

IMMORTAL BLEMISH

BY PAUL BRINKMAN

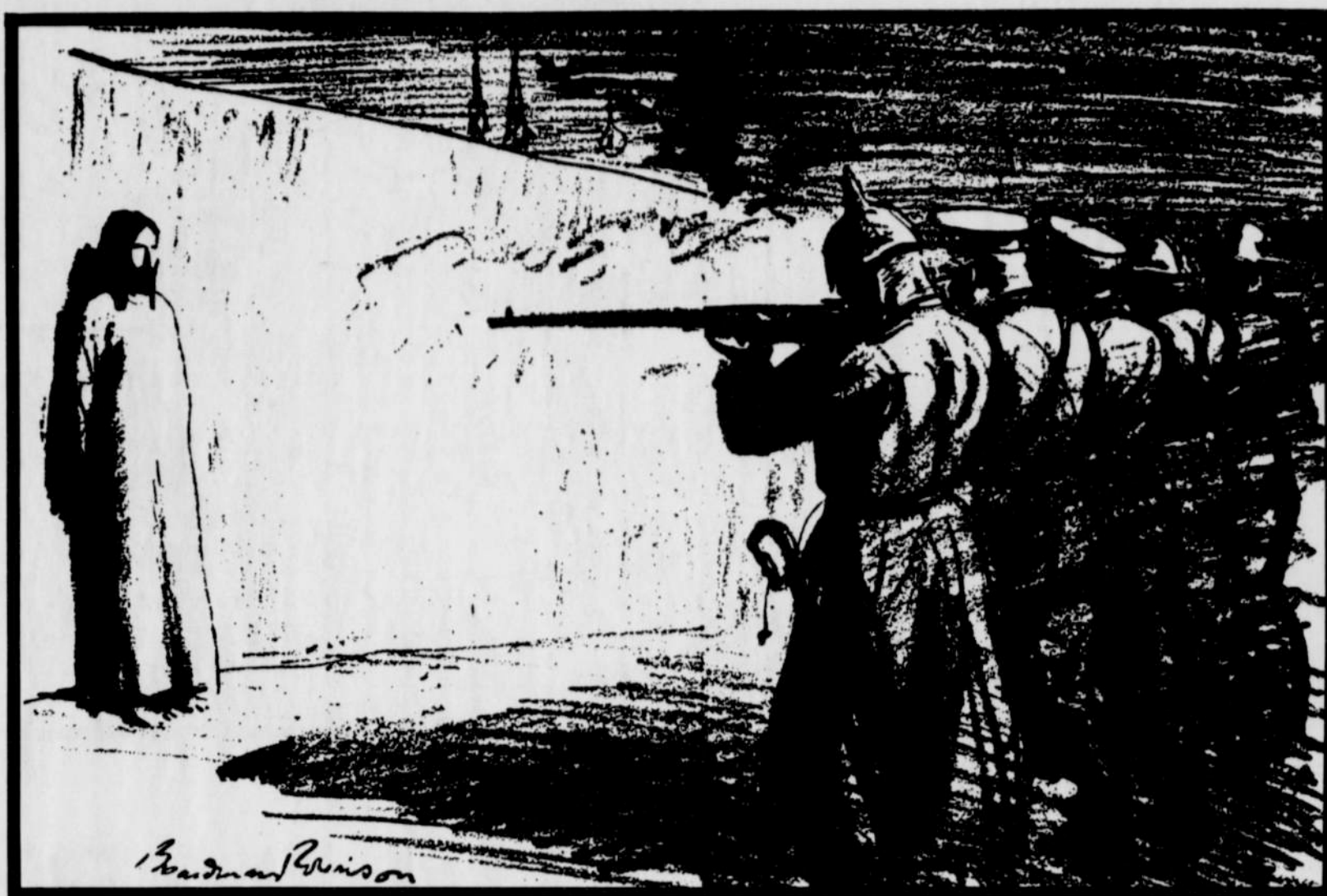
The Greatest Curse and Immortal Blemish of Mankind.

This is what Nietzsche said about Xianity. However, Einstein in his lecture "Science & Religion" acknowledged some positive aspects of religion. Of course, Xianity is an easy scapegoat for every conceivable private and imaginary wrong and gripe, often with a vengeance, and far too many pretend to be the final authority about it. Willy nilly, everybody is incurably religious, including the anti-religious atheists who merely believe in the religion of "no-God" as their God almighty. Their creed is "I believe that I don't believe." K. Marx said with much good reason that religion is the "opiate" of the people, which therefore must include atheistic communism as just another faith. And how about the unconcerned? They merely make their unconcern into a religious belief. The early Xians in ancient Rome were called atheists because they refused to burn incense unto Caesar. But under Constantine the Great, Xianity was made the official religion of Rome, reversing the situation.

Again, an important point Nietzsche failed to see in his view of Xianity is that it is like electricity which can be harnessed for good or short-circuited with harmful results. This raises the problem of evil which most people think is the absence of good when it is actually the corruption of good. You can't even tell a lie without truth to falsify nor can you be sick without health to begin with. The upshot from this is that the more good there is, the more corruption, as current events show. Madame Rolant expressed the meaning of this in her famous words, "Oh Liberty! What crimes are committed in thy name!" So with Xianity.

