

# The **+** WITNESS

FEBRUARY 27, 1964

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ALTHEA GIBSON: — Episcopalian who got to the top in her field. The struggle others of minority groups are making today to find their place in the sun is told by Benjamin Minifie in this number

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-- THE CASE FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE --

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## SERVICES

### In Leading Churches

#### NEW YORK CITY

##### THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

Sunday: Holy Communion 7, 8, 9, 10; Morning Prayer, Holy Communion and Sermon, 11; Evensong and sermon, 4.  
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For Christ and His Church

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By Hugh McCandless

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### THE WITNESS

Tunkhannock, Pa.

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Sunday Services: 8 and 9:30 Holy Communion; 11 Morning Prayer and Sermon (Church School); 4 French Service; 5:30 Evening Prayer.

## Story of the Week

### World Council Leaders Issue New Disarmament Plea

★ The time is ripe for new advances toward peace through disarmament, World Council of Churches leaders said in Odesa, USSR, in a statement addressed to governments and religious groups of the world.

Welcoming the international relaxation of tension following completion of the limited nuclear test ban treaty last summer, the executive committee declared that now "every opportunity should be seized to advance from competition in armaments to cooperation in disarmament."

In addition to urging major world powers to accelerate peace efforts, the statement called on the "intermediate and smaller powers" to press upon larger nations "the need for such concessions as will advance agreement without endangering international security."

Churches were urged to "renew and intensify their zeal for peace" by joining with "other men of goodwill" in exerting pressure on governments.

It was noted that a statement, "The test ban treaty and the next steps," adopted by the central committee last August has received "widespread use in governmental and inter-governmental circles" and has been transmitted to the resumed conference of the eighteen nation committee on

disarmament at Geneva, Switzerland.

The council leaders cited the existence of "serious obstacles" which must be overcome "if the precarious detent of the moment is to become more firmly established . . ."

It was stated that the tendency of governments to maintain that disarmament plans are "acceptable only if proposed by their representatives" must give way to "a readiness to appraise plans on merit and to a procedure of meaningful negotiation whereby jointly-sponsored propositions must be put forward."

Threats of war also exist, the statement said, through efforts to gain military advantage through disarmament, exploitation of local conflicts and the imposition of foreign controls which prevent new nations from choosing their own forms of government.

"Notwithstanding lack of confidence, and in spite of the suspicion which survives so long as obstacles such as these remain," it declared, "general and comprehensive disarmament must be the goal of international striving."

The statement said that "vital meaning for international security" is found in proposals made by both east and west — including means of curbing nuclear power for military pur-

poses, negotiation of a non-aggression pact and the repudiation of force as a means of solving territorial disputes.

"In a number of instances," the executives said, "the proposals are sufficiently similar that agreement is possible and should be reached."

At the same time, as multilateral agreements are being discussed, individual nations were urged to "be mindful of the part they can play by unilateral action."

And smaller nations, while bringing pressure for disarmament on larger forces, were reminded that "they themselves have a responsibility for disarmament" and should "meticulously avoid increasing their own military strength through the acquisition of armaments discarded by others."

#### Freedom of Religion

Followers of religious beliefs as well as atheists deserve equal protection under law in a free society, a World Council of Churches official declared in a report to a business session of the executive committee.

"Freedom of religion or belief applies to all men," said O. Frederick Nolde, director of the commission of the churches on international affairs as he reported on his agency's efforts in the UN in behalf of a statement on religious intolerance.

Russians at the UN, the official said, insisted that the freedom of atheists be protected. Nolde pointed out that while he agreed, the proposed

declaration also should insure that "all men have a right not only to maintain or change their religion or belief but also to maintain it in society."

"There is," he said, "a need for varying religions and beliefs to have every opportunity for peaceful competition."

"In order for confrontation of this kind to take place, freedom of religious propaganda as well as freedom of anti-religious propaganda must be insured by constitutional law, juridical action and public practice."

"Christians," he added, "are confident that truth will prevail in any competitive dialogue and, therefore, they wish that the rights of all religions and beliefs be safeguarded against interference."

Earlier, Nolde called the draft UN document on religious intolerance "inadequate and disappointing," saying it did not explicitly relate religious freedom to other human rights proclaimed in the UN declaration of human rights.

He also said the draft omits mention of the right of religious groups to practice their faith "by performance of acts of mercy or by the expression in word or deed of the implications of belief in social, economic and political matters, both domestic and international."

### Developing Nations

Additional assistance to churches facing problems created by rapidly changing social conditions was voted by the committee.

The 14-member panel acknowledged increasing pressures on churches in developing nations by approving enlargement of the special assistance to social projects committee.

The unit, composed of representatives of all Council divisions, deals with large programs of comprehensive assistance for

specific areas and solicits support for the projects through member bodies.

It was noted that the committee will engage experts in the fields of journalism, agriculture, social work, medicine and vocational training to assist in the study and outline of possible projects.

The executives formally endorsed an appeal launched through the division of inter-church aid, refugee and world service for \$1-million for assistance to refugees in Africa.

In a report to the committee, Leslie E. Cooke, director of the division, stressed that the activity is aware of the danger of "becoming just a large humanitarian agency" with a multi-million dollar annual program, but that it "seeks always to serve the basic WCC purpose . . . renewal of the church in unity and service."

The executives also approved an appeal for \$4-million for the work of the theological education fund in the next five years, a campaign earlier endorsed by the commission on world mission and evangelism at its conference last December in Mexico City.

A 25-member international committee was appointed to carry out a joint study on education with the World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Association. Kathleen Bliss of London, chairman of the division of ecumenical action, was named to head the committee.

The executives also heard staff reports on plans for a "Consultation on men and women at work," scheduled in Geneva, Switzerland, June 29; a faith and order conference, slated to be held at Nicosia, Cypress, next August 15-29, and a world conference on church and society in 1966.

### Stand on Unity

The right of all Churches to "hold and develop" their own

attitudes toward unity must be "fully recognized and respected," it was declared in Moscow by World Council leaders in a statement which cited the dawn of a new era in the ecumenical movement.

Members of the executive committee, following the meeting in Odessa, released the statement on Christian unity at a press conference.

At the present stage of the ecumenical confrontation, it was stated, "nearly all churches recognize the urgency" of the Christian unity movement.

"We welcome especially," the leaders said, "the attention the Roman Catholic Church is devoting to the subject in deliberations of the Second Vatican Council."

But while stating that they "rejoice" over the fact that "more and more personal relationships are being established both among church leaders and among members of different confessions," it was declared that the "real crux of the ecumenical problem" lies in mutual recognition and respect of varying attitudes toward Christian unity among different churches.

The WCC, the statement said, "seeks to promote a conversation within a fellowship which has become a new experience in the life of the churches as they have shared in prayer and action."

Within this fellowship, it was stated, churches "recognize one another as confessing the same Lord, sharing the same baptism and participating in the common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

These churches do not seek "unity characterized by uniformity or by single, centralized administrative authority," the statement said.

