

PEACE

REDISCOVERING GOD
Our International Treasure

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	5
INVOCATION	9
INTRODUCTION	11
I. Treasure at The Doorstep: Eugene Del Mar, John Henry Titus	21
II. Out Beyond Harlem: Charles S. Braden, <i>These also Believe</i>	32
III. Infinite Goodness: William M. Kephart, <i>Extraordinary Groups</i>	47
IV. Secret Following: Arthur H. Fauset, <i>B---- Gods of the Metropolis</i>	66
V. Both Bread and Joy: Kenneth E. Burnham, <i>God Comes to America</i>	74
VI. The Spellbinder: Ronald M. White, Thesis, <i>New Thought Influences on FATHER DIVINE</i>	98
VII. American Messiah: Roma Barnes, <i>"Blessings Flowing Free"</i>	145
VIII. Exemplifier of the American Way: Robert Weisbrot, <i>FATHER DIVINE And The Struggle For Racial Equality</i>	162
IX. Early Fruit: Clippings from <i>The New Day</i>	181
X. The Last Sermon: Clippings from <i>The New Day</i>	210
XI. Quality Of Life: Clippings from <i>The New Day</i>	222
XII. Peaceful Paradise of the Pacific: Charles LeWarne's Article, <i>"FATHER DIVINE'S Peaceful Paradise of the Pacific"</i>	251
XIII. "I Will Never Forget Him": Tributes to FATHER DIVINE	263
XIV. A World Set Apart: MRS. M. J. DIVINE, Better Known as MOTHER DIVINE, <i>The Peace Mission Movement</i>	273
XV. Stream of the Spirit: Exodus	293

FOREWORD

PEACE!

As one of the dumb things of the earth, it was wonderful to enter this world under the darkness of War, Racism, Segregation, Discrimination and Oppression by some of the brutes of this Civilization--to matriculate through various segregated and integrated Educational Institutions beyond the Graduate Level, and to be trained in Christianity as it was understood.

The Spirit blessed me to become victorious in numerous arenas--the Business World, Sports World, Academic World, Military World and the Religious World.

After twenty five years of Christianity, the Spirit led me into twenty five years of in-depth study and practice of Buddhism, where I helped lead thousands into the Faith.

Upon returning to an intense study of the teachings of Jesus the CHRIST, the Spirit led me to the Mountain Top and introduced me to the Words, Deeds and Actions of the "DIVINE FATHER," FATHER DIVINE. Then my spiritual eyes were opened to the coming of the FATHER, Who had sent the Son!

FATHER DIVINE'S Deeds and Actions are too stout to be denied! They have their impact on the world. However, many of small, limited minds of prejudice and ignorance, preconceived ideas and opinions in the guise of the press, writers, historians, et cetera, have tried to mislead the masses and cover light with darkness.

They made a deliberate effort to belittle, discredit, distort, ridicule and flat out lie about the Greatest Work ever done for Mankind in this Civilization. Ultimately, these enemies of the people--thieves and robbers all--did not and could not tell the Truth, for the Truth was not in them. However, the Law is strict. They shall get their just rewards.

All the world should know about the One Who Blessed the people, fed tens of millions of people during the Great Depression--more than ten thousand per day in New York City alone--healed the sick, raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, and made the lame to walk!

HE sacrificed His Body thirty two times to lynch mobs in the south-- once for each year that Jesus was on earth--to stop the lynching of Africans in America, and to Redeem the Nation with a New Birth of Freedom under GOD. The Truth is eternally the Truth, yesterday, today and forever!

Now one has come forth and taken up the challenge to shed light on and refute these agents of darkness who have slandered FATHER DIVINE, to raise a Standard based on Righteousness, Justice and Truth. Mr. LaVere Belstrom has done a wonderful job in writing this book and has presented verifiable facts exposing those who committed intellectual and professional fraud. This book affords an opportunity for all to know the Truth, especially those who were victimized by the wicked ones.

I have known Mr. Belstrom for about twelve years. He is a self-denied individual with high qualifications academically and in real life practical experience, being a staunch advocate of True Americanism and the Spiritual Principles upon which America was founded. He is a

devoted advocate of the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution with its Bill of Rights.

In addition, Mr. Belstrom has spent more than fifty years studying and researching the Works and Teachings of FATHER DIVINE. And witnessed His work up close He has had substantial personal exposure to FATHER DIVINE and witnessed His Work up close.

I pray that you read this book and be greatly blessed!

Aaron Hermes Enaharo

INVOCATION

Dedicated to
REVEREND MAJOR J. DIVINE, Ms. D., D.D.,
Exponent of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST,
Better known as FATHER DIVINE
And His Matchless, Virgin Bride,
MRS. M. J. "SWEET ANGEL" DIVINE,
Better known as MOTHER DIVINE
For Their consistent, untiring, Superhuman efforts
over a period of many years,
to lift Humanity out of the prison of mortality
into living Glorious, Spiritual, Lives
of Peace, Love, Joy and Tranquility as
True Children of GOD!

INTRODUCTION

To be sure, one of the delights of "dog-dom" must be snuffling the earth for a deposited bone, excavating for it, and at length clamping jaws on the mouth-watering tidbit and settling down to a blissful session of gnawing, and reflecting on the dividends of retrieving a treasure.

No less, humans sometimes cache an object or an idea which was not appropriate for use at the moment, or which was thought to be no-account, only to disinter it later to find that they had buried a bonanza.

The interest in FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement that is currently surfacing illustrates the point. Thousands of people--perhaps millions--have heard of FATHER DIVINE during the last hundred-odd years, but were not ready at that time to acclaim HIM for some reason, or they discarded HIM as being of no consequence.

Presently, many of these people are experiencing the irradiation of rediscovering FATHER DIVINE through one avenue or another. Other people, especially the younger, who have not heard the Name of FATHER DIVINE, are discovering HIM with amazement and elation. This book will introduce FATHER DIVINE to the latter and flood the ken of the former with bright memories.

This book has as its title *Rediscovering GOD*. Perhaps the reader will be of the opinion that the author is being audacious and presumptuous in it. Nonetheless, on occasion, it is enlightening to view a venerable concept

with the intent to "rediscover" it by an unorthodox approach. Followers of FATHER DIVINE say positively that HE is GOD. Therefore, this work can be said to be written as a means of rediscovering FATHER DIVINE.

This volume endeavors to assist the seeker in rediscovery, or discovery whichever, by leading the explorer through the dank welter of denigrating books and articles written on the Peace Mission Movement to the sunlight of the enlightened works, which dwell on the positiveness of mainly FATHER DIVINE'S sociological and religious posture. There has been a mass of writings of every description on the REVEREND M. J. DIVINE since the beginning of the twentieth century, and it has been uniformly negative with few exceptions.

Much of this literature is acrid with bias as though there was a Hydra monster loose in the gloom of the land, each of its many venomous heads spewing a different poison. Most of the literature--if indeed it merits being called literature--disparages FATHER DIVINE mercilessly.

In later years, maltreatment of FATHER DIVINE by early writers has been recognized by a few investigators who are fair-minded and who readily give credit where it has been earned. William Kephart decries disparagement of FATHER DIVINE. He writes that there are "Gross differences" between the reporting of these early writers--who were only journalists, not trained sociological investigators. Their knowledge of FATHER DIVINE is "decidedly spotty": *"References, research sources, and general documentation are largely lacking. The methodology is not rigorous, and there are time gaps in the narratives. It is hardly surprising that there are some sharp discrepancies among the various*

accounts. In brief, they are popular books--no more, no less." (Extraordinary Groups, New York: St. Martin's Press, Second Edition, 1982, 160-161) Not much credence or respectability can be given to the scoffers' stories. News about FATHER DIVINE was overblown.

To the popular press, GOD and His angels were good copy, and reporters played up what seemed to them the circus like aspects. As Dr. Kephart said, *"they tended to look upon him as a showman. But while the movement doubtless had its ostentatious aspects, reporters conveniently overlooked the fact that Father Divine was a man of character and principle. A principle, according to the dictionary, is a guiding sense of right conduct, a proposed rule of action or conduct; and this definition aptly characterizes Father Divine's deportment. He believed strongly in certain maxims or canons, and both his life and his movement were based on them. In his thousands of deeds and words--most of the latter being preserved for posterity--he never once altered his position or changed his principles."* (192)

After 1965, the scoffers predicted that the Movement would quickly fall apart, but history has vindicated FATHER DIVINE. Kephart smugly insists that His "competitors" fell away. *"Decade after decade they sallied forth, only to be whirled back."* (178) FATHER DIVINE'S detractors are all but forgotten, whereas the Peace Mission Movement is very much extant. Far from being a dead Movement, FATHER DIVINE'S Peace Missions have been active in many foreign countries, holding meetings and serving Holy Communion Banquets, recognizing FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE'S Presence, even during the war years. These are some of the

countries where followers of FATHER DIVINE gathered--Australia, Austria, Canada, England, France, Germany, New Zealand, Panama, Switzerland, and a few of the South American countries around the Caribbean Sea.

Much of the literature on the REVEREND M. J. DIVINE, better known as FATHER DIVINE, is hearsay or based on hearsay. Some of the writings, if they be scrutinized carefully, compared with other scurrilous accounts, weighed with just plain common sense, and contemplated with a sense of decency and justice, will be recognized as mere fabrication.

It is not the purpose of *Rediscovering GOD* to waste the time of either the writer or the reader by scrutinizing, comparing, weighing and contemplating these offbeat writings. They will "wane of their own abnormal weight" as FATHER DIVINE has said--and slink back into the murky twilight from which they originally crept.

On the other side of the ledger are other journalists, such as Kephart, whose finely tuned insights, as well as their sagacious evaluation of apocalyptic happenings, revealed to them the profundity and transcendence of FATHER DIVINE. The accounts written by these sages are a refreshing diversion from the claptrap that was written earlier--long overdue.

Several writers have seen a gleaming light in the Peace Mission Movement. One of the earliest was the late Charles Braden, erstwhile Professor of the History and Literature of Religion at Northwestern University, who included a long chapter on the Movement in one of his books. Also in the forties was Arthur Fauset, whose book, based on his

doctoral dissertation, contains sections devoted to the Movement. Then came an extended hiatus until William Kephart wrote the book quoted above, which included a hefty chapter on the Movement. Kephart, now retired, was then Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania.

Subsequently a book appeared, the entire contents of which dealt with the socio-religious phases of FATHER DIVINE'S groups, written by Kenneth Burnham, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Temple University, as an outgrowth of his Doctor of Philosophy degree. Ronald White wrote a thesis in 1980 at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, to compare New Thought Teachings with those of the Founder, Sole Bishop, and Sole Pastor of the Peace Mission Movement. In view of the mass of existing negative literature on FATHER DIVINE, it was a happy surprise that Mr. White endeavored to break the trend, to produce a positive work on this most Commanding Figure on the religious scene. Roma Barnes fashioned a vast two-volume dissertation at the University of York in England on the several facets of the Peace Mission Movement. A questionable work then appeared, written by Robert Weisbrot, a Harvard graduate who is Professor of History at Colby College. The latest book is even more questionable. It is by Jill Watts, Assistant Professor of History at California State University at San Marcos.

There is something to applaud in all of these works. These investigators were not hoodwinked by the abundance of flak aimed at FATHER DIVINE. Shining through the clouds of censure was His determination to lift the people by teaching them to trust in their recognition

and realization of the actual Presence of GOD being with them and within them at all times. These writers saw this light and were attracted to it, as their writings show.

In addition to seeing this Light, they saw as the Source of the Light the beloved figure of FATHER DIVINE, and they accorded HIM a deference never shown to another. They described HIM as having supernatural powers and charismatic authority--a Person of "infinite goodness" who "furnished both bread and Joy!" Never was a natural man, no matter how great, been so characterized. These investigators were impregnated with the Presence of the incarnation of Deity-- some more, some less. Their impressions will assist the reader in rediscovering FATHER DIVINE.

This writer does not by any means endorse everything that these authors wrote about the Peace Mission Movement, however. There are what seem to be inaccuracies and misconceptions and a persistent proclivity to evaluate FATHER DIVINE and the Movement through eyes of a materialist, as though HE is embodying materialism as an ordinary man would embody it. Such an evaluation is useful up to a point, but since the Movement is essentially a spiritual movement at its core, a sound assessment of it can be produced only by perceiving it through spiritual eyes.

There is only one book that has been written from a spiritual standpoint--the only book that is endorsed by the Peace Mission Churches. It is written by MRS. M. J. DIVINE, better known as MOTHER DIVINE. It has emerged opportunely to satisfy the searching of those who are

rediscovering the world of FATHER DIVINE. MOTHER DIVINE'S book is discussed in a subsequent chapter.

When the news of FATHER DIVINE'S seemingly impossible achievements burst upon the world in the thirties, the printed media naturally stayed hot on His trail as any eager newspaper bloodhound would. The papers ran many bizarre tales, but other stories were very fair. This book would be derelict if some of these eye-witness reports were not a part of it. They are records of how some reporters interacted with what FATHER DIVINE was doing--reports that are appealing as well as factual, as the reader will discover later in *Rediscovering GOD* . There is also the story of an island on the Pacific coast which was for some time an outpost of the *Peace Mission Movement*.

It is probably not possible for a non-follower to report accurately on the Movement. He or she may assess some facets of it properly, but not the whole. It is difficult even for followers to describe the Movement. FATHER DIVINE'S remarks in 1948 on this score are revealing. HE said to a writer who wished to interpret the Peace Mission Movement through the perception of an outsider looking in, *"But when individuals desire--in the which the most of the newspaper men do--desire to get something from their personal point of view, and as you say, from your viewpoint or from their viewpoint, you cannot see the significance of the Truth when you are not a part of it."* (MOTHER DIVINE, *The Peace Mission Movement*, Philadelphia: A D F D Publications, 1982. 115)

It is as a person trying to write an instruction book that will teach people how to swim when the person writing the book cannot swim. The person is simply "not a part of it."

Writers do not get the true story because "*They did not seek it from a spiritual point of view, but they merely sought it from a literary point of view.*" (116)

FATHER DIVINE told Charles Braden point blank in 1945, "*A person should not write unless they are unbiased, absolutely unbiased, and at a place in consciousness where they could and would receive the Spirit of your Humble Servant. You can learn. As I often say to many other writers, they cannot write of ME rightfully saving by My Spirit. ...No man could be fair. ...The only way to write of a person is to partake of that person's spirit.*"(116)

The way of Peace is not to stress points of difference but to emblazon the elements of agreement. Therefore it would not be productive, in this volume, to go nit-picking among the works on FATHER DIVINE. Rather, it is more constructive to find and dwell upon elements of harmony. This platform of concord can then eventually be enlarged to support other points of harmony.

In show-casing the positive aspects of these works, some of the elevating precepts of the New Thought Movement will come into focus, for the reason that most writers hasten to equate them with Peace Mission philosophy, Ronald White in particular. Also, much of the Teachings of FATHER DIVINE will automatically be woven into the text as unavoidable spin-off from discussion by the several authors.

In reviewing the literature, this author has taken excursions into phases which the writers being studied did not mention--phases which seemed to the author to be relative to what these writers presented, and as being

enlightening to a consideration and an awareness of FATHER DIVINE and His thoughts, as well as being an aid to the reader in the process of rediscovering HIM. These excursions are not labeled as such but appear as logical supplements so that it may be impossible to determine which phase is original with these journalists and which is injected by the author. The reader is encouraged to read these authors to determine first hand where the author strayed from the subject of the original text.

Writings by these scribes are spotlighted in *Rediscovering GOD* for the reason that it may be interesting for the reading public, rather than listen to what followers say, to hear what others say about FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement. Some of the followers are thought to be radical and chauvinistic, and hence, their testimony is not always accepted as reliable. Whereas the documentation given by non-followers who are indubitable authorities will not be taken lightly.

Every right-minded individual will agree that GOD is a Priceless, International Treasure, to be Worshiped and put upon a Pedestal above all else. The major prophet Isaiah said it best--As the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are GOD'S Ways and Thoughts higher than our ways and thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9) FATHER DIVINE'S Followers are steadfast in their hearts, minds and souls that HE is GOD. Consequently we can state that HE is also a veritable Treasure to be rediscovered. *Rediscovering GOD* is presented herewith.

FATHER DIVINE is known best in the countries where there are or have been Peace Mission Churches or Extensions, but His Name and fame has gone elsewhere

into the far reaches of the globe. Visitors to the United States, even from the outposts, inquire with worshipful veneration about FATHER DIVINE, with rediscovery as their intent. If the voices of all the people in the world who in this day have love and reverence for FATHER DIVINE in their hearts would come together, there would be heard a mighty chorus from this multitude in glorification of One Who has brought Peace and Hope to them--One Who has blazed a trail through forests of prejudice, One Who has brought healing to the sick of mind and body, enlightenment to the ignorant, and inspiration to those reaching for illumination.

The original title of this volume was *Rediscovering FATHER DIVINE*. Be that as it may however, upon reflection, it became apparent that in rediscovering FATHER DIVINE, the reader would rediscover GOD simultaneously in a novel manner. Many people in the world are aware that FATHER DIVINE'S Faithful Followers assert beyond the faintest shadow of doubt that HE is GOD Personified in His Body. As a consequence, rediscovering FATHER DIVINE as GOD is, *ipso facto*, also rediscovering GOD. Accordingly, the title was forthwith revised to *Rediscovering GOD--Our International Treasure!*

CHAPTER I

TREASURE AT THE DOORSTEP

An Eye of Light

Ali Hafed was restless. He squirmed and twisted on his damask-covered four- poster and stared at the brocaded canopy over his sleepless couch. At intervals he squinted beyond floor-to-ceiling draperied casements of his retiring room, fretting irritably that the sun climbed so sluggishly to streak the sky and wake creation.

Twenty-four hours earlier, Ali Hafed, the Persian gentleman farmer, was serene. He lived many years ago near the Indus River which flowed from Tibet through Kashmir, Ali Hafed's home, and thence through Pakistan to the Arabian Sea. He was content because he was wealthy-- and wealthy because he was content. But the old priest of his Buddhist temple by chance told him how precious diamonds were and that, if he had a diamond mine, he would have power over kings and queens.

Visions of himself as lord over the earth was like a hypodermic that shot unrest into Ali's hitherto peaceful arteries. Every pulse-beat hammered his brain-- *"diamonds, power, diamonds, power, diamonds... diamonds..."* His cupidity obsessed him. He could think of nothing but *"diamonds, power, diamonds, power."*

Then the mind-burst! Quivering with desire, the decision crashed through his mind. Galvanized into chase of his

obsession, he sold everything he owned and set out to unearth a diamond mine.

The pursuit of his fantasy, properly enough, began at the Mountain of the Moon. From there Ali Hafed explored mountains and valleys, hills and plains to no avail. He scoured the earth up and down, to and fro, from ocean to ocean, and from land to land, with the maddening drum-beat at his temples, "diamonds, power, diamonds, power, diamonds, power..." but he blindly clung to his dream.

At length his money was gone. Ali Hafed stood a hopeless wretch in rags and abject poverty on the rocky ocean shore. His chagrin flamed into seething remorse and uncontrolled brooding. He could bear himself no longer. At that moment, a mountainous wave rolled in, and in frustrated desperation, Ali Hafed flung himself into it, sinking beneath its foaming crest, a bitter mortal lost in eternity.

While his camel was drinking from the brook in his garden, the man who purchased Ali Hafed's farm noticed a black stone with an eye of light that reflected a full rainbow of colors. He picked it up, put it on the mantel of his fireplace and forgot it.

Later, the same Buddhist priest who talked of diamonds came to visit the man. The moment he came into the room, the priest saw the flash of light from the eye of the stone, and rushed to examine it as he blurted, "This is a diamond! Has Ali Hafed returned?" His host replied, "No--Ali Hafed has not returned--and that is not a diamond, but just a stone from the garden." The old priest cried out, "That is a diamond! I tell you I know a diamond when I see one!"

Together they rushed out into Ali Hafed's garden to find diamond after diamond, each larger and more dazzling than the first. Thus was discovered the Golconda mine--the richest ever found. The crown jewels of England and Russia--the largest on earth--came from that mine right at Ali Hafed's doorstep.

Had he taken stock of the treasure that lay at his feet and evaluated it with appreciation and understanding, Ali would have been rich beyond measure, because every acre of his farm yielded precious gems. But he was blind to the blessings at his finger-tips, and dashed off pell-mell to seek his fortune at the other end of the earth and hence came to a tragic, sorrowful end.

Readers will recognize that story from Russell Conwell's little book, *Acres of Diamonds*. He was a clergyman, born in 1843, six years before the Gold Rush to California, who became president of Temple University in Philadelphia around 1900. Conwell gave the famous speech contained in the little book so many times that it became a classic. Its message is as timely now as ever. Its place in this book is to emphasize how often a person will assume that there is nothing at hand at that place where he or she is which offers a base upon which to build a richer life.

So it has been with thousands of people who have heard of, read of, listened to, dined with and/or talked with FATHER DIVINE. As with Ali Hafed, they did not investigate with perspicacity and intellectual or spiritual curiosity the good ground around them where FATHER DIVINE walked and talked, and which HE suffused with opportunity to gain a foothold in Heaven here on earth. They passed over HIM. They passed over the Eye of Light--the diamond in the

stone--to forage in barren places--thereby missing their blessing as Ali did.

Shuttered Eyes

Rediscovery of FATHER DIVINE is presently in the air, however. This book will abet the aroused mind in the process. This contemporary resurgence of interest in the Ministry of REVEREND M. J. DIVINE is ill-served by most of the early writings. Some writings are so deprecatory that they would at least discourage, if not suffocate, any effort at rediscovering.

Some writers were content to describe what appeared on the surface, as they attended a Peace Mission Holy Communion Banquet, a Praise Service, or a Righteous Government Meeting, much as one would witness a parade, with only the shallowest empathy for the proceedings. Other writers looked upon the proceedings, not through rose-colored glasses, but through brittle, hard-nosed lenses of materialism. They saw only ulterior motives in what FATHER DIVINE said and did.

Writers rode the bruising, searing juggernaut of prejudice to sensational stories which they assumed would disintegrate and eventually grind FATHER DIVINE and His activities into oblivion. Some, jeering at the unorthodox Teachings of FATHER DIVINE, and which were heightened by the ebullient devotion of His adherents, rode the equally bruising, searing juggernaut of derision to rowdy accounts, through the mockery of which they held FATHER DIVINE up to the world as a charlatan.

These writers saw in the activities of FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission only a multi-ringed circus--with its

performing bears, whirling Harlequins, precision- obedient dogs and horses, master-minded by the Ringmaster cracking his long, serpentine whip. To them it was a good show. They did not see the fertile depths and lush beauty of the forest because of the trees. Their eyes were shuttered with earthy scales--their minds obsessed with only what fluttered in the immediate foreground.

They missed the substance and caught the shadow. They missed the spiritual essence of the endeavor. Both FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE have declared that the Peace Mission is a spiritual Movement, notwithstanding its other facets. Anyone who does not perceive that the fundamental Foundation of the Movement is spiritual has lost the heritage that the Movement has for everyone.

There were some few investigators from the forties and later such as those cited in the Introduction who were more just and reasonable in their journalism. It is the purpose of *Rediscovering GOD* to spotlight the output of these writers so as to make the process of rediscovery easier for the student. There was a breath of recognition and appreciation of FATHER DIVINE however, over seventy years ago by a highly distinguished gentleman.

Eugene Del Mar

Who's Who in America, in the early Twentieth Century, lists a mining engineer as Alexander Del Mar, who was also a prolific author and historian. He sired three sons, Algernon, William and Eugene. Algernon, like his father, was a mining engineer. William was an electrical engineer and both were authors as well. The senior Del Mar and all three sons were carried in *Who's Who* for a good span of years.

Eugene, for instance, was listed for seventeen years, 1926 to 1943.

Eugene Del Mar earned a reputation as author, lecturer, lawyer, stock broker, business man, banker and editor, being admitted to the bar both in California and New York, as well as becoming a member of the New York Stock Exchange. He was partner with his brother in the London banking community.

As editor or associate editor, he was engaged in producing such journals as *Freedoms, Mind, and Common Sense*. Del Mar lectured widely on metaphysical concepts, and was a member of various academic societies. He authored books: *Spiritual and Material Attraction, The Divinity of Desire, Living Ideals, Fulfillment, The Conquest of Disease and Man the Master*. He founded the Mental Science Temple in 1899, and was member of the "New Thought Federation," "the League for the Larger Life" and the "University of Life Science."

Because of his qualifications, experience and reputation, he was commissioned in 1931 to conduct an inquisition into the private affairs of FATHER DIVINE. At that time, FATHER DIVINE'S headquarters were in what was then a quiet village-- Sayville, fifty miles east of New York City by the Great South Bay on Long Island. After a stay of a full month in Sayville, during which he was observing, listening to and talking with FATHER DIVINE for the better part of every day, he submitted an affidavit. In the affidavit, Del Mar stated that, *"I was attracted here to study the life and teachings of One Whom I was advised to be a great teacher and healer, besides being gifted with unusual powers."*

"In the light of this background, I have listened for a full month to the Teachings of FATHER DIVINE. These are all given at His free meals, so that eating and Teaching go together. I now recognize in FATHER DIVINE One Whose love, charity, sympathy and other spiritual attributes are manifested to an extreme degree in a transparent purity of Life, and to Whose wisdom and understanding of spiritual truth I bow my head with reverence. In the words of another epoch: "I find no fault in this man."

"All that I have seen, felt and ascertained regarding the Life and Teachings of FATHER DIVINE have illumined my understanding beyond anything I have heretofore experienced. His Teachings are both extremely simple and deeply profound." (MOTHER DIVINE, The Peace Mission Movement, Philadelphia: A D F D Publications, 1982, 95-96)

Del Mar apparently did not expect to find anyone living the CHRIST Life, but he wrote that FATHER DIVINE seemingly lives this Life in its fullness: *"This CHRIST Life HE depicts as one of extreme purity and universal Love. HE cites the New Testament in support of His Teaching that the results of living this Life are peace of mind and health of body, together with all of the other beautiful possibilities of life. His Teaching is that of essential Unity and Oneness, that body, mind and soul are One, and that when the CHRIST Life is lived in its fullness, the body is spiritualized so that it partakes of the Spirit of GOD, and is no longer subject to death. ...HE expresses every admirable quality and is always kind and considerate."* (96)

"To many of His followers, FATHER DIVINE'S unfailing expressions and activities of love and sympathy, His lofty Teachings and purity of Life, and the unusual powers with

which HE seems to be endowed, impel them to place HIM in a category superior to ordinary mortality, and they recognize in HIM the expected Messiah." (97)

"Highly educated scholars have been here who have accorded to FATHER DIVINE unique and exceptional attributes; but no one has as yet solved the mystery underlying His Personality, wisdom, supply and power. Now that the press and radio have spread the news of His Activities near and far, FATHER DIVINE has become a world figure, Whose Presence and significance can no longer be ignored." (98)

John Henry Titus

Another refreshing breath of the same period extolling FATHER DIVINE came from a much more famous author than Del Mar. John Henry Titus is lionized everywhere for his "The Face On The Bar Room Floor," the fifth canto of "An Ideal Soul," a beautiful epic poem done in seven cantos. It depicts an American scene, as truly American as the small town of Jefferson, Ohio, where John Henry Titus was born, where he worked and strove for poetic perfection.

In a biographical sketch prefacing *The Face on the Bar Room Floor*, Elizabeth Pfeiderer writes that *An Ideal Soul* is an imaginative allegory linked to Titus' life, re-enacted in the halo of fancy and the portent of the goal or destination in life. It contains a message of morale based on fact as well as on legend covering a period of more than 600 years. It took Titus 60 years to perfect it. (John Henry Titus, *The Face on the Bar Room Floor*, New York: Pocantico Publication, 1933). The title originated from the consciousness of a hovering spirit as in the "Black Dove Legend" which

influenced Titus in writing the canto, and which influenced Edgar Allen Poe also in his writing of *The Raven*.

The term "Bar Room" here does not refer to a common pub or corner bar or to a roughhouse saloon. This Bar Room was quarters where overnight travelers--judges, lawyers and others of national prominence arriving by stage-coach--were received and registered as at a modern hotel front desk.

Titus' father, William, was an accredited literary critic. Therefore John Henry became familiar with the best literature through listening to the discussions between his father and his associates, who were high in letters and affairs. His father was friends with Washington Irving and Edgar Allen Poe, with whom he spent holidays on the Hudson near Sleepy Hollow.

According to biographer Elizabeth Pfeleiderer, Titus ranked with the great contributors and benefactors to American national literature--a true American poet. Even his boyhood pals respected his passion, and the townspeople recognized his undeniable genius. He wrote his first poem, *The Awkward Boy*, at age twelve.

Titus wrote in a state of unrest and frenzy; he was an intense creator, with a "*craving for a larger life of greater experience.*" In his writings, "*the commonplace things of life reflect the worth of character and high ideals; yet no tendency toward any creed, cult or schism.*" (21) He had no set rules of diction, religion or isms-- thereby leaving Titus unlabeled with any sophistry; he was artless.

"He has lived in the world and his poems carry the essence of great truths." His first worthy poems were

written on bits of bark and leather found in the tannery where he was apprenticed as a youth. He became expert in the leather industry, and because of his versatility, he was commissioned to oversee the interests of a large leather concern in all parts of the globe. As a world traveler, he made many friendships which were contributory to his art. Titus' poem, *They Had No Poet So They Died*, is a recounting of his globe-trotting.

An enduring friendship developed between Elbert Hubbard and Titus, whom Hubbard dubbed a genius. Hubbard, another celebrated, inspirational American author, used Titus' poem, *Head, Heart and Hands*, innumerable times in his writings, and the three "H's" were carved on the private door of Hubbard's office.

After the Civil War, a moral force was generated by the issues of Temperance and Abolition and by such writers as Harriet Beecher Stowe. *The Face on the Bar Room Floor* was spawned in this climate. Young Titus was awake to the social conditions of the country, and consequently the moral fever of the day seeped into the poem. *"Its charm and moral purity charms the heart."*

Pfleiderer wrote, *"His power of moral discernment shines when compared to the immoral and impracticable hypocrisy around him."* (12) *"Nothing ever changed or obscured his deep sincerity and natural poetic expressions."* (21) *"He has always written and given to the world utterances, unmindful of return."* (22)

Mr. Titus was a frequent visitor at Sayville, where Eugene Del Mar also sat at FATHER DIVINE'S Table to listen to Words of Spirit and Life that filled the air. In a 1936

interview with a reporter from *The Spoken Word*, Titus remarked, *"I have the personal knowledge of FATHER DIVINE'S Work for years in New York and Eastern States, and I know that none other than one having the highest manifestation of Divinity could be accredited with such a range of expression, and such Spiritual Wisdom; hence I say HE is the Dean of the Universe.*

"I have seen the transformation of lives, have seen souls lifted from the depths of degradation to be respectable, law-abiding citizens. I have known men and women changed from their impulses and passions, and elevated to heights unlike any help they could get from colleges, universities, or by cults, creeds, or isms, and given an established position, a status enviable. ...I too, as thousands I know, have been strengthened and blessed by the personal contact of FATHER DIVINE.... The Divine Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding of FATHER DIVINE passes all human understanding." (MOTHER DIVINE, *The Peace Mission Movement*. 73-74)

In Russell Conwell's speech, he states that *"A diamond is a congealed drop of sunlight."* He states also that this statement is literally true because a diamond is an actual deposit of carbon from the sun. How apropos that statement is in connection with the "Rediscovering of GOD" in this volume by any prospector who is looking for the treasure of Peace, Joy and Happiness! In the Life and Works and Teachings of FATHER DIVINE, all prospectors who seek with humility, sincerity and an open, harmonious heart, will certainly find diamonds--and much, much more than just a drop of sunlight!

CHAPTER II

OUT BEYOND HARLEM . . .

Charles S. Braden, *These Also Believe*
New York: Macmillan Company, 1949
Twelfth Printing, 1970.

A few years after John Henry Titus had proclaimed FATHER DIVINE the Dean of the Universe, additional appreciation of HIM appeared in the atmosphere in 1948 by way of an esteemed Professor of the History and Literature of Religion at Northwestern University. Charles Braden bewails the fact that accounts previous to his-- which he did not even deign worthy of mention in his preface-- "*seem never to have made any serious attempt to get the inside point of view of the Peace Mission.*" Braden cites the "*great need for careful, scholarly study*" of such minority groups, and adds, "*few books if any... have been written from the standpoint of objective scholarship*" (*These Also Believe*, ix-x)

Then Dr. Braden plunges enthusiastically into the account of his discovery that the Peace Mission is a vibrant, ongoing Movement--an account which the seeker will relish in his or her rediscovery of FATHER DIVINE.

Dr. Braden accorded preeminence to the Peace Mission Movement by reporting his in-depth study of it in the very first chapter of his book--the "curtain-raiser" so to speak--

and devoting seventy-seven pages to it. The spotlight is thrown on significant portions.

Salvation Now--Not After Death

"Father Divine's Peace Mission Movement, the official name of his group, is one of the most unique religious movements that has appeared. Many prophets have arisen and not a few Messiahs, but seldom has GOD himself in human form assumed leadership of a movement. Yet that is precisely the belief of Father Divine's followers concerning him." (6)

But this is no promissory movement. People have visualized GOD as a man with a full beard, glowing robes, and a golden crown, settled on a gilded throne in a fleecy heaven beyond the azure sky--beyond the sun, moon and stars! Some evangelists have promised that when people die, they go straight to this fleecy heaven, wear golden slippers, meander along broad, golden avenues, dine on milk and ambrosia, and twang a golden harp!

