

The **+** WITNESS

SEPTEMBER 7, 1961

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QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FAITH

PERTINENT ONES WERE ASKED at the first North American Ecumenical Youth Assembly. The story of this meeting attended by two thousand young Christians will be found on page three of this issue

- CHARLES P. TAFT ON UNITY -

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In Leading Churches

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7:30, Evening Prayer.

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Story of the Week

Ecumenical Assembly of Youth Raise Provocative Questions

By Betty Thompson

★ Christian unity on the North American continent may be strongly influenced in the years ahead by encounters which took place on a midwestern campus last month.

The two thousand young Christians at the first North American Ecumenical Youth Assembly which met at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, issued no message to the world nor the Churches to which they belong. The assembly made few headlines but it may make history.

"Entrusted with the message of reconciliation" was the theme for the week-long gathering. Never before had so many Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox young people from Canada and the United States been specially delegated to an ecumenical assembly.

The assembly held for the purpose of study and encounter was sponsored by the youth departments of the World Council of Churches and by the World Council of Christian Education, the Committee of Young People's work of the Canadian Council of Churches, and the United Christian Youth Movement affiliated with the National Council of Churches.

"By the end of the first day everybody was beginning to realize that an assembly dele-

gate should be like a wrist watch — moisture proof, shock resistant, and anti-dogmatic," the Rev. Wilbur K. Howard, United Church of Canada, Toronto, said in summing up the assembly on the final night.

For seven days the high school and college students from widely varying geographical and theological backgrounds gave and sustained a number of shocks. They were from 40 different religious groups. For some — notably the Orthodox — it was the first time they had met with Christian youth of other Churches.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this dialogue in mutual respect and love in Christ," the Russian Orthodox young people said toward the end of the assembly. "We deeply feel our own individual inadequacies in the knowledge of God (theology) that is necessary to understand the scriptural truths on which the message of reconciliation of this assembly was based. We pray that all participants will come better prepared to future meetings to enter more fully into this dialogue for an ever richer experience of ecumenical encounter."

Delegates were shocked as often by their lack of knowledge of their own traditions as they were by the strange liturgical practices and theological con-

victions of others. Greater confessional awareness grew along with more restlessness at the divided state of Christ's Church.

The young churchmen heard the Biblical theme of the assembly presented each morning by Canada's George Johnson, dean of the United Theological College, Montreal. The heart of the assembly was the Bible study and the large group was divided into 125 small ones each morning after the main theme presentation in the University's vast Hill Auditorium. Here delegates grappled with the meaning of the Bible for themselves and their world.

Johnson drew upon history and the contemporary scene. As the assembly reporter Wilbur Howard pointed out, the theologian "with dazzling dexterity skipped from creation to automation, from Israelites to satellites."

Among other things Johnson said: "We don't formally recognize one another across the lines of division. Power politics work in Christian congregations because there aren't enough saints. The lost dimension of Man is his separation from God."

Provocative Plays

Two plays specially commissioned by the assembly to raise provocative questions more than succeeded in that aim. Some delegates — and older leaders — questioned whether they should have been produced at all. The first was "Break Them in Pieces", a drama of four troubled and rootless people in

the contemporary world, written by 26-year-old Rhodes scholar Fred Myers.

Comments ranged from "garbage" to "great" . . . the poor man's "La Dolce Vita", "a shocking presentation of lostness in an existential setting." That was on Thursday night and on Sunday the assembly dared again — this time with a satirical musical review by Helen Kromer with music by Fred Silver.

The assembly delegates rose in wildly applauding acclamation at the end of "For Heaven's Sake". The next morning they backed up their enthusiasm with orders for 1000 copies of an original cast record of the musical so they could listen again to such lyrics as "Use me, O Lord . . . But NOT just now . . ."

As soon as I've reached retirement

As soon as they're getting ahead

As soon as I draw my pensions

As soon as I am dead!

Canon Edward H. Patey, who has been chairman of the first European Ecumenical Youth Assembly at Lausanne, Switzerland, last summer shared the young people's enthusiasm. He felt it was the most successful attempt yet made to restate in fresh contemporary idiom some fundamental things about the mission of the Churches in the contemporary world. The canon residentiary of Coventry Cathedral, Canon Patey hopes to bring the production directed by Robert Seaver of Union Theological Seminary to England in the near future.

Delegates had opportunity to listen and learn as much as they could absorb from such speakers as the World Council of Churches' president, Archbishop Iakovos of the Greek Archdiocese of North and South

America. He led a worship service in the Orthodox tradition one morning. That afternoon he spoke to a general session for those not attending the twelve denominational youth meetings which had their national planning sessions each afternoon.

In his speech the Orthodox primate affirmed that the World Council was not an attempt to create a "super-church" but a council through which diverse traditions could demonstrate their unity. The archbishop chatted informally with students afterward in the center of the campus by the assembly exhibit.

Questions Asked

The use of arts was evident throughout the assembly. Most conspicuous was the commissioning of the plays. But that was not all.

"Who am I?"

"Why am I here?"

"What does it mean to be entrusted?"

A startling outdoor exhibition by one of America's most talented younger photographers, Ed Wallowitch, caused comment from the assembly and Ann Arbor citizens. The photographs mounted on big display panels and scattered on blocks of varying size in the middle of the campus puzzled many.

Designed to help answer the question "How can I relate more meaningfully to myself and my fellow human beings?", the photographs pictured men, women, and children in attitudes of joy, despair, and work.

The presence of 110 students from Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia reminded the North Americans that theirs was not the only continent. But observers who had attended last summer's European Ecumenical Assembly felt that this assembly was much less conscious of its responsibility for recon-

ciliation with the rest of the world than the one at Lausanne.

Layman Gives Warning

U Kyaw Than, a Burmese Christian layman, was the speaker on the gospel at one of the big plenary sessions. He warned against equating western culture and Christianity.

"The gospel cannot be equated with any political system be it democracy, communism, or benevolent despotism. The gospel judges and questions democracy as it does communism," he asserted.

The Baptist layman, who is an executive of an interdenominational organization which includes churches from Pakistan to New Zealand, warned against identifying "our cause as God's cause" and attempting to "take care of God's cause for him."

"How can we talk about the ministry of reconciliation and the work of God to reconcile the whole world to Himself when we treat the Negro as being outside the realm of God's love?" he asked.