And although they may "have reservations concerning one another's ecclesiological position," it continued, their



conversation is on "equal terms."

"All are expected to listen as well as to speak, to receive as well as to give" and "existing differences and tensions are frankly faced."

But "conversation is not all," the statement added, noting that member churches try to "render assistance to each other in case of need and support one another in their witness to Christ and in their evangelistic and missionary task."

WCC members were encouraged to "use to the full the great opportunities which God is granting to the ecumenical movement in this generation."

"We believe churches and their conversations, as well as individual Christians," the statement continued, "should seize new possibilities of personal contact, of frank conversation, of prayer together and of cooperation in common Christian tasks with fellow Christians of whatever confession."

"We warmly invite those churches outside our membership to consider how they might be able to enter into this kind of fellowship. Since all churches have great responsibility towards each other and can learn from the renewal which is granted others, we encourage them to cooperate more and more in service to the world in the name of Christ, Lord of all."

The executives attended Orthodox church services in Moscow and Odessa and several remained in the Soviet Union to visit officials of the Estonian Lutheran Church and the Georgian Orthodox Church.

## EPISCOPALIANS HEAR BISHOP SHEEN

★ The Roman Catholic Church was described as a fortress which had been breached from the inside by Pope John,

in an address made by Auxiliary Bishop Fulton J. Sheen this month at a meeting of the New York churchman's clericus. Pope Paul, while temperamentally less expansive than his predecessor, is no less concerned with the members of other churches, Sheen said.

Declaring that the present era is almost penultimate in character, with "the good people becoming better, and the evil people becoming even more like the anti-Christ," Bishop Sheen called upon all Christian forces to unite against secularism. "Preservation of belief in God and the heritage of Christ" is the great task set for the church in this generation, he held.

Sheen told the 130 clergy from the dioceses of New York, Long Island, and Newark that in his opinion the prospective changes in the Latin liturgy were of small importance compared to the inner changes in the church, which became a "fortress" since the council of Trent, and its increased concern and respect for all Christian people. He felt it is almost certain that the next session of the Vatican Council will take a position on religious liberty in which a guarantee of freedom of the individual conscience will be held to be required as a divinely given right.

## MORE MRI PROJECTS ANNOUNCED

★ Thirty projects in Pakistan and the middle east were issued to the churches of the Anglican Communion by the executive officer, Bishop Stephen F. Bayne. The projects, with a capital cost of \$854,000, include school and hospital construction as well as churches and others ranging from youth centers to reading rooms. Included in the list were needs for personnel, including an urgent ap-

peal for doctors and nurses in Iran. The annual operating cost represented was about \$92,400.

"Pakistan and the middle east" is one of the nine regions specified by the Anglican Communion for the establishment of regional officers to meet planning and ecumenical needs. The region is included, ecclesiastically, in the five dioceses of the Jerusalem archbishopric, and the two dioceses, Karachi and Lahore, in West Pakistan. For planning purposes, the diocese of Dacca, covering East Pakistan, will be included in the India-Ceylon region for the time being.

This represents the second such comprehensive program of advance work to be circulated since the call to "Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence". The first covered nearly sixty dioceses in Africa.

In publishing this list of projects, Bishop Bayne called attention to "the openness and confidence" which has been expressed in the Africa list as well. A keynote of the MRI proposal was common life and interdependence, of which the first expression is the brotherly, public statement of need. In contrast with older relationships between "sending" and "receiving" churches, the present public circulation of plans and hopes is felt to be a significant first step forward in partnership.

## SURVEY PLANNED IN ATLANTA

★ The diocese of Atlanta begins this summer a year-long, detailed survey of its present condition and its future needs.

It was announced at the diocesan convention that more than 1000 clergy and lay people would take part.

The convention also adopted a budget of \$397,000 — largest in history.

# Former Archbishop Would Defer Step Two of Merger Program

★ Anglican and Methodist communions in Great Britain are not yet ready for full organic unity, though intercommunion seems "entirely possible," according to the former Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lord Geoffrey Fisher of Lambeth, in a new booklet on the proposed British Methodist Church of England merger, said that it would now be "unwise and unnecessary" for the churches to pledge themselves to the achievement of organic unity.

Lord Fisher, who initiated Anglican-Methodist conversations, said the second of the proposed two steps toward merger — intercommunion by 1965, then organizational and corporate union — would be "a most unwise leap in the dark."

Noting that he was expressing only his personal views, the Anglican leader said that the route toward full communion "provides such a marvelous, even miraculous advance in unity of spirit and the bond of peace, that it must be according to God's will. Surely it is better to risk ambiguities inherited from the past and hope to wear them out of the fabric of church life by living together. I earnestly hope that 'stage one' will be adopted in both churches by overwhelming majorities. Yet, I cannot but feel that real anxieties are being suppressed or overruled."

He maintained that the merger plan involves proposals which "can mean one thing to Methodists and another thing to Anglicans."

The plan's second phase, Lord Fisher said, has "no necessary connection at all with stage one" and "confused the issue."

In a reference to the growing Christian unity movement, he

said: "It is far too early yet to foresee what shape the finally reunited 'Church of England'—including all the Free Churches, the Roman Catholic Church in England and the Orthodox Church in England — will take."

Conversations since 1956 between the Anglican and Methodist Churches produced in February, 1963, a joint committee proposal of the two-stage plan. All 12 Anglicans on the committee voted for the merger. The Methodist vote was split, 4 for and 4 against.

Considerable controversy has developed within British Methodism, particularly over the proposition that acceptance of the episcopacy by Methodists would be a necessary preliminary to merger.

## BLAKE NEW HEAD OF COMMISSION

★ Arthur Lichtenberger, Presiding Bishop, has resigned as chairman of the commission on religion and race of the National Council of Churches but will

continue to serve as a member of the commission.

Succeeding Bishop Lichtenberger, who resigned because of the pressure of other duties and for reasons of physical limitations, will be the Rev. Eugene Carson Blake, stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church.

The announcement was made by Bishop Reuben H. Mueller of Indianapolis, president of the NCC.

In accepting Bishop Lichtenberger's resignation, Bishop Mueller praised him for his "pioneering leadership" during the commission's establishment last June.

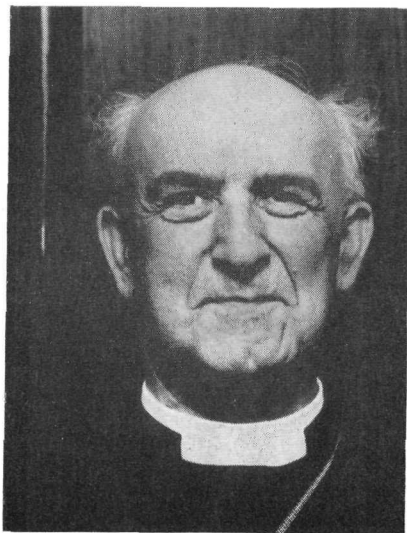
"The commission," Bishop Mueller said, "came into being at a most critical juncture of human relations in the history of our country and has served the cause of racial and civil justice with vigor and distinction. The churches are eternally grateful to Bishop Lichtenberger for his selfless service."

