condemned Marcion, but it took over the Epistles of Paul, re-edited them and included them in their own New Testament. Up to then, only the Jewish Old Testament had been regarded as "inspired". The fusion of Messianic Judaism with Gnosticism in Christianity had been effected, or at least its decisive step had been taken under the influence of the heretic Marcion who, as Archibald Robertson indicates, was no doubt an important, if little known figure in the early evolution of Christianity. One can even say that we owe to him both the Pauline Epistles and the very idea of a New—specifically Christian—Testament as distinct from the Old Testament.

Accordingly, these three names, Jesus, Paul and Marcion, seem to sum up in a sequential manner, the early evolution of what became, largely as a result of their influence, the Christian Church and religion.

THE FREETHINKER

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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. I. 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

Birmingham Branch N.S.S. (Midland Institute, Paradise Street). Sunday, April 22nd, 6.45 p.m.: GRAHAM CORNES, "The Life of Martin Luther".

Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Left Wing Coffee House, 26 Brazennose Street), Tuesday, April 24th, 7.30 p.m.: COLIN McCALL, "Scientific Materialism".

West Ham and District Branch N.S.S. (Wanstead Community Centre, The Green, London, E.11), Thursday, April 26th, 8 a.m.: E. S. HILLMAN, B.Sc., "Geology and the Rise of Materialism".

Notes and News

IN THIS Good Friday issue, we think it appropriate to reassess some aspects of the Christian story that will be commemorated in churches throughout the country this weekend and on radio and television (see the cover of the current *Radio Times*). In views and Opinions, H. Cutner points out the undoubted Pagan aspects of Easter (including the very name) and shows how these fit in with his mythicist view of Jesus Christ. F. A. Ridley holds, however, that there are deficiencies in the mythicist case, and in "Jesus, Paul and Marcion", "some random reflections on Christian origins", as he described them to us, he posits a historical, if composite Jesus as one of the components of early Christianity. Prompted by our two well-known contributors, readers might like to submit their own clues to what Mr. Ridley calls an "intriguing crossword puzzle".

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WE WERE SORRY to learn from *The Sunday Telegraph* (8/4/62) that Sir Charles Snow (still better known as C. P. Snow) had suddenly gone blind in one eye. "The doctors diagnosed a detached retina and advised an immediate operation for its repair", but Sir Charles insisted on keeping an appointment to be installed as Rector of St. Andrews' University before having the operation. We wish this eminent advocate of rationalism a quick and full recovery.

SIR CHARLES was invited by the Humanist Council to be one of the guests at the Dinner to be held in the House of Commons on Saturday, November 3rd, 1962. Unfortunately he will be out of the country. Those who have accepted invitations to speak are Sir Julian Huxley, Professor Ritchie Calder and Mr. F. A. Ridley. Other speakers will be announced later.

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NOW THAT the Roman Catholic authorities in New Orleans have avowed their intention of integrating their parochial schools by next autumn, we may expect to read how the Church has led the way in the fight against segregation. Actually, while often speaking in favour of integration, Church leaders have been reluctant to introduce it. Twelve months ago, *Time* (3/3/61) reported that Roman Catholic integration in the four Deep South States, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina was "confined to one elementary parochial school in South Carolina, a seminary in Mississippi and the Jesuit-run Spring Hill College in Mobile". And *Time* quoted the Catholic *Interracial Review*, where the Very Rev. Harold R. Perry, Negro rector of St. Augustine's Seminary, Mississippi, wrote: "Catholic institutions could have won great respect among Southern Negroes, if they had dropped segregation long ago. In many instances, segregation continues up to and including the Communion rail. We have missed a real opportunity to impress the Negro with the true attitude of the Church".

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BUT WHAT IS "the true attitude of the Church"? The way it speaks or the way it acts? And what if it speaks differently and acts differently at different times. The aged Archbishop Joseph Rummel of New Orleans spoke against school segregation as long ago as 1954, but when the school crisis came in 1960 he postponed desegregation until integration of the public (state) schools had been "effectively carried out". "The wholly temporal reason was", said *Time* (3/3/61) "that parochial schools which enrol half the white pupils in New Orleans, get tax-paid books and supplies from the segregationist state legislature". Moreover, as the New Orleans correspondent of *The Observer* (8/4/62) pointed out "Most of the leading segregationists here happen to be Catholics". One especially, Leander H. Perez, is enormously rich and has continually threatened to withhold money and students in case of integration. *The Observer*, then, was rather understating when it said: "It is generally thought that economic pressures have been responsible for the long delay in the Church's carrying out the policy of integration in schools . . .". And it looks as though public and parochial schools will desegregate together, for Judge Skilly Wright has ordered all public schools to integrate by the autumn.