The Peace Mission Movement does not indulge in such folderol. Dr. Braden writes: *"Father Divine's is no other-worldly faith. He promises no heaven hereafter. One hears reiterated over and over in the testimonies given in the public meetings, the joy of believers in the fact that they do not have to wait until after death to secure the benefits of salvation. They are already participants in the joys of the Kingdom. They enjoy the presence of GOD. They are sustained daily here and now by his bounty. They expect confidently that this will never end. To be sure, there is the larger world about them which has not yet acknowledged the rule of Father Divine, and in which they experience*

opposition and sometimes serious injustice. But GOD'S will must ultimately prevail, and the world will recognize him or be destroyed. Meanwhile within the little microcosm they have built for themselves they find the security and joy and satisfaction which they so deeply crave." (18)

FATHER DIVINE maintains that the Peace Mission Movement is founded on the Teachings of the Great Law-giver and Exemplar, JESUS CHRIST--specifically His Sermon on the Mount in chapters five, six and seven of Matthew. FATHER DIVINE persistently and constantly upholds Jesus' Teachings to His own disciples as the Law under which they must live and which must govern their every thought, word and deed, but HE makes *"no reference to any life hereafter. This is quite true to Father Divine's thought. His salvation idea is this-worldly, not other-worldly. He never tires of reiterating his teaching that heaven, as commonly taught, is wrong, and that it must really be experienced here and now. ...Heaven is really but the realization of the Kingdom of GOD and that is not something only for a future life and another world. It has already come."* (63)

"there is not a little in his program to command the respect and even the admiration of those who cherish the Christian ideal and seek its realization in the lives of men." (25)

FATHER DIVINE'S Social Program

Many off-shoot minority groups are largely ego-centric; they do not concern themselves with being their brother's keeper in the social order. Braden contends that *"no such statement can be made concerning Father Divine's Peace Mission. Father Divine does, to be sure, strongly emphasize the necessity of individual salvation and is insistent on*

personal integrity. But that is not the end of the matter. He has a veritable social passion and never ceases to preach the remaking of the social order. The individual is never left to stand alone. And the ultimate end which he envisages is no less than a perfected society here on earth--a true Kingdom of GOD." (17-18)

"To perceive that this is a profoundly social movement one needs only to attend a service, read the mottoes on the walls and listen to the songs, or give attention to the speeches of Father Divine. Manifestly the people are religious, but one finds certain words appearing over and over again which indicate the social interest at the heart of it.... 'Americanism is our religion,' proclaims one placard in a meeting room. Another, 'Let there be an International Bill of Rights.'" (18)

After an interview with FATHER DIVINE, Professor Braden expounded further on the inherent social and political nature of the Movement: *"Father Divine himself said to me, 'Americanism, Democracy and Christianity are synonymous.' But how does he define Americanism? Another placard found in the various centers says: 'What does Americanism consist of? Amalgamation of all Races, Colors, Creeds.' Here one is plunged into the very center of the movement. No note is more insistently struck than that of the equality of the races--and no movement in America is more definitely itself an inter-racial movement. In it there is no distinction of color. W---- and b---- mingle freely, and w---- and b---- sing with apparently equal enthusiasm the crusading songs in which racial discrimination is condemned and the ideal of racial brotherhood proclaimed." (18)*

Unlike some other religious associations, FATHER DIVINE has a well-defined program for elevating the social order: *"here is a religion with a concrete social, political and economic program, designed to make its ultimate ends possible of realization. If they seem to some grandiose and unattainable, it must at the same time be observed that some of them are exceedingly sensible and have much to commend them. He has an educational program. Many thousands of followers have become literate, intelligent citizens because of the stimulus they have received from him. He does have an economic program. Many people have been lifted out of misery and unhappiness and poverty through the operation of his system. He has a political ideal. His people are told to revere the Constitution of the United States."* (25)

Followers place great store on the implications of the Declaration of Independence for all people and follow its precepts in their personal lives. They uphold the Constitution with its Bill of Rights and Amendments as a pattern for all governments.

No Segregating Words

Using any sort of prejudicial, ridiculing or discriminatory term as applied to a person is strictly taboo in the Peace Mission. No type of label is condoned for the reason that labels classify, segregate, compartmentalize and divide people who should be unified. Labels erect high walls between people. If on rare occasions it becomes really necessary to distinguish between so-called races, the terms "Afro-American" and "Caucasian" come into play, or the terms "dark complexion" or "dark expression" and "light complexion" or "light expression."

As the Pledge to the Flag stipulates, the United States of America is "one Nation under GOD, indivisible!" FATHER DIVINE proclaims, *"There is only one race--the human race!"* HE declares also, *"A man is a man--and that's all!"* People are not all the other characterizations that have been attached to them.

No Ethnic Complications

Prejudice is an insidious, psychopathic cancer. It has triggered more strife between people, between groups, and between nations than any other incendiary element. Billions of lives have been consumed in the foul conflagrations which it kindles. Prejudice has fettered progress universally and is the principal salvo that bigoted writers have aimed at FATHER DIVINE.

Dr. Braden remarks that strangers to the Peace Mission are often shocked *"to see the freedom with which c----- and w---- live in the same hotels, share the same rooms, eat at the same tables, with a complete apparent lack of the consciousness of differences. This is particularly notable among the Rosebuds, the young girls' group which usually forms the choir and keeps the music going during the banquets and in the public meetings. Here fresh-faced, young, dark and w---- girls sing side by side without the slightest trace of any difference between them. There is no grouping of w----- together. Nor does this seem to be at all by design, rather a personal choice. They seem to sit together because they like each other. Nor is there any grouping of w----- together at the communion tables. (26)*

"...so far as could be observed the factor of race or color did not enter in the slightest degree to affect their relations with each other or with Father Divine." (27)

FATHER DIVINE has solved the racial problem!

FATHER DIVINE'S Economics

"Father Divine's Peace Mission is not simply a religious movement. It is at the same time a definite social and economic movement as well. Indeed, it is the economic aspect of the movement which has probably excited more curiosity and interest than any other phase of it." (27)

A great deal of mystery has shrouded FATHER DIVINE. HE is an enigma to many--one reason being that people cannot fathom the wellspring of His opulence. Where does the money come from? Professor Braden offers this observation: *"it should be said that the Peace Mission Movement is not one single cooperative, economically. Rather it is a congeries of small cooperatives operating upon principles taught by Father Divine and brought into spiritual unity by the common loyalty and devotion which all the members feel toward him. This spiritual unity will be seen, however, to have very practical consequences; indeed, it seems to be the sine qua non of the effectiveness of his whole economic program."* (32)

Braden deals with the specter of embezzlement that floats fitfully over wealthy spiritual leaders thusly: *"The insistent belief that there must be something not quite above board about the whole financial arrangement arises chiefly from the difficulty the average American has in conceiving a type of belief or organization in which money plays only a minor role--where it is only a kind of necessary evil, because of the surrounding environment which depends upon money or exchange for its very existence."*

"But suppose that money comes to be considered not as an end, but only as a means to securing certain values, and suppose further that those values could be secured without money, or at best with only a very limited amount of it. Then obviously the amassing of money would hold no appeal for people. This seems literally to be a fact among many of Father Divine's followers as it is a fact among some other groups such as some, though not all, monastic orders... there is a faith among them in the ability of Father Divine to secure for them all that is needful--in this present life. They feel this so strongly that they are quite willing to forego the ordinary monetary rewards men seek and to devote their time and energy to making possible the successful operation of the various enterprises of the Peace Mission. It is this fact which makes it possible to operate them at the low prices they are able to charge." (33- 34)

Professor Braden very objectively surveys the infrastructure of the operation of the enterprises in the Peace Mission Movement in more than ten pages of his chapter. At length, he analyses the very sound business practices employed in such a manner as to show how all the enterprises and activities work compatibly in support of the total structure. His bottom line is: *"Here is the secret of Father Divine's amazing achievements--the free service of devoted followers without any desire for financial return, but only the privilege of being near or working for him whom they love." (38-39)*

"Thus there does not seem to be so much mystery about the system as popularly imagined. It looks like very wise planning." (38)

Basically an Independent, Religious Entity

Dr. Braden was impressed with the strength of the Peace Mission Movement. It stands on a multi-faceted foundation of inter-racial, social, educational, political and economic bulwarks. He writes however, *"If we have emphasized, and rightly, the social and economic features of Father Divine's Peace Mission, it must not be forgotten that it is first, last and always a distinctly religious movement. It is out of certain basic religious convictions that the practical social and economic beliefs and practices naturally flow."* (42)

It is not within the scope of *Rediscovering GOD* to offer either a synopsis or digest of FATHER DIVINE'S religious ideas as discussed by Dr. Braden in over thirty pages of his book, in which he quotes FATHER DIVINE copiously. The reader is directed to MOTHER DIVINE'S book, *The Peace Mission Movement*, for extensive and intensive exposition of the ideas, ideals and religious philosophy of the Peace Mission Movement.

It may be apropos nevertheless, to spotlight the one most singular tenet of the association which sets it apart from other religious groups. It is perhaps the nonpareil of all the Teachings of FATHER DIVINE. This tenet is that GOD is Present with all people all of the time--inside of them and all around them. The unique outgrowth from this statement is that when people are conscious that GOD is actually closer to them than breathing and nearer than their hands and feet, they will behave better than if they thought GOD was not looking.

Everyone wants GOD'S Blessings, but if they think, say and do what GOD says not to do, HE will withhold His

Bounty. Therefore, when people are acutely aware that GOD is an instant eye-witness to their actions because HE is right there, they will strive always to think, say and do right, so as to please GOD. If everybody, because of the consciousness of the Presence of GOD, would feel this moral, righteous compulsion to do the right thing, Peace, Joy and Happiness would flood the earth. No other group, except perhaps a New Thought society, carries this tenet to its ultimate implementation as do the adherents of FATHER DIVINE.

This is His cosmic declaration of the keen intimacy which should fuse GOD with every man, woman and child:

"The Spirit of the Consciousness of the Presence of GOD is the Source of all supply, and it always has and always will, as it does, satisfy every good desire."

Honesty A Paramount Virtue

An individual and collective trait of the Peace Mission of which Professor Braden takes especial note is honesty. He states that FATHER DIVINE'S *"insistence upon truth and honesty is constant and extremely rigorous. I have personally never had contact with any group which seems so absolute in the definition of honesty. One who finds a penny on the street will not keep it."* (62)

The finder will turn it in to the Lost and Found Department of the Church to be advertised in some manner.

Comparison with New Thought Doctrine

Another observation which Dr. Braden presents is the concurrence of a substantial portion of FATHER DIVINE'S

Teachings with those of New Thought groups. It has been noted above that Eugene Del Mar applauded FATHER DIVINE--one probable reason being that he was immersed in New Thought and found in FATHER DIVINE'S philosophy an extension as well as an intensification of New Thought precepts.

There are significant similarities. The cosmic declaration quoted above has an unmistakable New Thought ring--although these exact words will not be found except in the Peace Mission.

The importance of success and prosperity is common ground in both FATHER DIVINE and New Thought thinking. If an individual does not enjoy the abundance of general well-being, that man or woman is not living the CHRIST Life, and the true relationship with GOD has been broken. The method of attaining this abundant well-being hinges in part on the visualization of the positive, which is another accord between the two groups. Healing is a great factor in the New Thought regimen as it is in the Peace Mission. It is emphasized constantly as part of well-being. Also, much stress is laid on happiness here and now--not in another world.

Braden notes one marked difference between the activities of FATHER DIVINE as compared with New Thought. He makes clear that FATHER DIVINE'S remarkable economic arrangement--His Cooperative System by which His followers have been enabled to enjoy a financial security they had never before known--has broken new ground, and has gone far beyond any New Thought systems known to Braden.

Professor Braden cites another departure from the New Thought mode of action. He asks the pointed question, from whence came the intense social passion which marks FATHER DIVINE'S ministry?

"Whence his strong insistence upon the equating of Christianity, Democracy, and Americanism, and his powerful promotion of racial equality? Certainly he did not get these from either the older revivalistic Christianity or New Thought, which are both strongly individualistic in their outlook." (75)

Dr. Braden can find no precedent for this passion. Defining religion in terms of democracy and social justice is foreign to both early evangelistic Christian theology and New Thought direction. Only in recent times has a social gospel been included in a definition of religion.

Hence, Braden concludes that the passion came from deep within the very Being of FATHER DIVINE--a Being which is ultra-sensitive to the cries of the people who suffer from discrimination and other persecution. The passion is natural and spontaneous. It is a must with FATHER DIVINE.

That FATHER DIVINE endorses New Thought is strikingly underscored by reason of the fact that HE distributed free of charge, at considerable expense to HIM, many New Thought books. This practice, though eventually discontinued, was in force for much of the period during which FATHER DIVINE'S headquarters were in Sayville, New York. Prominent among this literature given to truth seekers were publications of the Unity School of Christianity. FATHER DIVINE expressed high personal esteem for the founder of Unity, Charles Fillmore. See Chapter Six for a

fuller commentary on FATHER DIVINE'S espousal of New Thought.

Comparison with Roman Catholic Principles

FATHER DIVINE gives credit where it is due. HE frequently holds up to His hearers Catholic ideals as exemplary, and exhorts His followers to live as virtuously as do the nuns and monks. The Peace Mission in some ways can be compared to Catholic disciplines: *"This may be seen in the essentially monastic organization of the inner circle of his followers. Note, first of all, that it is celibate, a rather remarkable fact if one considers the age in which it appears and the fact that it is accepted wholeheartedly by so many people. He (Father Divine) expressed to me in personal conversation his admiration for Catholic nuns, and in public discourse he frequently dwells upon the 'virginity of Mary' and the 'Holiness of Jesus' as ideals to be realized in the community. Furthermore, the essentially communal living is very much like that of monks and nuns."* (76)

Followers, however, move about freely in the outside work places, whereas some monastic clusters are tightly cloistered. Lives of followers can be characterized as a type of lay monasticism.

FATHER DIVINE'S Personality

As a warm participant/observer Mr. Braden became fond of FATHER DIVINE, as his journalistic treatment of FATHER DIVINE unmistakably indicates. Braden was sensitive to FATHER DIVINE'S great humanitarianism: *"He is constantly spoken of as Father. He is Perfection. He is Love. He is, of course, Creator, and is represented as active in nature and*

history. He works through natural forces to effect his will. He is Good, and of course, he is One. The unity of GOD is frequently stressed." (54)

Mr. Braden reports on FATHER DIVINE'S ideas regarding the attributes and the Commission on earth of Jesus the CHRIST--attributes and accomplishments which followers by analogy ascribe also to FATHER DIVINE: *"He is Savior, way-shower, example, life-giver, health-giver; he is the giver of eternal pleasure, success, prosperity, and victory over all undesirable conditions; he is eternal emancipation, and the bringer of peace on earth and good will to men."* (56)

FATHER DIVINE'S whole purpose was to meet the needs of the people: *"...he is a keen student of human nature and of human need in the present age. With rare skill he has set himself to minister to it in the most effective way possible. ...The very strength of the appeal is the immediacy of its ministry. Not in some indefinite future, but now, here, at once, there is help of the most concrete sort."* (77)

This immediacy of FATHER DIVINE'S ministry kindles in the membership an intense flame of personal loyalty to HIM. His Love for them engulfs their encounters with HIM when they seek HIM out for help and healing. HE *"sits and talks quietly with them and inquires as to the nature of the malady. Then he bids them contact him spiritually, always declaring that his physical presence is not necessary at all, and most importantly, bidding them 'live exactly according to my teaching.' They must have implicit faith.... His very manner, the complete confidence with which he announces this, begets confidence, which is the secret, psychologically, of faith healing the world over."* (71)

Echoing Eugene Del Mar's sentiment about FATHER DIVINE is an Englishman who lectured widely in England and on the continent in the metaphysical field. His statement, as quoted by Braden, is befitting the close of this section. In the dedication of one of his books, in which many of FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings appear, Walter Lanyon wrote, *"In my search for truth I had met many wonderfully enlightened souls, noble and fine; some official stone casters; and a Judas; from all these I received help, but it was never until I contacted Father Divine that I fully realized the Presence of the Power here and now. Not as something to be used to produce results, but as the very actuality of Being itself."* (47)

Charles Braden's short hagiography concerning FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement, together with the statements of Eugene Del Mar and John Henry Titus in the preceding chapter of Rediscovering GOD graciously opens the door for the explorers who are bent on rediscovering FATHER DIVINE. For each seeker, the following utterance by Braden is a warm welcome to the world of FATHER DIVINE: *"Salvation, then, is here and now. The Kingdom of GOD is already come. It will go on extending itself--out beyond Harlem and Jersey and Philadelphia until it takes in all mankind!"* (67)

CHAPTER III

INFINITE GOODNESS . . .

William M. Kephart, *Extraordinary Groups*,
New York: St. Martin's Press, Second Edition, 1982.

During the 1920s, FATHER DIVINE'S activities in Sayville, New York, intensified and blossomed to such an extent that His renown as a spiritual leader spread from continent to continent. The press was not slow in picking up such a sensationally colorful figure as FATHER DIVINE in its pages. Perhaps hundreds of articles were written in the select periodicals such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *Life*, *Reader's Digest* and *The New Yorker*, not to mention the lesser ones. This eager, inordinate coverage continued for many years. But there was a paucity of journalists who undertook to understand the Peace Mission Movement, with the result that many of the articles were coarsely shallow, and none compassionate throughout. Not until discerning writers directed their peculiar talents to catching some of the subliminal substance of FATHER DIVINE did any respectable accounts appear.

One such account on the FATHER DIVINE Movement is the fifty-page chapter in Dr. William Kephart's book, *Extraordinary Groups*. Because he kept his weather finger

on the societal pulse of the day, Kephart's sociology classes at the University of Pennsylvania were popular.

Sense of Hope and Purpose

Dr. Kephart, now retired, notes that Afro-Americans and other minority societies suffered from acute alienation--a sense of hopeless futility in being ignored. He claims that *"More than any other leader of his time, it was Father Divine who fought against the spread of alienation, and he was a superb practitioner. He understood the masses. He could talk to them. He could engender feelings of self-respect. ...Most important, he never lost sight of the two basics: food and jobs. These were the bedrock. As long as he was helmsman, his followers would have ample food at little or no cost. And--through his employment service or within his own economic establishment--they would have jobs. Food, jobs, and a joyous war against racism and alienation! No wonder large numbers... flocked to Father Divine's banner."* (168)

"Father Divine succeeded in imbuing his followers with a sense of hope and purpose. ...He encouraged self-respect by insisting that they give their employers an honest day's work for a day's pay. He forbade them to accept tips. He gave them a sense of self-discipline by prohibiting smoking, drinking, swearing and 'immodest behavior.' And--above all else--he gave them spiritual security." (163)

Seventy five years ago, people were hungry. FATHER DIVINE fed them. Seventy five years ago, unemployment was rife aggravated by the fact that most Afro-Americans were excluded from all but a peon's job. FATHER DIVINE railed against such heartless discrimination, and found

decent work places. Seventy five years ago, people of a dark complexion needed an inspirational leader who could stand up to people of light complexion. FATHER DIVINE filled the void--and results showed.

There are three questions concerning the Peace Mission about which people are avidly curious:

1. Is FATHER DIVINE GOD?
2. Where does the money come from?
3. Why are sex and marriage prohibited?

There is no patent answer to the first question, for the answer must come only from deep within each soul who asks it. The answer cannot come from another. Dr. Braden answered the second question in his book, and there are excerpts below also as to how Kephart answers it.

Sex and Marriage

With respect to the last question, Professor Kephart remarks, *"True followers do not believe in sex, marriage, or family.... True followers also abstain from all sexual relationships. In fact, men and women have very little to do with one another."* (174)

They are strictly celibate; brothers and sisters do not mingle or converse together except on matters concerning the business of the Church. Brothers and sisters live in separate buildings or, as in the hotels, on different floors. This sharp cleavage is carried even further; when bed linen and towels are laundered, that used by sisters is kept separate from that used by brothers. There are even certain laundry hampers for brothers' towels and bed linen and other hampers designated for the sisters' laundry.

"With regard to family life, dedicated followers see themselves as children and Father and Mother as parents, and they believe that this type of relationship is more gratifying--and more exalted--than normal family arrangements." (174)

If GOD is all, if GOD is the FATHER-MOTHER of everyone, then all people are blood brothers and sisters. They are not lovers--born to stalk and chase each other. They are siblings in the same family because they have the same FATHER- MOTHER. By this token the whole world is One. This Oneness thereby creates and constitutes a World-wide Family in the stead of the usual small, clannish, compartmentalized family--which must eventually be displaced by the World-wide Family. This is an invaluable concept in the struggle for world peace, for if the world is one family, then certainly the members of that family will look after one another in love and harmony; they will not thrust a knife in each other in hate and greed. Kephart indicates that *"Nowhere in Father Divine's teachings is any provision made for the hereafter, for the dedicated follower has everlasting life. Father Divine spoke literally, not symbolically, on this point. Over and over again, he promised his followers that if they adhered to his teachings faithfully, they would have perfect health and eternal life."* (177)

From this viewpoint stems one of the positions of the Movement on celibacy, for if people do not die, there is no need to bring more children into the world to preserve the species and to prevent world attrition. An oblique corollary to this statement is that if people stop propagating, they will stop dying.

Self-Discipline and Virtue

FATHER DIVINE established His International Modest Code as the Standard of Living for His disciples:

No Smoking - No Drinking

No Obscenity - No Vulgarly - No Profanity

No Undue Mixing of Sexes

No Receiving of Gifts, Presents, Tips or Bribes

This Code is Law for the followers and they live it word for word--with joy. It is second nature with them. They feel no sense of deprivation or of being abused as they jettison these appetites and lusts. Rather, they consider this self-discipline as their moral and spiritual debenture which they must liquidate according to Paul's epistle to the Romans written in 60 A.D. from Corinth: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of GOD."* (Romans 12:1-2) In fact, many followers consider that embracing FATHER DIVINE'S Modest Code by all people is imperative, and fundamental to achieving both national and world unity and Peace.

Another position on celibacy by the Movement--which is the abiding, underlying root of the matter--is that any sensual, voluptuous appetite or lust, even under the cloak of procreation, severs people from their rightful intimacy with GOD. During the year before he wrote his long letter to the Romans, Paul, a vigorous, consecrated bachelor, wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus: *"It is good for a man not to touch a woman.... For I would that all men were*

even as I myself.... He that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well." (I Corinthians 7:1, 7, 37)

Two attributes are paramount in the Peace Mission--Holiness and Virginity (Purity or Chastity). In one sense they are interchangeable but the avenues toward attaining these two traits are clearer if they are pursued separately but concurrently as two parts of the same goal--which is Perfection.

Dr. Kephart concludes his discussion of celibacy among the followers by deducing that Father Divine *"desired his followers to live the life of Christ, a position that was--and is--expressive of the very heart of the movement."* (194)

Rewards of Self-Denial

Objections to the life style of followers is often vociferously noised about. People query, "Don't they ever have any fun?" Worship of GOD in the manner of the Peace Mission is fun in the lives of adherents to the Teachings of FATHER DIVINE. Kephart writes: *"It should not be thought that the followers of Father Divine lead a completely sacrificial life. Far from it. They must renounce normal marital and familial relationships and abjure the profit motive, but the rewards--from their point of view--are far greater than the sacrifices. ...Their expenses are near zero. They have no family to support, no parents to look after. They pay no rent, have no mortgage or other expenses connected with a house. Their recreational and travel costs are minimal. They have no food bill."* (176)

This is the situation of the coworkers who provide full-time, dedicated service to the Movement. The followers who work outside the Peace Mission on a regular job however, have the usual cost of living expenses to bear--food, shelter, clothing, travel, and all the other incidentals of modern day life.

Kephart considers material requirement the least of the benefits accruing to the followers: *"In the intangible sphere, dedicated followers' rewards are even greater. They have the day-to-day satisfaction of serving and being close to their GOD. They have the comfort of living and working with like-minded people. They are spared the normal worries of family living. They have no financial woes. They have peace of mind and a sense of spiritual well-being which outsiders often envy. This latter point is perhaps the most important, for no one can be around the group very long without being intrigued by their spiritual outlook. They give the impression of inner security because they understand. Their love of GOD- -Father Divine--is so great that it has given them an understanding both of themselves and of the outside world. Understanding, inner security, love of GOD: these are the distinguishing characteristics of the dedicated follower. Note that it is not the worship of GOD, not the fear of GOD that is the key--it is the love of GOD. It is this feeling which permeates the entire movement."* (176-177)

Dr. Braden, in his book, repeatedly made the point that the Peace Mission is a faith of now. It is this-worldly, not other-worldly. People need succor today--not in some maybe heaven. Dr. Kephart is impressed as well by this aspect: *"The followers' love is closely related to the 'here and now' philosophy of the movement.... Good will toward*

men, racial integration, righteous government, international modesty--all these things are desired now, in this world, not the next. It is on this premise that the plans, policies, and actions of the movement are based. And it is this 'here and now' philosophy which gives the true follower a sense of abiding satisfaction. He feels that if he can unashamedly express his love for Father, put his teachings into practice, and show that the system works, then man's salvation will be at hand." (177)

There is a widespread misconception that followers must turn over to the Movement all their money and possessions. This is absolutely not the fact. They do whatever they wish with what they earn or possess. They are not even required to donate to the upkeep of the Church, although many do, of their own volition.

The Divine Cooperative System

FATHER DIVINE never asked anyone for a dime. To the contrary, HE has refused thousands of dollars that were offered to HIM with no strings or reservations attached. A broad review of this fact may be found in Chapter Seven of MOTHER DIVINE'S book, *The Peace Mission Movement*.

In view of this fact, the populace has always been piqued by the mystery of how FATHER DIVINE acquired the thousands of dollars required to do what HE did. The answer lies in the Cooperative System--which essentially is the unification of many people in pooling their resources, just as Dr. Braden pointed out in his account. Dr. Kephart reveals that another factor operates in the financial workings: *"Thanks to Father Divine's perspicacity, the organization is well endowed financially and owns a number of valuable properties."* (196)

FATHER DIVINE does not own these properties. Neither HE nor MOTHER DIVINE own anything. HE does, however, advise members on the purchase of real estate, but title to property is inscribed with names of members--not with the Name of FATHER DIVINE or MOTHER DIVINE. Followers pool their money cooperatively in this way to further His Work among the people: *"one further point should be mentioned. Father Divine and his followers did not build their hotels; they bought them. Often in run-down condition, the buildings were refurbished--with the help of the faithful--and then opened for business. Father Divine had a remarkable eye for real estate values, and much of his success stemmed from his uncanny ability to ferret out bargains."*(171)

Cohesion and Solidarity

Professor Kephart lists several sociological techniques that FATHER DIVINE uses to engender and foster what Kephart labels "internal solidarity." These are mechanisms which draw the members together and hold them together--some secular and some sacred.

The churches, for instance, are used not only for worship but also as living quarters and dining rooms and other activities. These three mechanisms alone--worshipping, living and dining together--act as effectual cohesive agents. Many of the followers have known each other for forty years or more. They have worked together; they travel together; they own buildings jointly.

These are not the only communal activities. Followers sing together as they dine together--a very compelling uniting force. Not only that, but they think and believe together. The most powerful congealing element, naturally,

is the charismatic Being known as FATHER DIVINE--Who is the Organizer and Who is the Organization.

Professor Kephart enjoyed encounters with the Movement sufficient to catch the ardor of the followers. He writes of the Rosebuds, the younger female choir and action group: *"they sing their hearts out on every song. Their spirit is indomitable, inexhaustible. Although they are accompanied by a pianist, they have no sheet music to read. All their songs--dozens of them--are memorized."* (151)

The Lily-Buds, a senior female group, are equally spirited. A fellowship of men, known as the Crusaders, are no less ardent in their devotion to the Work of the Movement.

Holy Communion Banquets and Praise Meetings are spirited affairs where the spiritual level frequently rises to ethereal heights which are experienced even by some non-followers--these affairs being sparked by the followers' love for FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE, which is something to behold. There is genuine rapture, genuine ecstasy.

Kephart, in quoting from an interview with a follower, made the point, as MOTHER DIVINE does, that the intent of the Peace Mission is not in actively endeavoring to attract great numbers of people. Numbers are not the crux of the matter. It is the quality of the membership that is the concern of the day--not the quantity. The interviewee remarked: *"Father Divine said it best when he said that our problems are man-made-- crime, poverty, sickness, death. To avoid them, we must reach a higher level of consciousness--a higher spiritual reality. We recognize that*

Father Divine is GOD, and through Him we can attain that higher level. The potential is within all of us, but only those of us who give ourselves to GOD wholeheartedly--totally--can transcend the material. These are the members we accept today." (197)

Kephart posits that the entire membership may soon *"consist of a small, spiritually elite group. One follower compared the present state of the movement with an earlier quiescent period of Christianity, the implication being that sooner or later there would be an inextinguishable resurgence for the Divinites."* (197)

FATHER DIVINE'S Ministry

Dr. Kephart declares that the Peace Mission Movement has *"made some positive contributions. During the Depression, the various branches fed thousands of destitute people at little or no charge. The homeless were provided with a clean room at a dollar or two a week. Alcoholics, prostitutes, beggars, thieves--all were welcomed into the movement and given respectable jobs.*

"Once they joined, followers were taught the value of honesty and hard work and the importance of building self-respect. They were forbidden to accept tips or gratuities, and they were admonished to dress moderately, eschew vulgarity, and act kindly toward their fellow man." (194)

Kephart intimates that people "join" the Peace Mission Movement as they do in other churches, but with respect to becoming members, individuals do not make application for membership and then are inducted at a ceremony. People become members of the Movement by somehow coming in contact with the Name of FATHER DIVINE. Then

as their harmonious interest continues, they begin to read Peace Mission literature, attend praise services and Holy Communion Banquets, and fellowship with the followers. Subsequently, according to the degree that persons live according to the Teachings of FATHER DIVINE, they unfold from one level of consciousness to the next, and in this manner, grow into becoming a follower.

"In the field of race relations, Father Divine was clearly a generation ahead of his time. The movement of the 1930s and 1940s was pressing for reforms that would not be enacted until the 1960s and 1970s: laws prohibiting segregation in schools and public places, laws establishing fair employment practices, removing 'race or color' designation on personnel forms and official records, outlawing restrictive covenants in housing and so on." (194-195)

Hundreds and thousands of testimonies and letters have come from far and near, from high and low, from wealthy as well as poor, from literate as well as illiterate in evidence of what FATHER DIVINE has done for the general uplift of the people.

In the political field, also, Father Divine proved to be a seer, for many of the planks in his Righteous Government Platform came into being following World War II. *"It may be true that the various reforms would have come about with or without the assistance of Father Divine. But it is equally true that he spoke out in no uncertain terms when others were silent. Without the impetus of the Father Divine movement, these reforms might have been slower in arriving."* (195) The Righteous Government platform,

written in 1936, is a compelling document. It contains many of FATHER DIVINE'S political and social ideas.

Kephart lauds FATHER DIVINE for an effort which escapes the perception of many who are admirers of the Peace Mission: *"There is one other feature of the movement that should be mentioned: the great emphasis on Peace. Father Divine probably desired Peace as fervently as any man who ever lived. Peace between nations. Peace between races. Peace between ethnic groups. Peace among people, and Peace with oneself. This is what he stood for, and this is what he preached. He called his organization the Peace Mission Movement, a name it is known by even today.*

"Current readers may be quite familiar with demonstrations and editorials calling for an end to war, but it was not always so. In the 1930s and 1940s, such protests were few and far between. It must have seemed to Father Divine that he and his followers were virtually alone in carrying on the Peace Crusade. But carry on they did--and still do--in their own inimitable fashion." (195)

Overt resistance to war and strife, no matter what the origin or evidence, is obviously active among the members of the Peace Mission. It begins with their first encounter of every day with anyone they meet and continues *ad infinitum*. Their greeting is not "Good morning" or "H----" but "Peace!" Likewise, when they take farewell of anyone, their exclamation is not "Good-bye" but "Peace!" The word "H---" is outlawed.

The Spotless, Virgin Bride

Since FATHER DIVINE burst upon the horizon in the early nineteen hundreds, HE has been making headlines. This was no less true on April 29, 1946, when HE took unto

Himself a Bride. Because interracial marriages were illegal in most states, the nuptials were performed in the District of Columbia where mixed unions were welcome.

An interracial marriage in that year was news in itself, and because one of the principals was FATHER DIVINE, it was twice newsworthy, and because FATHER DIVINE forbade wedlock for His followers, it was thrice newsworthy. There was consternation and shock everywhere, and the disintegration of the Movement was deemed a certainty because FATHER DIVINE had violated His own decree of celibacy.

But this was not the usual marriage. This was a Chaste, Holy, Spiritual Marriage between two Chaste, Holy People. This was not a sexual marriage to be consummated in cohabitation for the purpose of procreation. This was purely a symbolic Marriage because it is the Marriage of the Lamb and the Bride--symbolic in that its purpose is to propagate Honesty and Sincerity in the Land and to propagate Virtue and Morality in the Land. Further, this Marriage symbolizes the Marriage of CHRIST to the Church, the union of GOD and humankind, and the fusion of Heaven and Earth.

Some mothers are venerated because of their gentle character. There is a Mother, however--the Bride of FATHER DIVINE--Who is called Blessed because of Her saintly, angelic ascendancy. MRS. M. J. DIVINE, better known as MOTHER DIVINE, is just such a Mother, and SHE is duly beatified by those who know and love HER. Mr. Kephart states: *"The current leader of the movement is Mother Divine, who has proved to be a remarkable woman. ...she has always occupied a special place in the leadership structure."* (185) Every one acclaims Her as the Head of the

Movement, although SHE and the true and the faithful know, deep in the far reaches of their souls, that FATHER DIVINE is the Head--now and forever. *"She now presides at the communion banquets and other meetings, handles correspondence, grants interviews, visits the various branches, gives talks, and makes the major decisions necessary in day-to-day operations. Many of Mother Divine's interviews were published in The New Day, and over the years she has talked with politicians, students, clergymen, college professors, and others. She is quite knowledgeable about the movement and answers questions--many of them pointed--with facility. She has a wide grasp of the Bible and is able to relate many of the movement's policies to biblical precedents. ...Perhaps Mother Divine's outstanding trait is her devotion to Father and the causes he espoused. At the communion banquets, for example, several pictures of Father Divine stand propped up in front of her, and as songs are sung she looks at the pictures with genuine love and adoration.... Father's presence is very much felt by dedicated followers. During the banquets his chair is always kept vacant, and his place--next to Mother Divine--is always set. Before the food is passed around, Mother Divine offers every plate to him."* (188)

Dr. Kephart, enjoying a Holy Communion Banquet with FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE, took notes which appear in his book as follows: *"She smiles, gesticulates, and often joins in the singing and clapping. (She is a... Rosebud and on occasion still wears the red jacket with the white V.) When Father Divine speaks to her, she looks at him with unabashed admiration. It is also apparent, on the basis of her movements and facial expressions, that she possesses*

great natural dignity. She is able--without effort--to combine enthusiasm and graciousness. She seems the ideal person to fulfill the role of heavenly wife." (152)

Lovable, "Sweet" FATHER DIVINE

FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE are the focus of attention wherever They are known to be present, and They elicit comment from all quarters. Dr. Kephart writes of FATHER DIVINE: *"...it is apparent ...that he is a commanding personality. Every step of his buoyant walk, every gesture, every nod of his head brings gasps of delight from the onlookers" (149); "Neither condescending or overbearing, he acts with good-natured dignity and restraint. It is apparent that he is in command of the situation at all times" (150); "Father Divine speaks in a strong, resonant voice, with a distinctive tone quality. Though he starts slowly--almost methodically--his audience is spellbound from the very first word. The sermon itself is a combination of the practical and the profound." (154)*

It appears from the twinkle in what he writes that Mr. Kephart derived some pleasurable satisfaction in describing FATHER DIVINE: *"Just as a tall person stands out in a crowd, so does a short one--at least, if he is the center of attention, which Father certainly was. Actually, Father Divine had many of the traits we associate with a tall person. He had a resounding-- some would say strident--voice that could fill an assembly hall without benefit of microphone. His voice had an inimitable, attention-commanding quality, a quality that comes through even today when we listen to recordings of his talks made several decades ago.*

"In everything he said and did, Father Divine exuded enthusiasm, zeal, and self-confidence. His walk, his motions

and gesticulations, his facial expressions, all attested to the fact that he was on earth to help humanity--and that all the forces of evil combined would not stop him. ...His energy was prodigious. Sermons, talks, interviews, conferences, business meetings, consultations, trips to the various branches--day after day, year after year--all on four hours of sleep a night! As he himself might have put it, his energy was embedded in every organ, muscle, sinew, joint, limb, vein and bone, and even in every ATOM, fibre, and cell of His Bodily Form. His health, also, was little short of phenomenal.... As Mother Divine says, 'He never complained.'" (189)

Kephart writes that the followers worshiped FATHER DIVINE and that the closer they were to HIM the greater their feeling of reverence: *"his personal magnetism, his heavenly claims and obvious knowledge of the Bible, his penetrating voice and allegorical speech, his presumed healing powers, his spontaneous and vibrant manner, his intense concentration on goodness and fairness--for his followers, the result spelled GOD."* (168)

Kephart was obliged to say, upon looking at FATHER DIVINE'S Body and assessing His stature from a physical point of view, that FATHER DIVINE *"was as improbable a figure of GOD as one could imagine. But, say his followers, so was CHRIST. And that is the point. For if, when GOD periodically returns to earth, He does so in the form of an unlikely human figure,"* then FATHER DIVINE'S physical stature lends credence to His followers' belief in His Deity. (190)

FATHER DIVINE was keen mentally: *"He was intelligent, witty, quick, with a sharp memory. He abounded with*

original ideas. He had an excellent understanding of human nature and was a remarkably good businessman. He knew his Bible and could quote long passages verbatim. Despite the fact that he gave hundreds of sermons, talks, and addresses over the years, he never prepared for any of them. So far as is known, they were all extemporaneous."