## STUDY PROGRAM FOR CLERGY

★ For the fourth consecutive year the General Theological Seminary will offer a "Study Program for Clergy." The program is open to all clergy of the church and will be held at the seminary in New York City from May 31 through June 5. As in prior years, five lectures in each of three subjects will be given as part of a daily schedule which will include daily chapel services.

The Rev. W. Norman Pittenger is the faculty director and he is assisted by Stuart M. Gardner, director of music, and the Rev. Arthur C. Kelsey, chaplain. The program chairman is the Rev. Malcolm S. Sawtelle of Northeast Harbor, Maine.

Enrollment will be limited to sixty and these men will be housed in seminary dormitories.



LORD FISHER: — asks caution on English unity proposals

# EDITORIALS

## Liturgy and Dialogue

MASSEY SHEPHERD is so much the number-one person in the liturgical movement in our church that one sometimes hears in discussions of the subject the acclamation, "The Shepherd is my lord."

It is fitting therefore, and perhaps inevitable, that the book presenting papers at the liturgical conference held in Wichita in 1962 should open with a development of the thesis that liturgy and mission are both the outward action of the compulsion laid by God upon those in the church. In the words of one of Shepherd's students they are "the present form of God's action in Christ". As such they must have a creative function in all phases of man's existence where healing is needed, be it race relations, Christian disunity, or other.

To this end Prof. Shepherd looks forward to an "authentically Christian worship in all churches that is neither iconoclastic towards the past nor irrelevant to the here and now". Existing unity is more evident in liturgical similarity than one might expect from the differences in dogmatic treatises. What is to be sought is a liturgy expressive of the underlying essentials, not in uniformity, nor in an amalgam of several traditions, "but in liturgical diversity and the indigenous adaptation of inherited rites to native culture and custom."

In a similar vein the Rev. Joseph T. Nolan, pastor of St. Patrick's parish in Galena, Kansas, outlines the background and aims of liturgical developments in the Roman Church.

In "The Church's Mission to the Artist" the Rev. W. Moelwyn Merchant, head of the department of English, Exeter University, turns the table, holding that our "task is not so much the mission of the church to the artist as it is the free . . . dialogue between the church and the artist," and vice versa. When this is done with committed Christians it can make for more dramatic movement within the liturgy, something which Merchant wishes bishops would encourage. Some artists have only recollections of professed Christianity — James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Ezra Pound, Dylan Thomas, are cited—but, nevertheless, says Merchant, in listening to them "you are then in contact with living artists whose integrity may be every bit as high as

yours. They have their fidelity to their truth as they see it, and if you don't see that fidelity you will not be able to speak your truth to them."

Artists outside the formal category of faith, like Bertolt Brecht, Tennessee Williams, Perry Miller and Arthur Miller do in any case honestly depict the human situation, and Merchant has a "great deal more respect for the agnostic writer, or the agnostic painter, who works out the implications of his own art with inflexible fidelity to the truth as he sees it, than . . . for the wishy-washy, spineless art which we foist on a great number of our people."

The Church will use artists for architecture, decorations, vestments, but then be content "with debased music and with words that are unvital". When these are compared with those of the artists he cites, Merchant says, "an honest Christian conscience is bound to admit that the artist has the better of the dialogue." But he has the hope that a true dialogue will lead to "a liturgy to which we can confidently invite our artists and ask them if they will not participate with us to the greater glory of God."

Addressing himself to the problem of "The church's mission to a scientific culture", the Rev. William G. Pollard, executive director of the Oak Ridge Institute of nuclear studies, finds himself at a loss for an answer. The scientific age, dating from 1660, is a "dark age" because it has become increasingly difficult, Pollard holds, to have "an awareness of reality transcendent to nature", possibly because so much more of describable reality has been included in the "space-time" continuum. Thus "no transcendent domain of reality exists at all out of which the divine word could come into space and time and be made flesh."

Pollard seems to be under the impression that the elements of the Christian faith as they were apprehended before 1660 require a concept of the universe in which they could all be given a point in space. Where this concept is gone the result is "the difficulty which such an age experiences with the great supernatural events which constitute the heart of the gospel: the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord". According to Pollard, unless place can be given to non-spatial, non-temporal reality somewhere, it all becomes what he calls "subjective", which to him means that it has no basis in reality outside a person. This obtains not only with regard



to the "supernatural events" of the gospel but of all art, religion and values. Since science can find nothing in nature in which these can be rooted ours is a culture in which they "would all vanish from the universe should man perish from it".

Pollard does not explain in what culture — and there certainly is no such Christian culture — the arts, religion and values would maintain themselves, though man perish from the earth. At least one would like to know who in heaven or earth would care. There is a problem, but Pollard does not state it well because he attempts to make it fit the wrong answer.

In "The liturgy and work", based on the conference sermon, Bishop Pike sets out man's calling as the mediator of God's work through creativeness, redemption, and conciliation in all phases of life.

The book concludes with a discussion of the means of carrying out the mission of the church in the city, presented by C. Kilmer Myers with the competence, earnestness and transparent sincerity which one has happily come to expect from him.

There is a fine introduction on the liturgical movement by Frank Stephen Cellier who had the job of getting and bring the conference paper into a book, together with the discussion where, with few lapses, a high level of discourse was maintained. (Liturgy is Mission, Seabury. \$3.95.)

## Four Anglican Poets

THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION, together with the entire English-speaking world, has been permanently enriched by those men who were not only in holy orders, but literary artists as well. Pre-eminent among them was, of course, Thomas Cranmer, whose mastery of devotional prose provided the Book of Common Prayer with a place among the two or three great classics of the language.

But he does not stand alone. Serving among the clergy in the Anglican Church have been gifted essayists, biographers, novelists, playwrights, and poets, among the last of whom four — John Donne, George Herbert, John Keble, and Studdert Kennedy — are particularly worthy of notice because of their contributions to Christian worship. All but Donne have contributed selec-

tions to The Hymnal of 1940 of the Episcopal Church.

We are happy to present in four consecutive issues articles on these four by the Rev. William S. Hill, rector of St. Paul's, Lansing, Michigan.

## Common Sense Comes To the Papacy

By Ralph A. Weatherly

*Rector Emeritus, Grace Church, Kingston, Pa.*

WITH COURTEOUS deference to Popes John and Paul and their conference of hundreds of cardinals, bishops and advisors, we are not too thrilled or excited at their findings. A gesture of kindness and consideration has been made to the Orthodox, who gently reminded Rome that the scriptures were in Greek or Hebrew. Protestants have been smiled at, forgetting that they have been schismatics: their societies may even be termed churches in time.

The mass may be said in the vernacular under certain circumstances. The scriptures may be more intelligently read. Some of Italys' politically conceived dioceses may be let go. More rights may be given to bishops.