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STILL ON this important integration issue. It is not known, said *The Observer*, whether Perez has been threatened with excommunication. Another Catholic segregationist, Mrs. B. J. Gaillet, President of Save Our Nation Inc. announced that she had. She has therefore armed herself with Biblical quotations (Genesis 27, 33; Numbers 36, 9-10, etc.) and requested an interview with the Archbishop. Her defence of segregation has always been the Bible, she said (*Montreal Star*, 6/4/62) and unless the Bible is brought into the discussion with the Archbishop, "then I will have to bow down gracefully and accept excommunication rather than desert my belief in God".

Men and the War God

By ARTHUR W. ULOTH

I AM ALWAYS opposed to attacks on the female sex as a whole, because they are always unfair. For every feminine folly there is a masculine equivalent. Dr. J. V. Duhig is completely one-sided in his article "Women and God" (30/3/62), for he leaves one with the impression that women as a sex form a barrier to progress and that men do not. The truth is that the enlightened members of society form a small minority, and that the vast mass of men, as well as women, are extremely reactionary. No doubt women fall more easily than men to the particular dope put out by the Churches, especially the Roman Catholic one, but Christianity is not the only religion in our society, and men are every bit as gullible as women, though in a different way.

Where is it that men congregate in huge numbers, and allow themselves to be bullied, crushed, brainwashed and treated like human cattle? Is it not in the armed forces? Have we not here the male equivalent of the female religious obsession? Instead of the Virgin Mary and Gentle Jesus we have the God of War.

Of course nobody now worships Mars, or calls upon Mithras, but there is no need to. It is the attitude of mind that counts. Men worship *male values*, as they understand them, which means in practice brutality, destructiveness and power.

Frederick the Great is said to have observed, "If my soldiers would only think, not one of them would remain in the ranks." Yet Dr. Duhig writes, "As a class, with of course exceptions, women are useless as abstract thinkers and dangerous in the field of religion." As a class, with of course exceptions, men are useless as abstract or any other kind of thinkers and utterly disastrous in the field of politics, where they run the risk of destroying the whole world.

Throughout history men have waged wars. If Amazons existed once their societies died out long ago. There is no need to tell the long story of humanity's agony. The responsibility for at least 50 per cent of it lies at the door of the male sex. Let us come down to modern times.

In 1914 Europe went beserk. Of the major powers involved, most were at least theoretically democracies. At least Germany, Britain, the USA and France had a form of parliamentary government. Except Japan they were Christian countries, with Protestants and Catholics on both sides. They all shared a roughly similar civilisation. Why did they then tear each other to pieces? Business interests were at the bottom of it, and business is usually a masculine preserve. But the tragedy could not have occurred unless thousands of men had not been willing to go like sheep to the slaughter, to don uniforms, to cast aside their independence as men, to allow themselves to be shelled, machine-gunned and tortured to death. And then we talk about the foolishness of women!

After the war various militaristic movements, all run by men (though women gave their moral support, not to mention on some occasions their votes), sprang up all over Europe. They were called Fascist, Falangist or Nazi. Once again large masses of men started putting on uniforms, once again they went to war, once again they were shelled, machine-gunned and tortured to death. And at the end Europe was left divided into two camps, East and West, glaring at each other over barbed wire, and each threatening the extermination of the other.

Now the women's part in all this was shameful enough. They urged their menfolk onward, often to their deaths. But the evidence is that the men did not need much urging from this quarter, and besides most men despise, like Dr. Duhig, the mental capacity of women. Anyway, whatever power some women may exercise behind the scenes, it is undeniable that the governments, the armies, the air forces, the navies, most of the espionage services, the police forces, the jailers, the hangmen, the torturers, the diplomats, the journalists, the propaganda and psychological warfare experts, the technicians, the atomic physicists engaged in war research and all the rest of them are mostly men. Although there are doubtless a few glamorous girl spies, a few women prime ministers and ambassadors, a handful of female scientists and a large number of typists involved in the warlike activities of the great armed states of the world, the system is still run by men for men.

