

longer considered desirable; indeed, Federal money is now available for just the opposite. In the ecology of identities, ethnic identities for certain purposes and in certain contexts began to serve individuals better than a general American identity."

VII.

History does not stand still: a certain aspect of Professor Glazer's theme, which he has not treated in this book, casts further shadows on the problem of equality and civic unity. Most Americans familiar with our experience as a nation of immigrants probably still consider the main chapters of this to be already written. We ask how we who *have come here*, or whose ancestors once came, can get along with each other; what are the principles of our coexistence? The past and

present dominate our discussion. *We* are the subjects and objects.

But the experience is not over. As the U.S. Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization recently said, "In the next three decades, it is expected that new immigrants and their descendants will total 15 million, or 25 percent of the total population increase. Immigration... has now emerged again as a significant factor affecting the number of persons who reside in the United States."

The earlier waves of migrants came chiefly from Africa, Europe, Japan, and China. The new ones will come chiefly from Latin America and from other parts of Asia. As these trends continue, so will America tend toward the condition once prophetically foreseen for it—a microcosm of the whole world's nations; the nation of nations. If this is to be so, those

who make and think of our civic policy might ask whether the America to which the newcomers come will be able to absorb them if it is already torn by an ethnic militancy based upon officially encouraged rivalries among those already here. It might also be asked whether the traditional, and also quite revolutionary, ethic of civic America—one which judges individuals on their merits rather than on their skin color—may not be the ethic which best supplies both the cement for a viable enduring nation, rekindling faith in a civic culture transcending tribes, and attuned to the best possibilities for the "spaceship earth." There is no reason why America's destiny must follow that of the Ottoman Empire; and I assume that Professor Glazer has written this book as an act of commitment and faith that it will not. □

Book Reviews/Andrew M. Greeley and Anne Roche

Two Views of Muggeridge's Jesus

I. Review by Andrew Greeley:

Malcolm Muggeridge's *Jesus* is embarrassing. Beautifully printed and illustrated in color prints of marvelous paintings—some of which will be quite new to most readers—the book is a statement of Muggeridge's personal faith in the traditional Jesus. His commitment to the "traditional" Jesus is flung in the face of an unbelieving world of scientific enlightenment without the slightest hesitation or propensity to compromise. Hereon Muggeridge stands; he can do no other. Unfortunately, the reader will easily get the impression that between the Jesus of Muggeridge and the Jesus of *Superstar* there is no choice. It is not merely that these options are fundamental, they are also fundamentalist: the simple Christ of the hippies, the simple Christ of the demythologizers, or the simple Christ of Muggeridge's traditional faith.

One cannot fault Muggeridge, of course, for his own style of faith; nor can one fault him for expressing that faith in public. It's a free country and, we hope, a free church. But one can fault a writer of Muggeridge's intelligence and sophistication for not recognizing apparently that there is an alternative Jesus to the one presented by his traditional piety, a Jesus who is well within the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy and who is much more attractive to those men and women of good will for whom Muggeridge's traditional pieties are simply not enough.

The Jesus of the sophisticated Scripture scholars is a more impressive person than the Jesus of the traditional piety. Such scholarship has gone far beyond the debunkers and the demythologizers in

presenting a portrait of Jesus which is deeply challenging and profoundly religious. The work of such writers as Gunther Bornkaam, Joachim Jeremias, and Reginald Fuller, for example, has as much piety as Muggeridge and a good deal more sophistication.

It is not merely that the sophistication of the Scripture scholars enables them to deal more adequately with the problems of the unbelievers, though that is not an unimportant point. Their Jesus is also a

Jesus: The Man Who Lives

by Malcolm Muggeridge
Harper & Row \$17.95

much more powerful Jesus for believers. The Muggeridge book is reassuring and comforting; it tells us, in effect, that if we merely put aside our modern scientific problems and return to the simple faith of the past, everything else will be taken care of. The challenge of Jesus is essentially one of accepting what science thinks is impossible. Once you have made the leap the rest is relatively easy.

But if you begin your analysis of Jesus with his parables, as do the literary form people, and come into contact with the hard kernel of the world view of Jesus, you are required to believe not the impossible but the highly improbable—which is far more difficult. In the parable of the "crazy farmer," for example, we see that Jesus is saying that the love of

God is so powerful that He behaves toward us in a manner which if it were to be observed among humans would be judged a sign of lunacy. By human standards, the Ground of the Universe is madly in love with His creatures. The same point is made in the parable of the loving father (incorrectly named the parable of the prodigal son) where all the emphasis is on the father's love and not the son's prodigality. If you accept this world view of Jesus—a view of a universe animated by a lunatic love—then nothing is easy; for you have to live the same way in the midst of all of life's confusions and uncertainties. The God of the parables is "too good to be true," and hence He is terribly disturbing.