These measures should have been taken hundreds of years ago. Now the atomic age, the pressure of communism compel such action for unity as a means of existence.

Several years ago a pope discovered that a mass might be permitted after twelve noon. This pulled the rug from those who thought such action was blasphemous. God probably does not act by a clock nor is he greatly interested in human diet. In time we may be able to learn how to keep a correct calendar ourselves and devote less worry to our stomachs.

The most discerning account of the conference has appeared in the New Yorker backing the opinion that only humorists can size up life.

### NOTES ON ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

A concluding article by Bishop Stephen Bayne, executive officer of the Anglican communion, will be in our next issue. It is from his report for 1963 to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Other parts of his report were featured in our issues of February 13 and 20.



# THE CASE FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

By Benjamin Minifie

*Rector of Grace Church, New York*

## THERE IS PRECEDENCE IN SCRIPTURE AND IN HISTORY FOR THE DEMONSTRATIONS NOW TAKING PLACE

IN ACTS we read these words, "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'"

We can almost picture the scene: the senior citizens of the community, senior not necessarily in age but in prestige and power, impressive-looking men in their flowing robes and handsome beards, seated in a semi-circle a step or two above the main floor of the large room, and standing before them several young men obviously of the poorer class, fishermen and the like and yet not at all subdued or timid in the presence of their elders and superiors. Indeed, they have been told more than once to stop disturbing the peace, to leave off preaching about this Jesus of Nazareth who had been crucified. But they've gone right on defiantly and illegally in spite of threats and jail sentences.

And now, peasants as they are (the early Christians were sometimes described as the off-scourings of the world), they have the audacity to say, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

You and I reading their words from the perspective of the 20th century applaud them. We say to ourselves, these are the words of brave men, men of conviction. But what would be our attitude if they were spoken today by some dissenting group, a minority or radical group? I might ask, what is our attitude, for we are living through days when, as we all read every day, it is happening in our midst, what we call civil disobedience, when the laws and customs of society are challenged and even broken in the name of a higher law, even God's law of equality and justice due to all peoples.

Isn't this how the demonstrations and strikes and boycotts of the last two or three years in particular are defended? We must obey God rather than men, which is to say, **There is a moral law in the name of which men are sometimes justified, if not constrained, to question or disobey the civil law.** Do you believe this? And is it not a dangerous principle or point of view?

### **Plenty of Precedent**

**YES, IT IS,** and yet it certainly has plenty of historical precedent. One might go further and

say civil disobedience has been a favorite American method of protest.

We call them patriots today, but back in 1773 I'm sure the royal governor and a good many other solid citizens of Boston looked upon those who perpetrated the Boston tea party as dangerous and lawless men, troublemakers and anarchists. But what better way for these last to dramatize their protest against taxation without representation? Their act of civil disobedience will be retold as long as America is free.

Or we think of Henry Thoreau up in Concord refusing to pay taxes to a government whose policies he deplored. Or of a John Brown, fanatical and violent, breathing hatred and murder, one whose ways no sensible man could justify, and yet like an Old Testament figure with sword in hand come to destroy and avenge the evil of human bondage.

Or in our own time, a far different man in the person of a Gandhi, a non-violent man, a one-man revolution against the British Empire, going to jail over and over again because he broke the law of the land, broke it deliberately, broke it in protest against foreign rule and domination.

Last month I had luncheon with a man, a Friend or Quaker, who was one of a small group of pacifists who were arrested and, I believe, imprisoned a few years ago for deliberately sailing their boat into a hydrogen bomb testing area in the far Pacific. They did it in the deep conviction that war is suicidal, that the munitions race is dangerous, even mad folly, and that this country no more than any other has no moral right to poison the sea or the air. I am not a pacifist in any absolute or doctrinaire sense, yet I expect human society would be the poorer without persons to challenge the assumptions of the rest of us who conform too easily, to raise questions in our minds about national policy, to make us rethink our own Christian witness, persons who in the name of a transcendent loyalty and commitment disobey the commandments of men.

SINCE the end of world war two there have been several trials of Germans who held high office during the Nazi regime and shared responsibility

for the neo-barbarism of those dark years in Europe — the recent trial of Eichmann in Jerusalem comes to mind. And over and over again their plea, their defense has been that they were merely obeying the orders and the laws of their superiors and of the state, that they had no alternative, really.

And has it not been the position of the prosecution that in every instance there was an alternative, that even at the risk of being shot oneself a moral man must disobey a government which instructs him to exterminate human beings whose only crime it was to be Jewish, that there are circumstances when civil disobedience is mandatory?!

Is it not fair to say, as we look back upon the dissenters and non-conformists of the past, the ones who protested and disobeyed civilly for the right reasons, not just to be different, that yesterday's fools and villains often become tomorrow's heroes?

### Present Demonstrations

PERHAPS we are too close to the crisis in our own day and age to judge accurately what is happening. I expect many, many of our more conservative citizens seriously question and frown upon the acts of civil disobedience characteristic of the 1960's, street demonstrations and school boycotts, yes, citizens even here in New York where we have had a long history of the utmost diversity and variety in population.

I say to you, and I say to myself, let us not judge too hastily. Remember again that civil disobedience has a long and honored tradition behind it in this country. Let us not forget either that the people who are demonstrating, and often being fined and jailed for it, have been waiting an unconscionably long time, more than 300 years, to be treated the same as every other citizen in this country takes for granted when he applies for a job or enters a restaurant or whatever it is.

Let us not be surprised or shocked if they are impatient. In many parts of our country the ordinary process of law and government has effected very, very little change in the status quo in this respect over the decades. Segregation, and all it means by way of inferior and menial status to the "out" group as compared with the "in" group, has been rigidly perpetuated year by year. It has been only through demonstrations and boycotts, remarkably, wonderfully restrained

ones, non-violent ones, that there has come about some little change.

Of course, there have been and there will be mistakes, these are inevitable in human affairs. To be sympathetic with the over-all justification for civil disobedience, yes, when the established law and custom are unjust, is not necessarily to agree with every act, every expression of it.

For example, I have strong reservations about public school boycotts, although we must confess the recent one made us all much more aware of the over-crowded conditions, the dangerous number of drop-outs, the deep concern of Negro and Puerto Rican people for better education. The question might be asked of us, why does it take thousands of people walking in picket lines in 20-degree cold weather to make us aware of civil problems in our midst? Yes, moral problems as they essentially are.

### Church Leadership

LET ME ADD, too, in speaking both to you and to myself on this pressing issue of our time, let us rejoice that its leadership has come almost entirely out of the churches. Who can say that religion is the opiate of the people when he looks upon or listens to a man of the stature, of the courage and commitment of a Martin Luther King, able to persuade tens of thousands of peoples in the way of non-violence, seeking nothing for himself but regarding himself as expendable as he comes and goes in cities like Birmingham and Atlanta? What a moral witness his has been!