"We see millions of dollars devoted to the development of nuclear weapons while we see citizens in our own states live in squalor and inhuman slums," U Kyaw Than declared.

"Instead of seeing that these brethren are also objects of God's work of reconciliation we turn them into objects of our own mercy and charity."

The speaker stressed that the Gospel cannot be equated with the so called "Christian" Western Europe or North America. Asian travelers arriving in the West find conditions that make them wonder how these regions could ever be called Christian.

Observing that Christianity transcends any particular way of life or culture, the Burmese leader said:

"I don't suppose my Christian obedience implies I have to discard my culture and learn the music of Bach to praise God or

appeal to you for funds to build places of worship with Gothic architectural patterns to practice Christianity."

"The Gospel judges and questions every culture whether it is European or Asian, African or American. It can also regenerate and renew any culture," he said.

As the opening night speaker 23-year-old Jerry Fenton of Arlington, Virginia, put it, "as Christians we have exported the gospel all over the inhabited earth only to discover that in many ways the child is stronger than the parent and that the time has come when the Christians of Asia and Africa may have a lot more to tell us about the gospel than we have to tell them."

The denominational youth sessions were considered by some a threat to the real concern for unity of the conference. Some felt them dull and competitive compared to the main program. But others welcomed such opportunities as that afforded Methodists, Presbyterians, United Church of Christ members, and Episcopalians who met together to hear Eugene Carson Blake, U. S. Presbyterian leader, discuss his proposal for the merger of those four Churches with Dean John B. Coburn of the Episcopal Theological School.

Coburn pointed out that as far as the Episcopal Church is concerned, there will be serious questions raised about the uniting of the ministeries of the various Churches, the use of non-liturgical forms of worship with particular reference to the significance of Holy Communion, and the place of confessions of faith in the proposed Church.

"The spirit with which we approach this proposal is most important," Coburn told the delegates. "We must stay open to ways of strengthening the

Church. It may take a long time, but time is God's time, so it can come about."

Stringfellow Speaks

In the closing meeting, William Stringfellow told the young people that the secret of Christian unity "must be sought, and will only be found in the world."

Stringfellow, New York attorney and an Episcopal layman, told the delegates that, "If any man today would be a Christian and confront and bear the burden of the disorder of the Churches, he must live in this world where Christ lives."

He has practiced law in the East Harlem section of New York for the past five years. He has concentrated on helping the impoverished residents of one of New York's most overcrowded neighborhoods.

"The trouble with the North American Ecumenical Youth Assembly is that it is not ecumenical," Stringfellow charged.

"But if it has an ecumenical concern — if it cares for the wholeness of the Body of Christ — it must first confront and confess the fact that the dis-

unity of the Churches today has almost utterly immobilized both the service of the Churches to Christ and the mission of the Church in the world," he said.

Stringfellow asserted that "American Protestants have a lot of confessing to do. For more than a century and a half Protestantism nurtured a notion of autonomous and personal religiosity which incubated the stifling ethos in America in which Christians find themselves today," he charged.

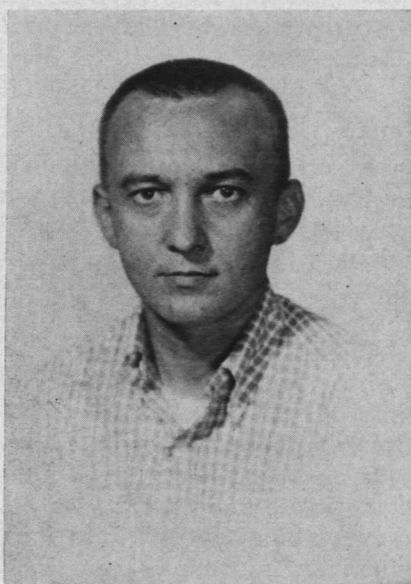
"From the radical individualism of American Protestantism came the doctrine that religion has only to do with religion, but not with life."

"The American idea of religion," Stringfellow said, "is openly hostile to the Biblical description of the Church as the Body of Christ living in the midst of the world on behalf of the world. The Biblical image of the Church is never one of an innocuous, isolationist religious society cut off from the actual affairs of men in the world."

Stringfellow described the assembly as a place where the real differences existing among American Protestants have been brought to the fore, while at the same time reflecting the spirit of American religious life.

"The Gospel is treated here with as much embarrassment and caution as it is in most congregations," he said. "The secret of unity is that the world of God is present already in the ordinary, transient, everyday, besetting, profane, heroic, wretched, baffling, frivolous affairs of men in the world. The reconciliation of God and the world in Jesus Christ means that in Christ there is the radical and integral relationship of all men and of all things."

"The Church — the one great Church for which the Churches pray as the Body of Christ in the world has, shares, mani-



WILLIAM STRINGFELLOW: — tells the young people what the Church must do to be ecumenical

feasts, and represents that same radical integrity."

"The reconciliation of the World with God in Jesus Christ establishes a Christian man in unity with both God and the whole world," Stringfellow concluded.

The most painful moment in the assembly came at worship time on Sunday morning when it was brought home to delegates that they were not united at the table of the Lord. According to plans made beforehand the delegates were to go to churches of their choice in Ann Arbor. There was no common service of worship and Holy Communion on that morning because of the differing doctrines regarding the sacrament.

Sermon in Hollywood Night Club Explained by Malcolm Boyd

★ The Rev. Malcolm Boyd, visiting his mother in Hollywood before starting his new job as Episcopal chaplain at Wayne University, put in an appearance at P. J.'s, night club of that city.

He asked permission to speak to the customers. The jazz band was stopped and the throng, including a number of Hollywood notables, listened for twenty minutes in unaccustomed silence, as Boyd preached about religion, sex, love and the movies.

When it was over there was brief silence — then applause. "I still didn't know how the patrons would take it," Boyd told a reporter afterwards, "but there was no heckling. It was so quiet you could hear a pin drop."

As he finished his talk a group gathered around him. Someone invited him to join a crowd at a table.

The Baptists, Disciples, and Church of the Brethren had a joint communion service and the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor invited all assembly participants who were able to do so to join in communion there. Some participants felt the assembly was trying to force the issue of intercommunion. Others simply could not understand the age-old barriers at the table of the Lord and reproached the assembly for not planning a communion service within its framework.