In a very real sense, contemporary Scripture scholarship brings us closer to the world view and teaching of Jesus than anyone (save for the mystics, perhaps) has been since Jesus' own time. It has become a powerful asset to the church, and does not deserve to be ignored in what purports to be a major book on Jesus (judged by its size, cost, and production). Muggeridge may have reinforced the faith—and the prejudice—of traditional Christians, but he has not, I think, done the churches any great favor. They can make a much better case then he has made.

As an example of the better case, one might consult *The Challenge of Jesus* by the brilliant young Catholic theologian John Shea (Chicago: Thomas More Press). This book yields nothing to Muggeridge in either orthodoxy or devotion, but it does two things which are essential and to which Muggeridge makes no con-

tribution: it stirs Christians out of the self-satisfied complacencies of their verbal formulations, and it stirs agnostics out of the self-satisfied complacencies of their bland indifference.

I'm sorry, but that is, I think, the work of the church. And the work of Jesus. □

II. Review by Anne Roche:

It is quite common to hear people speaking, with either satisfaction or despair, according to their prejudices, of how we live in "the post-Christian era." Certainly there seems to be a lot of evidence to support that observation. When an America given to proclaiming "In God We Trust" now forbids its children to address Him in its schools, or when Britain's Established Churchmen help vote in abortion on demand, one may be forgiven for concluding that the Christian ages are indeed ended.

At any rate, the Christian revelation seems to have lost its ability to animate and direct the civilization it created. And if this is so, even the most optimistic atheist should fear for that civilization's prospects, for whatever world view replaces the Christian one will necessarily produce its own different society. A powerful and seductive new revelation already prevails in a large part of the world that was never Christian, and in a large part that once was. China. Indochina. Russia. Eastern Europe, much of Latin America. Give it ten years, prophesies Henry Kissinger, and it will have prevailed over Europe.

Civilizations do perish. Perhaps ours is about to; perhaps even it deserves to. But it had its moments of glory, some of which are remembered in a beautiful new book about our society's reason for existing, *Jesus: The Man Who Lives*, by British journalist, author, and television personality Malcolm Muggeridge. Those high points of our culture that we troop about Europe to admire, the pictures and manuscripts, the panels, altars, doors, and capitals, appear humbly here as illustrations to a biography, and one suddenly realizes what they were really meant to be, not decoration, but *illumination*, in the true sense of the word. Candles held up to the face of truth. The exquisite Nativities—by Geertgen tot Sint Jans, by the Master of Konstanz, by Frederico Barocci—in which the light pouring from the Person of the Christ Child illumines the darkness, reflecting from men's faces and the eyes of animals and domestic objects (in one case a laundry basket) are meditations on the Incarnation of God. The light they mirror is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Our civilization is, or has been, an extended comment on His Coming, a celebration of "the most stupendous event in human history," the Birth of Christ, His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

The author of *Jesus* readily admits that if he had been born in Mecca or Bangkok

he might think differently, but as a child of that civilization which still, despite Madalyn Murray O'Hair, counts its age from The Year of Our Lord, he concludes "that whatever is truly admirable in the achievements of the succeeding centuries, in art and literature, in music and architecture, in the quest for knowledge and in the pursuit of justice and brotherliness in human relations, derives from that same event" and that "the revelation Jesus provided... of the true purpose and destination of our earthly existence [is] of unique and everlasting validity."

Jesus is an account of the events of Christ's life and teachings, by a man who came late in life to an acceptance of the Christian revelation, having tried and rejected the alternatives. Readers of his recent volumes of autobiography will recall

his odyssey, from childhood in an ardent Socialist family (as a boy he spoke at political meetings), through a brief love affair with Soviet Communism (he burnt his dinner jacket and his marriage lines and emigrated to Russia), into a lifelong war against Marxist savagery; through a considerable measure of worldly success, to the surrender of *Jesus Rediscovered*. It took a long time, and like one of his heroes, St. Paul, he kicked against the goad. At the beginning of my acquaintance with him, 16 years ago, he wrote to me that although he had long considered the Christian explanation of the human condition to be the most satisfying and comforting of all man's attempts in that direction, he could not embrace it, though he envied those who could. He never did join any church—he dislikes institutional-

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ized religion. He admits to no Damascus Road conversion. Yet now he finds himself able to assert that "Jesus's claim to be the Light of the World, and his related promise that through him we may be reborn into new men, liberated from the ego and our appetites into the glorious liberty of the children of God" seem to him to be "indisputably true." The pull of the Light was ultimately irresistible.