I have a text, a second text, if you will, for this article. The first one was "We must obey God rather than men." This is from Romans 12, the second verse: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Paul is saying that all of us, whoever we are, however modest and meek in our position, all of us who have given our allegiance to Christ, are to be over-ruled and guided finally in our thinking and in our acting by what is right and true and good in the sight of God, God as he is made known to us in Christ. This will mean that to some extent the vocation of every Christian man and woman is to be a non-conformist, not for the sake of being different, but because in the last analysis the criterion and standard of our lives is not the commandments of men but the will of God.

Yes, we are members of society and citizens of the state, and as such we have a duty to obey its laws. And, God helping us, we shall do so ordinarily. But surely at the very least we can imagine the possibility of conflict when in the name of a moral law superceding man-made cus-

toms and conventions we must disobey and run the risk of being misunderstood or worse.

There were brave men who did it in the Germany of the 1930's. There are men of faith doing it in America in the 1960's. Perhaps we, too, shall be called upon to do it one day soon.

## FOUR ANGLICAN POETS

John Donne — Poet of Human Mortality



By William S. Hill

*Rector of St. Paul's, Lansing, Michigan*

THE PRESENT-DAY John Donne revival has presented to the public mind the picture of a poet whose bursts of energy and insight produced "uncut gems" in verse, of an essayist whose observation that "no man is an island" has become a popular aphorism, and of a preacher whose eloquence drew such vast crowds that people were sometimes killed in the press of those eager to hear him. Behind the facade of him who has been called "one of the greatest ornaments of the Church of England and of English poetry and prose," was a tormented soul continuously preoccupied with thoughts of death. During his boyhood a Roman Catholic kinsman had been executed for his beliefs; thenceforward the prospect of his own death was never far from his mind; indeed, during his final sickness he posed for his portrait in a shroud, shown here, that he might know how he would appear to God on the day of judgment.

JOHN DONNE was born in London in 1573, of relatively well-to-do parents who were staunch Roman Catholics. His mother was a descendant of Sir Thomas More; an uncle of his was a Jesuit whose death has already been referred to; an older brother died in Newgate prison where he had been confined for sheltering a Roman Catholic priest. "I had my first breeding and conversation," Donne wrote, "with men of suppressed and afflicted religion, accustomed to the despite of death and hungry of an imagined martyrdom."

After being privately tutored at home, Donne went at the age of eleven to Oxford and at sixteen transferred to Cambridge. He did well in both universities but received a degree from neither: his loyalty to Roman Catholicism prevented him from subscribing to the oaths that were prerequisites for graduation. By the age of eighteen he was studying law at Lincoln's Inn, in London, and he had decided that he could profess no religion except the general one of "Chris-

tian." At this time he began what was to become a lifelong study of divinity.

In his *Life of Dr. Donne*, Izaak Walton claimed the crucial point in Donne's career to be his ordination — that prior to it he was as sinful and libidinous as Augustine before his conversion, and that afterward he was as dedicated and saintly as Ambrose. Certain of Donne's own words would tend to confirm this impression. He speaks of his youth as a time "when everything I did conduced to sin;" and he also remarks that "some irregularities of my life have been so visible to some men that to take holy orders would bring dishonor upon a sacred calling."

It appears however, that the sins of his youth were no more heinous than those of any travelled and educated young man of the period and that the lament over his irregularities was an expression of modesty made picturesque by a fondness for a well-turned rhetorical phrase. He was spiritually sensitive and interested in theology while active in government service; he was concerned with affairs of government while an ordained clergyman; and this continuity of interest gave a measure of unity to the whole of his life. Moreover, he was not only charming and generous but volatile, unpredictable, and eccentric both before and after his ordination.

### Early Marriage

AN EARLY MARRIAGE, of which the bride's father heartily disapproved, plunged John Donne into a host of difficulties. Poverty became his lot; doors of advancement in government were closed to him; a new child every year brought ever-increasing weight to his burdens; and he was able to eke out a living only by giving secretarial assistance to one government official or another and by taking advantage of the hospitality offered by wealthy friends. For all that John and Anne Donne loved each other and enjoyed a happy domestic relationship. Walton speaks of this marriage as "the remarkable error of his life," for it deprived him of freedom to give himself completely to the pursuit of a career in government.

Despite his own interest in politics and in governmental activity, however, there was never any lack of people in Donne's life to urge him to enter the ministry. His learning, his eloquence, and his leanings toward piety led any number of his acquaintances to suggest that he take holy orders. But he kept putting them off, until King James himself virtually commanded him to

present himself for ordination. When finally the Bishop of London elevated him to the priesthood, Donne was forty-two years of age.

Six years later — having served as king's chaplain and as adviser to a diplomatic mission to Germany — he was made dean of St. Paul's, London. There he soon distinguished himself as a preacher of unparalleled eloquence. This is the description given by Walton: "Preaching the word so, as showed his own heart was possessed with those very thoughts that he labored to distil into others; a preacher in earnest; weeping sometimes for his audience, sometimes with them; always preaching to himself like an angel in a cloud, but in none; carrying some, as St. Paul was, to heaven in holy raptures, and enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives; here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those that practiced it, and a virtue to make it beloved even by those that loved it not; and all this with a most particular grace and an unexpressible addition of comeliness."

### Preoccupied With Death

THE GREATER PART of Donne's adult life was colored and shaped by the need to make economic provision for himself, his wife, and their ever-enlarging family of children. It may be that his reluctance to enter the ministry grew out of a fear he would not be granted an appointment which could fulfil his material needs, and it is possible that only the reassurance of the king granted him the freedom to obey the voice of his deepest desire.

Apart from the economic pressure which made much of his life an anxious chore, John Donne knew an even more powerful and persuasive pressure: the fear of death. To the degree that Donne was a "driven" man, the driving force was his preoccupation with his demise.

He finally was able to win through to a spiritual victory in his view of death — one of the last things he said was, "I were miserable if I might not die" — but before he could win this victory he had to work through to an adequate view of himself and of the church which he served.

As for himself, he was aware of his deeply passionate nature, and of the hungers of the body which so frequently went contrary to the aspirations of the soul. It was only when he accepted both soul and body as alike the creation of God, and as complementary to one another, that he felt God would forgive the sins of the



one even as he blessed the achievements of the other, and therefore would raise up both soul and body in the general resurrection. Until he came to this conclusion he felt that the sins of his body had damned his soul.

As far the church, Donne, it will be remembered, was brought up a Roman Catholic, and the spiritual heroism of members of his own family served to reinforce the idea that apart from the Church of Rome, no one could be saved. His acquaintance with Protestantism as a university student weakened his devotion to Roman Catholicism without granting him another ecclesiastical loyalty to put in its place. Living apart as he was from any close and deep connection with a spiritual fellowship, let alone with the Church of Rome, was he damned? This question was only resolved when he concluded that one's duty, under God, is to "conform to the church of one's king and country." In his own case, this was, of course, the Church of England.