"In the case of any orator, two essential ingredients are voice power and word power. And to anyone who ever heard him, there was no doubt that Father Divine had both of these attributes. He had a mighty voice, which seemed even more compelling than it was because of the small body which housed it. And when it came to words and sentences, he was a veritable magician. ...He worked hard, was intensely patriotic and preached a more or less standard sermon: honesty, modesty, a day's work for a day's pay, Peace on earth...." (190-191)

Professor Kephart, of a surety, realized that FATHER DIVINE was no run-of-the-mill human being. Kephart's soul responded to the touch of the Master--or he would not have written: *"In both talks and sermons, he spoke sometimes as GOD, sometimes as a preacher. But he seldom conversed as an ordinary mortal;"* (193) *"...he was a phenomenally successful leader. It is quite possible that at the height of his career, Father Divine was more ardently acclaimed and revered by his followers than any religious leader in United States history. To those who believed, he was more than just an exalted person."* (155)

Kephart's final words concerning this remarkable Being who strode the earth are: *"FATHER DIVINE will remain one of the indelible figures in the history of twentieth century*

religious thought... He was also a man of infinite goodness."(197)

It will be noted that Professors Braden and Kephart took time to endeavor to understand FATHER DIVINE. They sensed that HE as an individual was "set apart" from the populace. Something in them responded to His Deity. They observed and understood what an avalanche of good HE wrought in the land. Because of this appreciation of FATHER DIVINE and His Works, they felt kindly toward HIM, and they wrote accordingly--far different from others.

Had Ali Hafed long ago done thus with the good ground around him, he would have discerned what treasure was his for the taking, just as do those who are discovering FATHER DIVINE in this hour as they read *Rediscovering GOD*.

CHAPTER IV

SECRET FOLLOWING

Arthur H. Fauset, *B---- Gods of the Metropolis*
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944
Fifth Printing, 1984.

Anthropology, by broad definition, is the science of man and his culture. In 1944, Arthur Fauset wrote a doctoral dissertation in this field at the University of Pennsylvania entitled *B---- Gods of the Metropolis*, which was published as a 126-page book. Aside from the vulgarity and derision of the racist title, Dr. Fauset made some contribution in the book to the literature which deals with the science of man and his culture by examining the religious practices of minority orders, including a short chapter and other small sections on the Peace Mission Movement.

A New Religion

Dr. Fauset classifies the religion of the Movement as "Christian Eclectic" rather than merely "Christian." Braden's view is that no nascent religious movement is one hundred percent original. It grows out of older movements and borrows from them to suit its purpose--usually differing from them at significant points. FATHER DIVINE sometimes alludes to Himself as an eclectic--a honey bee buzzing from blossom to blossom, sipping the essence from a variety of

blooms. Hence, Fauset's classification has some merit. He writes, nonetheless, that the Peace Mission Movement *"appears to have Christian elements, and at first glance one is taken in by these appearances. Actually, however, except for the recognition given Jesus with regard to his proper sequence in the general scheme of divine unfoldment, a closer scrutiny ...reveals that it departs radically from orthodox evangelical belief and practice. ...until in some respects a new religion has been created."* (70-71)

Dr. Fauset lists four compulsions which propel thousands of people to embrace non-conformist, non-orthodox sacred ideologies, the first of which is the most powerful, in his judgment:

1. The desire to come in closer communion with a supernatural Power
2. The personality of the leader
3. The desire for relief from physical and mental woes
4. What Fauset names "nationalistic race consciousness" (76)

Followers of FATHER DIVINE were drawn to HIM probably mostly for the first compulsion, although the second and third were certainly factors in many instances. With respect to Fauset's fourth factor, however, people were drawn to the Peace Mission because of the absence of nationalism and race consciousness.

Fauset, unlike other less thoughtful reporters, happily does not waste ink on the origin of FATHER DIVINE or His Movement because, as he states, *"The true history of Father*

Divine before he emerged in Sayville, Long Island, is as much a mystery today as it was in 1932." (55)

Organization

Fauset delves forthwith into the heart of his subject by declaring: *"In the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, Father Divine is the organization.... The reason for such an organizational situation is not far to seek. Father Divine is GOD. He is everywhere, knows everything, sees and hears all things."* (56) FATHER DIVINE is the Founder, sole Bishop and Pastor. There are no other bishops, pastors, elders, deacons, directors or assistants. There are church officers, however-- president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. There are others who are managers of the dining rooms, hotels and other Peace Mission enterprises. But there is no church hierarchy. In the light of this apparently loose structure, Fauset writes, *"The question naturally arises how any consistent work is accomplished if there is no organizational responsibility. The fact is there is tremendous organizational responsibility; it is so tremendous and so forceful that followers strain themselves in their efforts to keep attuned to the spirit of their leader, whether he is present or absent, in order that they may know whether or not they have heard his call."* (56-57)

Functional Transformations

According to Fauset, the Peace Mission Movement clearly demonstrates that one of its sociological functions is to *"transform social needs by means of secular enterprises.... Here these transformations achieve a plane of efficiency and a scope which in some instances lift them clear of the realm of amateurism, and establish them with*

those other secular expressions in America, which have culminated in the concept of 'big business... Many critics who see in the Father Divine Peace Mission nothing but a 'racket' probably miss this important functional implication. ...The essential fact is that out of an attempt, through the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, to resolve a need of a segment of humanity, numerous significant functional transformations have ensued." (91-92) The point Fauset is making is that, whereas the social needs of the people should have been met years ago, FATHER DIVINE, through a religious movement, did meet these needs by way of what Fauset terms "functional transformations," viz., all the secular enterprises operated by followers. *"Thus the Father Divine Mission Movement, which essentially is a religious organization, in effect becomes the mechanism by which various social urges, particularly those of its leaders and more socially dynamic members, may find outlets of expression. By making it possible for agencies to be established to fulfill these needs, it tends to transform these urges into the imperatives of American culture."* (95) Fauset observes that it appears as though the Movement outstrips other movements and religious bodies in the extent to which it demonstrates these functional characteristics: *"This undoubtedly is due to a greater social awareness as well as a superior organizational capacity on the part of the leadership of the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement."* (95)

Living Evangelically

Dr. Fauset comments on the necessity of living evangelically by refraining from all the lesser and greater vices. Eternal existence is dependent upon living

evangelically. In addition, *"A true follower will forget all else save Father Divine and his teaching. If he has mother, father, sister, brother, wife or children, he will forsake these, unless they choose to come with him and follow Father Divine. An exception is made for minor children. A parent must be concerned about the rearing of his children, irrespective of membership in the Peace Mission Movement"* (66); and, *"The righteous man is the reincarnation of the expressions, versions, ideas, and opinions of GOD. The closer a man lives to true evangelism, the more nearly will he approach the appearance of GOD."* (63); *"He has renounced the things of this world completely. He no longer plans his own life, but lives it completely in accordance with the instructions of Father Divine. He . . . places himself at the disposition of the Father, making himself completely subject to Father Divine's suggestion, instruction, or command. ...Such members are the true angels."* (59-60) Fauset endeavors to explain that the true follower is self-denied and does not cater to personal proclivities, ideas and pleasures, but sublimates them according to a Higher Will.

GOD Came to the Lowly

Dr. Fauset emphasizes the fact that His followers regard FATHER DIVINE as Deity: *"This fact is accepted without question or cavil by his followers. They believe this emphatically and unequivocally. There are no ifs, ands, or buts, and this is as much the case with the most highly cultured follower as it is for one who was formerly an illiterate share-cropper. ...It is impossible, through the written word, to convey the full import of this concept, just as it is impossible to describe the impression which comes*

over an outsider who listens to a highly intelligent, sophisticated, and cultured young follower averring this fact with a degree of quiet assurance which defies the imagination." (62) Critics snicker because "GOD" came in a human likeness that is despised and spat upon. But Fauset explains that FATHER DIVINE came in a lowly form because the people HE came to help are among the most humble on earth; "GOD prefers to bring salvation to the lowly."

"The followers of Father Divine view him with the greatest awe and the most profound devotion, yet they feel very close to him, and are free to approach him with any question, opinion, or request. ...The comings and goings of Father Divine are signals for the wildest demonstrations among the members. The writer was in Nazi Germany at the beginning of Adolph Hitler's rule, but he saw nothing in the enthusiasm and fanatical worship of Hitler's followers to surpass in intensity the enthusiasm and devotion of the followers of Father Divine." (67)

FATHER DIVINE'S Appeal

Mr. Fauset describes the scene as FATHER DIVINE enters a meeting place or Holy Communion Hall: *'A stir is noticeable throughout the place. More people are streaming in.... A general, lively expectancy fills the place.... There is a spontaneous burst of hand-clapping. Father Divine is entering the room.... his stride and manner are as vigorous and buoyant as a youth's. His clothes are perfectly tailored, displaying a subdued flashiness and bearing no semblance to the usual priestly garb. His dark brown head, nearly bald, is strong and round. A glance at his eyes reveal native shrewdness and a keen sense of humor, but should there be any reason for his returning the*

glance, they seem unusually keen and penetrating. His powerful body was intended for limbs considerably longer than those on which he moves jauntily, ...making more emphatic the suggestion of great power of will, determination, and command written in the firmly modeled full lips and widespread nostrils.... He walks briskly forward.... Soon he joins in the singing, at the same time kicks his feet against the floor, swaying his body to and fro, and clapping his hands lustily." (65)

Everyone loves to talk about FATHER DIVINE--especially as a Personality. Braden and Kephart wrote at length about HIM Personally in a very friendly, loving manner. Fauset adds another perspective.

A "Secret" Following

Curiously, both Dr. Fauset and Dr. Braden touched upon an intriguing portent. Fauset suggests that there is a legion of tacit admirers of FATHER DIVINE who have as yet not declared themselves. Dr. Kephart quotes a follower who implies that there will probably be an eventual resurgence of interest in the Peace Mission Movement. Millicent Fauntleroy, reviewing a recent book on FATHER DIVINE, hints that His Movement may warrant a re-examination. She writes, *"perhaps a second look is in order. This is especially so... when people may once again be searching for a messianic figure to lead them out of economic disaster."* Dr. Fauset's awareness of FATHER DIVINE'S "secret" followers may be an omen to be considered. His evaluation follows:

"After speaking to scores of Divinites, listening to hundreds of them give public testimony, and noting the character of that testimony, the author is of the opinion

that there is a considerable secret, one might say unconscious, following of Father Divine which probably exceeds the many thousands of public followers who might be assembled in a huge convocation. ...Father Divine himself probably will never know of the actual existence of many of these secret followers, yet they come under the influence of the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, and to a certain degree they are subject to the discipline of the leader, i.e., indirectly they fall into his organizational scheme. If this is true, the function of this movement on the socio-economic- political level becomes more significant." (58)

Fauset indicates that an eloquent dynamic of the Peace Mission Movement is a distinctive American Culture, and suggests that activities of the Movement transform social urges into "imperatives" of that American Culture. Fauset, Braden and Kephart evidently share belief in the possibility that there are people whose hearts and minds reach out to FATHER DIVINE but who have not openly shown their affection for HIM. These persons, together with those who in Fauntleroy's mind will take a second look, will be thrilled when they rediscover FATHER DIVINE and the new American Culture that HE instituted in the land.

CHAPTER V

BOTH BREAD AND JOY

There have been few full-length books written on FATHER DIVINE and His Peace Mission Movement, and because the first ones were unspeakably crude, derisive and unempathetic, the world can rejoice and be grateful that there were no more. The chapter of Charles Braden's book denoted journalistic progress by non-followers in approaching FATHER DIVINE, and a similar chapter in William Kephart's book indicates further advances. Braden was a Professor of Religion and Kephart a Professor of Sociology. Hence, by the fact of their pedigree, they could be expected to produce a respectable account, and indeed it was incumbent upon them to do so. Whereas the other investigators were merely shallow writers of popular books who were more concerned with royalties than with righteousness.

In 1979, there appeared the first serious book on the Peace Mission Movement--a book with the rousing title, *GOD Comes to America*. The author is Kenneth Burnham, who began his study of the Movement in 1960. The study culminated in a 1963 doctoral dissertation which provided the basis for this contemporary book.

Thus, *GOD Comes to America* remains the only book written by a social scientist trained in techniques of observation and analysis of group humanity according to sociological principles. Dr. Kephart states that Dr. Burnham was painstaking in his research and in conducting interviews, and indefatigable in his participant/observer interaction with the Movement. Kephart is in a position to pass judgment inasmuch as he worked closely with Burnham as the thesis developed. This writer can attest Burnham's industry through observing him day after day poring over past issues of *The New Day*, the newspaper of the Movement, some dating back as far as 1931. Burnham is Sociology Professor Emeritus at Temple University.

Between 1960 and 1977 he attended many Praise Meetings of various types and he participated in many Holy Communion Banquets, in addition to interviewing over one hundred followers. He has taken his classes to visit services at the Circle Mission Church in Philadelphia after becoming acquainted with the Movement as a student of the Sociology of Religion, "because they so well exemplified, in a fresh and even startling manner, concepts used in studying this subject." (vii) Other writers present the Movement as a social movement, whereas Burnham treats it as a *social religious movement*.

FATHER DIVINE'S Background

Burnham writes that there is no clear trace of the existence of FATHER DIVINE before 1914. Fauset writes that the true history of FATHER DIVINE before Sayville times is as much a mystery today as it was in 1932. It will probably remain just that. Therefore the attempts by previous writers to piece together bits of conjecture into a verifiable early

history of FATHER DIVINE are futile. Burnham wisely concluded that knowledge of FATHER DIVINE'S early history was not germane to his study, and he agrees with *"Father Divine's insistence that his history as an ordinary human being was of no importance."*

Burnham quotes FATHER DIVINE as saying, *"You have not heard Me mention a Personal expression in the way of education and any pedigree, for the purpose of establishing Myself, but to the contrary, I have striven to hide, if possible, every expression that would tend to reflect mortality, or human's intelligence other than that which I bring forth by My Spirit."* (3-4)

FATHER DIVINE'S Magnetism

Kephart queries what manner of person FATHER DIVINE was--and what is there about HIM that draws thousands of people to HIM? Kephart answers his own query by stating that FATHER DIVINE'S *charisma* is the attraction. Kephart then refers immediately to Burnham's thoroughly enlightening discussion of charisma as a presentation which probably could not be improved upon. Burnham wrote that the word is borrowed from a New Testament Greek word meaning "Gift of Grace." Burnham quotes from Max Weber, who gives the word its sociological meaning thus: *"It is a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader."* (2)

The salient terms in Weber's definition are "supernatural," "superhuman" and "divine." These three words point unerringly to FATHER DIVINE. Hence, attributing charisma to HIM follows logically and easily as a natural consequence, for no human being within this writer's ken has executed works that even approximate the Works of FATHER DIVINE.

Charismatic leaders are a recurrent phenomenon in religious sects and movements. As a charismatic leader, FATHER DIVINE was very able to mold the Peace Mission Movement into a dynamic agency and provide a form and a structure for it. The followers' association and interaction with HIM--the Body of their GOD-- was the coagulant which produced the Movement.

The significance of charisma in a leader is how his or her disciples regard the leader. Charisma is assuredly the lodestone that draws disciples to the leader, and they accept his or her leadership because of awesome personal magnetic power derived from supernatural, superhuman and divine sources. The charismatic leader proves his or her mettle through continued victories and successes of one sort or another. The leader demonstrates worthiness to hold the adoration of followers by performance and by works--miracles, heroic feats, and propitious involvement in remarkable events, accompanied by revelations and especially by evidence of superlative intelligence and rare personal qualities; *"Sectarrians often display a high regard for charismatic authority whether this be offered as an incarnation of GOD in man, as a special anointing by GOD as a prophet, or merely as a marked natural ability, special wisdom, knowledge, lucidity or unction."* (22-23); *"Healing alone could not account for Father Divine's charisma;*

healing was not unknown in minority group churches, and several of his followers were Christian Science practitioners when they joined his movement. At least as supernatural, in his followers' eyes, was his ability to contend with great social forces and institutions. His success in this area seemed phenomenal and validated his charisma for many." (19)

Dr. Burnham travails with the fount of charisma--whether it springs from conditions extrinsic to the charismatic figure or from powers inherent within the figure. He writes, *"Until someone recognizes his extraordinary power, the charismatic figure is powerless, unless he happens to occupy a position in a group that gives him authority. This distinction between the power secured from a position of authority and the power an individual exerts through his followers' faith in his ordinary or supernatural powers is what Weber identified by the term charisma."* (4)

"The author accepts the premise that a religious leader cannot be explained apart from his cultural and social setting or without some understanding of the culture base on which his appeal rests. As Hoult says, such a person is part of a 'certain concatenation of cultural forces and historical circumstances without which . . . [he] might live and die unnoticed.' 'He is part of a complicated causal nexus,' according to Yinger. His complex influence is intertwined with the interests, needs and tendencies of those with whom he interacts. Some will reject him and others will respond positively in different ways." (113)

In many instances, a charismatic figure is clearly the product of the milieu--the zenith of events which opportunely cluster around the figure, and in combine with

innate leadership qualities and an opportunist's incisive ability to seize the scepter, elevate him or her to authority and power. With respect to FATHER DIVINE however, it should be readily perceived that His authority and power is vested in HIMSELF. The title of Burnham's book surprisingly intimates this deduction, and the titles of his chapters two, three and four reinforce it.

Why People Switched to FATHER DIVINE

Professor Burnham asks, *"What compels people to sever their affiliations with other religious groups, leave their families, enter new occupations, and establish new residences in order to become a part of the Peace Mission Movement?"* (1) and writes that this question may be answered in part *"by examining the impact of Father Divine and his close circle of followers on thousands of individuals from many countries and various ethnic and 'racial' groups--many of whom significantly altered their lives to create a new heaven and a new earth under the 'Godhead' of Father Divine."* (1- 2)

The reason behind these defections to FATHER DIVINE is that people did not find soul and body satisfaction in their former church and family relationships. They yearned for hands-on, down-to-earth answers to their physical and spiritual needs-- not the vague speculations that common practice and orthodoxy offered: *"Father Divine always represented his Movement as a practical program dealing with problems of life on this earth. He had no patience with pie-in- the-sky religion nor with a heaven in some imaginary place. He preached a heaven on earth in which every individual has the same rights: independence, a job, self-respect"* (50).

"Father Divine moved GOD and Heaven to this earth and turned the idea of predestination for an other-worldly heaven into the idea of predestination for a this-worldly heaven." (19-20) Burnham quotes FATHER DIVINE'S Words in amplification of his own categorical declamation. FATHER DIVINE, as early as 1938, pooh-poohed any god as not being worth a nickel who did not venture out from his sumptuously feathered nest in heaven to help people on earth. FATHER DIVINE indignantly exclaims, "it matters not what the different Religions and the politicians say, to try to keep you in bondage of the fear of some other place, beneath the ground, and the fear of some other place far above all of the other planets. You are all substantiated. Men try to use Religion to keep you in bondage, to enslave you, but I came and have truly emancipated you. I would not give five cents for a God who could not help me here on the earth, for such a God is not a God at hand. He is only an imagination. It is a false delusion--trying to make you think you had just as well go ahead and suffer and be enslaved and be lynched and everything else here, and after a while you are going to Heaven some place. If God cannot prepare Heaven here for you, you are not going anywhere." (38)

Both Bread and Joy in the Peace Mission

"Father Divine furnished both bread and joy. The religious services and parades and outings were the joy. The 'bread' was furnished by providing for three needs not being met for a sizable portion of the population from 1932 till the war boom of the 1940s. These needs were shelter, food and clothing, and the immediate means of achieving these was work which Father Divine took the credit for

creating. He sought to instill in his followers respect for themselves as efficient workers deserving a fair wage." (53)

The emphasis on mundane matters was not the only concern in the Movement. Jesus pointed out to Nicodemus the dire need to be born again. (John 3:3) Paul likewise exhorts people, as their reasonable, bounden duty, to present their bodies as a living sacrifice that is acceptable to GOD, by being transformed through the renewing of their minds. (Romans 12:1-2) FATHER DIVINE, the urgency of food, clothing and shelter notwithstanding, is constantly striving to upgrade humanity spiritually--which in the final reckoning, is the bottom line: *"The emphasis on a new spiritual person, on turning from a past identity to a new one, has been a persistent theme in the Movement.... Many followers have taken new names to express their sense of having entered into a new spiritual life. References to the past would be made only for comparison with what the new life has accomplished in overcoming past sin and suffering."* (4)

These are some of the answers to Burnham's question on page one of his book as to what compels people to leave their past and set out to become new creatures. Another reason that so many souls from so many varied backgrounds from so many different corners of the earth have been drawn to FATHER DIVINE is of course, the appeal of His Person. Most people who are at all sensitive to fine and noble and lovable traits will relate positively to HIM as the writers in the preceding chapters of *Rediscovering GOD* have demonstrated. Further, it is manifest that HE is a commanding personage with obvious strength, and it is clear that HE knows what HE is going to do and that HE has the drive to do it. These traits attract people as well,

because those who are sincere are certain that it takes only the influence of an outstanding being to reverse their attitude toward life-long habits. Truly it takes a fundamental upheaval for a leopard to change his spots.

Burnham appraises the ethos of the day to pinpoint what the needs are: *"This, then, was the social and cultural setting in which Father Divine found his followers:*

- 1. The major institutions were disorganized in that government was not assuring equal treatment to all despite the ideal culture traits embodied in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution;*
- 2. The economic system was not providing enough employment for all, and this lack fell particularly on minority group members and the previously underprivileged;*
- 3. The family was a difficult unit to maintain because of disorganization in both economic and governmental institutions, as well as the problems attendant on migration to the city; and*
- 4. Religious institutions did not meet the needs of people caught in this anomic situation."* (118)

Peace Mission Churches

The Churches of the Movement provide a coordinated framework within which the followers live, work, learn and worship in a variety of functions, which in turn support the Churches in reciprocal action. One hand washes the other. These functions attempt to face the needs of society as outlined by Burnham in the four points directly above. He writes: *"To survive in a larger society a new group must*

search for congruence between its norms and those of the dominant groups. Hence in the 1940s various groups of followers incorporated as independent and self-governing religious bodies under Article 10 of the Religious Corporations Law of the State of New York. Such was the inception of the Movement churches." (73)

There are six incorporated churches within the Peace Mission Movement, all founded in 1940 or 1941, some with branches:

Unity Mission, Pennsylvania
Nazareth Mission, Pennsylvania
Circle Mission, Pennsylvania
Palace Mission, New York
Palace Mission, New Jersey
Peace Center, New Jersey

These institutions have as part of their official title the words, "church, Home and Training School." They are just that--offering the amenities as well as the necessities of life that these grass roots agencies in society are duty bound to provide. It is obvious that they are churches and homes. They are schools also in every sense, but followers can testify that they function, not only in the various fields of learning, but especially as Schools of Life that train the body, spirit and mind as no seminary or university does. This training is accomplished as the followers rub elbows and minds and emotions with each other as true brothers and sisters in one great big family--all having the same FATHER and MOTHER.

These six Churches observe the same "church Discipline, Constitution, and Bylaws," although each Church and each

of its branches around the world operate as an independent entity and has no fiscal or legal dependence on any other Church, or on the Peace Mission Movement. The Peace Mission Movement is not incorporated but is an umbrella name that covers all the activities of the association, much as the term "Christian Movement" refers to the total Christian effort. Burnham concludes that *"A viable form of social organization is there, with a dedicated, experienced staff of followers... With his [Father Divine's] body and spirit still available to the true believer, a charismatic Mother Divine... function[s] at the center of an efficient church organization capable of handling problems of everyday social life."* (112)

Burnham exults in the "bread" and "joy" that FATHER DIVINE offered. The simultaneous action of these two factors, *"religious and economic, with the same individuals often taking part in both a church of the Movement and an occupation identified with it, was to create a religious community and subculture in which, as Father had urged, a follower could lose his old identity and devote his full energies to the religious life and Father Divine. Although many followers still worked in the 'world,' they returned to sleep, study, worship, and help with the work of one of the churches, which was also their home and 'training school.'"* (80)

Living in Communal Style

"True followers do not need to go outside the organized activities of the church for recreation. The followers rent their own educational movies, watch selected television programs in public rooms, use their own gymnasiums, conduct their own adult education program, and create

skits and dance programs as a form of worship. They eat in their own restaurants or at the Communion Table of their church. They travel from one property of the Movement to the next by the 'church cars,' driven by coworkers, often serviced and garaged by followers. They may spend their vacations at one of the estates or hotels of the Movement. They may invest their money in the properties of some church or business conducted by the followers." (80)

Church Festivals

The usual commemorative days in the year are observed with only a nod as they pass, except for Independence Day and Christmas Day, which are patriotically and religiously more meaningful than the others to the followers. Apart from these days, there are two major annual Church Festivals in the Peace Mission Movement. One is a three day event on September 10, 11 and 12, which is a three-fold Anniversary Celebration of: the Consecration and Dedication of Woodmont in 1953, the Sacrifice of FATHER DIVINE in 1965, and the Dedication of the Shrine to Life in 1968.

The other is essentially a one-day event which is sometimes extended to two. This is the Anniversary of FATHER DIVINE'S Marriage to His Spotless, Virgin, Rosebud Bride, MOTHER DIVINE, on April 29, 1946.

The New American Culture

Kephart uses the sociological term "primary group" in his discussion of minority religions. A primary group is a fellowship whose members share experiences, confide in one another, and have mutual feelings and understandings. This group is known for its intimate relationships such as

exist in the family and other types of coterie relationships that resolve deep-seated needs of the group Burnham notes that the Peace Mission Movement illustrate perfectly the concept of what constitutes a primary group. Burnham continues: *"Thus 'the kingdom of Father Divine' may be described as a subgroup, with its own culture--perhaps one that is peculiarly American--and also as an example of rebellion against anomie, against disorganized culture and society."* (115)

It is more than a coincidence that Arthur Fauset also uses the term "American Culture." He perceives that the crucible that is called FATHER DIVINE'S Peace Mission Movement, as the elements in it are slowly and sometimes painfully blended into a dynamic whole, is in essence a unique, fresh shoot of inborn ingenuity and creativity which wells up from deep within the core of the native American make-up Fauset claims that fulfilling social urgencies transforms those urges into the imperatives of American culture, and here Burnham hails FATHER DIVINE'S subgroup for having its own peculiar culture--a new American Culture.

In addition to Fauset's and Burnham's with respect to a new breed of American, no less a person than MOTHER DIVINE, in chapter five of Her book, *The Peace Mission Movement*, states that this emerging dispensation is at hand. Employing exceedingly powerful language, SHE heralds the advent of a "distinctive, transcendent, American Culture," as we move into the Third Century of American Independence. This American culture is motivated and undergirded by the "Moral and Spiritual Law which is the foundation of the New Culture for the New Age," in which moral, patriotic and educational *standards* for citizenship,

for holding public office, for being a media director or a corporate executive, for being a parent, and even for owning and operating a motor vehicle, et cetera, are established. It is apparent that the Peace Mission Movement, in microcosm, is a prototype of an untroubled, novel world.

With respect to the present troubled world, Burnham writes, *"Father Divine was aware of the difficulties many Americans were experiencing in family life. His cure was a drastic one: do not get married, or if married, return to the state of mind and practice where all men are brothers and all women sisters.... His cure for sexual promiscuity was to remove temptation by limiting social contact between the sexes and to practice complete celibacy."* (117) This arrangement is part and parcel of the New Culture to which MOTHER DIVINE alluded, where all people are brothers and sisters because they all have the same FATHER and MOTHER, and which supplants the traditional, narrow, tribal concept of family which has as its base the direct lineage of patriarchs and matriarchs. Burnham writes of this alternative, *"Father Divine's followers created a 'holy family' which... creates a 'substitute family' based on the strictest of moral codes. Persons of all shades of complexion worship, work, eat and live together."* (116)

In addition to being convicted of the absolute Fatherhood of GOD, followers subscribe to one of their Creeds, which states, *"I must have a conviction of the Universal Brotherhood of Man--of our One World and our One World-wide Family. I must dedicate my life to unselfish service of everyone in the world."*

FATHER DIVINE and New Thought

Another congruency which is not coincidence is Burnham's linking of FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings to those of New Thought as Charles Braden did. FATHER DIVINE dispensed free of charge hundreds of dollars' worth of books by Robert Collier and Baird Spalding and others. Collier's version of New Thought promised both salvation and prosperity as FATHER DIVINE did. Spalding wrote about the Masters of the Far East who lived a halcyon life of miracles which FATHER DIVINE asserts everyone is heir to. Burnham quotes FATHER DIVINE as saying, *"I tried to give out the highest Light of the Teaching I could find written in books, that would somewhat convey the Message of Truth, the way I saw it... not for it to be an Eternal Expression, or a commercial contribution to humanity, but as a Message at the time to those who had not heard of Me, and had not been quickened and awakened."* (7-8)

Braden found much agreement between New Thought and FATHER DIVINE'S thought. Burnham suggests that some of FATHER DIVINE'S utterances were couched in New Thought terms. In the next chapter, Ronald White intensively compares FATHER DIVINE'S philosophy to New Thought precepts.

Virtuous Government

Beginning with Sayville days, FATHER DIVINE gradually and continuously planted in His followers the essential ingredients of government in the mode of FATHER DIVINE, as a rebuttal to the prevailing mode of corrupt and inefficient government--which persists to the present. By 1936, the fruit was ripe for the harvest. At sessions meeting variously at Rockland Palace and St. Nicholas Palace in New

York City, a Righteous Government Convention labored, on January 10, 11 and 12, to forge a document that would proclaim to the world some of the measures that would be necessary to put the nation on an even keel according to FATHER DIVINE'S standard. The document bore the suggestive title, "The Righteous Government Platform."

Professor Burnham devotes most of his chapter five to discussion of this document. It has six parts: Preamble, Principles Section, Economics Section, Political Section, Educational Section, and Amendments. The Platform is built with Planks-- fourteen under Principles, twelve under the Economic Section, two under the Political Section and four under Education including the added educational plank given in the Amendments Section.

For a fuller understanding of it, the reader is referred to Burnham's treatment of the document and to the complete Righteous Government Platform reproduced in full in chapter fourteen of MOTHER DIVINE'S book, *The Peace Mission Movement*. Burnham concludes his discussion by observing that the force of the Platform was soon manifested: *"Immediately after the Righteous Government platform was published, Congress started passing federal emergency legislation almost weekly.... Collective ownership and systematic abstention from government welfare schemes, still practiced in the Movement today, was advocated and practiced by the true followers at this time."* (45)

In Congress shortly thereafter, Senator Allen Ellender was filibustering the Anti-Lynching Bill. *"In order to ridicule Father Divine who was sponsoring a letter campaign for the bill, Ellender read into the Congressional Record the whole*

Righteous Government Platform criticizing many of its planks as he read them. Father Divine called Ellender 'a little dog baying at the moon' and for many months after spoke of the printing of the Platform in the Congressional Record as an act brought about through an enemy, showing that Father Divine's spirit was in Washington and in Congress. It proved that Father Divine... could use even the most prejudiced enemy for His purposes.... Publicity from Senator Ellender's speech is still cited as an example of Father Divine's supernatural power." (48) What Senator Ellender intended as a rebuff and sharp censure of FATHER DIVINE, boomeranged and became a feather in FATHER DIVINE'S cap as the Righteous Government Platform became part of the official records of the United States. The Platform is carried forever in the *Congressional Record*, Volume 83, part 1, January 1938, 753, 761, 817, 828, 829, 831-834.

Fascination of Holy Communion Banquets

Attendance at Peace Mission services varies, depending on the occasion and the capacity of the meeting hall. Wherever the service however, the same aura of Peace, Holiness and Virtue prevailed in one part of the globe as in another.

The atmosphere at Communion Banquets is usually more sacred than that at other services. Burnham writes that *"the Communion Banquet produced an ecstasy and a unity that went beyond the scope of a large gathering in the usual auditorium."* (65) FATHER DIVINE reveled in the hallowed enchantment of His Holy Communion Table where HE served His faithful and His guests, more than anything else HE did. HE delivered most of His Sermons during Banquet settings. Burnham describes the scene as

one of great beauty, and the most moving of all the services. Then he quotes the *New York News* of March 3, 1934, 1,6:

"Banquet Tables, Banquet Tables, Banquet Tables, spreading throughout the world. Wherever the name of Father Divine is heard, there a banquet table can be expected, flowing with the abundance of the Promised Land, for the Great Duplicator is here, and the Holy Table that originated in Sayville, Long Island, has been duplicated many times over, in all parts of the world...."

"As many, and as beautiful as they may be, however, there is none quite like the Table at which Father is present Personally, where the beauty of holiness reigns supreme, and the ugliness of mortality does not show its head in His shining presence, where only shouts of joy, and glad songs of praise arise, and shafts of Holy Love fall from His All-seeing Eyes." (65)

"The music is so lively and rhythmical although not exactly jazz, that one feels that one must join the foot-tapping, clapping, and dancing which often accompanies the songs." (128)

The charm of the spectacle at a Holy Communion Banquet Table had found its way into the heart of even a *New York News* reporter, many of whom are not known for aesthetic sensitivity.

The Mountain of the LORD

Mr. Burnham has enjoyed many visits to Woodmont, the country estate of FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE--some in company with this writer. The physical beauty of the estate is breath-taking, but the spiritual atmosphere of peace and

tranquility is soul-taking. Burnham's words are: *"In 1953 Father and Mother Divine were presented by one of the churches with an estate in an exclusive section of the Philadelphia suburbs. It belongs to the Palace Mission Church of New York and is called Woodmont, the Mount of the House of the Lord; it is considered the home of Mother and Father Divine. Its huge castle-like main house is surrounded by seventy-three acres of beautifully landscaped lawns and gardens."* (81) From this pinnacle of high consciousness--The Mount of the House of the LORD--the law shall go forth, and all nations shall flow unto it. (Isaiah 2:2-3)

The thirty-two room mansion has been singled out as the most outstanding example of French Gothic architecture in the area. On the grounds also are other buildings, as well as a swimming pool and delightful paths through the natural woods. *"The estate immediately became a symbol of the spiritual and material success of Father Divine and his Movement."* (81)

"I AM The Same . . ."