U Kyaw Than said "We cannot break the bread together, we cannot drink the cup of fellowship. We renew the scars on his body and tear asunder his image."

"Chaplain," asked one nightclubber, "what's your definition of God?"

"Well," said Boyd, "it isn't easy to define. You see, God is spirit, and . . ."

It was the first of a dozen conversations which lasted until closing time.

Visit Praised

The Los Angeles Herald-Express, on the day after the visit to the nightclub, wrote in an editorial: "Somehow, and very seriously, there's nothing amiss about the report that a sincere Episcopalian priest preached for 20 minutes in one of our gayer night clubs. You can't argue that night club patrons don't stand in need of grace, like anybody else. And it comes to mind that Saul of Tarsus wasn't above taking the word to men wherever he found them, nor did Saul's mentor and Master find it odd."

The nightclub took an adver-

tisement in Variety which read: "With great humility, P.J.'s thanks the Rev. Malcolm Boyd for his inspirational visit."

The Hollywood Citizen-News said, in a lead editorial; "The incident reminds us that Jesus was criticized for consorting with 'publicans and sinners.' It seems to us that people who might not go to church or other places where formal religious services are held are probably in need of such an inspirational message as a clergyman might have for them. Religion involves an uplifting of the spirit. There is no reason to reserve it entirely for those who attend church services."

Reasons For Visit

Asked by The Witness to elaborate on his reasons for his night club sermon, Boyd replied:

● The Church cannot wait for people to come to it; its vocation is to go out to people where they are, and to learn to speak their language and share their concerns. This does not mean a "preaching to" but rather a "being with."

● I believe that the Church's primary task, after offering worship to God, is to love men — not only their souls but their whole beings — and to express this love unmistakably clearly so that men will know that they are loved by the Church because the Church knows better than anyone else that man has been created in the image of God.

● I consider that the Gospel is revolutionary and radical, never at peace with mere conformity or the status quo, always trying to transform both individual lives and the life of the whole culture.

● There are too many overlapping monologues in the place of valid dialogue. Dialogue requires a listening to someone before one speaks to him. In a

(Continued on Page Fourteen)

GENERAL CONVENTION AND UNITY



By Charles P. Taft

Deputy to General Convention from Southern Ohio

WHEN EUGENE BLAKE preached his famous sermon in San Francisco Cathedral last December I did not hear it because I was engaged in trying to prevent what seemed to me a seriously divisive form of message, attacking the slowness of approaches to unity, from reaching the floor of the Assembly of the National Council of Churches. This is perhaps typical of the problem of greater Christian unity. We want it faster or slower than someone else and our opinion of some other who doesn't agree with us is difficult to contain within the bounds of Christian charity toward our neighbor's foibles. That one might be wrong and the other person right seems hardly conceivable.

This is often the human perversity in each of us, which to me is closer to original sin than all of St. Paul's lexicon of bodily lust.

This is also the reason why I am very doubtful, frankly, about organic union of the twenty-one families of denominations which we know in the United States, to say nothing of their opposite numbers around the world.

But that does not put me in the class of a denominationalist. I support vigorously the Life and Work movement whose principles of getting together by working together are represented in the National and World Councils of Churches. I support especially the Faith and Order move-

ment, in which origin two great bishops and one devoted layman of our Church played such a part. I know less of the International Missionary Council, but I rejoice in its merger into the World Council with the other two.

The Faith and Order Commission produced last summer at St. Andrews a new formulation to answer fully for the first time the question, What unity are we seeking? This appealed instantly to me and to many laymen who have not been too happy with the concept of one big Church.

Let me explain first my feelings as a practical political scientist and politician about big organization.

Our democratic inheritance grows out of the small independent religious congregations who burst into political life in the Puritan Revolution. As the unit gets bigger, the participation in discussion and in the seeking of God's will for the group becomes more and more difficult. When you reach nine million in a state like Ohio, and 180 million in the United States, the task is formidable indeed.

Even though we have succeeded to an astounding degree by the device of a representative democracy, we cannot afford to neglect the essential sense of participation of the individual citizen to a substantial degree.

Differing Traditions

TO EXTEND THIS SYSTEM to a parliament of man which actually legislates and governs seems to me out of the question, when it involves people of totally different cultures and background and philosophy. The British Commonwealth is surprisingly successful, but it is definitely not a Federation in any true sense. It works because of its paradoxes. The United Nations is an essential forum, which we would have to create if there were not one. But it is not a Federation either.

Applying this general philosophy to the Churches, we have a common Lord and Bible, but we also have widely differing traditions. I do not want one big Church either in the United States or around the world, and I doubt if many laymen in the pews want it either.

But they do want to move into the Church that attracts them, without being told that the one from which they came is second-class or lacking some thing to make them Christian. Our Communion accepts other Baptisms, as do the Roman Catholics. Why not memberships? and free communion?

This is the goal laid out by the Faith and Order Commission. It may be no easier to achieve than organic unity, but it is what I am sure most Christians want, and I doubt if many laymen who have thought it out, really want one big organization.

What Faith and Order said at St. Andrews in 1960 was as follows:

"The Commission on Faith and Order understands that the unity which is both God's will and His gift to His Church is one which brings all in each place who confess Christ Jesus as Lord into a fully committed fellowship with one another through one baptism into Him, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel and breaking the one bread, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all; and which at the same time unites them with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are acknowledged by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls the Church."

There was some discussion of this by the Central Committee after Professor d'Espine pre-

sented it. In particular he pointed out that "in each place" was purposely a broad term. It could mean all in a big neighborhood, or a city, or a region. It is what the constituents can agree on.

In Cincinnati a group of us from six denominations covered by the Blake-Pike proposals, are meeting to work up a discussion manual for groups in a community to discuss the proposals, and the St. Andrews statement. We have to go to our denominational headquarters for information and advice in many cases which, in a sense, makes "in each place" mean the United States, but we are thinking of greater unity in Cincinnati as our particular objective.

Witness and Service

THE MAIN POINTS in the St. Andrews statement are the common confession and apostolic faith, one baptism, and breaking one bread. From these come witness and service to all and a uniting in a corporate life with the whole Christian fellowship in all ages and in all places. It results in acknowledgment of ministry and members, and on occasion, as God calls for it, a common voice.