Khrushchev, Kennedy, Macmillan, de Gaulle and their entourages, all are at least biologically males. All of them believe enthusiastically that their side is right. All seem equally ready to blow the world to Hell rather than give in. All appear to have the mentality of fourth form preparatory school boys. And yet we talk about the folly of women!

While I have no desire to exalt the female sex as superior, I have often asked myself how can my own sex be such sadists, poltroons, bullies and sheer idiots? True, they don't nowadays often fall for the religious humbug to which women are susceptible, but they fall victim to another form of humbug equally deadly.

Male values! You can persuade a man to commit any crime under the sun by appealing to his masculine pride. Women influence men in this way, but men also influence each other. Men are more afraid of being thought cowards than of being cowards in reality.

Macbeth proclaims, "I dare do all that may become a man. Who dares do more is none". But, characteristically, he did not stick to this position long.

Wherever you go in the streets little boys are playing with guns.

"Harmless", say the pundits, "it lets off their aggressions."

Our entertainment on television and cinema screen consists largely of violence. It is the modern equivalent of the gladiatorial show. Let not the reader feel superior. Almost certainly he gets some pleasure out of some of it. The writer is not immune either.

Our economic system, based (theoretically at least) on competition, glorifies the struggle between men. No holds are barred. Almost any form of cheating is permitted, in the form of advertising in particular. Dr. Duhig says, "Female duplicity, gullibility and queer moral sense is a serious obstacle to a high general morality and standard of conduct." Yet in the world of business women still play mainly the role of camp followers.

The only hope that poor humanity has got is that the sexes shall come to a better understanding of each other, and learn a little mutual tolerance.

MANY MANSIONS

People with interest in the future save with the Church of England Building Society—Advertisement in the London Underground.

For God's Sake Keep That Box Shut!

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

YOU MIGHT IMAGINE that the very old would welcome the conventional notion of a resurrection of the body and a final reappearance in the heavenly realm with a jolly rejuvenation. But, when I visited a Jezreelite service in Camden Town before the war, the congregation of three ancient crones was proud to testify that they were among the elect who would be transferred straight to heaven, body, soul and spirit. The service was conducted by two decrepit gentlemen who wore barbic robes and played little harps. They turned to me with the most tragic appeal: could I be induced to become a convert? They croaked and fluttered round me, promising, with an unconscious gruesomeness, that it would be possible for me to age endlessly in flesh and bone throughout eternity.

Later, I mentioned the Jezreelites in a wireless talk on curiosities; and I received some indignant letters from the old "immortals" who had offered me so much!

I have, then, been particularly interested to read R. A. Baldwin's new and admirable little book, *The Jezreelites* (Lambarde Press, 12s. 6d.). It seems that this business started with Joanna Southcott who was born in 1750, the fourth daughter of a not very successful farmer. "It was in 1792," writes Mr. Baldwin, "that she first showed signs of some mental abnormality, and the change in her, altogether slow in developing, was nevertheless unmistakable, until she eventually became a completely different woman." She now wrote doggerel rhymes and made predictions and thought of herself as The Second Eve who would challenge Satan to mortal combat and avenge the sin and suffering which had come into the world through the disobedience and fall of the first woman. In 1814, she announced that she was going to give birth to Shiloh, the saviour.

This seemed to be a remarkable achievement for a spinster of 64, and her condition created a stir far beyond the bounds of her own devotees. Twenty-one doctors examined the lady, and seventeen declared that she was pregnant. But, as the time of the child's birth drew near, it became evident that Joanna herself was dying. The signs of pregnancy disappeared—the hysterical phantom pregnancy which would have been recognised by doctors today; and the lady passed away, assuring those at her death-bed that her visions had been delusions.

But did all this unnerve her followers? Not at all. They said that Shiloh had been born, but no one had seen him as he had been snatched up into Heaven to save him from the Dragon. They promised airily that he would reappear. In fact the whole of Mr. Baldwin's entertaining monograph illuminates the fact that in religion "anything goes!"