Hundreds of times FATHER DIVINE has stated that HE--His Body--does nothing to reach any condition, and that it is not necessary to shake hands with HIM, talk or write to HIM, or contact His Personal Body for any reason, because everything HE does is done by the Spirit according to the faith of the individual. He has also asserted that HE would not let His Body stand in the way of the Spirit. Augmenting this assertion, FATHER DIVINE often warned His adherents, as Jesus did, that they might not always be able to see His Body. Jesus said, *"Yet a little while and the world seeth me*

no more." (John 14:19; 7:33; 16:16) FATHER DIVINE said, *"With or without any body I AM the same."* (99)

Pursuant to His warnings, FATHER DIVINE eventually threw off His Body on September 10, 1965. Early writers had predicted that in the event of the disappearance of the Body of FATHER DIVINE there would be many suicides and defections. FATHER DIVINE however, had prepared most of the true and faithful mentally and spiritually so that the event had little deleterious effect. In fact, for many the opposite was true. Burnham observes that *"It is at this point in the history of the Peace Mission Movement that schism and disintegration might have occurred. Some individuals may have lost their faith at this time, but many more seem to have reaffirmed theirs. Mother Divine was a strong leader in this process."* (100) To many, the event was merely another test of their faith--realizing that, as Burnham says, *"GOD is a spirit only temporarily resident in a body."*

The Shrine to Life

Ground was broken in 1966 for an edifice to be constructed on the Woodmont premises to harbor the Body of FATHER DIVINE. Much study and deliberation by MOTHER DIVINE, the architects, artists and others were necessary to evolve the design of the all-granite building so that it would be a fitting testimonial to the Life and Ministry of One so great and good as FATHER DIVINE, and to the Covenant that GOD extended to humanity long ago in Bible times. "The Shrine to Life," as it is named, was dedicated in 1968.

During this time, the iconography to be attached to the two leaves of the massive bronze door was being conceived

and executed by Donald DeLue. Mr. DeLue was the sculptor for the George Washington statue at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, as well as other significant commissions. This door is classed with such famous and outstanding doors as the Gilberti door in France, but so far as is known, there is no similar door in all the world. The door is known as "The Portal of Life Eternal" and was dedicated in 1970 to mark the ultimate completion of The Shrine to Life. Burnham quotes Movement literature: *"The shrine at Woodmont, powerful in its simplicity, denotes the personal life of Father Divine. Its peaceful atmosphere conveys his staunch stand for the high moral and spiritual values of life made clear by his own example which are the foundation stones of the Peace Mission Movement as it stands today, a bulwark of faith in a troubled world. ...Its purpose is twofold. It is the Holy Sanctuary enshrining the body of GOD Father Divine and it is a reminder of the consistency and continuity of GOD'S covenant fulfilled from the beginning of biblical history to the present time."* (82) At Woodmont, MOTHER DIVINE is hostess to followers of FATHER DIVINE *"who come from all over the world to be close to 'the body.' They believe the spirit that was in his body is still present and as 'operative as it ever was.'"* (2)

Burnham entered into the feeling and spirit of FATHER DIVINE'S Sacrifice. He proffers this evaluation: *"Father Divine had forged religious and cultural unity from the participation of many individuals in a common response to such symbols as were now being reinterpreted. The apparent break in continuity with the Father... was experienced as another transition rather than a break. Wherever Father Divine chose to take his body, his followers felt that there was a holy place; hence*

Woodmont, where he spent much of his time after 1953, became a symbol of his presence as it was of Mother's, who had been continuously at HIS side since 1946. ...Her words, expressions of love for Father... were typical of Father's own speech and of the emotional response it drew from his followers. Thus was a continuity maintained."(101)

MOTHER DIVINE — Symbol of FATHER DIVINE

Of MOTHER DIVINE, Burnham writes, *"Mother is looked to... as the physical embodiment of leadership of the Movement, though followers still stress that Father is always present and she invariably prefaces her remarks to the followers with a greeting to Father. In... 1977 at their annual business meetings various churches in the Movement voted to change their Bylaws to include the charismatic status of Mother Divine with a statement about church leadership."* (107) In the original, there was no mention of MOTHER DIVINE, inasmuch as the Bylaws were written prior to 1941. The Amendment adds the Name of MRS. M. J. DIVINE, better known as MOTHER DIVINE, to the Name of REVEREND M. J. DIVINE, better known as FATHER DIVINE, as being the Supreme Spiritual Authority in all things.

Burnham writes that this linking of a charismatic MOTHER DIVINE to the Leadership of FATHER DIVINE is completely logical. *"Through her marriage to Father Divine she was set apart and accepted as a symbol of all that he preached."* (111-112) Also through the Marriage, the devolvment of leadership upon MOTHER DIVINE, as FATHER DIVINE'S Wife, is a natural consequence. Further, all the documented praise that FATHER DIVINE has heaped upon MOTHER DIVINE indicates beyond any doubt that HE

chose HER--and none other--to be, with HIM, the Supreme Spiritual Authority in all things concerning the Peace Mission Movement. No other member of the church or office staff was designated by FATHER DIVINE to assume control over any department or any of the church business or finances of the Peace Mission Movement. No other member has been exalted and glorified by FATHER DIVINE so often, so highly, and with so many superlatives, as MOTHER DIVINE. In fact, no matter how much FATHER DIVINE approved of other persons and appreciated their services, HE has not publicly and consistently mentioned anyone by name as HE has MOTHER DIVINE. SHE is *The ONE!*

Burnham euphorically prognosticates that *"For the foreseeable future neither Father Divine's charisma nor the charismatic group which formed around him is likely to fade out. A viable form of social organization is there, with a dedicated, experienced staff of followers.... With his body and spirit still available to the true believer, a charismatic Mother Divine... function[s] at the center of an efficient church organization capable of handling problems of everyday social life."* (112)

The New Age

In the 1930s, there was a popular song that everyone knew and about which everyone was mockingly facetious, "Show Me the Way to Go Home." It was the cry of one in the throes of inebriation whose one object in life at the moment was to "get home" and sleep it off. The condition of the world for 6000 years is analogous to the state of the singer in the song. Professor Burnham chose this comforting statement made by FATHER DIVINE in 1938 for

the last paragraph of his book, somewhat as a Benediction:
"I am showing you the way to go home! ...Humanity and humanity's descendants have been drunk for five thousand nine hundred and forty-two long years, since they were driven from the Presence of GOD in Adam in the Garden of Eden! ...I am showing them the way to go home! [The Book of Revelations] declared things that we are now fulfilling. How glorious it is to observe the mystery and to be in this Age and at this Time when GOD among you, through His Condescension, is with you as the Fulfiller... of the Scripture." (122)

Dr. Burnham is a social scientist and wrote as a sociologist in such a manner as to be credible to his colleagues in the sociological field. He did not allow that delimitation to cloud his vision nor to cool or derail the warmth of his love and respect for FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE that he had acquired after two decades of association with the Movement. The seeker who reads *GOD Comes to America* with deliberation in search of enlightenment concerning FATHER DIVINE will learn much about HIM and the Peace Mission Movement. In addition, the reader will gain some insight in this present time as to "the way to go home" after a 6000 year carousal (according to FATHER DIVINE)--the way to perceive and adopt and become a working cog in the New Age in which we are living--the New American culture that is shaping civilization.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPELLBINDER

Ronald M. White, *New Thought Influences on Father Divine*,
Unpublished Thesis, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 1980.

FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement remain subjects that are popular among college students who somehow hear of FATHER DIVINE and are sufficiently stimulated to choose HIM to furnish the substance with which to fulfill the requirement of a term paper or dissertation. Peace Mission Headquarters often receives requests for information.

Most of these efforts, especially the under graduate variety, are no more than perfunctory exercises. Others, such as those written by Fauset and Burnham, blossom into published works. Ronald White, at the University of Miami at Oxford, Ohio, in 1980 chose as the subject for his thesis, "New Thought Influences on Father Divine." Inasmuch as "positive thinking" has been bandied extensively for several decades, "New Thought" has enjoyed popularity and growth among people who are conscious that there is more to life than eating, drinking and making merry. It is obvious that White was irradiated by his study of FATHER DIVINE, and his illumination should not be abandoned to languish in dusty library stacks. Hence this chapter.

FATHER DIVINE'S Early Years

Ronald White states in his unpublished thesis that next to nothing is known about FATHER DIVINE prior to 1919, various published accounts notwithstanding. Similarly, next to nothing was known about Melchisedec, which suggests that FATHER DIVINE is a Mystery after the order of Melchisedec, *"King of Righteousness, ...King of Peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life."* (Hebrews 7:2-3) The early stories were vivid and grotesque. Each story had some continuity because these critical biographers colored in details of FATHER DIVINE'S origin, upbringing and early religious contacts, according to their own fancy. Their stories are worthless, White claims, because they differ considerably. It is impossible, on the basis of the information given, to judge the authenticity of these historical accounts. There is no verifiable history anywhere.

The stories of FATHER DIVINE'S Life from 1908 to 1919 tend to come together somewhat, probably mainly because all of these early writers took their information from what was thought to be a reliable source--a series of articles in *The New Yorker* in 1936 written by an antagonist, many of whose facts are merely circumstantial and which cannot be used as grounds for a true, factual biography.

Ronald White supplies the above evaluation of early attempts to provide FATHER DIVINE with a "history" in his thesis. He disdains some of the writers as not only poor journalists, but inept prophets. Their prediction was that when FATHER DIVINE'S Body was no more visible, "mass suicide among his followers would occur, or at best the

movement would quickly fall apart." (13) The Peace Mission Movement still lives.

In White's thesis, there is fresh air wafting life and hope across the horizon as he lifts FATHER DIVINE out of the muck up into the realm of respectability and righteousness and revelation. In equating FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings with those of the New Thought Movement, Mr. White has lent a buoyancy and an afflatus to the Peace Mission Movement that is refreshing, especially after decades of bleak, dusky reporting on the Movement, even though much of it was sensational and carried banner headlines.

Other Works on FATHER DIVINE

White surveyed a number of works on FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement which he places in three categories: Historical, Socio-psychological and Religio-philosophical. He bemoans the fact that most of them do not address in depth the subject of what FATHER DIVINE taught, although some of the writers do in part. In fact, some of the writers show no understanding of His Message and are so crass as to imply that FATHER DIVINE did not teach much of anything, but deployed His activities as a means to exploit the people for His Personal gain. Some of the books display bias and mockery even in their titles.

White noted that very little effort was put into understanding FATHER DIVINE'S Message, but *"several books... sought to unmask or malign him and his goals."* (ii) White insists that it is important to understand FATHER DIVINE'S Message so that His Movement can be properly comprehended. Therefore, White attempted to rectify somewhat the dereliction of other writers by choosing a subject for his thesis which circumscribes an area confined

to considering point blank the canons of the Peace Mission Movement.

Charles Braden and William Kephart each devote only one chapter of their books on various sects to a discussion of the Peace Mission Movement, and therefore do not give FATHER DIVINE'S Instruction extensive coverage, although they do present enough of His Teachings to illustrate how the Teachings lifted the people. Braden and Kephart were more concerned with an overall account of the Movement. Fauset, in his short chapter, almost completely avoided discussion of the spiritual content of the Peace Mission Movement. Kenneth Burnham, in his book, delved deeper into FATHER DIVINE'S Words than the others and quoted HIM freely. The manner in which he utilizes wide-ranging excerpts and ideas from the Teachings attest his thorough knowledge of the Movement gained over twenty years of participating and observing. He subordinated discussion of the Teachings to the sociological import of the Movement, as would be expected, given the fact that he probably wrote principally as a social scientist in a vein academically gratifying to sociologists.

Intellectual and Psychological Roots

Mr. White was impressed with the spiritual significance of FATHER DIVINE. Hence his thesis, the most substantial portion of which is devoted to his study of FATHER DIVINE'S precepts, as he compares them to the principles of the New Thought Movement. He took a different tack than the others--to seek the intellectual and psychological roots of FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings. His thesis attempts to show that the Teachings of FATHER DIVINE *"fall within the religious tradition generally termed New Thought."*

Recognizing this decisively influences how one is to approach and evaluate the Peace Mission Movement." (63)

White suggests that FATHER DIVINE'S beliefs may have been extensions of Christian symbols and themes that HE originated or borrowed. Through careful analysis, White claims however, that FATHER DIVINE couched His doctrine in current New Thought terms and that HE "*consciously and articulately grounded his messages in the symbols and ideas prominent in the movement called New Thought. It is further argued that the longevity of Divine's popularity among intellectuals and non- intellectuals alike derived from the practicality, life, and vibrancy he was able to give New Thought concepts which were originally rather abstract and dry.*" (ii)

FATHER DIVINE'S Message is of utmost importance to His followers, according to White, because there is messianism in His Teachings and because HE stresses the divinity of all peoples.

Free Distribution of Literature

Abstract and dry or not, FATHER DIVINE saw fit to recommend New Thought literature that would bear witness of and uphold His own Instruction in His efforts to lift the people from the doldrums of the prevailing life-style. FATHER DIVINE not only recommended this literature but supplied His students with it, free of charge, for probably a decade during the Sayville years.

Mr. White lists the literature that FATHER DIVINE used and distributed free. Following is a sampling:

Robert Collier, *The Secret Of the Ages*

Baird Spalding, *The Life and Teaching of the Masters of the Far East*

Lilian DeWaters, *The Christ Within*

Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows*

Joseph Benner, *The Impersonal Life*

Charles Fillmore, Unity publications (20-21)

White lists also the books by Dr. Lynne, to whom FATHER DIVINE refers as a great psychologist, but no titles are given. All of this literature can indubitably be stamped as hallmarks of the New Thought Movement which serve as reference points to FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings. HE stated that HE searched the libraries *"to find some books of Truth that would convey a high light of My Divine Teaching."* (20)

New Thought Ideas

All these books, according to White, are very similar in their outlook. They came forth bearing the good news which spiritual understanding begets.

1. They emphasize the importance of thinking positively, and they stress the material and spiritual success and well-being that following this practice brings.
2. They agree on basic Christian and Moral teachings, although they lean toward a provincial, exclusive interpretation of theological doctrines.
3. They place great store on wealth, good health through healing.
4. Another point that is not quite clear is the emphasis on the power to influence others so they are enabled to procure what they want out of life by

understanding certain moral and psychological disciplines. That seems to be what White is trying to say. (22-23)

Because all the books listed pursue these themes, they can be classed as New Thought resources. White comments that FATHER DIVINE'S early talks appeared in publications that catered to New Thought and other metaphysical associations.

At a New Thought convention held in 1917, nine principles were adopted which embody New Thought philosophy. White summarized these declarations:

1. Man's right to perfect health and spiritual healing is inalienable.
2. The Divine supply is inexhaustible and open to all. No man need want.
3. Heaven is within and we are one with the Father.
4. This Teaching is a practical psychology for success in the world.
5. "Christ Consciousness" is accompanied by cleanliness, honesty, and trustworthiness.
6. The four gospels are the foundation of New Thought standards.
7. The "Brotherhood of Man" is the goal of humanity.
8. Religious freedom is a basic right.
9. The "Good" is the supreme and everlasting. (44)

All of these principles are second nature to followers of FATHER DIVINE, Who has explicitly stated the identical doctrine many times in His lectures. FATHER DIVINE does not list Peace Mission Principles which are precisely corollary to the above, but White has culled nine declarations consonant with them which show the close

kinship between FATHER DIVINE and New Thought. White has painstakingly given references to Peace Mission literature where statements may be found to authenticate his findings:

1. Health. "When Christ comes in you He will draw all health unto you."
2. Divine Supply. ". . . GOD is the abundance of life and love for one and all." "The spirit of the consciousness of GOD is the source of all supply and it can and will satisfy every Good desire."
3. Heaven is within. "Then I say, Heaven is not necessarily a place to go geographically but heaven is a state of consciousness."
4. A practical psychology. "Can you not see as a practical, scientific psychologist I bring into actuality the reality of the practicality of truth?"
5. Christ Consciousness and Virtue. ". . . Modesty, Virtue and Holiness is a modest code to be instituted into society."
6. The four gospels as foundation standards. ". . . Live exactly according to the Life and Teaching of Christ as recorded in the four gospels of the Book of Life. Now anything that is not according to what Jesus said, you may know it is wrong; it is wrong for this standard of Truth I am representing."
7. Brotherhood of Man. "Hence you are coming to the great universal Brotherhood of man and the recognition of the Fatherhood of GOD."
8. Religious Freedom. "We believe every man has the inalienable right to vote and worship according to the dictates of his own conscience."

9. GOD as the Good. ". . . Produce something that is Good, Something Eternal, Something Real." (44-45)

Charles Fillmore and Unity

Mr. White cites Charles Braden's remarks on FATHER DIVINE'S use of "Unity" publications: *"Charles Braden... writes that he was directly informed by Divine, that during Divine's phase of distributing books, Divine gave away a great deal of "Unity" literature. (The Unity School of Christianity was founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore to propagate their brand of New Thought and esoteric Christianity.) Braden also relates that Divine expressed great admiration for the founders of the Unity School of Christianity. ...Divine's expression of admiration for the Fillmores is consistent, however, with the thesis that Divine had knowledge of and admiration for various brands of New Thought."* (21)

F. Collier and Robert Collier

Robert Collier was the nephew of F. Collier, the founder of the once famous Collier's magazine, who urged him toward the ministry. Robert took to mining engineering instead, but after ten years he reconsidered and came to work in his uncle's publishing business.

Robert suffered a serious attack of poisoning. After much painful treatment which brought only negligible relief, his friends proposed metaphysics. Robert had no faith that it would heal, but he was desperate. He was healed quickly and completely: *"This healing had far reaching effects on him. It set him to thinking deeply on the power of the mind. ...If it worked in the area of health, why not in other areas as well? Why could it not overcome*

financial lack? Or, for that matter, why might it not be the means of attaining any good for which one might devoutly wish? ...Desiring a concrete answer, he set about to read as many of the books and courses of lectures which were related to mental healing as he could." (26)

White asserts that both Collier and FATHER DIVINE "advocate identical solutions, though in a slightly different vocabulary. Collier insists that we vitalize the subconscious mind through direct contact with the Father's actual presence. Then the subconscious becomes, in Collier's analogy, like an Aladdin's lamp: 'Health and Happiness, power and riches, lie ready to its hand. You have but to wake it, to command it, to get of it what you will. . . . It is Mind-Thought- Idea. It is an all-powerful mental magnet which can draw to you anything you may desire.'" (28-29)

FATHER DIVINE offers essentially the same formula as HE recommends the realization of the CHRIST consciousness:

"Let Christ come in you. ...Christ is the great Magnet of Life, the scientific Truth of all truth that will attract and draw all things that are Good. Every desirable expression of all of GOD'S creation, I will attract them and draw them by My actual Presence when you reckon or recognize My Presence as a reality. [To] take this course...[is] practical psychology."

(29) Both Collier and FATHER DIVINE promise practical results such as good health, fine shelter, good food and fine raiment.

The Keyflower

FATHER DIVINE is fond of a legend which HE narrates that is the counterpart of the story of Aladdin's lamp, and which reiterates Collier's formula for attaining health and happiness, power and riches--which is to awaken and command the creative energy of the universe. The legend:

A shepherd, tending his sheep on the mountainside, happened to see a lovely blossom called the "Keyflower." He stooped, and as he plucked the flower, the mountainside opened upon the entrance to a great cave. Still holding the Keyflower, the shepherd cautiously went down into the cave. Inside, all the riches of the earth were stored--gold and silver, diamonds and rubies, and all the precious metals and stones. The shepherd boy was dazzled. At a small table, a little old ugly kobold sat, saying to the boy, "Take all you want, but don't forget the best!"

Whereupon, the shepherd boy laid the Keyflower on the table and filled his pockets with the glittering gems. The old kobold recited again, "Take all you want, but don't forget the best!"--prompting the boy to stuff more jewels into his shepherd bag. When he could carry no more in his pockets, he picked up the very largest diamond he could find and carried it in his mouth--while the old kobold continued to resay, "Take all you want, but don't forget the best!"

The shepherd boy, with his mouth full, could not talk--even so much as to say "Thank you" to the little kobold, and left the cave. As soon as he stepped outside, the mountainside thundered shut behind him, and all his priceless gems, including what was in his mouth, turned to leaves and pebbles all because he laid the Keyflower on the table and forgot it.

The *Keyflower* is "the best." If the boy had kept it in his possession, he would not have needed to stuff his pockets and his bag; he could have come into the cave whenever he wished, to get what he needed. Aladdin had only to rub his magic lamp and the genie appeared to fulfill his wishes.

The Keyflower is the consciousness of the actual Presence of GOD. Anyone who has it is empowered to come and go at will among the treasures of the earth to procure the necessities and the luxuries of life.

Gordon Collier

When Robert Collier died in 1950, his son, Gordon Collier, took over his father's publishing company. According to White, Gordon Collier was loosely associated with the Peace Mission Movement and White states that Collier was filmed at a Holy Communion Banquet seated in a place of honor beside FATHER DIVINE, but it is not clear where White procured this information.

Bruce Barton

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Barton attended a Banquet on November 2-3, 1938, at 152 West 126th Street in New York City, which followed an enthusiastic Righteous Government Forum. During his brief remarks, Congressman Barton stated that he and his party enjoyed the peace and happiness expressed on the faces of all.

FATHER DIVINE Strove Not To Be Honored

FATHER DIVINE, speaking at the same service mentioned above, made known His desire to remain in the background as a Person, offering instead literature that HE considered congruent with His own Precepts. In the Message which HE gave at the Banquet Table that evening, HE stated, *"I refused to write a line! I refused to write a sentence for the press or anyone else because I did not want to be seen."*

HE knew that if HE continued to preach His concepts of Truth, people would recognize the great CHRIST in HIM and give HIM wide acclaim. This acclaim FATHER DIVINE did not want, and HE tried to veil HIMSELF behind the teachings of others. HE stated, *"I read of Mr. Barton.... I selected his writings and Robert Collier's writings. I selected many great writers of our modern day to convey the Message of Truth for ME that I might hide MYSELF."* (*The New Day*, November 10, 1938, 57) FATHER DIVINE tried to keep HIMSELF, as a Person, out of consideration, in harmony with His precept that the Principle is impersonal. White states that in spite of the adoration that His followers heaped upon HIM, HE denied everything Personal about HIMSELF and constantly admonished His adherents to consider and thrive on His Impersonality rather than on His Personality. Because FATHER DIVINE thus endeavored to stay out of the limelight, perhaps His own discourses were not as numerous during this period as in the following years.

In His Message, HE told of His efforts to escape attention: *"About twenty years ago, when I decided to go out to Sayville, ...I decided to go out to some place and hide completely Personally, willingly and voluntarily exiling MYSELF ...that I might not be seen as an individual, that I might transmit My Spirit to humanity, that they might see GOD Impersonally! When these books came forth ...bearing a highlight of spiritual advanced understanding, I sought them diligently as a hiding place for ME. I could see I was going to expose MYSELF if I continued to talk!"* Yet it is evident that the literature of New Thought writers did not have that satisfying portion for which the people yearned. It did not satisfy FATHER DIVINE either because HE

discontinued His practice of distributing it. No doubt it was not pure enough or high enough. It probably served a purpose in preparing people for His own Teaching, but it was not resounding enough or trenchant enough to bring the masses to the mountain in consciousness to which FATHER DIVINE wished them to attain. It occurred to Burnham also that the literature written by other metaphysicians which was dispensed by FATHER DIVINE was lacking in verve. He suggests an appealing cause for the halt to the flow of free books toward the end of the first chapter of his book. He writes that the people did not want the other versions of Truth Teaching. They wanted FATHER DIVINE'S version of HIMSELF, His History and His Mission. They did not want a book to speak to them--they wanted HIM to address them. They wanted the medium of teaching to be the giver--FATHER DIVINE--not the books. The people would rather listen to HIM than read the books. Because of His uncommon powers, they preferred His Message, His Presence and His Example to the GOD of Christianity or a GOD up in Heaven someplace.

Finally, FATHER DIVINE saw that it was necessary for HIM to minister to the people HIMSELF, as a Person. His disciples wanted no surrogate Teacher. HE asserts, *"I had striven to hide MYSELF behind those things until I could be hid no longer. . . .For they [the people] sought something beyond that which had been written. Hence I could no longer hide."* The people sought something brighter, more real, more practical, and more loving than what was written in the books.

From here on, FATHER DIVINE'S Ministry on this earth was in full swing and gaining momentum. From this time,

especially after moving from Sayville to New York City, FATHER DIVINE did not employ literature that was written by non- followers in His Work--not even hymn books. HE HIMSELF supplied the world with spiritual food via the printed word, fresh almost every day, through His Sermons, Lectures and Messages--most of which were published verbatim in various papers, but especially in *The Spoken Word*, and later in *The New Day*. Many of His interviews and a good share of His correspondence with people all over the world were also published.

Power of the Mind

Mr. White does an exhaustive digest of New Thought philosophy as compared with FATHER DIVINE'S canons. The overriding power of Mind is central to both: *"The belief that the power of Mind is supreme is as basic to Divine's teaching as it is to New Thought. But Divine's approach was more radical by virtue of its all-encompassing nature. While New Thought groups generally encouraged positive thinking to secure specific goals, Divine encouraged positive thinking as a means to self-apotheosis. As such, Positive Thinking becomes total and unlimited even to the point of denying all things that tend to limit one to anything less than divinity."* (23) And, *"For Divine the greatest evil was personal "limitation," so Divine encouraged his followers to concentrate only in the direction of the unlimited to go beyond the personal."* (24)

White offers this statement by Collier, which is nearly identical to FATHER DIVINE'S doctrine: *"The mind is GOD. And the subconscious in us is our part in Divinity. It is the Holy Spirit that Jesus so often referred to."* (27) White extends the concept: *"When taken to an extreme, one could*

easily assume that man is divine, as Father Divine was to assert later. Collier was not so extreme, preferring to refer to our status as a 'son-ship,' a term which Divine later uses for the spiritual attainments of others in contrast with the 'Fathership' degree of his own attainment. In Collier's thinking the subconscious mind in its maturity is actually the Holy Spirit within. As such it served to link us with GOD the Father. For the subconscious mind to reach maturity it must be metaphorically 'baptized and confirmed.'" (27)

Collier has more on the baptism of the subconscious: *"Baptize it [the subconscious] in the waters of understanding your oneness with the Father, confirm it with the realization of the GOD life flowing so abundantly through you..... [only then] does it become the Holy Spirit within you--one with the Father, one with the Source of life, of power, of abundance."* (27) White warns though, that this gift of life and power does not come merely with baptism, but that mindful toil and faith are essentials, according to Collier's principles: *"Divine parallels Collier in his conception of GOD and the stress he lays on the mind and in the benefits that derive from the proper use of the mind. ...Collier defines these principles as relaxation, complete trust, and hard work. Divine also emphasizes 'relaxation of conscious mentality,' complete trust in GOD and hard work."* (29)

No GOD in the Sky

Mr. White comments on FATHER DIVINE'S strong theism and the affinity between the individuality of GOD and His complete freedom to be ever and omnipresent and His ability to move the world with or without a body. *"Divine's theology maintained a fine balance between the personal*

and impersonal aspects of GOD. ...In similar fashion Divine insisted that Jesus was GOD, that his followers should accept this and read the scriptures. But he also maintained that the 'Christ principle' antedates Jesus' birth, and that Christ may have manifested this principle in his work of Salvation on other planets. The delicate balance between the personal Jesus and the impersonal Christ principle is maintained." (34-35)

Orthodox preachments have done a disservice to humanity by broadcasting the image of a sky-God. White states, *"It is significant that identification or oneness with GOD the Father produces identical material benefits for both Collier and Divine: more 'life, power, and abundance."* Both also agree that the nature of this Father-GOD has been wrongly construed by orthodox teaching and as such has proven unhelpful to the common population. Robert Collier wrote: *"The God that most of us were taught to believe in was a huge patriarchal Man-God, seated upon a throne high in the skies.' Such a god could logically be of little help. He becomes an otiose sky-god."* (27-28) FATHER DIVINE taught the necessity of understanding that "no longer is our GOD afar off," and insists that *"If GOD is in heaven above the stars, the moon, and planets, why it would have taken God ten thousand years at light-rate speed to go to some of the far distant stars."* (28)

White projects the absurdity further: *"And if God had to manage so much territory, what possibility would we have of His answering our prayers? None. No, GOD cannot be considered to be 'up in Heaven' in a geographical sense. Heaven rather is a 'state of consciousness' that is always near and immediately responsive to us."*

"For Divine more than for Collier, there is more at stake here than just metaphysics, for to hold a concept of a distant sky god makes Him useless and keeps people impoverished. As Divine expressed it, 'All of the praying to an imaginary God... has kept the under-privileged down-trodden until this day.' It is Divine's special emphasis on the harmfulness of orthodox belief to the 'down-trodden' that sets him apart from Collier." (28)

Baird Spalding and the "Masters"

The thrilling succession of transcendental mini-revelations presented in Baird Spalding's *The Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East* are a wellspring of wonder to his readers. Yet, such a life will one day be routine. There are many parallels between Spalding and FATHER DIVINE. White writes of Spalding's saga that it is *"a fantastic account of the author's encounters with the great masters or 'Siddhas' of the East. These masters are responsible for the spiritual evolution of humanity, like the 'adepts' of Theosophy and the 'Ascended Masters' of the I AM movement.... As the book opens, Spalding is on a scientific expedition in India with a small company of Europeans. Spalding and company are contacted by a mysterious Indian who offers to demonstrate conclusively to Spalding and his companions the existence of occult powers and to introduce them to the occult brotherhood that 'oversees the earth plane's evolution.' During their travels to the high Himalayas they witness such feats as telepathy, levitation, bi-location, walking through walls and invisibility. All of this is observed and recorded in an objective and dispassionate manner."* (30)

White compares the pacific precepts of the Masters to New Thought dogma: *"The instructions that are given for developing these abilities are strictly in line with New Thought principles. The Goal of Life is Heaven, which is defined as a state of consciousness; GOD is part of our innermost being, and his Kingdom can be realized here and now. Humans are innately perfect, they only need concentrate to manifest the New Thought of their perfection to live perfected lives. This attainment of perfection is described by Spalding as the movement from mortal consciousness to Christ-consciousness. When all men actualize this movement, the 'vibrations' of the earth plane will be raised and heaven will be manifested on earth. Then all men shall be brothers. ...All of these ideas are more or less 'orthodox' New Thought. ...Spalding's model of a spiritual hierarchy is peripheral to the book's central message of self-perfection, but shows his tendency to be more 'Spiritualized' than most New Thinkers."* (30-31)

Spalding champions the actual manifesting of heaven on earth as well as the uniting of all mankind into one brotherhood. White notes the agreement between him and FATHER DIVINE: *"It is precisely in his emphasis on universal brotherhood and the subordination of the material realm to seeking spiritual self-perfection that Divine seems most in harmony with Spalding. Spalding has one of his Masters declare, 'E pluribus unum is one of the great laws of GOD [that] the one be expressed through the many, the One of all for all.' We find Divine declaring: ...We feel we are a part of you and part of all. I often say 'E pluribus unum' religiously as well as politically. ...we believe this will bring about the universal Brotherhood of men eventually."* (31)

The projection of a world-wide Family is one of FATHER DIVINE'S favorite themes. Spalding's language is identical. White quotes him: *"We are in reality all one family, Sons of the one Father-Mother-GOD. Why can we not meet as brothers all?" Divine says: 'I AM stressing ...the Love of GOD brought to fruition in the presence of you all as a Father-Mother- GOD, filling all space and absent from none, caring the same for each and every one. ...[Thus] there will be one Family ...coming into the recognition of the Universal Brotherhood of Man.'"* (31)

The Masters' Banquet Table

The Holy Communion Banquets of the Peace Mission Movement are uniquely individualistic. White recounts Spalding's experience with the Far East seers at their Feasting Table: *"When the expeditioners finally meet with the High Masters of the Himalayas there is a magnificent banquet. For Spalding the scene is the apex of the book. Spalding and his compatriots have traveled far and finally arrive at the home of one of the highest Masters of the spiritual planes. After some preparation, they are led into a tastefully and magnificently decorated hall. They sit at a long table in silence and presently the Great Master appears before them.*

"She is dressed in white robes and her countenance is bathed in a supernal light. She says a few words about the significance of their presence and stresses the coming unity of all mankind.

"Suddenly music is heard from the skies. Its sounds are so full of bliss and so perfectly harmonious that it raises their consciousness to the highest ecstasy, and they realize they are hearing the celestial choir of GOD. The Great

Master then begins to materialize breads and other foods before her and, blessing them with a touch, passes them to the right and then left. After all have eaten their fill, an abundance remained." (32)

This scene may not be familiar to New Thoughters but for those who have dined at FATHER DIVINE'S Table, it is habitual custom, because such Banquets are not once a year events in the Peace Mission but--with variations--everyday fare. This description is especially appropriate inasmuch as MOTHER DIVINE quite often appears in white raiment at the Banquet Table--with a glowing countenance-- especially during Anniversary Celebrations. Likewise, SHE speaks frequently of the blessed Privilege of assembling in the Presence of GOD, and of Her fervent desire for the union of all people. The Rosebud Choir, as the angelic host, breaks forth in song, and the vibrations rise ever higher, as MOTHER DIVINE passes the serving vessels to FATHER DIVINE for His Blessing before sending them down each side of the Table.