The point for me is that it does not require organic unity; but it is still the satisfying unity that can comprehend those who prefer the simple Baptist service and those who prefer the High Church or Orthodox liturgy.

I am not being a Pollyanna about this; I repeat that this is not much easier to achieve, for it raises all the questions of continuity and orders that plague our Anglican discussions with the others. But it is an objective that I want to achieve, and organic unity is not.

In our own communion there are bishops who lean over backwards to help find for a parish of differing churchmanship, a rector whose churchmanship is of the best quality that belongs with the churchmanship of the parish.

But there are others who try to force their views on the minority parish, and often as a result drive the parish dissenters out of the parish or even out of the Church.

If that can happen in a Church with as broad a range of views as we contain in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA, how much more could it happen in a bigger combination of differing traditions.

It has not happened in South India where Christians are a minority driven together by that

very fact. But power tends to corrupt and I don't care to give it a chance.

The Blake-Pike proposals do not require organic unity, and Doctor Blake specifically referred to and quoted the St. Andrews Faith and Order statement. So I approve most heartily of having the General Convention vote to join the Presbyterians in inviting the other denominations to confer.

The conference must tackle the points covered in the St. Andrews statement as well as those fully comprehended in Doctor Blake's analysis of the points essential to the Catholic tradition, and those essential to the Reformed. I am not sure that Doctor Blake has taken fully into account the problems involved for the congregational type Churches, both in the visible continuity, and in the credal requirements. These come to the front particularly if the Disciples of Christ are added to the discussion. They should be because of the fact that the new United Church is already committed to discussing merger with them.

But all I ask is that this viewpoint of unity without one organic polity be kept in the forefront of these talks. The favorable vote at General Convention will on that basis be given with real enthusiasm by the lay deputies.

Talking It Over

By W. B. Spofford Sr.

DETROIT IS IN THE NEWS but all of it is not about General Convention. There has been an Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM) in Washington for a long time. It was referred to by a lot of Congressmen as "a billion-dollar boondoggle" which provided soft political-pay-off jobs.

Then President Kennedy, in his speech to the nation on July 25, said; "In the event of an attack, the lives of those families which are not hit in a nuclear blast and fire can still be saved — if they can be warned to take shelter and if that shelter is available."

Studies made by OCDM state that anywhere from 80 to 50 percent of the population of the U.S. would be killed in a nuclear war. So now Congress has voted \$294-million to build holes for us to crawl into and to locate and mark existing buildings that perhaps will protect those who

get to them from blast and fallout. Congress is now considering another \$73-million to stock these holes with food and medicine and another \$47-million to move 126 million bushels of surplus wheat close to 191 metropolitan areas which are considered prime nuclear targets.

This new civil defense program is a reversal of plans developed under the Eisenhower administration. The old idea was for people in cities — over 25 million of them in the tri-state New York area for example — to clear out for points north on trains, buses, trucks, private cars.

Now instead of city people rushing to the country, country and suburban people are to head for the city and look for a big building with a sign that says if you can get far enough under ground you may live.

Which brings us back to Detroit since Mrs. Martha W. Griffiths, Congresswoman from that city, told the committee now holding hearings on the new program, that the district she represents did not have a single building adequate for shelter; that her people are 8 to 15 miles from downtown, "and I doubt if you could get those people back down into a shelter, or if anybody in his right mind at the head of the line would be willing to try for the interior of Detroit."

To make for shelter in the central city, if it was still there, would be to gamble that Detroit itself would not be hit next.

Anyhow you can credit Robert S. McNamara, secretary for defense, for the statement that "The heart of the President's program is the identification, marking and stocking of available community shelter space in existing buildings throughout the United States."

Newsman I. F. Stone, who has been attending the hearings, writes that it is "like watching a lunatic nightmare" and says that "the casualties of the immensity involved point not to a shelter program but to the criminal insanity of not doing everything humanly possible to avoid a thermonuclear war."

Incidentally those allowed to testify at the hearings are all pro-shelter officials of various administration agencies. Governor Meyer of New Jersey and Senator Young of Ohio, who believe civil defense a delusion in the nuclear age, are not given a chance to testify.

SO TO DETROIT and General Convention. We have brought that announcement on page 16 up to date as far as we can at the moment. Mrs.

Richard Loring of Massachusetts will do an article on the part women play in convention; the Rev. Charles D. Kean, rector of the Epiphany, Washington, will write about the visit to auto plants — if it comes off, which is likely; John H. Leach of St. Louis will write on what the convention does about the Church in the Inner City, and the Rev. Walter H. Stowe, rector of Christ Church, New Brunswick, N. J. and historiographer of the Church, will sum things up with

an article on “Was the 1961 General Convention Historic?”

There will be no issue dated September 14. We will return to an every week schedule with the issue dated September 21 which will feature the sermon at the opening service by Presiding Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger. Numbers through October will be devoted largely to news and articles about General Convention.

We hope you will send in that couple on page 16 right away. Thanks.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE ATOMIC AGE

By Albert H. Olson

Rector of All Souls, Berkeley, California

**WE ARE PLEASED FOR THE BLESSINGS
GOD HAS GIVEN THIS NATION. BUT WE
MUST NEVER FORGET THAT BEING
UNDER GOD MEANS JUDGEMENT ALSO**

BY THE END OF THIS YEAR nearly one million persons will have become new members of Christian churches in the United States, thus bringing the total national membership to a new unprecedented high of one hundred six million people. To put it another way, by the end of 1961 out of every one hundred persons, sixty will be counted as members of Christian bodies. Thus statistically speaking our nation is rapidly becoming a Christian nation; and statistically speaking this atomic age of ours is not only an age of fear, it is an age of faith — or at least so it appears.

Yet despite favorable statistics our crime rate is increasing rapidly, homicides and suicides continually mount upwards, divorce is on the increase, mental illness continues to rise, and there is no let up of degrading literature and entertainment. One would conclude that with the increase of belief there logically would follow a corresponding decrease of sin and evil. I remind you also that churches continue to struggle with inadequate budgets, scrimping and pinching, at a time when our nation never has seen such prosperity and so great a religious membership.

Money spent on liquor and cosmetics far exceeds the total expenditure of all the religious bodies in our country! What is wrong? Has religion lost its power to overcome evil with good? And what has happened to the faith that afforded Christians power to oppose wickedness and denounce despots, that enabled them to heroically suffer privation rather than renounce their Lord or to give their lives in witness to their God?