After Joanna's death, many leaders and would-be leaders of the sect and of splinter sects adopted her doggerel hymns and her teachings—and got away with it. Jezreel, whose real name was John Rowland White, was one of the most successful of the prophets who exploited Joanna's fame. His book, *The Flying Roll*, is an almost incomprehensible Southcottian rehash; but most cleverly, he only published four instalments of the great work, always promising that the really shattering revelations were to come in future volumes. Mystery plays a tremendous part in religion, and the fact that *The Flying Roll* was never completed worked in Jezreel's favour. Of course he could always explain what he had written, too, by crying: "The Spirit alone can reveal this."

Jezreel was also careful to make a mystery of his origins. Was he the Shiloh? He was a soldier earning a shilling a day when he hinted in 1875 that he might be "the one". Afterwards, he had to serve a term in India, but he picked up no new mystical claptrap there; and he wrote letters home to his admirers on Southcottian lines. He was finally discharged from the army with an "indifferent" character. He had, moreover, suffered a term of imprisonment while in the forces; yet everyone knows that the Devil is ready to contrive humiliations and tribulations for holy men. So, on his discharge, the prophet was ripe to found his empire.

He told his adherents that they must sell up their possessions and give the cash—to him. Naturally, they were only too delighted to obey such a simple request from a genuine messiah. Then they were dressed in strange clothes and forbidden to cut their hair, and they were put to work on community business in exchange for a meagre subsistence allowance. Jezreel founded all manner of shops and a school to keep his unpaid labourers busy, and the profits belonged to Jezreel and his own grandiose schemes.

No wonder that he could afford to get delirium tremens. At midnight, we are told, he might wake the boys in his school to inform them that "he was possessed by the Immortal Spirit and would then impart to them his latest vision, telling them to stare at him straight in the face." There are also accounts of some disgusting sadistic traits.

If some incidents distressed some of the disciples, it was too late for action. Discipline was severe, and the ultimate sanction was the threat of penniless expulsion from the community and its dole.

The temple on the summit of Chatham Hill, which was for so long a familiar landmark on the main London-Canterbury-Dover road, was the apotheosis of Jezreel's paranoia. It was never finished, and the ruins were recently demolished to make room for a factory, "the one" himself having died long before he had been able to spend the full £25,000 of other people's money on his architectural "folly".

Yes, the man who had promised others that they would not die, died. Disciples, who had already watched fellow "immortals" die, saw the master's end. But, incredibly, it made no difference to their belief in the preachers who went on thundering that there was no death for Jezreelites. In spite of the recurrence of tiresome corpses, Jezreelite ceremonies made no provision for death. The faithful and deceased had to be interred quietly by docile C. of E. clergymen.

The fight for leadership after Jezreel's death was most unedifying. Mrs. Jezreel won, and drove about in a grand equipage while the bible-quoting rank-and-file were ordered a decrease in diet. But there really is no limit to the hoax. A gentleman, styling himself Prince Michael, founded an allied community in America, and was arrested for seducing teenagers in his flock. King Ben, a rival commander of the sect in the States, hid from the police for years in a luxurious subterranean chamber where he entertained the devout and young ladies; but he was finally caught on rape charges.

Ah well, the Catholic Church survived the Borgias; and why should the members of a comparatively small-time church be less gullible? All the same, it is hard to

believe that people can be so monstrously credulous. Really, one *must* read Mr. Baldwin to get the full fascinating and fantastic picture of the history of just one comparatively short-lived "religious" movement.

Short-lived? Do we not still see advertisement in the press urging the bishops to get together and open Joanna Southcott's box and read her sealed prophecies which might still lead us to the Millenium, maybe under some Prince Michael or good King Ben? Well . . . I mean . . . what do you say, chaps?

OBITUARY

Although Robert Johnson had been unwell for more than a year, his death (briefly reported last week) came suddenly on April 7th. Mr. William Griffiths, his fellow Director of G. W. Foote and Co. Ltd. and fellow member of the National Secular Society Executive Committee, had visited him in Whittington Hospital in the afternoon, and though obviously sick, he did not appear to be in immediate danger. And his friends will find it hard to realise that "Johnnie" is dead.