It is reported that FATHER DIVINE'S Banquets began in a small way as far back as 1912. White continues: *"Divine's famous banquets are one of the hallmarks of his movement. The banquet ritual began on a large scale in the late twenties and persists to the present. This ritual constitutes the central group activity of the movement and is spoken of as a holy 'communion ritual.' ...As a demonstration of prosperity and ecstatic unity, Divine's 'Holy Communion Table' was an awesome event. ...The food was blessed by Divine's touch, passed left and right by him and eaten amidst singing, chanting, and testifying with rhythm sharply marked by the clapping of hands and tapping of feet." (32-33)*

FATHER DIVINE is quoted as having made these remarks concerning the Banquet Service: *"This Table is but the outer expression ...of the condition of the consciousness within. There is no limitation, there is no lack, there is no want. ...The abundance of the fulness of the consciousness of GOD has made this so to you. Aren't you glad! ...While sitting there ...I thought of how marvelous it is to be conscious of GOD'S presence!"* and White comments, *"Early on he emphasized that they were in the Kingdom of GOD that very moment. He urged them to relax their conscious mentality."* (33)

White elaborates on another version of the components of the Banquet: *"With all the rhythm and shouting this might be a more 'Baptist' version of Spalding's banquet, but it is nonetheless a version of the same thing. Both take place in a sacred place opening up to heaven; in both there is a great abundance of food (many in Divine's day thought he miraculously materialized it); there is the blessing with a touch and passing of food, and there are words and music used to bring people into ecstatic harmony."*

"Later Divine was to say of this music, 'You can hear angels singing because of the transmission of the angels to the earth plane; the angelic choir has been transmitted.' While 'Angels' is also used for Divine's close followers, here its usage is purposefully multivalent." (34)

The thought among serious students of FATHER DIVINE'S activities is that what others talk about, FATHER DIVINE has already done and has been doing. As White states, HE has taken the scenario that various leaders have dreamed up and brought it into reality, fulfilling metaphysical predictions and yearnings. *"Divine was making manifest on the earth what Spalding could only*

hope would one day be real: the coming of the heavenly hosts to dwell among all men. ...He was in a sense living out their script, making real and widespread what had only existed as a hope." (34)

Power of the Presence of GOD

Mr. White clearly conceived that the acute, conscious recognition of the Presence of GOD is the open sesame that brings Peace and Happiness. He quotes FATHER DIVINE: *"Now when you come around here, you are in the very atmosphere, in the very wave lengths of this recognition of the conscious realization of GOD'S Presence, hence you are dialing in on GOD'S conscience, and you can learn more wisdom and understanding in one day here, than you can through all of the different seminaries, and you will be charged with His mighty current of Love! It is indeed wonderful! ...It is because there is nothing else to rely on but GOD and GOD alone! Not the theories and doctrines of men, neither the versions and ideas and opinions of them, but the very presence of GOD alone, as your guide and your hope and your protection, and also your information and your inspiration!"* (51) Such an apparently boastful statement may lead some to judge that FATHER DIVINE is a conceited egotist--but there is no humbler Spirit than HE--as those who know HIM will certify-- except when HE rises in the Power of the Infinite Spirit to thunder down in indignation against a cruel injustice or rank imbalance. Such a statement as the above may seem vaunting, but FATHER DIVINE can make it without vanity or braggadocio because HE speaks from a position of strength. HE is merely stating fact.

White calls attention to the working of the above set of conditions in making new people out of weak, mortality-ridden bodies: *"Divine stressed 'awareness of the Presence of GOD' as the technique of self- transformation. In a very conscious way he presented himself as a focus of contemplation upon which his followers would project their desires and then internalize him as the ideal fulfiller of these desires. He taught that to internalize ideals in this way allowed the 'hidden treasures within' to become available in a manner that introspection alone could not achieve."* (51)

He adds, *"This was a practical teaching (or 'psychology') directed at those who by previous association were introspective and inclined to seek GOD or Truth by going inside themselves. Divine's message to these people was to turn from self-meditation in search of GOD to learning to see GOD in other people. Divine taught that when GOD can be seen in other people then the 'Kingdom of Heaven within' is disclosed and the 'door of Salvation' is unlocked.... He stressed seeing GOD in everyone and remembering GOD at all times. ...As he says, his followers are to 'visualize and gaze upon the principle not the person.' And yet it is through the person that the principle can be clearly visualized and realized. Divine taught that not recognizing the personification of the 'Almighty Father' here and now led to atheism and physical mortality."* (52)

It has been said that Jesus was the greatest Teacher the world has known, for the reason that HE not only preached the Truth to the people, but HE practiced what HE preached. Correspondingly, followers of FATHER DIVINE see His Words in action in HIM: *"Divine taught that recognition of GOD'S actual presence frees one from 'all sense of limitation, all sense of division and adverse*

conditions' and gives one a 'conscious conviction of this presence in action.' ...As one follower saw it, 'Not only was Father Divine teaching righteousness, but he was living the right-use-ness of every thought, every emotion, every word and deed. ...By the accurateness of the life of Christ exemplified by HIM, others were impelled to follow in His footsteps on the same foundation.'" (53)

Healing of the Body

Undoubtedly the excitement of many people over FATHER DIVINE was stirred first by reports of physical healings--and not without cause. All sorts of disease and bodily malfunctions being cured through some kind of contact with FATHER DIVINE were included in these reports. White writes: *"Healing was an important element in both the Holiness and New Thought traditions, but Divine's practice of healing more closely approximates the methods of New Thought. Divine's method involved no anointing, praying over, or laying on of hands on the sick person, as was common in evangelistic circles. The patient was told simply to have faith and to contact Father Divine's spirit within himself. He was encouraged to 'fast' from negative thoughts and emotions, to 'relax his conscious mentality' and think of the positive..."* (46)

Healings reported ranged from simple relief from headaches to restoration of a deceased back to life. A sister tells of having an ache on the side of her face--which she divulged to no one. Standing behind the celebrants at a Holy Communion Banquet that FATHER DIVINE was serving in Person, she, concentrating on HIM, observed HIM pass His Hand over the side of His Face--the same side that was

troubling her. Immediately the pain ceased--never to return.

A brother was brought across the continent from the Pacific to New York on a litter, almost totally unable to move. His body was so laced with cancer that the odor was unbearable. He was taken to a Peace Mission Church while FATHER DIVINE was Personally at another Church. When FATHER DIVINE was told of the arrival, HE calmly made the matter-of-fact statement that it was not necessary for HIM to see the brother Personally, but that the brother should be told to rise up from his litter. The brother was given this loving, impersonal message from FATHER DIVINE, Who remained at the other Church--and immediately the brother quit his litter and was subsequently healed of his cancer. White comments on the inner workings of the Spirit moving impersonally: *"This emphasis on the impersonal is thoroughly consistent with New Thought. Divine's practices for perfect health were those which he recommended in general for attaining 'Christ consciousness.' These principles were thinking positively, turning inward, denial of the negative and affirmation of the Good through Faith. All these principles are practiced in groups like Unity School of Christianity, Science of Mind, Religious Science and numerous New Thought groups."* (46-47)

White's mention of the healing process being a science suggests intriguing developments for the pioneers on the physical, mental and spiritual health front. When a theory is tested by many scientists by proper application of the prescribed methodology--all of whom achieve the same results--the theory becomes scientific Law. Long ago, Mary Baker Eddy perceived that the healing process evolved by the several New Thought groups including her own had

been "worked down to a science." Hence, she maintained that the technique of attaining total health can be classed as a science for the reason that anyone, anywhere, can apply the Laws of GOD and get the same results--perfect health. She employed the same methods that JESUS CHRIST exercised, and forthwith proclaimed her church as an exponent of *"Christian" Science* and furthermore heralded CHRIST as the Chief Scientist. Then she wrote a text-book on the Science of Health which outlines the procedures in achieving total health according to the scientific process. Two prerequisites are an elevated consciousness and an unshaken faith.

The Laws of GOD are at least as infallible and immutable as the Laws of science. Humankind has only to obey the Laws of GOD to the letter--as scientists unswervingly deploy the Laws of science--to gain perfect Peace and Happiness in all its endeavors: *"In Divine's peculiarly adaptable way, he didn't hesitate to use DeWaters' principle that there should be 'no personal healer in Divine Science,' that the healer should only step aside and allow the power of GOD to manifest itself impersonally. Divine and DeWaters both agreed that for GOD'S power to manifest itself in one, one must have a high character, a purified consciousness, and a great spiritual faith in the one Reality. The greater these characteristics, the greater was one's power to bless others. Likewise, Divine insisted on the 'Science of Recognition,' the science of devotion to GOD that DeWaters encouraged."* (35)

There is related an incident where a person was adjudged dead by a physician. Later, FATHER DIVINE came to the house where the alleged corpse lay and bade the person come to life--which the person did. Another

incident concerns a sister being injured in an auto accident. Her head and body were so broken up that no hope was extended to her. However, the spark of life was still there and her subconsciousness was so drenched with the Spirit of the Consciousness of the Presence of GOD that the relentless reaper could not take her--and she lived to regain her health.

It is manifestly desirable--and it is possible--to exploit this Spiritual Science in neutralizing the ravages of sickness, accident and death, and in returning the body to life and health. But it is infinitely greater in the sight of GOD to exploit this Science in preventive measures before disaster strikes--thereby armoring the mind and body to that state where sickness, accident and death cannot enter--and where there is undisturbed Peace and Happiness forevermore!

Essence of New Thought

Ronald White has presented both an extensive and an intensive discussion of the similarities between New Thought and FATHER DIVINE doctrines. They are mutually inclusive on virtually all points, except that FATHER DIVINE has gone to the hard core of evangelical living, stringently and vigorously upholding the standard that Jesus the CHRIST exhibited in His Life, thereby shunning any tendency to compromise with mortality and tabooing any soft, frothy thinking that would relax the standard. FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings have more substance. White quotes Robert Ellwood's summary of New Thought which describes its philosophical basis: *"New Thought is a modern western adaption of the assumption that mind is fundamental and causative. This means that the real cause of every event is*

an internal non-material idea. ...[New Thought] points to the mental potential of every individual. New Thought teachers have always striven to show how, in very practical ways, thoughts of health, wholeness, and success can create their corresponding material realities. ...If mind is the ground of the physical world, then changing one's thoughts ought to change the physical world. ...Mind can create by its own direct force all desirable conditions of life." (23)

Peace Mission thinking agrees entirely with this summary. Hence, it is appropriate to state that FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings are of the same genre as New Thought.

Intellectuals Drawn to FATHER DIVINE

The question arises as to why no one, neither within the New Thought constellation nor outside it, seized the hallmarks of these faiths and combined them with the rapturous Spirit of GOD to generate a climate that was conducive to health and happiness, as FATHER DIVINE did. The answer probably lies in the fact that there was then no other Messianic figure--nor is there now--with the consummate genius required to launch a Utopian-like society such as the Peace Mission Movement. *"Divine was fully conscious of the limitations of the discursive thought and introspection so characteristic of pre-World War I groups like New Thought, Theosophy and Christian Science. It was his genius that he could adopt their terminology, philosophy and techniques and combine these with a highly emotional, often ecstatic atmosphere. What is even more remarkable is his ability to turn this synthesis of contrasting tendencies, which in their extremes lead to utter passivity on the one hand and anarchy on the other,*

and direct it towards constructive social activity. This is the unique ability of charismatic leadership." (50)

White observes that the post-World War I groups adopted freer, more expansive teaching styles than the pre-World War I associations: *"They tended to center on a flamboyant, charismatic personality and de-emphasized discursive thought. ...As was characteristic of some southern... preaching traditions, the content was at times secondary to the feelings of enthusiasm and immediacy the preaching evoked. Divine's rhetorical style was often adapted to triggering an immediate awareness of Divine Reality."* (48) White comments on the fact that not only the unlettered were captivated by FATHER DIVINE'S attractive sodality, but the illumined set were also drawn: *"If it is accepted that Divine's style of teaching his message was so popular among metaphysicians because of its freer, more expansive nature, this would clarify Divine's appeal to ...people typical of the intellectual elite who associated themselves with the movement."* (48)

White singles out Eugene Del Mar and Walter Lanyon as examples, both of whom were not only enamored of the Truth that FATHER DIVINE taught, but they were devoted to HIM also because of His magnetic personal qualities. Del Mar and White were fifty years removed from each other, but because both were grounded in New Thought, they concurred in their appraisal of FATHER DIVINE.

Reverend Richard Randolph was another of the intelligentsia who succumbed to FATHER DIVINE'S charm. Randolph wrote a book entitled, *GOD is on Earth Today!* (with testimony). It is an "Authentic Metaphysical and Spiritual Treatise on the Work and Teaching of Father

Divine," published in 1952 by The Society of the Sacred Seven in Los Angeles. White writes that in his book, Randolph *"described himself as an ordained minister and a 'graduate doctor of metaphysics from a reputable college.'* He established the Society of the Sacred Seven in Los Angeles in 1944, which ran a school and a church in metaphysics and mental science. After reading *The New Day ...and meeting some of Divine's followers, he wrote, 'I was no longer satisfied with merely the metaphysical approach to GOD and Truth. I had suddenly found there was something deeper in Divine Truth than mere metaphysics; and there was something more vital to soul unfoldment than mental science.'*" (50) Thereupon, Randolph closed his church and his school and hid himself away to experience the exhilaration of being in the Presence of FATHER DIVINE. Then he was satisfied.

Plaintively, Philip entreated Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." (John 14:8) Philip, like Randolph, ached to know the Father; his soul thirsted for the bliss and security that he knew would be his if he could only be gathered into the bosom of his Father. Only constant contact with the Father would suffice!

Mr. White quotes the *Pittsburgh Courier* reporting an account of Arthur Madison, an attorney and very close associate of FATHER DIVINE, as being another intellectual in the Movement. Madison graduated *cum laude* from Bowdoin College and earned the Master degree from Columbia University. Madison asserted that his professors were psychologists, philosophers and educators of the first water such as Edward Thorndike, William Kilpatrick and John Dewey, but none could be compared with FATHER DIVINE in the comprehensiveness of His Teaching.

Reflection upon the apparent oddity of FATHER DIVINE drawing learned people raises a further question. Why were these astute men and others, who were abundantly endowed in all departments of life, attracted to what appeared to some as a lowly member of a condemned group? The answer is given by Walter Lanyon. He states that in FATHER DIVINE lies Power--and to be in the Presence of the Power is the reason he was pulled to FATHER DIVINE, Whose Message was broadcast not only by what HE said but also by how HE made people feel. Lanyon's statement may be found at the end of the second chapter of this book, *Rediscovering GOD*. Fauset is in agreement that people instinctively have the desire to be in the Presence of great Power. All that FATHER DIVINE demonstrates is achieved by opening one's self to the contagion of His Power, and following in His footsteps.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating just as profoundly in metaphysics as in the kitchen arts. From the earliest years, FATHER DIVINE'S congregation represented an amalgam of people from the Holiness Church, Christian Science, New Thought traditions, "I AM" and other sects, of various so-called races and ethnic groups, of every level of education and economic status. White states that "It is noteworthy that New Thought concepts had a determining influence on Divine's popularity among intellectuals."

In a private interview with MOTHER DIVINE, SHE remarked to Mr. White that many metaphysicians knew the law of positive thinking and right living intellectually, but they were unable to demonstrate it in the form of material necessities and luxuries. White quotes FATHER DIVINE'S remarks on this point: *"How is it that the metaphysicians*

can emphasize mastery over evil influences, contagious diseases, (and such); yet it appears as if there is ...a lack of faith to master the economic situation." (*The New Day*, January 19, 1948, 8); *"Metaphysics will justify you in self-exaltation and yet it will not lift you out of self and physical disintegration."* (*The New Day*, November 26, 1949 14); and, *"The average person that is metaphysically inspired they do not get to that place where things must be tangibilated."* (*The New Day*, March 26, 1949, 2; these excerpts are quoted in footnote 14 on page 38 of White's thesis.)

White continues the thought: *"By demonstrating material abundance especially in times of scarcity (as in the Depression), Divine drew thousands from other New Thought groups. Within Divine's system, as in other systems of New Thought, 'total surrendering to GOD,' the Fundamental of all existence, had very practical material payoffs. The living quarters Father Divine provided for his faithful followers were expected to contain all the desirable conditions of life."* (25) When people saw the pudding, and tasted, they trooped to FATHER DIVINE'S banner.

Dividends of Self-Denial

The rewards of following the FATHER are worth many times the effort. White explains: *"In the 'Sonship degree,' Divine taught, one is vulnerable to attacks and even death, as was Jesus, But in the 'Fathership degree' one is invincible, having the 'victory and the mastery over all adversities.' This was not a sacrifice without its compensations. True to New Thought form, there was a practical payoff for those who could sacrifice the personal for the Impersonal: health, wealth and happiness, heaven here and now."* (54)

FATHER DIVINE has been ridiculed and excoriated for His excesses of rectitude on one hand and the emotional eagerness of His followers on the other. But halfhearted efforts yield less than mediocre results. FATHER DIVINE employed more extreme applications of the eternal Principles than did New Thought. His precepts took much more progressive form in His followers than New Thought precepts did in its circles. Pursuance of "Good" helped them to obliterate all reminders of their individuality: *"Family ties were severed, names were spiritualized and one's lifestyle was expected to conform to Divine principles. ...Total dedication and absorption in the will of GOD are the means of 'resurrecting the Christ within' and then 'going on to the perfection of the Fatherhood degree.' Perfection meant heaven on earth. Harmony, wealth, and perfect health were the rewards of surrendering to the Spirit within."* (54-55)

FATHER DIVINE'S New American Society

FATHER DIVINE cannot be confined to His followers and those who attend His services--not even to the community surrounding His Churches and extensions. HE has declared hundreds of times that HE wants it to be all over this wide, extended plane just as it is under His Personal Jurisdiction. White praises FATHER DIVINE for this universal outlook:

"Divine's ultimate goal was more global than individual. Divine sought to produce perfect individuals not as an end in itself, but to create an ideal society. While the personal dimensions of Divine's message have been explicated, one would be remiss in neglecting the social dimensions of his movement. Divine did not limit his activities and messages to immediate followers and interested metaphysicians. Rather, he sought to force change on the society at large

through meetings, block voting or letter writing campaigns, and demonstrations (boycotting the polls).

"These actions were always implemented to achieve the goal of the 'universal brotherhood of man,' which always carried religious and quasi-metaphysical connotations. Where effectiveness in achieving his goals was the issue, however, Divine did not hesitate to address political issues head on. And he said, 'If they do not wish to hear My voice from a Religious point of view, they shall hear me politically.'" (55)

"These goals of achieving social and personal righteousness, justice and truth Divine described as 'True Americanism.' Because True Americanism leads to 'unity' it is touted as synonymous with Christianity and Judaism. With Divine, politics had become intertwined with religion, and religion became a spur to politics. Thus Divine can say 'It is as important to be converted by the teaching of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence as it is to be converted by the Gospel,' because for him they aspire to the same end: 'unity.'" (56)

Shortsighted puritans often decry the incursion of politics into the church and into its homilies. The colonial concern with separation of church and state was so ineffaceably etched into the souls of freedom-conscious Founding Fathers that it still persists. The phrase 'Church and State' is unfortunate because it has become fixed in the public mind and because it is a cranky issue with many people. These two words should never have been used together. Rather, the phrase should be "GOD and State." "Church" means denominationalism with its religious theology. Therefore "church" and State should forever remain apart. But GOD

and State must forever be inextricably interwoven, for whatever does not have GOD in it, is lost.

White justified FATHER DIVINE'S secular operations as being expedient in achieving His goals. *"There is no inconsistency in Divine's expression of New Thought and his social justice activities. Quite the contrary, in line with the 'practicality' that was constantly stressed by Divine he sought the most effective means at his disposal to make real the dream of universal brotherhood. ...Divine also encouraged action as well as talk. The reason for this was put best by one of Divine's followers when she said, 'This is more than just a teaching, it's a lifestyle.'"* (56-57)

Mr. White concludes his discussion of the preeminent merits of the doctrines espoused by New Thought and FATHER DIVINE with a statement that is fundamental to world Peace: *"What made Divine unique was the manner in which he was able to make terms and practices previously presented as tedious mental exercises popularly meaningful and alive by his personal charisma. Divine uniquely tapped into the native soil of America and drew out a synthesis that could not have been foreseen. B---- W----, thinking and feeling, Holiness and New Thought, Garveyites and Hindus, rich and poor, were all nurtured and comprehended in his teaching. 'Unity' was the key... and to those whom he unified he gave one goal, one aim, one destiny: to bring into reality the universal Brotherhood of man and the conscious realization of the Fatherhood of GOD within."* (57)

In this statement, there appears yet another allusion to American soil as being somehow indelibly native to the inimitable doctrine that FATHER DIVINE artlessly presented to the people. Both Arthur Fauset and Kenneth Burnham

made a particular point of calling attention to the peculiarly American texture of the Divine society. MOTHER DIVINE also, in Her book, writes of this New American Culture and its moral and spiritual Law being the foundation thereof. It appears that America is intrinsically hospitable to FATHER DIVINE'S Work and Mission and that they are dissolved together in a transcendent realm of well-being.

MOTHER DIVINE and the Atomic Era

White writes of the love and reverence for MOTHER DIVINE expressed by the followers, and the momentousness of Her Marriage to FATHER DIVINE: *"Mother Divine has been increasingly looked to for guidance and inspiration. As far back as 1946 their marriage was interpreted as the sign of a new dispensation. Father Divine proclaimed their marriage date of April 29 as 'a national and international, Racial and Interracial, Holiday.'" (11)* White quotes personal correspondence from MOTHER DIVINE to him. She wrote: *"FATHER had often spoken of the new dispensation we are living in, but HE said that on April 29, 1946 when we were married, a new era began. Because HE said it must come into consideration from a calendar point of view, we do start our New Year now on April 29."* (11-12) The present dispensation is sometimes referred to as the Fatherhood (Atomic) Dispensation.

FATHER DIVINE--Peerless Virtuoso

At length, after discussing the similarities between the doctrines of New Thought and the Peace Mission Movement, White asks, *"What was so special about what Father Divine taught? What was his appeal to the many intellectuals who were quite familiar with New Thought,*

Christian Science or other such groups?" (47) White remarks that the appeal was not in what FATHER DIVINE taught, for these people had already heard most of it. Neither were healings and psychic phenomena the appeal, because they also occurred in the other groups. "Rather, the appeal lay in the contagion of his personality and his ability to open others to high levels of emotion. In this ability, Divine embodied the transition from a coldly intellectual, discursive approach to metaphysics as the ideal--to the actual lively and intuitive participation in the Truth of metaphysics (through the mediation of a spiritual master) as the ideal. Divine's metaphysics can best be viewed as an example of the avant garde esotericism of his era." (47)

The "contagion of His Personality" flows from His fundamental goodness and Christlike attributes. This is what is so "special" about FATHER DIVINE.

Another trait that endears HIM to His disciples is His altruism and magnanimity. Whatever FATHER DIVINE has for HIMSELF, HE provides the same for His followers. HE claims nothing as His own nor for HIMSELF for His own private use. HE owned nothing--no real estate, no stocks or securities, no property--not even an automobile. White seems gleeful in presenting this excerpt from a sermon FATHER DIVINE delivered in 1937: *"All of these blessings are for you if you live Evangelically and abide in the spirit of GOD whole-heartedly. ...As I said, 'The Earth is the LORD'S and the fulness thereof,' yet without claiming anything. ...You have not found any record in the Bible where GOD especially claimed the earth as His own, as a Person. HE let the people claim the earth. What would I want with it as a Person? I like to see everybody enjoy it; to have the*

blessings and be practical and profitable and independent, rise above lacks, wants and limitations; free yourselves from depressions, hardships and miseries. ...This is what My spirit will do for you...Isn't it a privilege to realize you can rise above those limited concepts of things and revel into the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD?" (24)

FATHER DIVINE not only did not claim the earth; HE did not even claim HIMSELF in some ways. HE did not vaunt His pedigree, His education, His social position. HE did not set HIMSELF up as a potentate, but deliberately chose a humble role, except when His righteous judgment cried out against a villainy. His authority, according to Ronald White, rested on that mysterious something about HIM which is called "charisma." White then refers, just as Kephart did, to Burnham's thorough exposition of charisma and how it contributed to FATHER DIVINE'S authority. FATHER DIVINE'S Divinity, however, is the bottom line in this issue.

Many people, great and small, have attempted to "classify" FATHER DIVINE according to some pet system of their own choice or devising. All have been unsuccessful, whether they admit it or not, because when they think they have HIM neatly filed in a certain category, HE becomes a will-o'-the-wisp, slips out of the slot, and appears elsewhere in another guise; "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)

At the close of the second chapter of his thesis, Mr. White writes of this faculty in FATHER DIVINE: *"Divine's challenge is his almost chameleon-like quality when placed against the books he praises as high truth. Just at the moment when he seems to blend completely with the*

terminology, symbols and ideas of a Collier, Spalding or DeWaters, he moves and we are startled to find that he is really something apart with a life of his own. He may appropriate the commanding tone of Benner's The Impersonal Life to speak to his followers in the very voice of GOD, as Benner does in his book; or he may speak... using words like 'vibrations' and 'mortal consciousness;' but there is always a difference. ...He made his message uniquely his own, adapted to his circumstances, his audience and his ends. Benner may have written, 'I use all avenues Impersonally to express my message' but Divine lived it." (35-36) Anyone who endeavors to compare FATHER DIVINE with a mortal being will inevitably be shocked into perceiving that "there is always a difference."

FATHER DIVINE'S style has sometimes been classed as colorful and flamboyant, and as contriving emotional peaks in Peace Mission Meetings, as though there was nothing enduring behind His dramatics, and as though His Movement would soon disintegrate. White seems to hint that in spite of His style, the fruits of that style were not transient, but engendered conception of a compacted, stable faith in His followers. This writer suggests that if there had not been solid, substantive reality in its infrastructure, the Peace Mission Movement would not live today.

White states simply that FATHER DIVINE was first and foremost a New Thought preacher and notes that the natural alliance between the two groups applies not only to philosophy but extends to vocabulary: *"Some terms such as 'vibration,' 'material and spiritual planes,' and 'reincarnation' are most common in esoteric groups like Spiritualism and Theosophy. ...More frequent was his use of*

the phraseology 'Father-Mother-GOD.' 'Christ within' or 'Christ consciousness,' 'all-supply' and 'at-one-ment.' Such concepts were fundamental to his teaching and also lie at the base of Christian Science, The Unity School of Christianity and New Thought groups generally. Equally common are such concepts as 'GOD is all and in all,' GOD as an 'Impersonal Principle' and the 'Immortality of man.' Correlatively, these terms are also common in Christian Science, Unity and New Thought." (45-46)

In a brief note contained in the October, 1940, *American Speech*, C. B. Crumb submitted this delightful bit about FATHER DIVINE'S "style" and "punch": *"Father Divine is one of the spellbinders of our time. Teachers of effective public speaking may mark his use of colloquial and original English. There can be no doubt that he is effective; he succeeds in making himself heard easily and his words seem to carry some meaning to his audiences. Like other lofty rhetoric his high-sounding phrases are musical symbols of emotion!"*

FATHER DIVINE--Supernatural Humanitarian

Orthodoxy did not have the right solutions to the problems of the people. Orthodoxy was leading the people into a cul-de-sac, an abysmal dead end. The GOD of Providence knew this and hence inspired the New Thinkers to blossom with positive thinking. Something had to be done to save the people. The New Thought Movement served a great purpose in this respect inasmuch as FATHER DIVINE used it to assist the people to come out of the old into the new. It served as a ferry from one shore to the other--a gradual transition from the more or less barren banks of orthodox religions to the bright shores of

abundant living--reveling in the spiritual atmosphere created by the consciousness of the actual Presence of GOD. On these shores, each individual makes his or her own contact with the Creator and declares independence from all else.

The purpose of Mr. White's thesis, as his title states, is to show how the doctrine of New Thought influenced FATHER DIVINE in His Work and Ministry, His Teachings, His vocabulary, His philosophy, and His practices. White compared the Gospel of both groups, but the comparison is merely incidental because the value of the thesis is not in making the comparison.

White has done the friends of the Peace Mission Movement a service since he does not, in his thesis, travel the devious routes taken by earlier writers into the maze of materialism. These writers viewed FATHER DIVINE from every possible perspective except the spiritual perspective--which is the heart of His Work and Mission. Most of White's effort was happily expended in highlighting FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings--the positive thinking, the health, success and prosperity, and the ascendancy to the CHRIST Life.

Ronald White's thesis is valuable, in view of the scurrilous treatment of FATHER DIVINE in the past by all types of media, because it portrays HIM as a Force for Good, presenting HIM as Goodness Personified, and depicting HIM as an altruistic Leader whose Work is the upliftment of the people. The thesis will aid the reading public in gaining a true picture of FATHER DIVINE, rather than a distorted image.

The most important consideration in the minds of thinking, fair-minded people is that FATHER DIVINE be lifted out of the fetid sty known as racism.

For elucidation, two scientists may be compared--Albert Einstein in physical science and FATHER DIVINE in socio-religious science. Both are celebrated as innovators whose provocative equations sometimes raised eyebrows. Yet Einstein is not constantly and persistently labeled as a Caucasian who is associated with a w---- university or who has done a great deal to help w---- people, et cetera. Einstein is honored simply as a person of accomplishment--not as a race or creed or color. Correspondingly, FATHER DIVINE should be honored simply as a person of accomplishment--not as a race or creed or color. HE should not be conjoined with b--- - this or b---- that, nor should it be intimated that HE is a madman, a menace, or a myth, as has been done.

In the spirit of American justice, it is crucial that HE be lifted out of religious orthodoxy and bigotry, that HE be lifted out of ridicule and derision because of His radical Teachings and Practices.

Mr. White comments on the position of FATHER DIVINE on the religious scene: *"by expressing New Thought ideas while emphasizing his personal charisma, Divine stood at the vanguard of metaphysical groups formed between World Wars I and II. ...What made Divine unique was the manner in which he was able to infuse with life and vibrancy New Thought terms and practices that had been relegated to intellectual exercises by metaphysical groups like Christian Science or Unity. He stands unique in his era as one who united the perfectionist longings of the*

Holiness groups who flocked to his table, with yearnings for apotheosis found in New Thought." (43)

The writers reviewed in this book hold FATHER DIVINE in highest esteem-- especially in the light of Kenneth Burnham's conception of FATHER DIVINE'S Godship, plus the above statement by White. Consequently, it is logical to conclude that FATHER DIVINE was not influenced by New Thought ideas, but that HE eclipsed them. HE was the Source of those ideas.

FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings are the highest Light of Truth that the world has known. This is obvious because no one has done or is doing what HE has done. The opportunity existed for anyone to establish a society such as the Peace Mission Movement--but only FATHER DIVINE did it. There was no one who possessed the genius--or the Power--to do it.

FATHER DIVINE should be hailed because HE not only preached the Gospel of the CHRIST Life, but, as Jesus did, HE lived it. HE should be acclaimed for His boundless zeal in helping all of the people. The eminent consideration is that HE be exalted as the Great Humanitarian that HE is.

Herewith is reproduced a congratulatory letter from MOTHER DIVINE to Mr. White upon the fine qualities of his thesis, but taking exception to White's claim that FATHER DIVINE received His inspiration from the New Thought Movement:

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February 25, 1981 A.D. F.D.

Mr. Ronald M. White
109 Eaton Street
College Corner
Ohio 45003

My dear Mr. White:

I wish to acknowledge with much appreciation the copy of your thesis, "New Thought Influences on FATHER DIVINE" which you submitted as a requirement for the degree of Master of Arts at the Miami University, Oxford, Ohio in 1980. It was kind of you to honor My request for a copy.

I enjoyed reading the thesis because I could follow your thinking without any difficulty and you conveyed in logical sequence the factors that support your conclusion that the Teaching of FATHER DIVINE falls within the religious tradition generally termed as New Thought. It is then logical for you to make the positive statement that "recognizing this decisively influences how one is to approach and evaluate the Peace Mission Movement." Your findings, if accepted, could very well revolutionize the thinking and attitude toward the Peace Mission Movement that is now prevalent among students, scholars and writers. Your thesis merits wide circulation among these people and I would hope this could be possible.

While, in My opinion you have, in a very scholarly way, made clear to your readers the teaching that you consider

is the wellspring of the Peace Mission Movement, still I cannot wholeheartedly endorse or recommend your work for the simple reason that you portray FATHER DIVINE as a natural man who has taken His philosophy of life or religious convictions from certain individuals whose books HE read or recommended to His followers, and departed in one way or another from their point of view and masterfully created or espoused that which was uniquely "His own."

FATHER DIVINE is the Supreme Consciousness that condescended to impute Itself in a Bodily Form for the purpose of reaching all men on all planes of consciousness that they might be lifted and be one with that Supreme Consciousness. HE is the Personal of the Impersonal to lift Mankind from the personal to the impersonal.

FATHER DIVINE never had to attain this Supreme Consciousness. GOD came in Bodily Form to show us how to attain it. As you state, "Benner may have written 'I use all avenues impersonally to express my message' but Divine lived it." FATHER DIVINE, Personifying the Supreme Consciousness, is the Sample and Example for us to go by that the Eternal Truth that has always been here but discovered and rediscovered by different ones at different periods of time as man evolves and consciousness develops and expands, might be our portion.

Although your work is to be commended especially considering what has been written by so many others about FATHER DIVINE, My concept of HIM can best be explained in His own Words. This excerpt is inscribed on the walls of the Shrine to Life at Woodmont and is as follows:

'Condescendingly I Came as an existing Spirit unembodied, until condescendingly imputing Myself in a Bodily Form in the likeness of men I Came, that I might speak to them in

their own language, coming to a country that is supposed to be the country of the free, where Mankind has been privileged to serve GOD according to the dictates of his own conscience--coming sponsoring this Peace Mission and this Spiritual Revelation in the hearts of the children of men, and establishing the Kingdom of GOD in the midst of them; that they might become to be Living Epistles as individuals, seen and read of men, and verifying that which has long since been said, 'The Tabernacle of GOD is with men, and HE shall dwell with them, and GOD HIMSELF shall be with them, and shall be their GOD, and they shall be His people.'

Wishing you the leading and direction of the Spirit and Mind of GOD as you pursue Truth for the purpose of eradicating the darkness of misunderstanding and establishing the light of understanding so humanity in general universally might be benefitted and elevated, I Am

Yours very sincerely,

MRS. M. J. DIVINE
Better known as MOTHER DIVINE

CHAPTER VII

AMERICAN MESSIAH

Roma Penelope Barnes, *Blessings Flowing Free*
Unpublished Thesis, University of York
Heslington, York, England, 1979.

That FATHER DIVINE is riding the individual as well as the collective consciousness of humankind everywhere bursts strikingly on the mind upon becoming aware of an 814 page, two volume dissertation on the Peace Mission Movement written in 1979, entitled *Blessings Flowing Free*." The sheer bulk of this work alone is impressive enough, but the fact of its author hailing from the University of York in Heslington, England, is even more startling. Roma Penelope Barnes journeyed 3000 miles to New York City to enable her to do the necessary research on the Movement, some years after FATHER DIVINE'S Body was no longer visible to the world.

In a letter to this writer, Dr. Barnes stated that during the work toward her doctorate in modern American history at York University, dating back to 1969, her interest in FATHER DIVINE began as she encountered repeated references to the Peace Mission Movement in her ongoing study of the Depression Period. Inasmuch as she was engrossed in American history, she most logically would

choose a subject for her dissertation that was verily American, and because FATHER DIVINE is most certainly a red, white and blue American, she settled on the Movement as the topic for her post-graduate study. Her interest in the United States has been furthered by a lectureship in England in the field of American Studies.

The articles that Dr. Barnes discovered were apparently gathered indiscriminately and were included in the files without regard to their validity and without regard to their adherence to whatever ethics of fair journalism there might be. She writes, *"Most of these references were, as you know, trivial (if not derogatory)."*

Therefore, Dr. Barnes' solid seven months of study in New York City were not as fruitful as they might have been had she not been obliged to wallow through so much worthless material. However, she researched the immense amount of data in the Schomburg Collection housed in the New York Public Library as well as other sources.

Dr. Barnes' interest in the Peace Mission Movement was probably aroused partly by the cumulative effect of FATHER DIVINE'S Ministry, which continues to build as time passes. It attracts people although they may not be aware of the reason-- especially people who are searching for higher heights, deeper depths and wider widths in life. As they dial in on the profundity of FATHER DIVINE'S Good Works, they are prompted to investigate further.