I would like to explore some of these disturbing problems with you as we examine the Christian faith and the atomic age.

Superficial

FIRST OF ALL consider how much of contemporary atomic age religion is superficial and escapist in character and is therefore not representative of revealed religion at its best.

I am afraid the warning of our Lord stands between a fully committed belief and those who are as yet merely statistical Christians: “Not every one who saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Those million people who will become members of churches this

year, what are their reasons for desiring to be religious?

The motives are many. Some people join a church because it is the popular thing to do — they want to get on the band wagon. Others are pleased to have a religious body confirm and bless their own private prejudices and are willing to shop around until they find a church that will do just that. Again, some people are hungry for friendship and look to a church as a source for their social life. Again, there are those who inadvertently are seeking for some kind of spiritual sedative that will lull them into a security in the face of threatened disaster or unresolved fear.

Others again turn to religion for a variety of motives they may be unable to verbalize: perhaps someone possesses a strong sense of social concern and looks to a church as an avenue for such expression; or there are personal problems of morals; or someone tries religion as a last desperate attempt to save a breaking marriage. There are always those who possess a vague dissatisfaction with the so-called "salt mine" beginning at nine and ending at five, and we must not neglect those who have a feeling that religion will solve their problem of the meaninglessness of life.

Statistical Christians

THE MOTIVES ARE MANY and they may be either good or bad. I condemn neither the persons nor their motives because God can take the most self-centered and ulterior motives and by his divine purpose transform them so that the end products become hardly recognizable. The difficulty is rather with the casual manner our statistical Christians regard religious belief. They look upon their church membership as a kind of talisman that will protect them from evil and provides automatic solutions to personal problems or personal needs without any genuine commitment on their part. Religious belief is not that simple.

But let me ask you: is this problem new and unique with atomic age religion? Not at all. St. Paul wrestled with the same difficulty among statistical members of the Corinthian congregation and he cited for them a similar historical example dating back to Moses. You can read St. Paul's stirring admonition in the Epistle for the ninth Sunday after Trinity, and I quote him only in part here. By way of comment, the "cloud"

mentioned in the text was a symbol of divine presence. Today however, the "cloud" and the phrase, "Upon whom the end of the ages have come," take on a different, though very real and terrifying meaning in the light of current events.

"I should like to remind you," wrote St. Paul, "that our ancestors all had the experience of being guided by the cloud in the desert . . . and were all, so to speak, 'baptized' into Moses by these experiences. They all shared the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink . . . Yet in spite of all these wonderful experiences many of them failed to please God, and left their bones in the desert . . . Now these events . . . stand as examples . . . warning us not to worship false god . . . Nor should we dare to exploit the goodness of God as some of them did . . . Nor yet . . . curse the lot that God has appointed you . . . All this was put on record by way of admonition to us upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (J. B. Phillips and Weymouth trans.)

This text is cited for the purpose of aiding some statistical Christian to find his way to a whole-hearted commitment to God, to God's Church, and to God's infinite purpose. Of course it is a simple matter for someone to confuse the meaning and come up with something like this: "You professionals! How you delight in lifting high the demands of religion — way beyond our approximation of it. Look, the people of Paul's day or of Moses' day were no different than ourselves. You forget that we are human; must we be so different in the atomic age?"

I have already anticipated such an excuse because I too am human. But there is a rebuttal. In St. Paul's age and in Moses' age there were others, remember that! Yes, others — whose commitment to the God of Moses brought them over the Jordan River and others whose unshakable faith in Christ brought stability to that worldly church at Corinth. And today in the churches of this atomic age there are others — whose faith reaches beyond the limitations of escape to a place where they have discovered the true meaning of religious confidence and security.

Atomic Age Religion

CONSIDER SECONDLY, that as much as we would like to see the conquest of the faith in the lives of men and nations, it is necessary that the Church continually be on guard lest that faith be compromised to make it easy or victimized by the forces of the new age to make it false.

American Christianity has itself to blame if there are so many statistical Christians, and I do not excuse myself. There is always the temptation to offer spiritual wayfarers an atomic age religion that is out of contact with the Judeo-Christian epic. There is a vast difference between the circumstances under which the Church originated and the circumstances in which religion flourishes in our beloved America today. Throughout the rugged history of revealed religion the people of God learned only that a "remnant" would be able to pay the price of faith. In our Lord's own day it seemed simple and easy to be a disciple of the Nazarene and the Gospels bear witness that "multitudes followed him about." At the height of his popularity — lest those disciples be lulled into a false understanding of discipleship — Jesus astonished them with what the Gospels call the "hard sayings". It was after that moment we read: "Many disciples went back, and walked with him no more."

The same situation obtains today. There are many statistical Christians who know very little about the origin and continuing intent of discipleship. To be sure, they are quite willing to give assent to a bread and butter religion, but they do not realize that the full circle of faith includes blood and death. A bread and butter religion for example, offers the suggestion that God blesses nations that are good, and since America is prosperous it follows that America is good. Therefore: if you want to be prosperous you should become a church member (the popular equivalent of being good) and thus be in line for divine beneficences.

Another aspect of bread and butter religion puts honey on the bread, so to speak. A person must always think good and pleasant thoughts and never give one moment to the prospects of repentance and restitution, death and judgment, change of heart or the willingness to live a life of risk and daring. Ah, yes, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord . . ."

Only too often American Christianity has offered bread and butter when it should have concerned itself with blood and death. These are not alternatives but rather significant religious realities. We are pleased indeed, to live in a country where the pledge to its flag contains the phrase "under God" — "one nation under God." And we are pleased also for the blessings God has brought to this fair land. But we must never forget that "under God" means judgment as well as blessing.

The Big Events

BLOOD AND DEATH are significant religious realities because history has written a dreary negative over attempts to employ religion as a soft cushion against disaster or as a gimmick to assure success. Our atomic age does not in the least change the basic human situation; if anything, it merely accentuates it. Birth, life, and death still remain the big events from which no one is exempted. Yes — and love and hate still continue to be the contestants for the hearts of men. Despair and hope remain our chief alternatives. What the atomic age has done is to engrave more deeply the contrasts and the realities of existence.