One of the most poignant and appropriate as well as rational criticisms assessed against popular Xianity was by the outstanding writer Randolph Bourne; thus: "Most sermons today are little more than pious exhortations to good conduct. By conduct is meant that sort of action which least disturb the normal routine of middle class life: common honesty in business and profession, filial obligation, the use of talents, and always and everywhere simple human kindness and love." "The church remains a private club of comfortable middle class people" so there's "Never a word about removing the barriers...of economic inequality; but only to step over them. Never a trumpet call to level the ramparts of special privilege, or build the heights of opportunity," and also that "social ills may be cured by personal virtue," such as (for example, the evangelical revivalism of Billy Graham, well intentioned though he be) by individual salvation — good as far as it goes, but not to what Bourne insists. What this entails is, can life be improved by saving a few individual slaves rather than abolishing the unjust system of slavery itself? Or can recovery, now the big issue, come by individualistic free-enterprise without proper checks on the profit system? Of course in all honesty it must be admitted that private upright morals act like savoring salt in a putrifying society. The world can't be better than the human material it is made of — water inexorably seeks its level.

It is here the real problem lies which genuine Xianity is duty-bound to direct its message. The Old Testament prophets Jesus came to fulfill according to the records, concerned themselves chiefly with the nations with their false gods, wrong views, erroneous ideas, etc., and only incidentally to the individual whose healing depended on the healing of the nation. What historian Guizot said about his country, "France is a land that devours its inhabitants" applies. These inhabitants were fed in order to make devouring more palatable. Since the nation is the largest and most powerful of all human communities, it naturally tends to play God for its citizens who in turn identify their egos in it. By pretending to be the ultimate good or God, it overextends its natural limits and flops. It is the nation that becomes the most tangible embodiment of what Xianity calls "God of this world",



BOARDMAN ROBINSON

"principalities and powers of evil", etc. The great "beast" (devil) according to the early Xians was Rome and not some figment of ecclesiastical imagination. Let it be emphasized that it isn't the nation *per se* that Xianity takes issue with; rather it is bragadocio nationalism like, say Hitlerism, it opposes on behalf of the nation. *Gloria patria*, eagle-spread false patriotism has caused more suffering, misery and inhumanity than any other force on earth and often with the blessings of religion. The Xian church seems to forget that its Founder, Jesus of Nazareth, was executed for treason against Rome and not metaphysically as "the lamb slain for our sins" as later interpreted.

To clarify and simplify the whole matter of the Xian faith, church and doctrines, sacraments, rituals, organizations — the whole lot can be summed up in the Master's words: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," i.e., truth, love, justice, equality and liberty, and the whole character of society will become more livable. Inevitably, this comes into conflict with the injustices of anti-nation nationalism, the colossal monster of iniquity, and one immortal blemish is for Xians to remain detached and indifferent to that obligation by waiting for the physical return of Jesus which he himself never said but for others having him say so.

For still more light upon this subject, a comparison can be made with, say G. Washington, a fallible human who was "converted" to being a new man by giving himself unreservedly, as his Cross, for the cause of "Independence" (his version of the kingdom of God), whereby he was "resurrected" as "Father of

his country." Likewise, Jesus experienced the same for the kingdom of God, the ultimate good, and for which he was entitled the Christ. Jesus and Washington wanted their followers to follow them as they sought their goals or aims, namely salvation or fulfillment. And Jesus no more than Washington wanted to be heroized into some deity cult, as for instance, the former into what is called Jesulatory today, a blemish on the Xian faith. In other words, Jesus wanted man to emulate the Christ of faith or kingdom of God he stood for just as Washington wanted his soldiers to make freedom their dominant concern. Both of them could say, "I am justified by grace of the cause through faith" and confess that "It is no longer I but the cause living in me," paraphrasing Biblical terms. And lest we forget, both had a bounty on their heads because of their daring innovations.

Finally, the question is likely to be asked, Why Jesus? Why not Buddha? Confucius? Karl Marx? Don't they also make claims for the salvation of mankind? They certainly do, but whatever salvations good or bad they have, must incontrovertably refer to Jesus Christ since he manifested the ultimate concern, i.e., total fulfillment in infinite bliss beyond which it is impossible to go — the plumbline to square all structures with Q.E.D.; whatever fulfillment others claim to have is the same Christ which was in Jesus, though different both in degree and kind but unavoidable. It is for this fulfillment Xianity stands for, that is, by which all things exist and consist, no matter how distorted. *Adentum commentum*, this is written to show how meaningful and indispensable the much maligned Xian faith is and that, in Apostle Paul's words, "You can't do anything against its truth, but for this truth" — the sicker one gets by violating the norms of health, the most he wants health."

Paul Brinkman has been dead 10 years. For much of his long life he claimed to be among the last pioneers of Cannon Beach, and there he died at 80+something. This article was previously printed in the NCTE as a letter to the editor in April 1983. It is reprinted because the editor was thinking of him recently.



1160 COMMERCIAL ST.
NOW OPEN AT 304 37TH
10AM -- 6PM
325-7173 & 325-7768



CANNON BEACH
215 N HEMLOCK 436-1572
3556 SE HAWTHORNE PORTLAND 239-4605



1089 Marine Drive • Astoria, Oregon 97103
(503) 325-2961 Bicycle Sales & Service

**GODFATHER'S BOOKS
AND ESPRESSO BAR**

1108 Commercial • Astoria, OR 97103
Phone: (503) 325-8143