Roma Barnes displayed a persistent zest for the subject and entered whole- heartedly into her labors. As with other investigators, she was seemingly fascinated by the enigma of FATHER DIVINE and the fantastic reach-out of His Peace

Mission Movement. She was not swayed, as many people were, by the trivial and derogatory material which she faced. Her good judgment perceived that this material told a bogus story and did not portray the Peace Mission as it really is.

In her letter she writes, *"I am of the opinion that no one joins any movement without good reason and balanced mind. ...So in short, I did not believe that Father's followers in the thirties were the deluded fanatics they were cast as...."* As she writes, one has the feeling that she is probing the texture of the Movement in search of what makes it tick. Probe she did as is attested by a total of more than 1600 footnotes--261 in chapter six alone. Her bibliography covers twenty pages.

As with many other journalists also, she falls into the trap of attempting to analyze FATHER DIVINE'S Ministry without the benefit of being able to see "face to face," but only "through a glass, darkly." (I Corinthians 13:12) She knows only "in part"--not as she, as an expert in the field, ought to know. It appears that she did not visit any of the Peace Mission Churches or Extensions or contact any of the followers as part of her research, inasmuch as no mention of such activity is contained in her work. The result is that she has conceived something less than the truth about the Movement and contends that its "dynamic period" has ended and that it has now "declined and ossified." (from her abstract of the thesis) Through her recent contact with the Peace Mission Movement, Dr. Barnes probably realizes that this statement is in error, and eventually will no doubt enjoy visiting the Movement as the opportunity presents itself.

Individual Perfection for a Better Society

The charge is made by some that Christianity has failed, and it is evident that the world is sick. But any rational person will agree that the cause of the sickness is not that Christianity has failed the world, but that the world has failed Christianity. Where Christianity is practiced diligently, it works beautifully, as results show. Dr. Barnes writes, *"The Peace Mission arose in criticism of the conventional practice of the Christian faith. For Father Divine and his followers, Christianity, as it was then understood and pursued, was, at best, inadequate. ...To them, it was a religion that spoke only of 'other worldly' release and submission before injustice" (426); and, "Father Divine said, 'men have sought to redeem your souls long enough. They have not thought much on the redemption of the body... but this was the Mystery for which I came... to redeem your bodies from misery and sorrows, from woe and every other undesirable condition, that you might have the Victory.'" (109-110)*

This promise as divulged through FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings and the tenets of the evangelical life gave the followers *"a new perspective on their quest for salvation. Their former sects had offered them explanations of man's place in the divine order, and taught them how to achieve individual perfection. But they had offered them no way of changing the course of human affairs. FATHER DIVINE, however, linked individual salvation to the state of society, and promised his followers a new social order based on peace, love, brotherhood and social justice."* (122)

FATHER DIVINE, ever mindful of rendering the greatest good to the greatest number, challenged his disciples not

to think only of their own redemption, but also to be their brother's keeper: *"Father Divine offered them a crusade. He asked that the followers become 'fishers of men' in Harlem. It was their duty, he said, not only to be celibate but to 'clean up the community of all vice and crime....'"* (147) *"Father Divine promised that they would be rewarded not only in their own lives, but also by knowing that they were showing the world the way to everlasting peace and harmony."* (115)

New Thought and FATHER DIVINE

There is an attraction associated with the terms "New Thought," "Divine Science," "Meta-Psychology" and other terms that denote trafficking with the mind and exploiting its uncircumscribed power. Many of the writers who were inquisitive concerning FATHER DIVINE have put special emphasis on the close kinship between the Teachings of the New Thought groups and FATHER DIVINE'S Precepts. Barnes joins the act. She writes that many of FATHER DIVINE'S adherents were "truth" seekers who had gone from one religious league to another absorbed in the quest for spiritual knowledge that would enable them *"to understand the secret of the universe and the puzzle of man's destiny. Many acknowledged that they had previously been members of a variety of religious sects--particularly Christian Science, New Thought and the Rosicrucians. Among them were even former members of the Theosophists and Anthrosophists--sects that taught an esoteric philosophy based on eastern mysticism."* Therefore, many followers were comfortable in a regimen of spiritual living and religious discipline: *"All of them had been preoccupied with the possibility of man's divinity, and the*

possibility of controlling health and wealth through retraining their minds to realize unity with God."

FATHER DIVINE, as well as the philosophy of New Thought, taught that *"people could manipulate their own physical and material well-being through confidence in their power to tap the 'universal source of supply.'"* (121) These followers found their former religious affiliation wanting and were attempting to ferret out a more embracing and convincing spiritual persuasion in one of the New Thought bands. FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings gave them a reinvigorated perspective on the necessity of living the evangelical life if they were to achieve salvation. Peace Mission life offered those who were socially concerned

"the chance to commit themselves to an egalitarian, pacifist and communal lifeway, and to show others the beauty and potential of a social order based on these ideals. They joined Father Divine because his teachings combined the spiritual wisdom they sought with the possibility of a new society." (123)

FATHER DIVINE warned that the path was hard. The road to a new social order was not to be strewn with rose petals. Even as Nicodemus, the followers must be born again--born of the water and the Spirit--or they could not enter the Kingdom of GOD (John 3:3-6): *"Father Divine taught his followers that they could return to a state of divine perfection only by personal transformation. ...This cleansing and rebirth, Father Divine instructed, could not be achieved simply by studying or learning his messages. It required deep spiritual surrender and rigorous practical action. To achieve purification they had to strip away all the cloying layers of past and present associations and patterns of*

thought that lashed them to mortality, and confined and damaged their life experience, self- estimation and vision of divine perfectability." (110)

In this section (pages 109 to 117), Dr. Barnes encapsulates much of FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings with a comprehension that mirrors her deep study of the Movement. Few writers have exhibited such a grasp of the disciplines required of followers.

Living Happily a Science

As was highlighted in the preceding chapter of *Rediscovering GOD*, the enchanting and challenging proposition that attaining health and happiness is procurable by obeying certain scientific laws as unerringly as laboratory scientists bring their experiments to fruition, was reiterated also in Roma Barnes' discussion. She wrote that FATHER DIVINE told His believers *"to abandon gambling, good luck charms and other attempts to win the favor of the fates. They did not need to trust to luck; they were in control of their own destiny and salvation."*(116)

Many followers, having spent considerable time foraging in the realm of New Thought, were already convinced that *"life could be transformed by the knowledge and use of certain absolute, divine laws."* (121) They were ready for the implementation of these laws. FATHER DIVINE taught them that *"Sickness and death were caused by man's indulgence in worldly sins and his disregard for the divine 'laws of life' that were as immutable as the principles governing electricity or chemical reaction."*(117) Therefore it was mandatory that those who were scientifically minded have a New Birth so that they would be in condition

mentally and spiritually to engage in the rigors of thinking, speaking and acting according to these absolute, immutable, Divine laws of Life.

Turkey and Easter Eggs

In the early days of FATHER DIVINE'S advent in Harlem, according to Ms. Barnes, *"Those who trailed after his Easter parades were astonished to find meeting halls with tables 'heaped with turkey and cold meats of all kinds, with cakes and Easter eggs and pickles and relish.' ...News spread that Father Divine fed the unemployed free of charge; and each day bounteous meals were prepared for all comers at the Peace Missions' extensions in Harlem."* (91) The hearts of people hungry, out of work, evicted, and generally miserable were more than gladdened by the Peace Mission facilities that were as a cornucopia for the forgotten masses. Those who could boast of a dime and a nickel were pleased to pay for their nourishing ten or fifteen cent meal, but thousands could not so boast. *"The restaurants were busy day and night. Men and women, told to 'scram you bum' by other restaurant owners, were welcome here. ...Throughout the day people moved in and out; resting in the halls and dining rooms; sheltering from the street; staying to watch a meeting or to talk to the followers. If nothing else, the followers' contagious good humour and informality provided an antidote to the drab realities of Depression Harlem. No one was pressed to become a follower... or offer explanations of themselves and their misfortunes."* (92-93)

Not all of the followers attended the Holy Communion Banquets served at various Peace Missions and Extensions. Many patronized the restaurants which *"were often*

...congenial places, reflecting the infectious high spirits of the disciples. Strangers were enticed to join in the songs of the 'singing waiters' as they moved from table to table with the plates." (92) This was the atmosphere of the havens that FATHER DIVINE established in the ghetto. Many were the testimonials of grateful people that FATHER DIVINE was a life-saver: *"Elaine Goldberg, a social worker in Harlem, during the thirties, acknowledged that he provided an 'inestimable service' to Harlem's unemployed between 1933 and 1937. Furthermore, she said, 'he did it with a genuine goodness that I, as a social worker, could hardly help but admire.'"* (93-94)

Followers Enjoyed Well-ordered Lives

Dr. Barnes writes that the rank and file of the followers lived in households surrounding the larger Peace Mission centers. They had renounced their old mortal family life and were now settled snugly within the shelter of their new "family" which consisted of a group of all brothers or all sisters who shared the same living quarters. *"Within their 'families' the followers pursued well-ordered lives of work, rest and worship. They lived frugally and dressed in neat, conventional styles: freshly pressed suits for the men and colourful frocks for the women. About their daily affairs, they lived like many other hard-working and staunchly respectable folk. Yet theirs was no ordinary family life... at all times this 'family' world insulated them from conventional society and fostered in them a vivid sense of personal change and uniqueness. Within the 'family' the believers were at one in their love for Father Divine. They enjoyed new names and shared a special vocabulary. Past relationships were replaced by the companionships of sisterhood or brotherhood."* (187)

There were several large Extensions in New York City, mainly in Harlem. *"These buildings served a dual purpose in the life of the Movement. Firstly, there were social centers for all the separate groups of believers. The followers came here to talk, eat and participate in the activities of the Movement as a whole. Secondly, these buildings provided the Movement's main point of contact with the outside society. ...In this way, the building served as their home, their church, their club and, usually, their workplace too, as they gave their labor and skills to run the building on the Movement's behalf."* (188)

The majority of the followers of course, were employed in the various occupations available in the community.

Barnes commented on the benign, yet invigorating radiance of FATHER DIVINE'S involvement in the gatherings: *"Here followers came to eat, socialize and celebrate their salvation. It was at such meetings ...that Father Divine presented himself to the followers, not only as a reassuring comforter, but as a messiah, with a modern message: a man of knowledge and authority in the ways of an alien and demanding world. ...It was at the banquet meetings that Father Divine drew the Peace Mission together, established his presence and demonstrated his authority."* (185) *"In his speeches he told the crowds that he had come to guide them 'out of the ruts, out of the murks and mires of human slothfulness and impracticality' and into a state of perfect happiness and material abundance. Although human affairs appeared to be balanced on a precipice, Father Divine said that he held the key to limitless security and comfort. ...His apparently unlimited wealth, and the exuberant good health and satisfaction of his followers seemed to justify his claims."*

(94) With a smile and blithe assurance, FATHER DIVINE remarked, "I don't know what 'hard times' means!"

Peace Mission establishments within a given area are one large cooperative--the workings of which is known as the "Cooperative System." *"Economically, the Peace Mission relied on 'harmonious cooperation': a judicious combination of self-help, self-sacrifice, cooperation and self-interest. It afforded some protection to those in domestic service where unionism and government regulation did not reach."* (753) The reputation and strength of the Peace Mission was a shield for the lowly in several ways, and constituted *"a resistance to the competitive, materialistic ethos of that society, in favour of an organic world of duty and obligation based on a rigid morality."* (15)

Dr. Barnes in this manner describes life in Harlem as it was affected by FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement. People who sincerely tried to do what FATHER DIVINE set forth as the optimum life to live were never sorry for having made the effort: *"The believers had much to gain from the Peace Mission. It offered them warmth and companionship; it offered them a discipline through which they might regain the best of the past that they had lost, resist the demoralizing pressures of the present and reach out for the promise of a better future."* (185)

FATHER DIVINE'S Charm

Dr. Barnes observes that *"Father Divine's teachings and the stringent taboos and practical rules of the Peace Mission baffled many contemporary journalists. ...Many commentators were at a loss to explain his appeal."* (117-

118) FATHER DIVINE'S rules of evangelical life were far more exacting than were seen in the lives of people who attended orthodox churches. Life in the Peace Mission meant complete concentration of "minds and attention, love and devotion, ideas and opinions" on the Fundamental every day--not merely the casual fellowship of a church congregation on Sunday.

Investigators, and indeed the general public, are still at a loss to "explain" FATHER DIVINE. They will never find the wellspring of His appeal until they embark on a search for a higher life than the average person in the world is familiar with, and through that search be elevated in consciousness to a level where they can at least perceive FATHER DIVINE as someone sent by GOD--even if they cannot perceive that HE is GOD HIMSELF. Their souls must be brought into synchronization with the fundamental laws of the Universe to the extent that the window of their perception will be opened in such a manner that, although HE appears to be a natural man, their souls will bear witness that HE is also supernatural- -as HE works and operates and unfolds His purposes in the Cosmos.

"The followers were attracted not only by the prospect of food and shelter and by the simplicity and comprehensiveness of Father Divine's teachings. They were drawn also because he reaffirmed values that the followers held dear and, more important, because he sought to put these ideals into practice." (120) For some of these brothers and sisters, *"Father Divine's practical work in feeding, clothing, housing and apparently healing the people who came to him was sufficient proof that he understood the basic laws of life and wealth."* (121)

Reverend Paul Schroeder pastored Salem Church in Rochester, New York. He came in a party of distinguished church and community leaders to visit this phenomenon in Harlem, and was amazed at what FATHER DIVINE had accomplished in the thirties. Reverend Schroeder gave this tribute to HIM: *"You have in the most remarkable way, done what a great many of us have believed in and tried to do. I want to salute you in the interests of human brotherhood. Thank you for taking me into your fellowship tonight. I shall always, always treasure this as one of the high moments of my life."* (421) As everyone knows, this accolade is only one of hundreds made by people from every stratum of life. In Chapter Thirteen of *Rediscovering GOD*, are republished verbatim other salutes to FATHER DIVINE given by distinguished, well-known people over a period of years. These tributes reflect a somewhat hidden position, sometimes taken reluctantly, that in the conclusion of the matter, there is a quality about FATHER DIVINE that sets HIM apart from other leaders, and that try as they might, anyone who aspires to do what HE has done must first ascend to that place in consciousness where FATHER DIVINE Is!

A Revealing Note on FATHER DIVINE'S Appeal

Dr. Barnes uncovered an anecdote in Volume I of Myrtle Pollard's thesis written at the College of the City of New York in 1936, as reported in the *World Herald* of June 10, 1937. Ms. Pollard was nonplussed when His followers described FATHER DIVINE as "sweet": *"But after she joined a Divine boat trip she found the description more than apt: 'after seeing the unbounded energy that He expended, the general familiarity with them which He displayed, the tricks*

He played on them; and His infectious smile and mannerisms, I concluded that He was rather sweet."
(Barnes, 236)

Special Mission for America

Another facet of FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings that piqued the fancy of journalists is His aphorism that True Americanism and True Religion are synonymous. No other preacher or patriot has pushed this union to the extent that it is conceived in the Peace Mission Movement. Ms. Barnes frees FATHER DIVINE from the shroud of being a religionist for the under-privileged: *"He claimed a far wider purpose. He had come, he said, to bring all people to their rightful inheritance. He had come, indeed, to restore America to its first principles--to drive out injustice and corruption and rededicate it to what he believed was the intent of the American Constitution and Declaration of Independence: a righteous nation pledged to brotherhood, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."*

Here, Dr. Barnes endowed FATHER DIVINE with an appellation much as John Henry Titus did when he proclaimed FATHER DIVINE to be "The Dean of the Universe": *"He was, in short, an American Messiah, and the Peace Mission was saturated with this millennial Americanism: the belief that the cause of the Movement and the salvation of the world were bound up with the redemption of the American nation. The kingdom of heaven on earth was nothing less than the triumph of the redeemed America, under Father Divine's leadership He took 'God Save America' as his sacred cause."*

Barnes states that the Peace Mission *"tied salvation to the realisation of the American Dream. ...that the Holy Spirit had given a special task to America to convert and civilize the globe, to purge the earth of all its evils and to usher in Christ's reign on earth."*(12-13)

The Constitution with its Bill of Rights and Amendments together with the Declaration of Independence are sacred to FATHER DIVINE. They are as holy and as powerful as the Bible, and are sources of great inspiration with respect to the well- being of the people. After it was well established, the Peace Mission was *"bold enough to offer its precepts to the nation and the world as the fulfillment of the promise of the American Constitution and the proper foundation of any Righteous Government."* (753)

Barnes claims that FATHER DIVINE believed that *"it was possible to redeem America through the democratic political process. While the Peace Mission placed the main emphasis on the spread of the Movement by individual conversion, Father Divine and his believers ...believed that its principles should also be enshrined in law and government. The kingdom of heaven on earth could be hastened by ballot and law; by the politicians and legislators under the authoritative leadership of God, Father Divine."*(13-14)

Dr. Barnes joins the other scholars reviewed in this book in assigning a special commission to the United States of America--that of bringing salvation not only to the nation but also to the world. It is arresting that not just one writer caught this millennialism in the study of FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings, but several. This predestination is apparently a

characteristic peculiar to the Peace Mission Movement. Parallel to this commission is the fact that whenever people all over the world feel the need for a bolstering of their hopes, they look to the United States. The two factors march along, arm in arm. It is incumbent on the nation therefore, not to fail the world in this uncommon duty, but to rise to the occasion by returning to its first principles as conceived by the Founding Fathers--principles that were spawned in the knowledge that our GOD is One GOD and that the peoples of the earth are one world-wide Family--under GOD.

A Fulfilling Way of Life

The Presence of GOD is not only expressive, but creative. Because followers of FATHER DIVINE are so intensely conscious of the Presence of GOD, it is small wonder that Roma Barnes writes that the very aura of the Movement is creative, teeming with innovation--not the least of which is the affirmation that the followers are living in splendor here in heaven on earth! *"The Peace Mission's kingdom of heaven on earth was an extraordinary, indeed, unique development--but it grew out of broad influences, deep-seated traditions and a persistent quest for earthly salvation" (428); "Even today the Peace Mission still offers some... Americans a way of life that they find more fulfilling than any they might make in the larger society: self-renunciation, an absence of social or racial distinctions, and the companionship and support of a disciplined, collective life."* (750)

According to Ms. Barnes, the Peace Mission sought *"a profoundly American dream: the salvation of American society, rather than the salvation of a special group of its*

citizens. It sought the revitalization and fulfillment of the American democratic ideal; and thus its adherents were . . . wholly committed to egalitarianism and the 'non-recognition' of race. ...At the moment of the industrialised world's greatest crisis, it offered peace, prosperity and human dignity. It merits no one's condescension and it need cause no one shame." (761) And thus Dr. Barnes closes the curtain on her presentation of "Blessings Flowing Free!"

CHAPTER VIII

EXEMPLIFIER

OF THE AMERICAN WAY

Robert Weisbrot, *FATHER DIVINE and the Struggle for Racial Equality*,
Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983.

Jill Watts, *GOD, Harlem U.S.A., The FATHER DIVINE Story*,
University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles.

The Apostle Luke, in his account of the progress of Christianity in Biblical days, related what Gamaliel, a Pharisee and a doctor of the Law, had to say in a council meeting about criticizing a movement that might appear to be strange, and which was not properly understood. These are Gamaliel's words: *"Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of GOD, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against GOD."* (Acts 5:35, 38-39)

This admonition notwithstanding, humanity continues on its merry way to destruction, vaulting prematurely to faulty conclusions concerning aberrant groups and causes that loom as challenges to the comfortable existing norm. Notable examples are the pundits who investigated FATHER DIVINE, one of whom was Robert Weisbrot.

Robert Weisbrot has written a book, *FATHER DIVINE and the Struggle or Racial Equality*. Reading this book makes one realize the gauntlets that FATHER DIVINE traversed, and the tribulations that HE endured. No mortal could have fielded the imprecations that were hurled at FATHER DIVINE as HE did, nor could a mortal have weathered the storms as HE did. In many instances, when HE is compared to other figures, FATHER DIVINE stands at least head and shoulders above the others, and as coming off with the best end of the stick.

There is an undertone of cynicism that runs through Weisbrot's book. He is constantly obliquely disparaging FATHER DIVINE. He writes very craftily and materialistically about FATHER DIVINE. He views FATHER DIVINE through mortal eyes, and he measures HIM with the yardstick used to measure a man. Weisbrot sits as a magistrate, judging FATHER DIVINE'S Words and Deeds. As a puny mortal, he renders his opinion as to the worth and efficacy of what he considers FATHER DIVINE is endeavoring to do.

Weisbrot clearly indicates that he considers the crass wisdom of the world to which he subscribes superior to FATHER DIVINE'S fathomless Insight. He employs the standards of mortal man by which to gauge FATHER DIVINE--the very standards, which by their use, have pitched the world into the present abyss where it now languishes, fitfully and fearfully lashing about. Throughout the book, Weisbrot relegates FATHER DIVINE to the status of an ordinary, grasping, short sighted creature who does not hesitate to turn circumstances to His own advantage.

Booker T. Washington, educator and author, rebelled against the conservatism of religion in his day. He stated

that the *"church must be recalled from its apocalyptic vision back to the Earth."* (Weisbrot 4) FATHER DIVINE'S famous statement corroborates that view--*"The sky is nowhere and is nothing--but everywhere where there is nothing."* A sky god and a heaven somewhere beyond the stars are nothing--only a misty myth! Jesus HIMSELF said that *"The Kingdom of GOD is within you."* (Luke 17:21) FATHER DIVINE, by Word and Deed, did call the Church back to Earth!

FATHER DIVINE'S Striving Extolled

FATHER DIVINE denied the existence of a "suppositional" heaven. Instead, HE cites the lines in the LORD'S Prayer that are directed to GOD: *"Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in earth as it is in Heaven."* (Matthew 6:10) After praying devoutly for 2000 years for the Kingdom to come and for GOD'S Will to be done, why do people cast eyes to the skies and look for Heaven beyond the blue?

FATHER DIVINE saw the need for the highest Ideals and Principles to be the governing force in the Churches. HE was especially incensed at the fund raising chicanery that was rife in the Churches. Such improbity is anathema to FATHER DIVINE Who, more than anyone else, has shouted from the house tops the utter propriety and down to earth Rightness of preaching the Gospel without money and without price. In the entire realm of Religion and Church Endeavor, FATHER DIVINE has always stood out, as HE does today, as the prime exponent of putting no price on the Words of the Spirit.

HE has never charged a fee or accepted payment for His Spiritual Ministry. HE has never begged for as much as a nickel. HE has never sponged on anyone for a chicken dinner or a new suit. HE has never to this day passed the collection plate in His Services. There is never any fund raising in His Meetings--no drives for funds for new buildings or for new choir robes, no quarterly, semiannual or yearly pledges!

FATHER DIVINE was one of those rare notables *"Who derived His greatest sense of Power and Purpose from helping to shape Society according to His ideas of Justice ...in support of the reform causes HE valued--Integration, Equal Rights and Economic Cooperation. The Peace Mission ...thus became the indispensable and highly effective vehicle of FATHER DIVINE'S struggle for racial Justice."* (Weisbrot 8); *"The Peace Mission possessed a vital Communal Life, a Spiritual Commitment and a strong social Vision."* (Weisbrot 67)

"Americanism is Our Religion"

No Pastor preaches Americanism with the frequency and intensity with which FATHER DIVINE preaches it. For most ministers, Americanism is an element that does not mix readily with the worship of GOD. The opposite is customary with FATHER DIVINE. One of the most vigorous and characteristic songs of the Peace Mission is titled "Americanism Is Our Religion." One of the precepts--one of the A- B-C-D-s of the Movement--is that Americanism, Brotherhood, Christianity, Democracy and true Judaism are synonymous!

FATHER DIVINE'S zeal waxed hot whenever HE expounded on the blessed Marriage of Americanism and Religion as a channel through which the people might achieve a richer, fuller life--this New Life being the handiwork of the legalization of GOD'S Laws in the fulfillment of America's Destiny. *"One major reason that FATHER DIVINE exerted such influence is that HE, more than any other ...built on a Faith in American Society and its capacity for peaceful change. ...A growing American Idealism could overcome even racism and poverty."* (Weisbrot 189); *"The United States was His Homeland and the source of His social and cultural Heritage. ...a Birthright to Freedom and fair opportunity. ...FATHER DIVINE made it the central goal of His Peace Mission Movement to bring that Birthright to its full, long belated Redemption."* (Weisbrot 196)

FATHER DIVINE'S Peace Mission has a peculiarly American texture. There is an Idealism indigenous to the United States of America which produces a sturdy Faith in its Society--a Faith that its Democratic Values will overturn and overturn until the whole mass is kneaded into Peaceful Unity and a Greatness that cannot be denied. FATHER DIVINE built on this Faith to the extent that the Peace Mission and all it stands for is shot through and through with this Holy, distinctive, American vitality, the pulse of which is felt around the globe. FATHER DIVINE audaciously announced that "America is the Birthplace of the Kingdom of GOD on Earth!"

The role of America in the Redemption of planetary Society is an obvious phenomenon to discerning scholars such as those quoted in this book, *Rediscovering GOD*. Kenneth Burnham, Arthur Fauset, Ronald White all

observed this unique affinity between the basic Philosophy of the Peace Mission and the Fundamentals of Americanism. MOTHER DIVINE as well, hails the New American culture in Her book on pages 50-51, 65.

MOTHER DIVINE'S Letter

Journalists have attempted to blackball FATHER DIVINE ever since HE came out on the National Scene, and the Media also has engaged in the perfidy of the journalists who have breached the public trust. For half a Century or more, the Media has ridiculed FATHER DIVINE, whereas it should have glorified HIM. Instead, the Media reports murder, rape, greed and violence, and is accountable in large measure for the populace being in its present state of turmoil and ferment. The Media should beat the drum for FATHER DIVINE for the Great Good that HE has brought to the people--Joy, Love and Tranquility!

To underscore indelibly the indictment of Dr. Weisbrot, excerpts from a letter addressed to him follow. The letter was written in general in righteous indignation because of the constant stream of negative coverage of FATHER DIVINE, and specifically in protest to the tone of Robert Weisbrot's book. This letter was written by the One Person in the world Who is qualified in every way mentally and spiritually, as well as by reason of Her Position as the Wife of the Reverend Major J. Divine, and Who stands with HIM as the Leader of the Church, to assess the book-- Mrs. M. J. Divine, better known as MOTHER DIVINE.

The Mount of the House of the LORD
Woodmont Estate
Gladwyne, Pennsylvania

April 21, 1984 A.D.38 F.D.

Mr. Robert Weisbrot
Asst. Prof. of History
Colby College
Waterville, Maine 04901

My Dear Mr. Weisbrot:

I was hopeful that you could produce something I would wholeheartedly, or at least with a qualified explanation, endorse, so that the public could have factual information on the Civil Rights aspect of FATHER DIVINE'S Work and Mission. You led ME to believe that the book you authored *FATHER DIVINE, The Struggle for Racial Equality* would fill this need, because you had supposedly read the voluminous and documented History of FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement from *The New Day*, as well as researched into the facts and situations of the time and people involved

However, the truth is I Am appalled by your presentation of FATHER DIVINE as a flamboyant, egotistic, self-seeking man--not even a good man with pure motives--but a man who has used his inspiration, genius and love for people only to exploit them from every angle to satisfy his selfish lust for power and wealth.

You started your writing on the premise that FATHER DIVINE is a mortal human being, and you construct every event in His Personal Life and Ministry to fit that mold. You

have used your profession as an accredited historian to indelibly stamp in the minds of your readers lies, assumptions, innuendos and half-truths which, when you mix them with all the truth and factual information you have recorded, the reader is given a perverted, erroneous and very confused concept of FATHER DIVINE, His Work and His Mission. You cannot analyze or define, nor can you measure the Reverend Major J. Divine with the measure of a finite man.

Now it is commonly known that literally thousands, even millions, have declared that FATHER DIVINE is GOD. Judaism has been expecting the Meshiach for centuries; the Christian world says JESUS CHRIST is coming any moment. You could just as well have begun your research on the premise that FATHER DIVINE is a unique and superior individual, for science surely supports the fact that humanity has evolved, and develops through the ages; highly evolved individuals have always led and pioneered the Advancement and Progress of Civilization.

FATHER DIVINE HIMSELF has stated that eventually "Mankind will become to be the universal Personification of GOD," which means individuals who have demonstrated supernatural power emerge from the limitations of their human birth to be naturally what man has previously considered supernatural. There is voluminous scientific data available today to substantiate this possibility....

Your ignorance of basic religious and spiritual fact is absolutely unacceptable as a supposed historian of this American Culture. It is unthinkable that you could be any kind of an authority in this Country, where the Concept of GOD revealing HIMSELF to the common people is the

Fundamental Premise that gave Birth to our Constitution, and gave us a Democratic Republic Governmentally that is responsible for the advanced age we are living in....

The reason why it is said erroneously so often that FATHER DIVINE'S Followers give HIM their money is because everything is done in His Name, for His Honor and Glory. They find happiness and fulfillment in giving of themselves and their means to glorify the Name of FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE. It is reasonable to be dedicated and consecrated to a Name that represents something--Holiness and Virtue--the Standard that brings an Abundant Life of Peace and Prosperity; whereas their individual names mean nothing, no more than the names in many denominational Churches where the donor's name is placed on their gift.

That is why Followers have hid their ego and identity in FATHER DIVINE, and it appears that HE Personally owns all the wealth that the Followers enjoy, but in reality, neither FATHER DIVINE nor I have any personal funds, bank accounts, bonds or investments of any kind. We do not legally own any property, not even the cars we ride in.

Furthermore, if FATHER DIVINE was after the people's money, would HE have put a ban on soliciting money? Prove to us that a collection plate has ever been passed in a recognized Church of the Peace Mission or assembly of Followers of FATHER DIVINE throughout the world. And would FATHER DIVINE have successfully instituted celibacy among His Followers if HE was primarily interested in Wealth and Power? You know that FATHER DIVINE and the Movement underwent many stringent investigations by the

F.B.I. and others that have proven HE was not interested in money, personal power or sex.

As a historian, your book, *FATHER DIVINE, The Struggle for Racial Equality*, could have documented for the people who did not have the Privilege of living in that era, the countless events and courageous steps taken by FATHER DIVINE and His Followers as HE pioneered the advancement in Integration that is being enjoyed today. Your book is a misnomer. All of your analyses and opinions you have injected and verbalized mean little or nothing, because for many reasons, you are not qualified to make the statements you have made. Furthermore, if you had been interested in documenting the Truth, when I requested to review the manuscript before it was published, you would have granted ME this Privilege and been grateful for My opinion.

You fall in the category of man in his secular humanist ideology who thinks he is supreme and the earth is his domain to reign over and control the inhabitants thereof. He has through the ages subdued the CHRIST wherever and whenever It manifests Itself in the people. The carnal, human mind of man is enmity against GOD; it is hostile to innocent goodness, because it is not subject to the Law of GOD and never can be. The Christians in the past have condemned the Jews for crucifying Jesus. It was not the Jews as a people, but it was the impersonal, carnal, human mind operating in hostility against Godliness. Faith Is The Moral Fiber Of Humanity.

"The pen is mightier than the sword" is a true saying, and with the pen, you, Mr. Weisbrot, and all like you, have crucified mercilessly the CHRIST as It manifests Itself in the

Fathership Degree in FATHER DIVINE and as It manifests Itself in the true and faithful Followers. . . . In fact, it is all that people like yourself have done to destroy the Faith that gives the moral fiber to Humanity that has caused the deterioration of world conditions today. This is evident in the barbarism, terrorism, the amorality, the hopelessness and the real possibility of germ warfare and nuclear war, not to overlook the Cosmic Forces of Nature that are working inharmoniously to man's existence on the Earth, and will continue to do so in an ever greater degree of destruction, if he does not reverse his pattern of thinking and acting.

Without sympathy for the Judgment of Almighty GOD that you have brought upon yourself unless you repent and make amends for the diabolical way you have treated the Sacred Coming and Ministry of FATHER DIVINE in your book, I AM,

Yours very sincerely,

MRS. M. J. DIVINE
Better known as MOTHER DIVINE

Robert Weisbrot's book on *FATHER DIVINE and the Struggle for Racial Equality* was copyrighted in 1983. Nine years later, in 1992, he produced another book of only 119 pages, published by Chelsea House Publishers, with the title simply *FATHER DIVINE*. Chelsea House is mainly a publisher of books for children and juveniles. But this is no book for children and juveniles. The text contains material that only sociologists and religious leaders and others of the same stripe would care to study. It is written with the same syntax

and in the same scholarly language that Weisbrot used in his first book. And the same undertone of cynicism that pervaded the other book is present in this book.

Throughout the book, Weisbrot disparages and jeers at FATHER DIVINE. Weisbrot's obvious derision of FATHER DIVINE is readily apparent to anyone who is sensitive to the difference between what is mockery and what is sincere.

FATHER DIVINE'S Kingdom Defamed

As further evidence that Mr. Weisbrot scorns FATHER DIVINE, he repeats something from his other book that is very silly and preposterous, as though he wants to be sure that FATHER DIVINE'S Kingdom is defamed and slandered as often as possible from every possible angle.

On page 32 in this later book, Mr. Weisbrot wrote the ridiculous statement that at the beginning of a Holy Communion Banquet, FATHER DIVINE would have pitchers of water, tea and other beverages brought to the Table while HE served coffee. The diners were encouraged to drink freely. Only after much time elapsed was any food served, mainly starches, vegetables and fruit. By the time the meats arrived, the guests had already consumed much of the less expensive food, and their appetites were somewhat satisfied so they would not care to eat much more. The meats were duly served and then taken off the Table--to be frozen and served again at the next Banquet!

Anyone who has been privileged to attend a Peace Mission Banquet knows that such a performance simply does not occur. But there is more to what Mr. Weisbrot wanted to say.

A seeming miracle happened at the Banquet Table in Sayville, Long Island, New York--an endless supply of milk that poured from a spigot of a large dispenser on the Table. After the Banquet, a curious guest peeked under the Table and discovered two small boys pumping energetically at an apparatus hidden under the Table! Any reasonable person would realize instantly that such a scenario is absurd and laughable! Two growing boys would find it very irksome to be cooped up under the Table for the length of time it takes for the Banquet to be served, and they would certainly make noises that the diners would hear.

But the story serves Weisbrot's purpose well as he continues to flout FATHER DIVINE. Perhaps there are some people who are sufficiently credulous and naive to swallow these two ludicrous incidents, but most people will recognize them as another attempted slur on FATHER DIVINE.

It is not clear for what purpose this later book--which is certainly not for children--was published. But it is another book that serves to deride FATHER DIVINE in the minds of its readers.

Book by Jill Watts

Jill Watts wrote a 249 page book on FATHER DIVINE with the title, *GOD, Harlem U.S.A.* This book follows the pattern of Robert Weisbrot's two books--the pattern of discrediting the conception by His Followers that FATHER DIVINE is GOD, and to charge that HE is only a man.