Insofar as death is concerned, while science or religious healing have forestalled that final and salutary reality by five or ten years, there never was a time when death did not lurk a single breath behind every breath drawn. In this atomic age despair threatens to win the day while hope struggles to vindicate itself and stay alive. This is the age in which we live and the mission of the Church is to guard her members against the disillusionment of an easy way out.

In the third place, let me propose two vital facts about Christ's religion that offer security and confidence to daring Christian believers of this atomic generation.

The first vital fact is this: it is the living God with whom we have to deal. We can put our confidence in him because we know he is at work in the human scene. We have seen him active and supremely involved in the most significant of all crises — the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "And he has not left himself without a witness" because his Church survives. If we recognize this God for what he is—the Maker, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the universe — then nothing, absolutely nothing, can finally destroy his purposes.

To paraphrase St. Paul: "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation which includes atomic explosions, race riots, the brink of war, organization men, the fall of nations, and the melting of the earth." In this kind of assurance — "warning us not to worship false gods" — Christian believers of this atomic generation can find security.

THE SECOND VITAL TRUTH is like unto it: our heroic religious heritage assures us that at

its deepest level we cannot use such a lofty assurance to buy any kind of cheap security. While we know that "God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble" he will not allow his children to flee to him in order to avoid dangers or responsibilities. The Christian faith is a call to arms! A stern demand that believers take up whatever burdens God has placed upon them — "Nor yet curse the lot that God has appointed you" — and carry them! This is the faith that issues in courage.

Suppose you were in possession of such divine assurance and of such courageous confidence; what could that faith do for you? It would give you the strength to risk failure because you know God can take your failure and use it for ends beyond your finite little world. Such a courageous faith would give you strength to live in devotion to those apparently weak qualities as justice, compassion, brotherhood, and sacrifice because you are assured that no matter how unlikely or impractical they appear today, God employs these very values in the fulfillment of his purpose.

The Christian who is serious about his faith will discover one inescapable conclusion; there are no automatic gains in a return to religion unless such return is accomplished within the content of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

At this moment in history when the "cloud" and the phrase "upon whom the ends of ages have come" take on new and trenchant meaning, we cannot allow the Gospel of the living Christ to degenerate into an American cultural occupation for Sunday mornings.

- POINTERS For PARSONS -

By Robert Miller

WE CERTAINLY HAD MANY DISCUSSIONS about unity at our deanery meetings, and one of them was caused by Tompkins' saying, "The trouble is with the bishops. What are we going to do about bishops?"

"There is nothing to be done about bishops," said Fr. Buffers. "We never lost our bishops. It is the people who did that ought to do something."

"You mean the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists?" I asked.

"Them, and everybody who hasn't got bishops."

"Oh, I don't think you can narrow things down until it is only a question of bishops," demurred Gilbert Simeon. "If we are going to explore the possibilities of forming a united Church we must try and understand how a Presbyterian or a Congregationalist feels about them. A Presbyterian would feel that even though a bishop might be regarded as a sort of permanent moderator he would, in actuality, be much more than that. A Congregationalist would feel that no matter how circumscribed a bishop might be he would none the less mean the end of Congregationalism. We should remember that when we talk about union we are concerned with historic communions, and that it is a generous gesture on their part if they even consider the episcopate as a means to a generally recognized unity."

"Yes, yes," said Fr. Timmons. "I cannot for a moment expect the members of a non-episcopal Church to think just as I do about holy orders. It would be out of the question. But since I feel that it is Christ's will that we should all be one, I cannot be happy about what we call 'our divisions.' Not to be able to join with all who love the Lord distresses me. I do not greatly want to be an Episcopalian. I want simply to be one who loves his Lord. Oh these dreadful names! I think they keep us apart."

"I have a Baptist friend," I remarked, "and if you mention union to him he promptly says he doesn't want 'one big Church.'"

"I too have met that fear," said the Dean. "I've heard, we've all heard, the phrase 'our happy divisions.' If the people who use that term merely mean they don't want a vast, soulless, monolithic Church I would not quarrel with them, but I do not think that a Church like that would live. Look at the rich diversity of gifts of which St. Paul speaks."

"But surely," said Buffers. "We must insist on the faith that is once delivered to the saints."

This led to a question of what faith was, of whether there was a fixed body of faith existing from the beginning or whether there had been development; if so, was the development legitimate. And what was the source of authority? Was it scripture alone? Was scripture to be equated with the books of the Bible or could it have a wider reference? Could it include the writings of the Fathers? What was the place and content of tradition?

We were lucky in having Dr. Saunders with us for he was a distinguished theologian and historian. I think Fr. Buffers was rather taken

aback by the number and complexity of the questions that were involved. I was used to the way the man in the street swept away all difficulties by saying that we were all going to the same place and I felt that Fr. Buffers would think it was enough for everybody to turn to the Book of Common Prayer (except, of course, his bete noir, Tompkins.)

I thought that if we ever took any steps towards union it would only be due to the working of the Holy Spirit on our stubborn hearts.

Don Large

Don't Get Panicky

PANIC IS MORE POWERFUL than an arsenal of armaments. The arsenal implies the threat of indiscriminate destruction; but panic translates that threat into action. Furthermore, the armaments don't pretend to be anything other than what they actually are. But the spirit which induces panic always hides behind the mask of defending an ideal.

The wholesale hysteria which swept Europe during the hypnotic days of the Crusades was embodied in an alleged zeal to recapture the Holy Land and to exterminate the infidel. And that neurosis which was named the Spanish Inquisition hid behind the compulsion to wipe out every heretic on every front, for the closed mind was the order of the day.

And what of the infamous Salem witchcraft frenzies which maddened a whole colony of people? Our Puritan fathers stoutly declared that they drowned the witches and burned them at the stake for the sole purpose of exorcising the devil. But who doubts that their panic was anything but tortured guilt masquerading as righteous indignation?

The Nazi fascists of world war two created such panic concerning the need for Aryan superiority, that 6,000,000 Jews were consigned to the gas chambers. Adolph Hitler was the god of genocide, and Adolph Eichmann was his prophet. The Feuhrer was hiding the sickness of his soul behind the mask of racial purity. His lie had been daringly big enough, and he told it often enough — and the panic was on!