To be sure, questions of soul and body or of ecclesiastical allegiance, were not responsible for his morbid preoccupation with worms, putrefaction, shrouds, funerary urns and the other apperturances of death. But until these fundamental questions were settled, he could face the prospects of dying with neither courage nor faith. He could only seek relief for his tormented soul in the composition of poetry.

### The Poet

AS A POET, Donne has as many detractors as admirers. His detractors say that his poetry is "like a Yellowstone geyser: over-heated, turbid, explosive, and far from pure." His admirers come to his defense by saying, "If some of Donne's faults indicate radical flaws in his moral taste and sensibilities, a defective sense of beauty in life and art, others to be fairly judged must be seen in the light of Plato's statement that it is impossible to be perfectly virtuous in an evil state." In other words, he was a child of his time.

Part of the power of Donne's poetry is that it conveys the impression not of finding — that would be too much to ask of one possessed of tortured imagination — but of restless, indefatigable seeking. In his "Song," for example, the reader pictures him actually searching for a person of virtue even as he cynically avows that no such person can exist.

Moreover, the poems of John Donne acquire force from the fact that they possess, in the

words of one critic, "a root in the consciousness that the ugly and the beautiful are strangely blended in passionate experience." In an odd way Donne's very obscurities and pedantries serve to give one the impression that he has seen God; and this gives us the assurance that so, despite our conceits and lusts, shall we.

It was doubtless Donne's reputation as a preacher which directed attention to his religious poetry. Only one eighth of his poems can be considered religious and of these most deal with his major phobias: his sense of personal unworthiness, and the terrors of judgement day. He did, however, compose some poems, notably "Hymn to God" or "Hymn to Christ," which belong in any anthology of religious verse.

John Donne has contributed no selections to the Hymnal of 1940, but he did write a poem which was set to music and sung in St. Paul's, London. Entitled "An Hymn to God the Father," it consists of three stanzas, the last of which reads:

I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun  
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;  
But swear by thyself, that at my death thy Son  
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;  
And having done that, thou hast done,  
I fear no more.

Doubtless the choristers at St. Paul's did this well; but it is hard to imagine it as sung by a contemporary American congregation: its language is too fulsome, its thought-pattern too involved, to make a good hymn. In contrast with other hymns of the period, notably those written in Germany, it lacks the power to sweep a congregation up into the realms of glory.

It is unfortunate, however, that a poet of the talent and stature of Donne should not be represented in the hymnal. Perhaps a musician well acquainted with Donne's poetry — such as Theodore Parker Ferris of Trinity Church, Boston — will provide a setting for one of his poems which will be included in a subsequent edition.

### The Last Days

AS COULD have been predicted, the last days of John Donne revealed with dramatic clarity both his faith and his eccentricity.

Well-known are the eccentricities he showed forth just prior to his demise — his posing for his portrait wrapped only in a shroud, his selection of an urn, his concern for every detail of his tomb, his composition of his epitaph, his

lugubrious counsels to those who came to visit him. He knew he was not to win a martyr's crown, as his revered uncle had done; nevertheless he was determined to exploit to the full all the theatrical possibilities in his death and burial. Surprisingly, however, he requested a private funeral — a request incidentally, which was not honored.

It was the custom of 17th century biographers, especially those who idolized their subjects as Walton did Donne, to place upon the lips of the dying phrases of devout piety or solemn edification. One is led to think that every person of eminence who lived in the time of the Stuart kings died either reciting the Lord's Prayer or the 23rd psalm or urging those who would survive them to walk in the paths of virtue and rectitude.

It appears, however, that such was actually the case with John Donne. He did retain his power of speech and his clarity of mind until the very last, and as he had written during a previous illness, "He was that minute ready to deliver his soul into his hands if that minute God would determine his dissolution."

He died in full confidence that, as one of his sonnets, affirms:

"One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more."

## African Solidarity

By J. Seymour Flinn

*Staff of Mbale Cathedral, Uganda, East Africa*

MANY PEOPLE all about us knew of the assassination of President Kennedy before we did ourselves. I dismissed what a couple of people told me as wild tales, since in Africa there is a tendency to say a person is dead when from the western point of view he is only sick. But the thick headlines of the morning paper confirmed it. All knew (for radios are numerous) — simple and poor, sophisticated and well off — and were sorry for us.

An Asian (i.e. from India) who was with us when the paper arrived said it was a much greater shock to him than the news of the death of his uncle a couple of days earlier. It was the day before our little Melissa's baptism and with many errands to run in the town—funny that I never noticed before how many buildings habitually fly the Ugandan flag, somehow at half mast they seemed to shout to one. For a three nights running we listened to the Voice of America —

convenient for us as 10:00 a.m. in the States is 6:00 p.m. for us here, so that we heard everything.

It made me wonder — those hundreds of statesmen from DeGaulle down who went to Washington — the boy who came to greet me on Uganda's official day of mourning and who when I asked him what he was doing as it was a holiday he replied "We are mourning for our (sic) President".

### No Man An Island

IT MADE me wonder. For recently I have been reading a bit of African history, and also, we have been holding a monthly discussion group on the differences between the African and the western view of life and personality. In the African view, truly, "no man is an island". The extreme of this is the "idea", very widespread in Africa, that the life of a people is so bound together that if their leader is sick the whole nation is sick. If the leader looks as if he will have a long and lingering sickness, he is ritually killed off so that a new and healthy man can be chosen and thus the tribe spared a disastrous period of decline in their power.

This "idea" is said to have been imported into Africa from ancient Egypt, transmitted down the Nile to the Sudan, and from there west, and then south and east. It is an "idea" by no means dead. A few years ago, when the British deported the Kabaka (king) of Buganda (one of the districts in Uganda), one of our priests said that, even though he was living miles from home working in another district, when he heard the news of the deportation of his Kabaka he became so ill that for three days he could not leave his house.

Odd this. Very odd. This idea of human solidarity, especially with a leader — something supposedly imported into Africa. Perhaps it was imported in the particular form in which Africa knows it. But when some shots in Dallas can produce such profound reactions in the depths of so many people — I wonder.

Is this just an Egyptian or African "idea"? Is it perhaps something more basic? Could it be that what a number of writers today are saying is true: that in Africa there is still a strong sense of certain fundamental depths to human experience to which at least the western world has become largely blind?

But let us climb out of the murkiness of philosophical speculation and spend a few words on what is going on around us here, which will be done next week.

# Parochial School Aid Urged By William Stringfellow

★ Federal aid to parochial schools was advocated in Cincinnati by William Stringfellow who charged that American Protestants have been "irrational" in their attitude toward government assistance for church-related educational institutions.

He maintained that the federal aid issue is forcing Protestants to make a choice between the "conflicting moral principles of minimum taxation versus separation of church and state."

The lawyer, who serves on the World Council of Churches faith and order commission, addressed some 400 participants in the youth work section of the National Council of Churches education division annual meeting.

He declared that the closing of Roman Catholic schools unable to operate without federal aid would release "tens of thousands of parochial school students to public schools and thus require an enormous ex-

pansion of public schools at staggering public expense."