In executing her book, Jill Watts ignores--and perhaps scoffs at--the Conviction held by thousands of Followers of FATHER DIVINE since the early years of the Twentieth

Century, that FATHER DIVINE is GOD. But she took her cue from Robert Weisbrot, who, in his books, sits in judgment of FATHER DIVINE and His Followers. She arrogantly takes the position that the George Baker she found in the United States Census records was the person who metamorphosed into the Great FATHER DIVINE Who provided meals for thousands daily in Harlem for free, clothed them, housed them, healed them, and found employment for them, so they could live proudly independent! Adherents to FATHER DIVINE, asserting that HE is GOD, naturally hold that it is not necessary for GOD to look to man for His Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom, for the reason that GOD is Omniscient, having Total Knowledge and Knowing Everything. GOD is always ALL! He does not need to "learn" anything or to "develop."

FATHER DIVINE is GOD!

As set forth above, the legions of Followers of FATHER DIVINE know, with not even a shadow of doubt, that HE is GOD in a Personal Body. Obviously, Jill Marie Watts does not share that opinion. Instead she mentions Faithful Mary's published diatribe, *GOD--He's Just A Natural Man*, (153) and the sensational biography *GOD In A Rolls Royce*, by John Hoshor (138), which mercilessly holds FATHER DIVINE up to ridicule throughout the book.

Here, on one side is a multitude of devout souls who have lived lives of Peace, Joy and Happiness for years through being Followers of FATHER DIVINE. On the other side is one scribe, Jill Watts, who chooses to "*correctly place him [FATHER DIVINE] in historical perspective*," (Watts, Preface, x) and to provide a balanced account of His Movement. (Preface, xiii)

Shall one small, lone voice gainsay the mighty chorus of voices coming forth from a host of Believers? In MOTHER DIVINE'S book, *The Peace Mission Movement*, SHE quotes FATHER DIVINE. HE gave a Message on May 19, 1943 in which HE said in part, *"Man cannot define GOD, and cannot write a true History of HIM.... Who has a mind sufficient to cover the Infiniteness of the Infinite One?"* (114)

On page 72 of the Watts book is this quote from FATHER DIVINE'S Words: *"Now trying to stop ME, as I tell them, would not prohibit My Work; it spreads it that much faster. I AM here with you all Personally for your own personal good and to appease your human, mortal concept concerning ME and your fears, but with or without the Personal Presence, I will rule millions of homes and houses, for I AM Divine and that is not merely a word. It is Power!"* These words were spoken in November of 1931.

Early in her book, Miss Watts stated that the subject of her book, FATHER DIVINE, met Samuel Morris. Not long after they met, they adopted new names, so up to page 48, she uses the name "The Messenger" instead of George Baker. Around 1917, Joseph Gabriel, remembered by many Followers, was drawn to the Messenger's flock. Of all the Messenger's Disciples however, the most consequential was the warm, stately, gracious Peninnah. (Miss Watts evidently did not deem it important to use the correct spelling of Peninnah's name because she consistently misspelled it in her book.) Peninnah was stricken, crippled with rheumatism, but the Messenger healed her, so she left her family and friends and joined his little band.

Marriage of the Messenger and Peninnah

Miss Watts reported the Marriage of the Messenger and Peninnah on page 46 after her narration of the family moving to Brooklyn sometime after 1917. Then suddenly, she wrote: *"But Peninnah marked her Wedding date as June 6, 1882!"*--and this date is celebrated every year in the Peace Mission. Here is a threadbare anachronism! On page 5, Miss Watts wrote that George Baker was born in 1879. It is plain to see that these dates are incompatible. If George Baker was born in 1879, it is obvious that he could not marry three years later.

On page 46, Miss Watts attempts to reconcile these two dates by inferring that the Messenger and Peninnah were not married on June 6, 1882--but that Peninnah merely had her first religious experience on that date. Nevertheless, the Messenger himself stated that the Marriage was purely spiritual and that the union of HIM and Peninnah represented *"GOD'S Love for, and intimate bonding to, humankind."* This statement by HIM established beyond a doubt that the Marriage did actually take place. This fact disproves Miss Watts' claim that the George Baker born in 1879 was to become FATHER DIVINE. The two dates, 1879 and 1882 cannot be reconciled!

This was not an ordinary marriage. It was a purely spiritual marriage, as the Messenger had said, and was never physically consummated--exactly like FATHER DIVINE'S second Marriage in 1946 to Sweet Angel. There was never cohabitation between them; each had Their own, separate bedrooms.

FATHER DIVINE wrote a letter to Bruce Chapman on November 18, 1946. Bruce Chapman was on the air at the

time, known as "The Answer Man." In this letter, FATHER DIVINE declared: *"My Name has never at any time been George Baker, as stated by you and many others who have filled the press and the air with radio broadcasts with false, erroneous and perjured testimonies endorsed as though they were true."* (MOTHER DIVINE'S book, *The Peace Mission Movement*, 107)

There is no doubt that there was a man in Rockville, Maryland, named George Baker who was born in 1879. The United States Census records that Jill Watts consulted show that to be a fact--and the United States Census cannot be disputed. To establish a link between that man as George Baker and FATHER DIVINE however, is purely a figment of the desire held by Robert Weisbrot and Jill Watts and others to somehow prove that the tremendous saga of FATHER DIVINE is extremely overblown--and to prove that HE is not GOD!

Hickerson Gave FATHER DIVINE That Name

Much commotion was caused by the early scribes and journalists calling FATHER DIVINE by another name. The following Words by FATHER DIVINE settled the matter conclusively when HE referred to Saint John Divine. FATHER DIVINE said *"He claimed to have known ME years ago. HE WAS THE ONE THAT GAVE ME THAT NAME--George Baker. I knew of Mr. Hickerson... Saint John Divine or Saint John Hickerson or Saint John the Divine."* (*The New Day*, December 19, 1953. 17)

MOTHER DIVINE stands with FATHER DIVINE as the Spiritual and Temporal Head of the Peace Mission Movement. FATHER DIVINE took His Body from our view in 1965, and is enshrined in the Shrine to Life at The Mount of

the House of the LORD at Woodmont, in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania.

To the passive reader, Jill Watts' book may be merely the narration of an Afro-American youth passing through childhood and manhood, and in adulthood suddenly becoming FATHER DIVINE, Who healed the sick, raised the dead, preached Righteousness, Justice and Truth, Holiness and Virtue, and championed Americanism and Equality.

Most people will realize however, that the thesis of Miss Watts' book--that George Baker grew up to be FATHER DIVINE--will not hold water, and that both she and Robert Weisbrot are barking up the wrong tree when they insinuate that FATHER DIVINE is not GOD--but only a man.

The discerning reader may find imbedded in Dr. Watts' narrative a scornful vein of mockery, as there was in Robert Weisbrot's book, notwithstanding Jill Watts' recital of FATHER DIVINE'S supernatural, extraordinary accomplishments. She views HIM through human eyes and considers HIM as a man throughout the book, thereby creating a faulty Work.

There is one other fairly recent book that was published in 1953. This is a scurrilous, vituperative book written by Sara Harris and Harriet Crittendon, with the title *FATHER DIVINE, Holy Husband*. This book stirred FATHER DIVINE'S zeal to a high pitch, and HE made known His contempt in no uncertain language. On November 12, 1953, at the Circle Mission Church in Philadelphia, HE gave an impassioned Sermon. In the early part of His Sermon, HE erupted with these words: *"I curse all that believe in the erroneous and slanderous and libelous articles written by*

the malicious and antagonistic! Curse them--world without end!" Later in His Sermon, HE referred to Sara Harris and thundered: *"Now she is cursed! Naturally she is cursed! I mean, I curse her--I in the Name of ALMIGHTY GOD!"* (*The New Day*, November 21, 1953, 3-5)

CHAPTER IX

EARLY FRUIT

Clippings from *The New Day*,
Philadelphia: The New Day Publishing Company
Excerpted from "The Word of GOD Revealed," 1974.

The preceding chapters of *Rediscovering GOD* have presented reports on FATHER DIVINE as contained in certain books. The span of time covered in these chapters is roughly half a century beginning with the Sayville years in the twenties and thirties. As has been noted, hundreds of articles were published on the Movement in newspapers, magazines and books over the course of those fifty years--most reflecting the pet bias of the respective authors against FATHER DIVINE and His activities. Only the accounts which displayed at least relatively fair journalism and some intrinsic merit were discussed in these chapters.

The reader at this stage has assuredly experienced some of the joys of meeting an old friend in these pages. The rediscovery of FATHER DIVINE would not be complete however, without the seeker becoming aware of several rather engaging newspaper stories pertaining to the unbelievable episodes that occurred during the incipient times at New York States' Sayville. Access to these accounts was not possible until 1974 when the contents of a

notebook were published in *The New Day*. FATHER DIVINE'S meticulous secretary, John Lamb, for several months, kept a day to day shorthand record of happenings at Sayville in his notebook. He included a number of newspaper reports which will be especially gratifying to the "old-timers" among the reading public who knew of FATHER DIVINE during the Sayville years. They follow chronologically in this chapter and in the two following except in the next chapter where it was expedient to follow a chain of events through to their ultimate denouement for proper understanding and appreciation of the issues involved.

Prior to 1919, FATHER DIVINE had been in New York City quietly going about His evangelical Ministry in His usual fashion. In 1919 HE purchased a comfortable eight room house in Sayville and withdrew from New York City to live on Long Island. Here at 72 Macon Street, with Mother Divine (in the first Body) and members of His household, FATHER DIVINE continued to carry on His Work of Peace and Brotherhood. During the ensuing twelve years, the household grew to the extent that the house had to be considerably enlarged.

The stories coming out of Sayville in the earlier years were mystifying. Accounts of curious and wonderful goings-on stirred many, so that newspaper editors were pressed to get the story of the work that was in progress there for their readers.

Dick Lee filed an account which was published in the *Sunday News* of April 27, 1930, with the headline and sub-title:

BENEFACTOR SETS UP UTOPIA IN LONG ISLAND

Impoverished Find Haven There, Probe Reveals

Utopia has been found at Sayville, L. I., where M. J. Divine, young religious enthusiast, has set up a haven for all suffering humanity.

"The Lord provides for them as is good to their neighbors" is the only explanation offered the outside world by this very prosperous young man who claims to be Jesus Christ in the second earth-coming.

Unable to understand how all the lavish expenditures and high-powered motorcars about the much visited Divine establishment fit into religious fervor, District attorney A. G. Blue of Suffolk County has had a girl investigator at work for two weeks. She only added to the mystery.

"The welcome was genuine and there is nothing but a deeply religious air about the whole place--no immorality whatsoever," was the report got yesterday from the c----- girl investigator, Susan Hadley, borrowed from the Harlem police for the case.

Fifteen in Haven

She found approximately fifteen wayfarers--both b---- and w----, picked up from here and there--living off the bounty of the young philanthropist. There was little religious ritual but plenty of prayer for the curing of the inmates' ills.

She described the expensive furnishings of the fifteen room house in Macon Street which Divine has owned for ten years. The place is also surrounded by artistic gardens made so by an expensive landscaping program.

She said Divine's wife--supposedly cured of rheumatism--was known to all the colonists as Mother Divine. Each of the members of the household takes a name as Brother Peace or Sister Virtue. Each has his or her own room.

"All the money I've got comes from GOD," the Reverend, as Divine is styled by the beneficiaries of His bounty, said to Miss Hadley, *"and we spell GOD with all three capital letters in here."*

She described the meals served in the Divine household as being divine. They have roast turkey every day except Tuesday.

Furthermore, anyone who comes into the Divine care in a ragged condition is promptly outfitted. The local Sayville stores dealing in wearing apparel find wholesale business there and Divine foots all the bills, paying cash.

All inquiries as to the source of His wealth as evidenced by His Cadillac touring car and His Willys-Knight limousine are answered with Biblical quotations by Divine.¹

Dick Lee's article is a simple, straightforward report which presents the facts without bias as Mr. Lee observed them. Two editorial type pieces which follow were printed in the May 15, 1931 issue of the *Sunday News*.

FATHER DIVINE MUST SOFT PEDAL

It was not so many years ago that there was only one family of c----- people and less than half a dozen individuals of that race in all Sayville. With the advent of Father Divine and His establishment of what practically amounts to a free hotel with unlimited free eatsthe influx of c----- people has increased steadily. Naturally, He is not

popular with the residents of the section where He has made His home. People on Macon Street complained that real estate values had depreciated as invariably happens when n----- move into any section where only w---- people have been living. Then when these naturally happy, care-free, sociable . . . folk were bountifully fed, their joy quite naturally found expression in loud laughter and song and shouts of praise.

On the other hand local tradesmen have no fault to find with Divine. He buys supplies of the best quality in liberal quantities and pays for them promptly. He has never asked for charity and so far as can be learned has never solicited funds in Sayville. He has supplied working people for all kinds of jobs when application is made to Him, and invariably refuses to accept the fees usually collected for the service by employment agencies. Charges of immorality which have been made were not established when District Attorney Blue sent a detective to investigate the alleged goings on in the place. Father Divine has never divulged the source of the very considerable income necessary to carry on His lavish charities but always says: "The Lord will provide." He claims to be a Divine Healer and declares that those who believe in Him will never die.

He has undoubtedly aided many people who were in distress and not a few "w---- folk" among the number. If he were not so noisy in His methods He undoubtedly would have avoided trouble with the authorities, but people must sleep and He can hardly blame His neighbors for invoking the law when the racket at His place keeps them awake.

FATHER DIVINE AND NOISE

Instead of appealing to the intellect, like Christian Science and Unity, and many other Christian faiths, Father Divine's principal appeal is to the emotions. Consequently, His services are different. They are unlike the quiet high masses of the Catholic or Episcopalian Churches.

Now the making of noise, whether necessary or unnecessary, comes within the regulatory police powers of the state; and it is the making of noise which has given rise to most of Father Divine's court troubles.

Street cars, automobiles, the elevated railway and the subway, tug boats and a hundred other types of machinery also make noises; but the law says that these are necessary.

But the law also licenses night clubs and dance halls, permits the playing of ball games and the driving of noisy advertising vehicles through the streets, but it is debatable whether or not some of these noises are necessary. The teaching and playing of music on musical instruments, and singing are all very commendable from an artistic standpoint, until one chances to live next door to a musician or vocalist. Then even these artists may be regarded dubiously.

The point we are trying to make is that the police powers of the state are definitely asserted in all things except those which have to do directly with the soul of man. Father Divine's noisy services may be just as necessary and beneficial to His following as night clubs are to their following. One man goes to a quiet mass while the other goes to one of Father Divine's "kingdoms." Both invariably seek one or more of the same things--an outlet for pent up

emotions, spiritual rebirth or a place in which to drown one's sorrows.

What the law forgets in Father Divine's case is that with unemployment rife, the souls of most men and women are heavily laden; and that outlets which are goose for one are gander for the other. Father Divine's movement undoubtedly furnishes an outlet for the pent up emotions of thousands of distressed people, and for this reason, if for no other, it should be tolerated.²

Both of these pieces are an attempt to view the situation in the spirit of fairness to all concerned. Where this attitude prevails in instances where interests and activities of two groups are at cross purposes, a just resolution usually follows.

Another reporter, Bing Bart, wrote one of the first respectable stories. It appeared in the *Island News*, described in its masthead as "Suffolk's Pictorial Newsmagazine." Under date of October 1, 1931, it ran the headline and sub-title:

SAYVILLE RELIGIOUS TEACHING DRAWS BIG CROWDS

**Many Policemen Needed To Handle Traffic;
Thousands Come To Hear Preacher, Eat His Free Food And
Obtain Cures;
Nobody Knows Where His Money Comes From**

The article then states:

For many months the people of Sayville have been mystified, and many of them have been annoyed by the presence of a religious curiosity in the form of a Teacher, or

Healer. FATHER DIVINE has drawn large crowds to His home where they are taught a religion consisting mostly of simple instruction of good manners and kindness. The Teacher claims to heal many people of their afflictions. ...It is true that FATHER DIVINE has set up a pretentious and costly establishment, which is being operated upon a lavish scale, and all who go there are fed and treated well.

Bing Bart visited Sayville on Sunday, September 27, 1931. He was told by police that people were being drawn to Sayville by a Magic Healer, whose followers came there to enjoy the high vibrations and good times inspired by FATHER DIVINE. Mr. Bart was directed to 72 Macon Street where there were hundreds of people on the grounds. He writes in the first person.

Here I found a very large, green, shingled house with a red roof. Six of Sayville's police officers were directing traffic and keeping the people off the sidewalk so that the pedestrians might pass. Upon entering the grounds I passed beneath a sign which read as follows:

**Be on one accord. Drive in slowly.
NOTICE: Smoking, Intoxicating Liquors,
Profane Language Strictly Prohibited.**

Mr. Bart inquired of a brother in charge if he might get a story for his newspaper. The brother... immediately informed me that what I would get there was "the Truth"--that that was their teaching--the "Truth." He pointed out people who had come from all over, even as far as Missouri to get this "Truth.'

He told me of the people who had come there on crutches and left dancing; of others who had come blind,

but when they went they could see; still others who had come there mentally blind and when they left they could see the Light. He invited me into the dining room where I might dine, meet and talk with the FATHER. This I had not expected but promptly accepted.

The interior of this house, referred to as the Temple, was very nicely decorated in a manner in which you would expect to find the home of any individual of good financial standing. The dining room had a table of horseshoe fashion at the head of which sat the Person whom I was eager to meet. I was ushered to the head of the table and given a seat beside this mighty little Person. HE was not dressed in garments as one might expect of the leader of a religious movement; but HE was attired in a plain suit of clothes of good quality the same as worn by the average business man.

Around the table were fifty-three people. Of this number, twenty-two were light and of these twenty-one were women.

On the table was food of the best that money can buy. There were roasts of meat and fowl and at a glance one could tell they were prepared by someone with a vast experience. My eyes were taken up with the large silver consoles heaped up with the choicest of fruits that you find only in the high grade markets. In front of FATHER DIVINE were ten or twelve coffee percolators, all the coffee being poured by HIM and served by waitresses.

I found it quite hard to get in conversation with FATHER. No one up to this point would give me their name and I expected to be refused here, but I asked and to my surprise HE told me His Name was M. J. DIVINE. I asked HIM how

many people HE fed in a day. HE promptly replied, "We feed as many as come. We serve from early morning until midnight." I asked HIM what HE charged and HE said, "We charge nothing. Anyone, man, woman or child, regardless of race, color or creed, can come here naked and we will clothe them, hungry, and we will feed them.'

After the meal, we adjourned to the garden where I asked for a picture. This HE refused as HE said HE did not want publicity, that HE did not believe in advertising, that all the people there had come through the advice of others whom HE had helped.

I would estimate that there were at least three thousand visited there as they were coming and going all the time. I counted eight buses parked in the different places nearby. In the garden I also met a young Caucasian girl who informed me that she had come there insane, that FATHER DIVINE had given her new life, that she had been cured and as she smiled she said, "It's Wonderful." I asked her name which she did not give. I was then introduced to a young Caucasian man, Mr. Matthews, who has just returned from London and Paris where he has been spreading FATHER DIVINE'S Teaching. FATHER DIVINE informed me that there is a man in Germany now preaching His Teachings.

FATHER DIVINE'S Councilor informed me that the FATHER never sleeps. HE has hundreds of letters every day which HE answers after they stop serving at midnight and it is probably five or six o'clock in the morning before HE finishes. Then HE takes a walk and starts the same routine again.

A little woman shook hands with HIM and HE remarked, *"I know by your grip that you think you will be healed*

because you touched ME but this is not so. My handclasp is that of companionship and so do not think that by shaking hands with ME you can be healed."

I thought I would check up on HIM in Sayville, and did. It appears that HE has no banking account. The merchants say HE pays His bills in cash and always appears to have plenty of it.

One decorator told me he had assisted in painting and redecorating the house where FATHER DIVINE lives. His boss came up when the job was finished and the Leader asked what the bill was. It was \$480.

"That is fine," FATHER said. *"It is a good job and I AM very well pleased."* Then HE reached into His pocket, pulled out a roll of bills, and paid the \$480 in cash.

There are no religious relics or altars in the house. It is furnished similar to any other well-to-do middle class home. But the food is apparently the best that money can buy. I ate a fine meal and I know whereof I speak. There are large roasts, small lamb roasts, chickens, duck, the finest of vegetables and delicious fruits. I am certain the grapes were grown in a hot- house, or else highly cultivated.

One of the Sayville police officers told me that county authorities some months ago went into New York City and hired an Afro-American girl who worked for the city police to come out here as a "plant." Dressed shabbily, the girl went to FATHER DIVINE'S house and applied for help. She was given good clothes, was well fed and was treated hospitably. She could find nothing illegal, and so reported to authorities.

Upon inquiring in Sayville, I found that FATHER has been there about twelve years and recently the neighbors began

to complain and try to do something about it. . . . The only mystery that I could find about the place, and that seems to be the same that is troubling Sayville, is "Where does HE get His money?" Oh yes, I asked HIM and HE promptly replied that the Almighty takes care of that.³

Bart estimates that three thousand people came and went during the day--a figure that seems a little high. After observing for thirty days, Del Mar, who among other abilities is a lawyer, is of the opinion that 400 to 800 or more were fed daily.

Sayville is situated in Suffolk County, New York. The *Suffolk Citizen*, on the day after Bing Bart's articles appeared, printed a lengthy narrative (October 2, 1931) topped by the headline and three subtitles:

FATHER DIVINE HEALS MAIMED AND BLIND

**Followers W---- And C----- Live On Fat Of Land Provided By
Generous Host; Thousands Arrive Weekly**

**Preach And Practiced Christianity To Such An Extent That
Public Wonders;**

Neighbors Cashing In On Movement.

'Isn't it wonderful! Isn't it wonderful?" These exclamations with: "Peace! Peace! So glad! So glad!" reverberate about the Divine household on Macon Street where the Reverend M. J. Divine expounds His doctrine of "Peace on earth, good will to men" and puts it into practice more thoroughly than any other follower of Christianity, to all outward appearances. Here He feeds the multitude, whether they are hungry or not. He heals the sick and He preaches a doctrine that if followed to the letter, would certainly cast out d-v- ls.

Literally thousands of seekers of a new message, curiosity hunters and those who would go miles for a free meal and a jamboree, visit the Divine household weekly, the numbers augmenting on Saturdays and Sundays until there is not standing room in the large house, and the streets are lined with visitors who arrive in six buses and some 250 cars. This motley crowd is kept in order by the Islip town police who are on duty all day Sunday.

A representative of the *Suffolk Citizen* visited the place on Tuesday, September 29. Arriving at about 10:30 in the morning, the yard adjacent to the Divine house was filled with c----- and w---- people, gathered in groups, all greeting each other with: "Peace, Peace," and "Isn't it wonderful." W---- walked arm in arm with c-----, calling each other endearing names and all seemed in one accord.

Shortly before eleven the door to the reception room was opened and the rush to get in resembled an orderly subway stampede. The crowd took seats around the walls of the three downstairs rooms. There were attractive w---- women, scholarly looking w---- men, wide-eyed c----- women, an Italian woman suffering with a goiter, and a woman with a badly scarred face, a sickly looking w---- man with a hollow cough. ...As they sat about the walls, there were expressions of wonder, happiness, fear, and cries of "Isn't it wonderful." ...A jingling bell announced breakfast. Meals are served in the Divine household in a series of "tables."

Incidentally, the neighbors are cashing in on the movement. They rent rooms, sell sandwiches and coffee and rent parking space at a quarter a throw since the thirty minute parking law was placed on the district.

...The door leading into the reception hall is crowded with listeners, who stand the two or three hours it takes for the "tables," and the windows around the dining rooms are filled with faces peering through when the Father talks, and joining in the songs that accompany the meal.

The business of getting seated is conducted by Father Divine with much ceremony. Seated at the head of the table with Mother Divine, He presides with enthusiasm. A little person, hardly five feet tall, His presence in the room is dynamic. Seated behind an imposing array of seven large coffee percolators, He conducts the "table" and expounds His truths. The table, a long banquet table, groans with the fat of the land. Your reporter can remember the following dishes: hot water, coffee, rice, boiled corn meal, potatoes, macaroni and cheese, string beans, baked beans, cabbage, stewed tomatoes, delicious looking biscuits, a fish entree, whole baked ham, and this topped off with homemade pound cake and jelly.

The meal is opened with the singing of hymns that are of the nature of spirituals, some of them old favorites and many of them the commendable works of the Father. Great energy goes into this singing.

"All those who want hot water pass the cups," He calls as He wields a large steaming percolator and the cups are handed around the table. This over, *"All those that want hot coffee at the head table,"* and down come the cups again.... While the singing continues... the business of eating is undertaken, each dish being passed first to the Father, or Mother if He does not happen to be at the table at the time, who touches it with the hand before it returns to be consumed.

It is, as the meal progresses, that the singing reaches proportions that are really wonderful. Mother Divine, who has a lovely face, sees that there is not too long a lull in the program and starts new tunes as the spirit moves her, if someone down the table is not moved within a reasonable time. When the Father is at the table, His company responds to his moods with alacrity. A particular tune that was sung with vim began, "Joy, joy, joy." All tunes were sung with three or four parts and at times were truly beautiful....

His teachings, founded on His interpretation of the Bible, religious leaders and philosophers, appear to be strict Christianity.... *"I have never solicited, I have never begged, I have never had anything to do with people who do these things,"* He said. (Cries of *"Wonderful, Wonderful!"*) *"And by the looks of [this] ham down here in front of Me, I will not have to tomorrow, and I can tell you that I never will have to."* (*"Wonderful, Wonderful!"*) He went on to give His followers some kindly admonitions....

One of Father's angels, a w---- girl whose flowing hair falls about her pale face, rose to praise the Father for coming to them in the flesh. *"We know that He is here,"* she said, *"that the same spirit that is in Him is in all of us. We are living in the Heavenly Kingdom here on this earth."* [...]

During the "table" Professor Del Mar, who had visited Divine's once before and who had returned, gave a very fine speech in which he offered both himself and Mrs. Del Mar as disciples of the Father, saying: *"Out of my past experience of thirty years on the lecture platform during which I progressed from the study of psychology into the various forms of advanced thought, I have never found such teaching as this. I know that it is the only true religion*

and I am ready to join your household and to do your bidding." The Father did not accept his offer at the time, but it is to be presumed that He will. Thus with singing and speeches and explanations by Father Divine, the meal came to a close....

The Father is perhaps one of the busiest persons in Sayville. Called to the telephone many times during the morning by his secretary, He hardly had time to eat. Mother Divine filled His plate as the many dishes were passed, and He returned to eat a little before He rose to minister to the needs of His flock.

He very kindly gave a *Citizen* reporter an interview after the preliminaries of the second "table" were over. Told that the people here wondered where He got the money to do all this, He replied, "I guess they will have to wonder." He said that Sunday, a blind man was led to the house and went away seeing. This was confirmed by many of His followers, and the Father said that the police could also corroborate the saying. He also told of two lame men who came on crutches and went away healed within the past two weeks. One of them was an infantile paralysis victim of sixteen years ago.

The Reverend Divine does not think that He as a person does these marvelous works, but the Divine Spirit in HIM. He says that all could heal and all would have peace and plenty if they would follow the teachings of Christ, love their neighbors as themselves and do good. He says that because He takes the teachings of the Bible and follows them to the letter, others more worldly question His honesty. But this does not worry Him.

And we are reminded of the saying: *"Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone."*⁴

On October 9, 1931, the *Suffolk Citizen* included a letter to the Editor, expressing sentiments similar to the two editorials above.

To the Editor:

Sayville is now becoming involved in a very serious situation and it will be up to the press to instruct the people [as to] the meaning of it all. I think it is only the press representative that can get a direct interview with the person interested.

1. Who and what is this Reverend Dr. Divine? where is He from? is He a regular ordained minister to preach the gospel?
2. If He is, why this terrible discrimination by the Law that it requires 5 policemen at \$8.00 per day when they could be doing more important duty? My personal observation--I found instead of a mob, a crowd of Law abiding citizens, patient, and living up to all restrictions.
3. If this so-called Father Divine really believes that He is the Messiah of His people, according to the Constitutional right of the United States, that is His privilege, also if He wishes to preach the same to all people.
4. He is doing a very charitable work by feeding all that come to Him irrespectively, housing the unfortunate and finding work for all He possibly can, and from what I understand, He is a great asset to the trades people by His patronage.

5. Now why all this trouble about Him and His following? Are we not all GOD'S Christian Children irrespective of Faith and Creed?
6. There has never been a race to advance so rapidly in all spheres of Life, Educationally, Socially and Financially as the c----- race. Why should there be any discrimination?
7. During United States troubles in 1898 and 1916 the male population of the c----- race responded nobly to the call to arms; there was no discrimination then. Why now?
8. In the various southern states the Catholic Missionary Fathers are making great strides in reforming the c----- race by building institutions for their Education and for their general welfare.
9. I know that if the press would interview Mr. Divine and let the public know some of His views it would relieve all our minds.

Respectfully,
Major Finkelmeier⁵

The reports presented so far exude the distinctive flavor of joy and well-being that the reporters caught from the contagious atmosphere of the FATHER DIVINE establishment, and which the crowds visiting Sayville felt also. Those who visited FATHER DIVINE in Sayville experienced great relief at having discovered a blessed Place where there was kindness and succor and upliftment, as well as bounteous, delectable food such as they had never seen. The glad tidings of FATHER DIVINE and Sayville soon trickled into all the sectors of the globe. At last,

Someone Who cared and Who was doing what a Messiah should do was in the land!

Concurrently with FATHER DIVINE'S Ministry in Sayville, there was a noted lecturer in England who, with great success, was disseminating spirituality similar to that which was being taught in Sayville, according to letters published in the *Suffolk Citizen*. This was no coincidence, for the reason that what this lecturer was teaching in England was that which he had learned from FATHER DIVINE at Sayville a few months previous. There were four letters published in the *Suffolk Citizen*, one from a prominent follower in Sayville, two from the lecturer in England and one from FATHER DIVINE under the dateline of October 16, 1931-- just a fortnight after the Dick Lee and Bing Bart articles. In these letters, the scope and intensity of the program carried on to promulgate the fresh, illuminating Gospel of FATHER DIVINE in Europe is outlined in some detail.

The first letter was written by J. M. Matthews, devoted, ardent disciple of FATHER DIVINE. James Maynard Matthews was a millionaire in the automobile business, who was also, as he states in his letter, an international lecturer on New Thought and FATHER DIVINE precepts. His wife, who was also one of FATHER DIVINE'S supporters, was prominent in the rarified social life of the upper crust of Brookline, Massachusetts, an aristocratic suburb of Boston. He gave up his business to become a follower of FATHER DIVINE. Because of his talents--his business acumen, his executive ability, his flawless shorthand expertise, and his social graces-- he became a most valued and trusted member of the Peace Mission Staff as Personal Secretary to FATHER DIVINE. Finding that the name of Matthews anchored him to the mortality of his earlier life, he was

inspired by the Spirit to take the spiritual name of John Lamb. Henceforth, James Maynard Matthews was dead, only to live again, resurrected as John Lamb.

A LETTER FROM ONE OF REVEREND DIVINE'S DISCIPLES

The Suffolk Citizen

Sayville, L. I.

New York

Gentlemen:

I believe many of your subscribers and readers would be interested to know that the Work which is carried on by the Reverend M. J. Divine here in Sayville is not restricted to this Town, but that it reaches out into many other parts of this Country and across the sea to Europe, Asia and Africa. Various representatives are in the Field now, carrying FATHER DIVINE'S Message to the world, and others are going out from here continuously, imbued with the spirit of His teaching to tell others about the Wonderful Thing they have found in Sayville.

It has been my great privilege, and that of my wife, to have a part in carrying this good news. As you will see from the enclosed printed announcement, I lectured in London, England, on FATHER DIVINE'S Message for a period of six weeks last June and July. The International New Thought Alliance in London, one of the largest centers in the world, was glad to throw open its doors to a representative of FATHER DIVINE, and the Message was so enthusiastically received by capacity audiences and the benefits received by many were so great that a further series of lectures was requested. The people were so eager to hear of FATHER that during our entire stay in London, Mrs. Matthews and

myself were deluged with invitations and requests for personal interviews to such an extent that our time was not our own.

This demand is now being met by a widely known international lecturer and author, Mr. Walter C. Lanyon, and that is my real reason for writing you. I have just secured from FATHER DIVINE'S Secretary, before it went to the files, a letter from Mr. Lanyon telling FATHER personally about his work in London and, since Mr. Lanyon is so well known in New York City and throughout this country, I thought it might be of interest to your readers, and that his schedule of lectures, if published, might catch the eye of some reader who would be in London during October, so that he would have an opportunity of verifying for himself the familiarity of the Name FATHER DIVINE and Sayville in London.

I have known Mr. Lanyon personally for many years and he has been considered by many the foremost lecturer in this Country on spiritual, scientific subjects. He has lectured in New York before large crowds that came day in and day out for weeks in mid-summer when ordinarily it is difficult to get audiences together. He has lectured in most of the large cities in the United States and has made at least one round-the-world lecture tour. He is the author of various books which many people use as daily guides in their lives. He has been most successful, and last year had reached the apex of his career as an intellectual celebrity.

Shortly after that time he came in contact with FATHER DIVINE and His Teaching and since then he has been carrying FATHER'S Message across the sea. Last spring, after an introductory series of lectures in London, he made a tour through Spain and North Africa and returned to

London while I was there. The demand was such that we both lectured there at the same time and in various surrounding towns. Many times, although we were in the same vicinity, we were too thoroughly occupied to contact one another, but Mr. Lanyon, Mrs. Matthews and I later made a trip together into France and Germany. When we returned to America last month Mr. Lanyon stayed in Germany to do some work there and has now returned to London again to continue.

I am sure this letter from Mr. Lanyon would be interesting as I say, to many, even to those who know little of FATHER DIVINE'S Work, as it gives some idea of what that Work is. If you see fit to publish it together with any part of my letter to you, I would thank you to preserve Mr. Lanyon's letter for me so that I may return it to FATHER DIVINE'S Secretary intact, for her files.

Yours very truly,
J. M. Matthews
37 Macon Street
Sayville, L. I.
New York

In his letter, Lanyon writes to FATHER DIVINE of spiritual concepts. He considers the "personality" that most people display is "nasty" because it prevents them from enjoying a close, intimate communion with GOD. Lanyon states that he would like to tell FATHER DIVINE of wonderful events--but quickly adds that FATHER DIVINE, being Omniscient, knows of the events anyway. Lanyon tells of the terrific upliftment he received after talking with FATHER DIVINE.