Extremes in either direction are always dangerous, and extremists themselves are always

emotionally ill. And their very irrationality is their most effective weapon. For that which defies cool reason can easily lead to hot terror. The enormity of the liar's fabrication is cleverly designed to benumb the brain and to paralyze the spirit. And to the degree that he succeeds in his diabolical plan, his hearers become increasingly panicky, and so is the stage set for an ultimate holocaust.

It is therefore no more reprehensible for the leader of the John Birch Society to insist that General Eisenhower is a Communist, and that President Kennedy is only somewhat less under Communist influence — and that 7,000 Protestant ministers are Communist sympathizers. The hate-monger is still sick unto death, irrespective of whether his fulminations issue from the east wing of Bedlam or from the west wing.

Whether the soul-sick psychoneurotic is playing power politics or just seeking to line his own wallet, let's remember that his sole job in this field is to promote the panicky state of mind. He lives by fanning the flames of religious, racial, or class differences.

Now when, by the power of the living Lord within us and around us, we firmly face this paranoid personality — and extend to him the offer of the healing hand, even as we refuse to believe his gobbledegook — we shall be quietly disarming him and thus robbing him of his power to panic us. And when we refuse to be irrationally frightened by the man who may be able to hurt the body but can never damn the soul, we shall have won the day in Christ's name.

So there it is. We may look like scattered sheep, huddled and trembling in little flocks on windy hills. But the day will yet come when we shall be living together in the town for which we were created — the wonderful City of God!

SO YOU'RE CALLING A RECTOR!

By Robert Nelson Back

Bishops will want a supply on hand to send to vestries about to call a rector. Others will find it a most valuable leaflet, whether or not their parish faces the task of finding a new rector.

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The Witness — Tunkhannock, Pa.

NIGHT CLUB SERMON

(Continued from Page Six)

tavern, in a bar, I listen: I learn much about the needs of men so that I may better try to speak to men in terms of their sufferings, their loneliness, their needs of all kinds.

● The Church is not a dispenser of spiritual tranquilizers or a dollhouse religious institution with starched lace curtains. It is concerned with every part of men's lives — as, for example, that part of their lives spent in bars.

● I believe that a new concept of evangelism is developing and is drastically needed. This new evangelism must be understated; why is it deemed necessary, for example, to shout when one is speaking about God? It must be unselfrighteous in its whole manner. Too, it must be devoid (when it is directed to the "out" group, one group estranged from Christianity) of the use of traditional words and symbols which are now simply barriers to communication until they are translated into the idiom. In the Hollywood night club, I avoided all traditional Christian terminology, relating the faith to the theatre and cinema (the "point of contact" interest of most of the persons present) and speaking about Christ in the idiom of the people present.

● We must not dissociate ourselves from the world's concerns. Our vocation is to be in it but not of it. It is not the world's vocation to bridge the savage gulf existing between the Church and the world; it is the Church's vocation to do this. Present suffering in the world is not so much material — certainly within our own culture — but a need growing out of loneliness, emptiness, loss, a breakdown of communication marked by psychological foxholes.

● I related my "sermon" in the night club to the "out" group of persons by inviting the people there — if they wished to come — to visit the following Sunday at St. Thomas Church in Hollywood, where I would be preaching both at 9:15 and 11 a.m. as the guest of the rector, the Rev. William Key. I believe it is always necessary to try to

relate back to the life of the Church itself our experiments in evangelism.

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CONVENTION

General Convention opens in Detroit September 17 and continues through the 29th. Complete coverage will be given by THE WITNESS through the reports of

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Rector of St. John's, Tallahassee, Florida

(accompanied by the Rev. & Mrs. Samuel Entwistle)

BURKE RIVERS

Rector of St. Stephen's, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

WILLIAM B. SPERRY

Rector of Christ Church, Detroit

WILLIAM B. SPOFFORD

Managing Editor

FEATURE ARTICLES

The issue of September 21 will carry the sermon preached at the opening service by Presiding Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger and an article on what Convention should do about Seminaries by the Rev. E. Felix Kroman, rector of St. Alban's Washington.

Other feature articles will appear in the Sept. 28 and October 5, 12, 19, 26 numbers as follows: Convention and the Church in the Inner City by John H. Leach, layman of St. Louis; The Part of Women at Convention by Mrs. Richard T. Loring of Mass.; Visit to Auto Plants by Charles D. Kean, rector of the Epiphany, Washington; Minority Groups at Convention by John M. Burgess, archdeacon of Mass.; Human Affairs at Convention by Robert P. Varley, rector of Salisbury Parish, Maryland; James W. Kennedy, rector of the Ascension, New York, Ecumenical Relations at Convention; Was the 1961 General Convention Historic by Walter H. Stowe, rector of Christ Church, New Brunswick, N. J. and Historiographer of the Church.

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VESTRYMEN RESIGN TO OPEN DOORS

★ The twelve year long contest for control of the leadership and the properties of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, was concluded August 24th when general releases were exchanged between all the parties concerned.

The announcement of the termination of all litigation was made by Cameron Beadle, co-chairman of the parishioners' committee for Holy Trinity that conducted the campaign to keep control of the parish and retain the ministry of the Rev. William Howard Melish.

Three vestrymen who supported Melish tendered their resignations in a move designed to speed the re-opening of the historic 114 year old church. The three vestrymen are Mr. E. DeWitt Ramel, clerk; Dr. Phillips Brooks and Mr. John H. Burke.

Speaking in the name of the three resigning officials and also for the parishioners' committee of which he is co-chairman, Mr. Beadle said: "It has always been our central intention to ensure the perpetuation of Holy Trinity as a place of worship. The doors of the church were closed three years ago by order of a rector instituted by the bishop and acting upon his advice. It has become clear that the church will not again be opened for regular services of public worship until every appearance of possible contention has been removed. To eliminate what seems to the

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diocesan authorities to be the final obstacle, with our full consent, these three men have resigned."

After long court actions the highest court in the state decided against the Melish supporters and the properties, including a large endowment, were transferred to the diocese.

It is expected now that the Rev. John Howard Melish, now 86 and who was ousted as rector by Bishop DeWolfe in 1949, will continue to live in the rectory and that a supplemental pension paid by the parish will be restored by the diocese.