The expense, consequently, would violate the "general Protestant belief that thrift is a virtue and that government spending and in turn, taxes, should be kept to a minimum," Stringfellow said, adding: "Aid to parochial education would be a lot cheaper."

The speaker said he would support aid to parochial schools "as a lawyer, as a citizen and as a Christian."

"As a lawyer," he elaborated, "I think it is possible to design an aid scheme which can and will be upheld constitutionally."

"As a citizen, I believe aid to be more economical than vast expansion of public education which would be required if the parochial system collapses or contracts."

He said that as a Christian, he believed the principle of parochial education is "theologically more sound" than the separation of "secular" and "Christian" education.

Such separation, he declared, implies that truth can be divided and that "knowledge of

human life in science and the arts is set apart from knowledge of God and the practice of religion.

"Any notion of such a separation is intolerable to the conscience of a Christian, for the Christian affirms that truth is one and indivisible and that all knowledge is embraced within the world of God."

He also declared that many "public" schools in the nation actually are "de facto Protestant schools in their ethos and in their educational philosophy and practice . . . Yet they have been supported by public funds for generations."

Stringfellow insisted that secondary education cannot be divided into "public school" and "Sunday school," calling the latter "virtually a total failure."

"In practice," he commented, "it has just not worked."

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By

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BILL STRINGFELLOW: — speaks as lawyer, citizen and Christian

# Poverty Concern of Christians Labor Leader Tells NCC Unit

★ Problems of chronic unemployment, poverty, automation and civil rights must become the active concern of Christians, a labor leader told the National Council of Churches' division of education meeting in Cincinnati.

Albert Whitehouse, district director of the United Steelworkers of America, addressing 2,000 Christian educators at the sessions, said: "The rapid and extensive gains of communism and fascism are tragic proof that we have not gone far enough in applying the principles and spirit of Jesus to the social order."

The labor executive, an active layman of the Christian

Churches, declared that "we have not, as some would have us believe, gone nearly far enough in preaching and practicing the social application of his gospel in our quest for integrity."

While he said that "the Christian's question for action is not 'is it Republican, or Democratic, or Socialist, or in keeping with certain economic rules,' but 'is it right?'" he called for bi-partisan support of President Johnson's program to combat poverty.

"To talk about poverty in the abstract is one thing, it is quite another to learn that poverty means men, women and children

in dire need—now—in America in 1964."

Whitehouse said that at the present time 36 million Americans are living in abject poverty.

Lashing out at "racial and cultural discrimination which decrees that a Negro youth stands less than half the chance of a white youth in getting a job and receives less money for the same service," Whitehouse said, "we need to integrate our principles, prayers and practices."

He expressed whole-hearted agreement with the statement that those who profess to be Christians "and who tolerate discrimination by action or inaction, betray Christ and the fellowship which bears his name."

Calling upon Christians to follow the example of Jesus in social issues, Whitehouse said, "Jesus' spirit and his teachings touch every aspect of life, and it would be better to repudiate Jesus as impractical and unrealistic, than to profess faith in him with words, while denying him by our deeds."

"We need a new awareness to the radicalness of the break which Christianity demands with the values, standards and practices now prevailing in our daily work and our Monday through Saturday living."

The Christian educators also heard the church described as Africa's "Freedom School" by J. Carter Swaim, director of the Council's department of the Bible.

Speaking before the editors

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section, Swaim said that the gospel had brought to the peoples of Africa a sense of the dignity of work and opportunity, through participation in church meetings, to speak on public issues, keep records, handle finances, and learn administrative techniques. Beyond all this, the Biblical concept of the worth of persons has given men the longing to be free, he added.

## THE PICTURE ON THE COVER

★ Althea Gibson reached the heights in 1956 when she defeated Darlene Hard at Wimbledon, and then, teamed with the girl she defeated in singles, went on to win the championship in doubles.

She began her tennis career as a kid in Harlem with a wooden paddle. She was discovered by an instructor for the Police Athletic League who bought her a cheap racket. She went on to soundly trounce any adult player who cared to take on the pre-teenager. Soon she joined the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club, a choosy Negro organization coached by one-armed Fred Johnson, doubles champion of Nassau.

At nineteen she won a scholarship at Florida University in Tallahassee and it was while there that she was confirmed at St. Michael's and All Angels.

She won about everything there was to win in tennis but did lose in a touch and go match at Forest Hills to Louise Brough. Tennis fans will recall however that she won there a greater victory since, over vigorous protests, she was the first Negro to play on those courts.

She later turned professional and after a long career in tennis, shifted to golf in which she also excels.

## OUR IMAGE OVERSEAS IS NOT GOOD

★ In the minds of many people abroad Americans give the impression that they believe that "there is no sickness in the world which a little money won't cure", Bishop Stephen F. Bayne, Anglican executive officer, told the annual dinner of the Church Club of New York. The group is an unofficial association of laymen. Although he did not think that Americans intended to give the impression they do, Bishop Bayne said there is a widespread belief that "money is the key to our foreign policy, and we are in serious trouble because of this."

Citing Latin America as example, Bishop Bayne said there is a breach between northern and southern cultural heritages, and these can be overcome only when a commonwealth of humanity is admitted. It is the church's mission to minister to this commonwealth, disregarding political barriers, on the basis of a greater brotherhood, he held, this ministry to be expressed by love through persons.

## IDAHO PLANS FOR FUTURE

★ A committee to study the structure of the missionary district of Idaho, with particular reference to the rights and responsibilities of the bishop in relation to parishes and mis-

sions, and with the possibility of removing distinctions in terminology between parishes and missions, was established at the convocation of Idaho. The action was taken after the convocation looked at the strategy and witness of the district in light of the MRI report of the Anglican Congress. A need for greater flexibility in the use of manpower and resources in the mission of the church was seen.

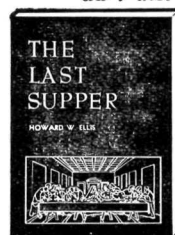
The convocation also voted to be one of the founding communions in the state council of churches, which an interdenominational committee has been exploring for the past year.

It was also announced that,

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in conjunction with St. Luke's Hospital and the Boise council on aging, the Frank A. Rhea day center for senior citizens would be established in the bishop's former residence. Reporting on the memorial program, the chairman of the district commission on aging, Dean Wm. B. Spofford Jr., said: "It has been learned that Bishop Rhea decided to study for the ministry following a visitation as a lay-reader to the county hospital for the aged in St. Louis more than fifty years ago, and we all know that he expressed this concern as hospital chaplain and visitor in Seattle up to the very day he died."

## UNDERTAKERS WARN THE CLERGY

★ A couple of undertakers in California told a group of 300 clergymen that if they did not watch their step they would simply be left out of funeral services.

"There is a strong indication," one said, "that the elimination of the minister and his spiritual message in connection with the disposition of the dead is well started."

He assailed "promotion of cheapness in the guise of simplicity" and said it "thwarts and stifles those wholesome qualities of affection, generosity

ty and self-respect. Most people don't want just a memorial service."