The passion of the convert, the ardor of the new lover, are unforgettably served here by a very great English prose stylist at his brilliant best. *Jesus* is a remarkable book—reverent, witty, fresh, moving, prophetic. Muggeridge accepts the Gospels as historical, that is, he takes their word that the Virgin Birth, the miracles, the Resurrection, did actually happen. At the same time, he is scornful of the "quest for the historical Jesus" which inevitably leads away from truth into fatuity, and he will have none of the modern Bultmann-style demythologizing. The in-

consistencies and problems of the Gospel accounts merely assure him of their truth. How quickly, the old journalist remarks, could an editor have tidied them up if a neat plausible story was what was wanted.

He refuses, too, to become entangled in theological argument, though he sometimes must, as must all post-Reformation Christians who speak about Christ, choose between explanations. Thus he is Catholic in his adoration of the Nativity: "...a real baby, wrinkled and wizened and full of wind... and a doting mother to offer her breast." And he chooses the Protestant over the Roman Catholic and Orthodox answers to the questions of Mary's perpetual virginity and Christ's continuing Presence in the Eucharist. The "tremendous certainties" are in the end what matter to the nontheologian, not the minor "dubieties about the precise circumstances." "Either Jesus never was or he still is," Muggeridge concludes

in a ringing act of faith. "As a typical product of these confused times, with a sceptical mind and a sensual disposition, diffidently and unworthily, but with the utmost certainty, I assert that he still is."

He has illuminated for us a "Jesus for our times" though he would reject that phrase himself. For this bad time needs not the vapid Superstar Jesus, nor the Che Guevara Jesus, but the Jesus of the Gospels, strong, ironic, passionate and compassionate, scornful of power and riches, suffering unto death, "demanding everything and enduring everything." Only for such a One could a man consider trying to live such difficult teachings, only for God Incarnate. "After all, who but God would have dared to ask of men what he asked of them?"

Believers meeting Jesus here will love Him more; I cannot recommend, apart from the Gospels, a better place for the unbeliever to encounter Him. □

The Bootblack Stand



by George
Washington
Plunkitt

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

We've got trouble. *Time* made me the cover story of its May 10 issue. It described me as humorless, ambitious, religious—but in favor of drink on the Sabbath—single-minded, ambitious, guilty of "occasional self-righteousness," ambitious, rigid, and possessing a sharply intelligent and ambitious mind. It mentioned that when angered I become cold and methodical and more ambitious. It told of how I fixed my political ambitions years ago, and divulged that three years ago my advisers and I laid out a "careful, detailed, meticulous" plan to capture the Presidency. I know they thought it was a favorable job for they think of me as the next JFK; they even used that P.R. stuff about my listening to Shostakovich, reading Faulkner, and meditating on Kierkegaard. But then came the real trouble.

On May 7 Rabbi Korff appears at my campaign headquarters, and announces that I am about to "receive the public endorsement of someone really big." On May 8 Ziegler is calling and saying the announcement will come any day. Now I hear that the Committee to Reelect the President is buying prime time TV so "America's greatest living ex-President

can make known the name of the man who most closely approximates his political philosophy and style." What can I do to prevent this catastrophe? How much will it cost us? Can they keep him quiet until the election? If we don't act soon the press won't have Jimmy Carter to kick around anymore.

—Cordially,
Mr. Jimmy Carter

Dear Mr. Carter:

It is a riveting commentary on the horrible perils of American political life when an outsider who has devoted much of his public life to the single-minded, pragmatic pursuit of the Presidency can be blown out of the water by the possible endorsement of an outsider whose single-minded, pragmatic pursuit of the Presidency won him just that. Have you ever considered simply stonewalling it?

—GWP

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

Since the Watergate hearings I have received many polite inquiries from budding politicians and celebrities wishing to

know if it is possible that I might have overlooked them when I revealed the White House enemies list. Several have let it be known that it might be financially worth my while were I to discover their names on a special list that I overlooked in all of the excitement. What do you make of these letters?

—Sincerely,
John Dean

Dear Mr. Dean:

A gold mine, my boy! Your White House enemies list conferred instant celebrity on many mediocre nobodies. On some it conferred the modern equivalent of sainthood. Take these individuals up on their offers. Announce that you have discovered an especially hot list behind some old CREEP memorabilia. In the years to come you may be able to make some boodle by publishing yearly lists of promising pols whom you would certainly have included on your enemies list back in the salad days of the Nixon Administration.

Don't let the grass grow under your feet.

—GWP