He was not an obtrusive nor a voluble man, but he could always be relied on to present a sound and sensible view when necessary, and his counsel will be sadly missed by the boards and committees on which he diligently served. He was born in the Shetlands, seventy years ago, but spent most of his early life in Aberdeen and regarded himself almost as a native of the granite city.

Outwardly, "Johnnie" might strike many as a "typical" dour Scot, but he was in fact, a sentimental man (in the best sense) as well as a man of wide reading. And he was certainly not without humour. He enjoyed equally a jovial evening or an intense discussion—as an active participant. He was, needless to say, firm to the end in his freethought views.

The funeral took place at St. Marylebone Crematorium on Saturday, April 14th, when a tribute was read by the General Secretary of the National Secular Society in the presence of friends and freethought colleagues.

Charles Horn, of Shotts, Lanarkshire, who died at the age of 76, was one of the finest examples of that fine type, the Scottish miner. He was always concerned about the well being of his fellow man and active in his advocacy of Secularism and Socialism. Charles was one of the founders of the Shotts Secular Society (later incorporated by the Glasgow Secular Society) and was a strong opponent of Christianity, but withal a tolerant and courteous debater.

He was a great lover of the classics in music and literature, and his bookshelves were well stocked with scientific works which he read diligently.

His funeral at Daldowie Crematorium on April 2nd, was attended by a large number of admirers, and a secular service was conducted by Mr. Robert M. Hamilton, Chairman of the Glasgow Secular Society.

We send our deep sympathy to Mrs. Horn and her family.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE MYSTERY OF MYSTERIES

The greatest mystery of all is how God could have managed the Creation without a woman to tell him how!

N. E. S. WEST (U.S.A.)

ATHEISM

If, as Mr. G. Wappenhans appears to say (p. 104) the atheist is neither a freethinker nor a rationalist, that is, his thinking is neither free of authoritarian shackles nor guided by reason, how on earth does he come by his atheism? It can hardly be through faith, as the theist comes by his theism.

Further, if my version of an atheist is to be regarded as what an atheist should be and not what he is, will Mr. Wappenhans be so good as to explain how an atheist manages to be an atheist if he is not what an atheist should be?

As for Dr. Richard Hope, he first charges me with being (of all things) a "hysteric" (he presumably means a hysterical person) and then credits me with a robust logic. I should hardly have thought hysteria would have produced the robust logic approved by Moore—unless the doctor is referring to Old Moore, who, I believe is inclined to mistake magic for logic. Is not the good doctor's charge more suggestive of hysteria than my calmly-made estimate of theism?

Even if his contention were true that my accusation against

theism could be levelled with equal cogency against atheism, it does not follow that my accusation is false. But is the contention true? Of course I cannot state one primary atheistic assumption that is not totally unverifiable. I don't know of any. I wasn't aware that the atheist made primary assumptions of the dogmatic sort that the theist makes. The theist asserts categorically that God exists, but without providing the faintest proof. The atheist does not categorically assert that God does not exist. What he says is that he refuses to believe in God simply because he can find no adequate grounds for doing so.

REGINALD UNDERWOOD.

THE QUESTION OF PROOF

Dr. Hope's challenge to Mr. Underwood to state one primary atheistic assumption which is "not totally unverifiable" is worth giving some thought. Much may depend on what is considered a "primary atheistic assumption" and what is considered "unverifiable".

On the grounds of logic and reason I contend, e.g., that: (a) if there is a God (I am using this term in a Christian sense) all occurrences, including human behaviour, must be determined by Him, so that there is no sense in the whole scheme of probation, punishment in Hell and reward in Heaven; and (b) that the existence of God is incompatible with the existence of evil. To set out these arguments in detail would lead us too far since it would take pages, but, as my experience in debates with Christian theologians has confirmed, these assertions, which lead to atheism, are not only "not totally unverifiable" but quite irrefutable as long as the validity of logical thinking is maintained.

All that can be held against these arguments is the lack of proof for the validity of logical thinking as such, but since this could also be turned against any religious assertion we would be led from atheism to agnosticism, but not further.

Dr. Hope certainly only speaks of atheism and probably does not also mean agnosticism, so that I have nothing to object. But since readers might believe that something more is implied I should like to declare that, if not atheism, at least agnosticism can be proved and that I am prepared to do so if challenged.

G. WAPPENHANS.

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