The Rev. William Melish, canonically a priest of Long Island, is presently the eastern representative of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, an interracial group seeking integration. He issued a statement on behalf of both his father and himself saying that "If what our friends have now done contributes to the preservation of this lovely edifice and its use once again for religious purposes, we shall be content."

Bishop DeWolfe, according to Religious News Service, was unavailable for comment on whether the church will be reopened.

ARMAMENT TAX HIT BY CANON

★ Canon Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, has taken a crack at the British government for proposing to increase taxes to pay for a stepped up armament program.

Referring to the Berlin crisis, he said; "The grotesque results of our policy of nuclear war brinkmanship becomes every day more alarming. Both East and West talk as if there could be victory in a war over Berlin, a war which if it starts can end in nothing but mutual suicide."

(If we had wanted to be funny we would have made the heading "Hit by Cannon" but

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we try to make as few mistakes as possible in spelling, proof-reading etc. Like Governor "Meyer" on page nine which we knew should be "Meyner" after that part of the paper was printed.)

OVERSEAS WORKERS VISIT PARISHES

★ American Episcopalians will meet more overseas workers of the Church than ever before in the weeks before and after General Convention at Detroit.

Visiting clergy and laymen from overseas, here for the Convention, will be dispatched all across this country to as many parishes as possible in almost every diocese. The ambitious program of arrangements is being coordinated by the overseas department and the speakers division of National Council.

Besides speaking at regular services, the visitors will attend

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various parish events and many will go on parish calls with their host rectors.

CATHEDRAL CROSS HAS SECULAR SYMBOLS

★ The newly decorated chapel of Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, has a cross bearing such symbols as the insignia of a brewery and the St. Louis Cardinals. Stan Musial is named in the baseball panel.

According to Dean Ned Cole, the symbols depict a Christian family in a setting of familiar St. Louis vocations. In addition to the beer and baseball symbols, panels of the cross represent the fur trade, shoes, the historic courthouse, mastheads from the two St. Louis newspapers, and ticket stubs from the municipal opera.

Many visitors have praised the realism of the symbols, while others have been critical.

BISHOP BARTH DIES

★ Bishop Barth of Tennessee died of cancer on August 22 after a year of illness. He remained active in his work however until a month before his death.

He is succeeded by Bishop John Vander Horst who was elevated from suffragan to coadjutor in April of this year.

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PARTRIACH WILL NOT VISIT POPE

★ Patriarch Athenagoras of Istanbul has stated that he had been ready to visit Pope John at the Vatican, but only if a return visit of the Pope to Istanbul was assured. However he stated that there had been "no response" from the Vatican and hence "the subject of the Ecumenical Patriarch's visit to Rome must now be considered as non-existent."

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EP 5:15; Mon. - Thurs. MP 7:45, HC 8
& Thurs. 5:30; Fri. MP 8:45, HC 9; Sat.
MP 9:15, HC 9:30; EP Daily 5:15; C
Sat. 4-5, 6:30-7:30 & by appt.

- NEW BOOKS -

Kenneth R. Forbes

Book Editor

Struggle for Freedom by Lewis B. Whittemore. Seabury Press. \$5.50

This is an important book, published at the time when it is much needed by the Episcopal Church. It is concerned with the "Philippine Independent Church" and its timeliness is the fact that General Convention will be acting on the "Concordat" by which the two Churches' relations will be governed. It is based upon the "Bonn Agreement" between the Anglican Communion and the Old Catholic Church and is not in any way a step toward a merger of the two bodies.

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about the Philippine Independent Church or the nature of the Philippine's religious and cultural history, but they can find in this book by Bishop Whittemore an illuminating account of it all, which begins with the days before Spain took the Philippines, continues with a study of the long period of the Spanish Friars religious and political rule, the inevitable revolution against both political and religious masters—which was long and bloody and produced native leaders several of whom became martyrs.

The coming of the United States to the islands in 1898 was, of course one of the turning points in the fight for freedom and independence. Philippine leaders wanted independence of America as well as from Spain—Admiral Dewey had promised it—but the settlement at the end of the Spanish-American war refused it and bitter fighting lasted two years.

The final section of Bishop Whittemore's book deals quite fully and fairly with the Friars and their extensive and valuable lands, the new policies of the Roman Catholic Church and the growth and influence of the Independent Church.

The whole book is admirably clear, well written and reflects the fact that its author is an authority on the subject. All the facts he knows so intimately that he can wax eloquent. One may hope that the Deputies to this year's General Convention can read it before taking their seats in Detroit.

The Interpretation of Scripture by
James D. Smart, Westminster,
\$6.00

This is a magnificent survey, from one point of view, of the whole development of modern biblical theology, chiefly as it concerns the Old Testament. The author is professor in Union Theological Seminary, and comes from years of study of the Bible and its practical interpretation in religious education. He was editor in chief of the new curriculum of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., the curriculum that set a pace for all others. He deals with such subjects as the "mystery" of scripture, the problem of interpretation, the Bible's unity, the methods of typology, allegory, analogy, and finally the inspiration of the Bible and its authority. To this is added, for full measure, two chapters on the death and rebirth of biblical theology.

The revival is credited largely to Karl Barth, and the resulting Biblical theology is mainly Barthian or at least Continental. There is no idea of editing the scriptures or deleting

parts which are not edifying or constructive, e.g. the anti-semitic tirades against "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," or the curses on Edom. These can of course be left out of the lectionary; but if you take the Bible as a source for Christian theology, something more is required. There is no realization (to speak of), in current Protestant theology, that the Bible is simply the lectionary of the synagogue plus the additions made by Christians in taking it over as the lectionary of the Church. Nor is there any realization (to speak of) that a whole tidal wave of opposition to conventional Christianity and its antiquated scriptures is rising before our eyes.

The recent commencement address at Princeton Seminary by the Dean of the Harvard Divinity School has been a lone voice crying in the wilderness! But something much more and better must be made of the Bible before it is too late; and the sacred book must be resolutely taken out of the hands of the Continental theologians, and handed back to the Church! The Bible was, and is, and must continue to be the Church's Book, not a warehouse full of ma-

terials for a dull and deadly biblical theology. The days will come, surely, when the "revival" of the 1920's will be seen for what it was—a backward step, which killed both liberalism and vital interpretation of the Bible from the historical, literary, religious and liturgical point of view. "Heilsgeschichte" was a bad deal. It cost *much* too much.

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