Jessica Mitford, also present, called for a 9-point program of controls over mortician practices, among them a requirement that funeral directors furnish itemization of funeral charges.

## - NEW BOOKS -

E. John Mohr

Book Editor

INTERPRETING THE MIRACLES,  
by Reginald H. Fuller. Westminster. \$2.50

This book, worn thin with use, should be in the study of every clergyman. Pastors might well buy it wholesale, and distribute it to every intelligent inquirer. It represents the best in New Testament scholarship, and makes that best available and understandable to the non-specialist. Moreover, it illustrates the fact that biblical criticism (which means discriminating and fruitful analysis, and not tearing to shreds the "faith once delivered") is positive, relevant, and deeply meaningful for personal faith.

In his first chapter, the writer,

who is professor of New Testament literature and languages at the Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, underlines the breadth and depth of the biblical perspective. The Bible, he points out, knows nothing of nature as a closed system. Supernaturalism, then, is something taken for granted. However, all history is "the arena where God intervenes." The biblical writers saw this as special "from time to time" intervention — God therein succoring, demanding, condemning, blessing.

But the point is that these events, which were so understood, were not contrary to nature; nor were they believed to be so. And, equally with the supernatural, they too were considered to be "miracle." Further-

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



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more — and a matter of particular significance which is implicit rather than explicit in the author's discussion — there is the fact that the criterion of "miracle" is not supernaturalism in our popular sense of the term, but rather something which faith alone can discern, viz. the recognition that there is a "deeper-than-meets-the eye" meaning to every aspect of *normal* historical and personal circumstance. Not just in the abnormal or the extraordinary, then, but as the very warp and woof of all existence, God's hand is at work.

This is not to deny the possibility of miracle in the sense of supernaturalism. But it is, so to speak, to take the tension out of the pros and cons of this particular dialogue. It is also (this is again to stress the writer's perspective) to eliminate the necessity for polemical defense or rejection of the literal historicity of the supernatural elements of the biblical witness. Equally important, it enables one to embrace that witness in its totality. For miracle, biblically understood, is a *daily* experience for each one of us here and now. And the truth of the scriptural record does not depend upon precise formal correspondence (something which can never be demonstrated) between its words and what actually happened. Rather, the miracle stories are true because they correspond to the deep unseen reality which those who were there found in the words and deeds of the Christ, and correspond, too, with that identical reality which undergirds the lives of those who welcome him as their personal Lord and Saviour.

So it is that *now*, and in everything which makes life what it is, we can encounter (if we will but open our eyes and look!) him who forgives, recreates, sustains, and makes sense out of every circumstance of life. And particularly is this the case within the context of the church's life. For — and this note occurs frequently — "in the preaching of the word, in baptism and the Lord's Supper, the Christ event is not merely commemorated, but by the act it is brought out of the past and made effectively present so that the people of God can partake of its benefits. The word and sacraments are therefore miracles in the biblical sense."

Chapter 2 asks, "Did Jesus do mighty works?" Here the historian can speak with confidence. Analysis of the biblical sources makes it clear that he did perform exorcisms and healings. Explain it how one will, Jesus was able in wondrous fashion to penetrate into people's lives and to make them new. To this the so-

called "nature" miracles also witness, even though the evidence as to their literal historicity is far less satisfactory. Doubtless, the purveyors of the oral tradition (chapter 3), and the Evangelists who recorded that tradition (chapters 4, 5), believed that things happened as related. But even so, the *real* reason why such stories were told and retold was not (nor is it now) to prove, say, that Jesus could contravene the laws of nature, but to lead hearers and readers to know him (and this still happens today!) as the eyewitnesses knew him — as one who mediates to all who wish it the love and power and salvation of God himself. The author puts it this way: "It is not the miraculous itself, but the significance of the miracle which is the concern of the biblical writers."

Incidental, perhaps, but important because illustrating new advances in New Testament studies (one thinks, particularly, of the new quest for the historical Jesus) is this statement: "It is becoming increasingly clear that Jesus never used messianic titles of himself, and that explicit faith in Jesus as Messiah arose only after the resurrection." And yet, for all this, the church's confession of him as Messiah and Lord is solidly rooted in what he said and did and was. For the historical Jesus "confronts us with 'God's presence and his [God's] very self'. Here is the substance of messiahship: the titles come after the resurrection as the church's believing response."

The problem of Jesus' "messianic consciousness" has, although understandably so, been for too long a "red herring" of biblical studies. Did he claim to be, think himself to be, the expected Messiah? Did he even speculate about his own person in these or any other categories? The historian knows that the evidence permits no certain answer. Many, along with Prof. Fuller, conclude that he did not. But surely, now, we can lay this ghost to rest — and permanently. For it can be demonstrated, quite apart from what Jesus may or may not have thought, that the church's confession of him as the Christ was impelled by his ministry and person.

This book is the best brief treatment of the New Testament miracles known to the reviewer. There are places where it is almost too succinct and cryptic. It deserves both clarification and expansion.

— O. SYDNEY BARR

*Dr. Barr is associate professor in New Testament, General Theological Seminary, New York.*

## BOOK NOTES

*The Christian Yes — or No*, by E. Spencer Parsons. Judson. \$1.50

A perceptive and honest study of the task and problems of evangelism in the contemporary situation is here presented for individual reading or for training of groups for personal contacts. The writer, now pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church, in Chicago, was for 12 years associated with Dr. Samuel H. Miller, now dean of Harvard Divinity School, in a ministry to the academic community in Cambridge.

*How to Study Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon and How to Teach Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*, by Joseph M. Gettys. John Knox. \$1.50 and \$1

Another set in the study series covering most of the canonical books, for study groups.

*The Three R's of Christianity*. By Jack Finegan. John Knox. \$1.75

A credible, intelligible, and convincing presentation of the central elements of the Christian faith is here offered by the professor of New Testament history at the Pacific School of Religion. Writing for the ordinary reader, but in such a way as "not to lose the sense that it is, with great matters, indeed with vast mysteries" that we are dealing, the author gives a brief, but comprehensive, account of the meaning and being of revelation, redemption, the Redeemer.

For this purpose Dr. Finegan brings into focus the work of the best commentators in contemporary biblical learning and theology, constructively and irenically. He has penetrated deeply into the significance of these central doctrines, and his earnest concern that they may have a living impact is conveyed to the reader.

*Agents of Reconciliation*. By Arnold B. Come. Westminster. \$1.95

A revised and enlarged edition of this book, in which Dr. Come develops the thesis that the Christian Church is ready for a new reformation, in which all, without the traditional distinctions between clergy and laity, must be enabled to be agents of reconciliation, and hence bearer's of the church's mission, is now available in paperback. In a new concluding chapter he analyzes the appraisals currently undertaken of the church's freedom — in terms of its bonds to physical circumstances, class isolation, maintenance of social *status quo*, and submission to general cultural ideology — to develop and propound, as its mission to the world, its own ethic of reconciliation.

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