Walter Clemow Lanyon was born in 1887, and was in the prime of life when he wrote the following letter from London in 1931. *The National Union Catalog* of the Library of Congress (Volume 315, 611-614) lists twenty-six books by Lanyon. It is not clear that this is the total number that he wrote. *The Catalog* states that most of these books deal with some aspect of New Thought, and that seven of them have somewhat to do with FATHER DIVINE also. Some of the titles are provocative *The Impatient Dawn, Impressions of a Nomad, The Laughter of GOD, Thrust in the Sickle*, etc. Lanyon's book, *It Is Wonderful!* is the one best known to followers and to FATHER DIVINE because it is dedicated to HIM. The dedication reads as follows:

This book is dedicated to FATHER DIVINE

In appreciation for the glorious revelation his words brought to me. In my search for truth, I had met many wonderfully enlightened souls, noble and fine; some official Stonecasters; and a Judas; from all of these I received help and understanding, but it was not until I contacted Father Divine that I fully realized the Presence of the POWER here and now. Not as something to be used to produce results, but as the very actuality of Being, Itself. . . .

It is with a heart full of love and thanksgiving that I dedicate this book to The Father, who has so richly given me of his Love.

W.C.L.

FROM WALTER LANYON

Peace, FATHER:

The wonderful letter which came yesterday was so full of light that it made me see things I had only dreamed of before. You should see Your Angels over here unfolding before the gracious spirit of Your teaching--they are learning to get rid of the nasty personality which has intruded itself so long. They rise and call it Wonderful, and they speak in sure terms of the glorious accomplishment of the power as shown forth by You. It is Wonderful, FATHER. Heaven and earth are full of Thee.

I should like to talk to You about certain things that have happened. They are too wonderful to put down on paper. But then I in reality have talked it all over with You and You know all about it anyway.

My lectures have been of such a nature that the power has almost been visible, something like the glorious thing I recognized when I came to You. You remember how dumb I was. I was so filled with amazement that although I had lectured to capacity crowds for years, I was just plain dumb with the wonder of the revelation You gave to me.

I only had about three or four hours with You, but that was enough to change everything in my life and open the doors of the Heaven that Jesus spoke of as here and now.

I know what it was. I lost my personality; it fell off of me like an old rag. It just wasn't the same any more. I wish all the seekers after the Light that come to You could leave their nasty personalities on the dump heap. The personality gets so swollen with pride and it wants to tell of its good works, and it wants credit for everything that it ever did.

"Holier than Thou," it points its finger of scorn at everything or everybody who does not fall down and worship it. . . . How they can come to You and not drop off the personality and come out into the glorious Sons of the Living GOD is more than I can see.

I understand now why you said to me over and over again, "It is not necessary to contact Me Personally." I know now what the lesson was that You were giving me. Blessings FATHER, it is Wonderful!

Yes FATHER, the blind see, the lame walk and the dumb speak. All these things take place and greater even than this is the insight that comes to the new-old consciousness of the "I AM." Truly FATHER, all things are possible and probable to the person who has gotten rid of the personality. It is Wonderful!

I am giving forty lectures this month to great masses of people who come now to hear about the Word from You, and not to [listen to] a personality or teacher. They are beginning to say, "Thank You, FATHER," and are bursting out with "It is Wonderful!" Believe me, FATHER, the people have been starved for the Word of the LIVING GOD.

They have been satiated with the personal teaching--and the swollen personalities that have tried to put themselves over on them. If Jesus would not allow Himself to be called Good, what is it that makes these personalities try to fill that place? "Call not me good. One who has sent me into expression--He is the only good."

Sometimes I feel your cooperation very plainly and, of course, the glorious joy and blessings of the angels is always appreciated. Everything that You told me has worked out into expression.

I don't want to go on too long, FATHER, but I want to tell You how amazed I was. ...To You it was and is perfectly natural for the power of GOD to manifest, and so You are Divinely Indifferent. That helped me so much; it made me firm in the recognition that Good is the natural state of things and the action of the Laws of GOD should not seem strange or unusual, but Divinely Natural.

Blessings and love to You and Mother and the Angels.
Sing a little song for me.

Love,
Walter

44 Leyland Road
Lee S E 12
London, England
October 2, 1931

P.S. FATHER, a growth on a woman's neck just disappeared all of a sudden, so completely that she didn't know for sure whether she had even had it, although it had been there for years. Years, in the human way, are nothing in the Divine.

N.B. I have lovely lecture work planned all over Europe. It is Wonderful. A lot of wonderful things have happened--but they will keep.

Some twenty-six years later, Walter Lanyon wrote FATHER DIVINE from California, and received a reply. This correspondence is inserted here parenthetically as evidence of the long-standing depth of Lanyon's love for FATHER DIVINE. The illumination that FATHER DIVINE provides for individuals as His activities continue to proliferate is very

much appreciated by Lanyon as is shown in the following note:

**WALTER C. LANYON THANKS FATHER
FOR HIS BLESSINGS**

California

March 21, 1957

Dear Father:

I have been thinking of You much these days--have recalled many wonderful LAWS You gave to the world--and how true and wonderful they all are.

I hear the echo of Your voice so often when I move about speaking the Word--and so I just wanted to write You and say Thanks--and Thanks again!

Now You are entering into a new phase of it all--where even greater LIGHT shall be given--it is wonderful.

Bless You always--a rich reward is Yours!

Walter C. Lanyon

P.S. As I went to fold the letter it seemed I was impressed to say to You that You are coming out into a very definite expression again--only greater than before. Bless You always.

W.C.L.

FATHER DIVINE REPLIES

"MILLIONS WHO HAVE WALKED IN DARKNESS BEHOLD THE LIGHT"

PEACE

764-772 S. Broad Street

Philadelphia 46 Pa.

March 28, 1957 A.D.F.D.

Mr. Walter C. Lanyon
California

My dear Mr. Lanyon:

Thank you for your letter of the 21st postmark, and I AM glad to hear from you.

As I was just speaking about you to some of My Staff the other day, you were obliged to get in touch with ME, for when My SPIRIT calls anyone into consideration, if the individual is in harmony with ME and in tune with My MIND, he or she will respond immediately. Therefore, by your instant reaction to the thoughts of My MIND, I weigh the Spiritual progress you are making.

It is true, as you say, this is the Day in which a greater unfoldment of expression is being made, and millions who have walked in darkness shall behold the LIGHT. They are coming from the North, South, East and West up to the Mount of the House of the LORD, and I AM writing My Laws in their inward parts and engraving it on their hearts. Men shall no longer walk in ignorance and superstition as they have done; for in this New Dispensation the LIGHT of LIBERTY is shining and they shall be partakers of the

FREEDOM of the SON of GOD as heirs and joint heirs with HIM.

Thus, I rejoice to know that you have kept the faith and are walking in the LIGHT as it is revealed to you; for I desire that you might be even as this leaves ME, as I AM Well, Healthy, Joyful, Peaceful, Lively, Loving, Successful, Prosperous and Happy in Spirit, Body and Mind and in every organ, muscle, sinew, joint, limb, vein and bone and even in every ATOM, fibre and cell of MY BODILY FORM.

Respectfully and Sincere, I AM
REV. M. J. DIVINE, Ms.D., D.D.
Better known as FATHER DIVINE

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1. The New Day, August 17, 1974, 19
 2. Loc. cit.
 3. June 15, 1974, 18-19
 4. August 17, 1974, 19-20
 5. August 24, 1974, 17
 6. August 10, 1974, 19-20
 7. Loc. cit.

CHAPTER X

THE LAST SERMON

Clippings from *The New Day 1974-1975*,
excerpted from *The Word of GOD Revealed*, , and from
The Spoken Word, 1937.

In this chapter, additional newspaper reports are presented having to do with one of the most extraordinary episodes in the history of Civil Rights. The episode is a milestone in Peace Mission Movement History as well.

Sunday, November 15, 1931, running into the small hours of Monday morning, brought a disturbance in Sayville that loosed a chain of events which were nothing short of astounding. Kephart suggests that November 15, 1931, possibly marks the actual beginning of the Peace Mission Movement because of the developments which followed that date.

The usual Sunday evening meeting was in progress. John Lamb, the keeper of the notebook referred to in the preceding chapter, writes in the first person, that there was a *"great demonstration of the Spirit, while various Angels were singing in foreign tongues, dancing and praising GOD. The vibrations were very high and everyone was moved, until all were standing with their hands in the air. This demonstration at such a late hour was contrary to the usual custom, as we usually do not sing after eight o'clock in the*

*evening, and not only that, the windows were open and the blinds were not drawn. This is the first time, in my recollection, that this has happened, as the curtains are usually pulled down and the windows closed at ten o'clock. Thus it was apparently FATHER'S Will, as HE was present at the table continually."*¹

The din was so disturbing to the neighbors that when the noise did not subside at midnight, they summoned a police officer. When he surveyed the scene, he decided that it was too much for him to resolve alone and that he needed help and plenty of it. The officer notified the Town Police, who brought with them County Police, State Troopers, Officers from the District Attorney's office, and even the Fire Department. This caused such a ruckus that matters began to assume the proportions of a riot.

A news item stated that *"They found the assembly crowded into the long dining room at the rear of the house, those who were unable to find seats, standing about the sides of the room. The Reverend occupied His usual seat at the head of the table, and standing, was leading in the Divine revelation. As the officers peered through the windows, planning their mode of procedure, they saw the Reverend with His hands extended leading the crowd in praise that shook the rafters. As He raised His hands, the cries rose to tremendous volume, and as He lowered them the sounds diminished with only occasional "movings of the spirit."*²

John Lamb continues the story in the first person as he set it down in his notebook: *"The house was first surrounded and hose lines were laid so that water could be poured in, if necessary, to quiet us down. The troopers*

came in several times by the front door, but could get no further than the front room for nearly an hour, as they were apparently held back by FATHER'S Will to witness the demonstration. Finally, one went around and came in to the dining room by the back door and said he wanted to speak to FATHER. FATHER turned and said in a loud voice, "Speak!" and the trooper bolted out the door like a flash. FATHER then quieted the demonstration and we all stood silent in the room for about ten minutes. FATHER said, "I will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on ME," and quietly led us into the front part of the house. There we found the State Troopers waiting."³

There were approximately eighty people in the house. The officers notified all that they were under arrest and made it clear that they preferred not to use force.

"We all got our wraps and were taken to the court in buses with the understanding that we would be there only fifteen minutes. FATHER was meekness itself and spoke in a low voice but never lost His authority for one moment.... At the court I was locked in a cell and finally beaten up because I gave my new name while they found an automobile license in my pocket with the old name on it. I was finally released with the others however, after about two-thirds had pleaded not guilty--the case to come up for trial in a few days. FATHER was charged separately, with maintaining a nuisance and let out on fifteen hundred dollars bail for trial before the grand jury. FATHER says HE may choose to go to jail rather than pay a fine, and that it is all for a purpose."⁴

Instead of being detained for fifteen minutes, the followers were held in court all Sunday night. They were required to return to court after six o'clock on Monday

evening. *"Only those who pleaded Not Guilty were required to appear, but most of the assembly went down. When we arrived at the courthouse there was a crowd waiting in the street and all seats were filled, but a place was cleared for us and we filed in. The room was packed to the doors and as many people were waiting outside as in. Reporters were present from most of the New York papers and there were many flashlights (photos) taken. The dignity and poise of FATHER'S followers was beyond description and many of the spectators and some of the officers remarked upon it. Before the judge entered, those who had pleaded guilty and were prepared to pay their fines, were ordered downstairs. Then court opened and FATHER'S attorneys moved for an adjournment to Friday--a period of four days. This was granted and the crowd dispersed good-humoredly, while we walked back to 72 Macon Street in a body."*⁵

*"Accordingly, at the appointed time, the trial resumed. Friday evening... was the night of the final disposition of the charge against the individuals in the Kingdom, for Public Nuisance. As before, there was a large crowd in front of the courthouse when we arrived there. This time however, none had been admitted and only those who were on trial, together with the complainants, were allowed in. ... Newspapermen from all papers were present as before and many pictures were taken in the court and outside. The crowd outside stood for hours in a wet fog to learn the results and during the entire time I heard no remarks against FATHER, but many of the storekeepers and people of the town were speaking in His favor."*⁶

The case ran from seven-thirty to eleven-thirty that night, with testimony from both complainants and

defendants being heard. *"Finally the case was completed and all filed out. The result was that all were found guilty, although it is said that the case was won for FATHER until a witness was brought in by the district attorney, who lied and thus finished it. FATHER paid all the fines and threw a five hundred dollar bill down on the table, which they could not change. I believe the change was brought to HIM at 72 Macon Street next day. That disposed of the case against individuals, but there still remains the case against FATHER to be tried before the grand jury."*⁷

This court appearance occurred in November of 1931, with the hearing before the grand jury following later. FATHER'S actual trial did not come up until the following May in Mineola, New York. At this time a former Assistant United States Attorney jumped into the breach with an offer to defend FATHER DIVINE on Constitutional grounds.

OFFERS TO DEFEND FATHER DIVINE WITHOUT FEE

Mr. Lamb continues:

"Following upon published reports telling of the attitude taken by w---- citizens of Sayville, Long Island, with regard to Father M. J. Divine and His followers, former Assistant United States Attorney James C. Thomas volunteered his services, to defend the leader's property rights, which appeared to be jeopardized by the reputed action of the Sayville w----s.

"Father Divine's work in that community stirred resentment among the w----s by reason of the fact that His followers were from both races. Notwithstanding that His property investment totals \$30,000 or more, He has been given an ultimatum requiring Him to leave there with His

followers not later than January 1, 1932, without regard to His real estate holdings.

"In a telegram Mr. Thomas offered his services "gratuitously to preserve those rights and privileges so sacred and won at so great a cost."

"In commenting on the matter, Mr. Thomas referred to the ouster movement against the group as being caused by the influx of a number of n--- - visitors to Father Divine's services denominating it "as a means of depriving Him of His constitutional right to own property where He sees fit, and to worship GOD as He sees fit."

"He declared further that "such a situation is the concern of every . . . man, woman and child in the United States, for if it is permitted to go on unnoticed and unchallenged, who can say but that tomorrow these and other constitutional rights and privileges will not be denied to each of us.

"To allow this incident to go unchallenged is to weaken the foundation of democracy in the United States, and to single out the n---- group as one not entitled to the full enjoyment of every right, privilege and immunity guaranteed by the Constitution....

"In America there are too many public-spirited men and women to allow a handful of bigoted, prejudiced un-Americans at Sayville, L. I., to undermine the foundations upon which this great government is builded." ⁸

Inasmuch as the Court, including the judge and prosecuting attorney, was implacably prejudiced against FATHER DIVINE, the trial was only a mockery, and reduced to shambles any vestige of justice. The jury was less vindictive, although it brought in a verdict of "Guilty." *The Suffolk Citizen* reported:

REVEREND DIVINE FOUND GUILTY BY NASSAU JURY; NOW IN JAIL

*Many Witnesses Testify For And Against Him;
Jury Recommends Mercy For [...] Evangelist*

The Reverend M. J. Divine of 72 Macon Street was convicted on Wednesday by a jury in the Nassau County Court before Judge Lewis J. Smith, on an indictment charging Him with maintaining a public nuisance at His local tabernacle.

The indictment followed a raid on the Divine establishment last winter when He and about eighty of His followers were brought before Justice Charles Duryea and charged with disorderly conduct, after neighbors had complained of loud noises coming from the house.

The jury recommended leniency and Divine was remanded to the county jail for sentence....

More than a score of witnesses testified that when they had visited Divine's Center they had found no disorder and no undue noise. Among those who upheld Divine's place were ministers, clerks, a singer and a playwright, Marjory Locke of 245 Lowery Street, Long Island City....

James Thomas, attorney for Divine, said that he would file an appeal.⁹

Inevitably there was great chagrin among the followers at learning that their beloved FATHER--and indeed themselves--had fallen victims of the law and were convicted. The law was obliged to run its course however, and the followers, being law-abiding citizens, endeavored to make the best of a disagreeable position. They uneasily

and apprehensively bided the time until the day for sentencing.

It was May 24, 1932. The followers were compacted solidly within the Union Temple Baptist Church on 132nd Street in New York City. The sentence was to come down shortly. Hence, the adoring, overflow congregation gathered to hear FATHER DIVINE'S valedictory. This address is known as "FATHER DIVINE'S Last Sermon Before the Verdict" and is beyond doubt the most famous of His hundreds of Messages. It is dear to the hearts of all followers.

The course of the Sermon revealed FATHER DIVINE'S happiness and buoyancy. HE radiated a true Father's affectionate care, and baptized the congregation with His Love as a warm, gentle rain caresses a misty flower garden. HE was compassion Personified. HE smoothed the rumpled feelings of His doting multitude at one point by assuring them that *"Every one of you can rise and shine now, for the Light has truly come and the Glo-ray of GOD has rayed His glows upon you. It is Wonderful! I say the glow, the glows of GOD have rayed their rays on you. The rays of the Light of the sunlight of Life have rayed on you. It is Wonderful! . . . I say you are lumps of radium! Bits and balls of radium, for the glow of rays and the rays of the glow have radiated you, and you are now radiating the Glo-rays of GOD."*

Later in the Sermon, FATHER DIVINE touched lightly upon what was to come: *"Now there are many things that I could say, but the time is well expired and I must go. I have something to do and I must go apparently, yet I AM here and I AM there and I AM everywhere. It is Wonderful! The apostle said, 'When I am absent in body, I am present in*

spirit.' And you can always recognize My Ever Presence whether you see ME with your physical eye or not. It is Wonderful! ...as I before said, the time is well spent that I must seemingly depart for the time being."

Then His benediction: *"Now let Love and the blessing of the Spirit--the blessing of the Spirit of the sweet communion of GOD'S Infinite Love be with you."*¹⁰

Judge Smith, ignoring the jury's recommendation for leniency, sentenced FATHER DIVINE to the maximum--a year in jail and a \$500.00 fine. In less than one hundred hours after pronouncing sentence, the Judge was dead, although he had appeared to be in the best of health.

The media had diligently spread the news of this entire episode far and wide. The crown of the episode naturally, was the death of the Judge. The world took up the chant that his death was retribution for his rancorous sentencing of FATHER DIVINE. But even though FATHER DIVINE Personally had nothing to do with the demise of Judge Smith, the world would have it no other way but that FATHER DIVINE punished the Judge by death, whereas in reality, it was the Judge's own hate and animosity which returned to him to mete out to him the condemnation he measured to FATHER DIVINE. In other words, the Judge took his own life. This is the Law of the Spirit.

As a consequence, the fame of FATHER DIVINE flew straightway around the world, and estimates of His Power and influence soared to the firmament. FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement were henceforth no longer confined to Sayville, the small hamlet on Long Island where fisherman lived.

FATHER DIVINE went to jail nonetheless, where HE spent about a month in what HE jestingly referred to as His "summer hotel"--being there during warm weather--before being released by virtue of a Certificate of reasonable doubt. This Certificate was forthcoming for the reason that in the review of the Mineola proceedings, thirty-two counts of prejudice were determined and certified by the courts.

Later in the year, the *New York News* ran a short news item:

SETS DIVINE CASE FOR NEW HEARING

Supreme Court in Kings [County] Orders Appeal to be Heard in December

The Reverend Major J. (Father) Divine, who was convicted in May in Nassau County and sentenced to one year in jail and fined \$500, appeared Monday before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in Brooklyn in connection with His appeal. Argument of the appeal was set down for the December term of the court.

James C. Thomas, 11 Park Place, attorney for the Sayville head, represented Divine at the hearing. The religious leader, who has transferred the center of His activities from the Sayville Heaven which was adjudged a nuisance, to 135th Street in Harlem, is free on \$5,000 bail.

Justice Humphrey, sitting in the Supreme Court in Brooklyn on June 24, released Divine on a Certificate of reasonable doubt.¹¹

Accordingly, in the Term at the end of the year, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York condemned the proceedings of the Court at Mineola, where the late Judge Lewis J. Smith had presided

and brought sentence, as being erroneous and prejudicial, as follows:

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, Respondent
THE MAJOR DIVINE, Appellant

JUDGMENT OF CONVICTION REVERSED ON THE LAW AND A NEW TRIAL GRANTED. IN OUR OPINION THE COURT'S RULINGS AT FOLS. 487-490, 492-495, 648-650, 891-896, 947-949, 572-576, 651-656, 788-790, 666-667, 669-670, 86-89, 131-132, 133-135, 168-172, 243, 660- 661, 683-684, 690-693, WERE ERRONEOUS AND PREJUDICIAL, AND WE THINK THAT PREJUDICE AGAINST THE DEFENDANT WAS EXCITED IN THE MINDS OF THE JURORS BY COMMENTS, RULING AND QUESTIONS BY THE COURT THROUGHOUT THE TRIAL, AND THAT THE COURT WENT BEYOND REASONABLE AND PROPER LIMITS IN THE CROSS-EXAMINATION OF DEFENDANT'S WITNESSES. WE HAVE EXAMINED THE RECORD AND FIND NO ERROR AS TO THE FACTS.

LAZANSKI, President Judge
YOUNG
CARSWELL
SCUDDER, and
TOMPKINS, J. J., concurring

Reported 237 A Div. 890-891, 2d Dept. Jan., 1933 ¹²

The Appellate Court allowed a new trial, but no further legal action was ever pursued. The judge was dead. FATHER DIVINE was vindicated and absolved by the Supreme Court. What need for additional litigation?

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1. The New Day, July 27, 1974, 17
 2. August 24, 1974, 17
 3. July 27, 1974, 17
 4. Loc. cit.
 5. July 27, 1974, 19
 6. Loc. cit.
 7. Loc. cit.
 8. August 24, 1974, 19
 9. 20
 10. June 21, 1975, 18-20
 11. June 28, 1975, 17
 12. The Spoken Word, June 22, 1937, 18-19

CHAPTER XI

QUALITY OF LIFE

Clippings from *The New Day*

Philadelphia: The New Day Publishing Company,
excerpted from "The Word of GOD Revealed," 1974.

In the preceding chapter, certain events were reviewed-- events subsequent to the November 15, 1931 invasion of 72 Macon Street which led to the New York Supreme Court Appellate Divisions's pronouncement that FATHER DIVINE was befouled by a prejudiced court. The raid was the talk of the town and other towns; it raised comment on all sides-- pro and con.

Some of this agitated comment as of October, 1931, was included in Chapter Nine. As in every instance where such an incendiary issue as race relations is raised, the climate heats up and people take sides. Even in the face of rampant prejudice in the dark ages of those times however, because of the palpable good that FATHER DIVINE was about, the predilection toward HIM in some quarters was positive, and HE was accordingly championed as a Benefactor to humankind.

This trend was obvious in the articles introduced in Chapter Nine. In this chapter, there is later opinion such as the editorial comment provided by the *American Business*

Survey on November 18 and 20, 1931, with respect to the demonstration of the Spirit at FATHER DIVINE'S home which provoked the neighbors to summon police.

CHARGES DEPLORED

It is with regret that we learn of the recent rather unwarranted arrest of the Reverend Major J. Divine of Sayville, Long Island, whose charitable deeds were disturbed for a time when a group of inconsiderate citizens complained that His services disturbed their rest. With Him were also arrested eighty-eight of His disciples, many of whom rely upon the hospitality of the Divine home for shelter and food.

It is unkind, and unchristian to demand the arrest of a servant of charity and religion. To prosecute Dr. Divine for His generosity is to be deplored. A Person of His character is entitled to some consideration.

The weary, the hungry, and those low in spirit are welcome at the home of the Reverend Divine at 72 Macon Street. Here is an open house for all--where prejudice of any kind has no sway. The kindhearted disciple of religion here turns saddened hearts to GOD and brings joy and happiness to the troubled and the sorrowful.

REVEREND DIVINE'S MOVEMENT

A "spirit demonstration" at the Reverend Major J. Divine's establishment early Monday Morning was the forerunner of a fracas that, but for the timely intervention of the authorities, might have had serious consequences. Feeling has run at fervent heat in the vicinity of Macon Street, since the Divine c--- has increased from a handful of followers to a movement that is attracting world-wide

attention and bringing visitors that sometimes reach the proportions of thousands a day. The quiet residents of the block, most of them German-Americans, are home-loving folk who have paid for their homes by dint of hard work, and they resent their sudden arrival at the corner of the world.

It is said that the spirit demonstration of Sunday evening reached such proportions that the neighbors were unable to sleep and, not knowing the nature of the enthusiasm that possessed the Divine worshippers, they were alarmed. Summoning the police, they asked for relief.

All fair-minded people respect the rights of citizens of this country to practice their religious beliefs without interference. The founders of the United States of America braved the dangers of an uncivilized wilderness that they might worship GOD according to their convictions. While the Constitution provides for freedom of worship, the law also protects our citizens against any annoying practices that might infringe on their rights as peaceful and law-abiding folk.

That the Reverend Divine and His followers have a right to worship according to the dictates of their conscience no one can or should deny. But when this worship becomes of such a nature that others, who have the same right to love of peace and harmony, are unnecessarily disturbed, we believe that justice has a right to intervene.

Undoubtedly the number of the Reverend Divine's followers has outgrown His quarters on Macon Street. In fairness to Himself and His faith He should take steps to plant His c--- where it can prosper unhampered by the limits of a residential section. He is to be commended for

the good He has done among His fellowmen, and it is to be regretted that the natural confines of civilization should cast a shadow over these.

Until He does take steps to provide a place commensurate with the size and nature of His establishment however, continual outbreaks of the nature of the Sunday evening episode may be expected to occur. We are sure that this type of thing is distasteful to all and we trust that He will endeavor to remedy the situation.¹

Two weeks later, *The Messenger*, an all North Shore Long Island paper, printed an article which helped to keep the issue in the public eye. It seemed, although people realized that FATHER DIVINE'S evening services disturbed the community and that they had a right to complain, many people took His part and were especially indignant at His arrest. On December 4, 1931, *The Messenger* carried the following harangue directed at the Editor of the Suffolk County News:

SAYVILLE PAPERS PLAY UP HATRED

Then Complain of Publicity Coming to Sayville

The interesting picture of a Sayville editor deploring publicity given Sayville, because of the fact that Major Divine happened to reside there, conducting religious meetings, extending food and help to the unfortunate-- while his own newspaper was one of the chief agencies for spreading that publicity, is a sickening commentary on the low state of the public intelligence that permits such hypocrisy.

He held the center of the stage and decried also the publicity appearing in another local paper, which happened

to get a better break on the news, and even charged that paper with being subsidized.

As a matter of fact, and strict legality, we question very much whether the Reverend Mr. Divine hasn't the edge on the situation, if HE has a decent lawyer. Certainly, the method of forcing Him out of town is not Christian, for the Pastor has done no wrong that is adducible in evidence--and if Brother Hoag [the Editor in question] doesn't know where the Reverend Mr. Divine gets His money--neither does the Pastor know where Brother Hoag gets his, and could retort that he certainly doesn't earn it with his newspaper, unless people are contributing.

We suspect the Sayville Pastor is getting financial help from many sources--and we certainly see no reason to complain of His charity--it stands comparison with anything Editor Hoag has ever done for Sayville.

If the prejudice is because Pastor Divine is c-----, and we believe that is all there is to it--and because c----- people congregate with Him, why not be frank and state that as the reason?

We can quite believe that Brother Hoag won't even want to stay in Heaven, if he gets that far, if he sees an Editor who is a Democrat ahead of him (and that is quite likely to happen for Democratic editors usually get ahead of him).²

A staff writer for *The Age* made it his business to file a special report on the situation so that his readers would have a clear picture of what was transpiring. Clifford Smith, on December 5, 1931, reported that meetings were held between the citizens committee of Sayville and a committee representing FATHER DIVINE to resolve the conflict. It was agreed that now *"there was no complaint*

against the moral character of Father Divine or that of His home; that the matter had now gotten beyond any question of noise complaints; that it was now a matter of having a 'Harlem Colony' in Sayville."

The townspeople were insistent in 1931 that Father Divine move out of the vicinity, to preclude the growth of a Harlem Colony in Sayville--but HE is still there today.

Mr. Smith concludes his story with an account of his enjoyable visit with the followers:

Reverend Divine teaches His students, as followers are called, that GOD is in every man, woman and child, if one will but acknowledge the same. I found a well, healthy and contented group of people of both the w---- and c----- races all with one idea, "GOD is here in all of us with Father Divine, as He is called here, to teach one to live right."

It was a sight to be remembered, a setting of peace, harmony and contentment. The statement given out that this was a c---, or sect of some peculiar sort did not appear to me at any time as there were no weird actions, chants or incantations to spirits, etc.

It is a fact that the students of Reverend Divine feel He has shown them the Truth and some unknown Light and hold Him symbolic of GOD today, which some of them called Him in my presence.

Your writer watched a clean, wholesome, substantial meal given to all comers, regardless of race, creed or color. There was no offering, collection, or donation received or asked for at any time, only a simple lesson all were asked to study on Christianity.

After this I received a number of statements and testimonials, some of which will be used in future articles. Among the statements I received was one about a blind man being able to see and a lame man made whole again and other miracles performed without Reverend Divine touching or coming in contact with any of them at any time.

The Sub-Committee of Sayville residents is made to appear only a hidden move of race prejudice and ignorant people to poison the minds of the broad minded, right thinking people of Sayville against Him, said Father Divine, and asks the aid of The Age readers to help Him--not with money, but cooperation in His work in the time of depression in helping and teaching as GOD has decreed.

His parting statement was that He holds no ill feeling against any one on earth and forgives each and all of His foes. Your reporter has not, nor never has been a student, follower or convert of Reverend Divine but writes this and other articles to come as a result of personal investigation.³

Several wealthy, well-known women were among the devotees to FATHER DIVINE. *The New York American* observes this fact on December 7, 1931.

WOMEN LOYAL TO CREED OF LEADER
Confident of Good Work of Messiah
Who is Spending \$100 Daily to Feed Poor

Calmly indifferent to the opposition of the townspeople, the Reverend Major Divine, Messiah of Sayville, L.I., continued yesterday His ministrations to His flock, which now includes a number of prominent w---- women.

The fact that He has a legal fight on His hands has not stopped Divine from spending \$100 a day on food for those who gather at His daily hearings. It has not stopped either, the speculations of the townsfolk as to the source of this \$700-a-week income.

He has been indicted on a charge of maintaining a nuisance in the operation of His Heaven, the headquarters from which issue loud prayers and hallelujahs while the hearings are in progress.

Some of the prominent women who have become interested in the work are:

Mrs. Edward Locke, wife of the New York playwright; Miss Martha Messinger, actress once associated with the Theatre Guild; Mrs. J. Maynard Matthews, wife of a millionaire, and prominent socially at Brookline, Mass.; Mrs. Anna Marmelin, mother of the three Marmelin sisters, dancers; Mrs. Mary Orr, whose family is connected with one of the large manufacturing concerns in the country; and Anna M. Mawe.

Feminine Viewpoints

Mrs. Matthews, whose husband gave up an automobile business to join her here as a member, said she is convinced of the high-mindedness of the Leader.

Mrs. Orr said: "I have found in Him the Messiah I desired. I am happier here than I have ever been elsewhere."

Miss Messinger said: "This is the first time I really have had peace of mind and felt in touch with the true meaning of the Gospels."⁴

On December 31, 1931, as a follow-up to its December 4 article, *The Messenger* heaped more fuel on the fire by

continuing to harass the Editor of the *Suffolk County News* because of his prejudice, and argued strongly for civil rights, including freedom of religious worship.

"LYNCH LAW" HOAG, WHAT ABOUT JUDGE OLIVER'S DECISION?

**Why Don't You Criticize His Opinion
And Take The Law Into Your Own Hands?**

REVEREND MAJOR DIVINE GRANTED APPEAL TO HIGHER COURT

Constitutional Rights Invaded Because Of Racial Prejudice

As we said in our first article on the subject of the illegal arrest of Major Divine, the Pastor of Sayville, if he had a good lawyer, he could certainly beat that case.

The spectacle of Francis Hoag, Editor of the Suffolk County News haranguing the angry mob, and indicating what would happen down South, as reported by the press, was certainly another piece, all in part with the racial feeling evidenced.

Everyone in that arrest has a proper action for damages, and we hope they will start in and make the law observe law.

County Judge Robert T. Oliver granted the application of the attorney of Reverend M. J. Divine. It was the only thing to do, and the only right thing to do.

The fines put on these people by Justice Duryea should be returned. Forty- six defendants arrested and fined \$5.00 each, \$230! Fine bit of work for a local Justice's day?

The complaint of neighbors did not warrant a forcible entry without warrant. A nice libel suit instituted against the local newspapers would bring the matter further into the light.

No information was given the arrested parties as to their rights. Their statutory rights were violated. Their arrest was absolutely indefensible. The right of assemblage for worship and the right of privacy, and the individual right of a citizen for protection from illegal arrest, have all been defied.

Sayville Mob Newspaper Rule gets a much needed lesson. The people do not want nuisances, or improper places, and if there are such, the law provides a remedy, along legal lines. To break the law to get vengeance is to invite a breakdown of law.

County Judge Oliver is making a record for himself as a just and upright judge, unbiased and merciful, not using the law for private revenge. As he has properly said, "It is our duty not to break men, but make them."⁵

Clifford Smith again takes up the cudgel for FATHER DIVINE by reporting that a Suffolk County newspaper is encouraging HIM to sue both the media and certain people. *The New York Age* of January 9, 1932 carries this report and also a report of people being helped through contacting FATHER DIVINE mentally and spiritually.

FATHER DIVINE URGED TO SUE NEWSPAPERS

Sayville, L. I., N. Y. The old saying that right will overcome all odds seemed to again prove its truth in the case of Father Divine. The unbiased . . . fair-mindedness of Judge Oliver in the handling of the case against Father

Divine has prompted one of the w---- Suffolk County newspapers to publish a statement suggesting that Father Divine and His followers who were arrested with Him should take legal action against certain newspapers and persons, to teach them respect and the legal rights of worship.

This is a move which Father Divine is considering. But as He stands for peace, He says He does not like to do such a thing unless compelled to do so....

A surprise meeting was held in New Star Casino in New York City on Sunday evening, January 3. The Age reporter was again present, but like the meeting at Rockland Palace, the meeting was orderly and quiet.

Singer Claims Cure

While awaiting the arrival of Father and Mother Divine, the audience heard persons give several testimonials. One case that attracted considerable attention was that of a well-known n---- concert singer, who said she had lost her voice. Said she, "I heard of Father Divine during my illness, and contacted Him. Today I am well, hale and hearty, and able to fill my concert engagements without a care on my mind." There were many other testimonials of mental and physical healing.

Upon the entrance of Father and Mother Divine there was a great shout and demonstration of welcome. The speaking of Father Divine and the singing of Mother Divine were worth going miles to hear, and if emotions show the inner feelings, then all present, even to the police officers, enjoyed the meeting.

*Out in Sayville, there was a pitiful case of a young woman seriously ill, who was instantly healed by Father Divine, but at His request, we were withholding her name....*⁶

Mr. Smith had developed such an affection for FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE and the followers that he wished to be of as much service to them as possible by providing information about them and their activities to anyone who sought it. At the end of this article, he stated that it was all the *New York Age* could do to handle its business and that FATHER DIVINE'S office was swamped with mail. Therefore, so as to take the load off his newspaper's office and FATHER DIVINE'S office, he was willing to supply information about the Peace Mission Movement himself, if the seeker sent a self-addressed and stamped envelope to his home in Patchogue, Long Island. Such generosity toward FATHER DIVINE by a newspaper reporter is news in itself!

Clifford Smith spent quite a bit of time at the Peace Mission in an effort to give his readers an accurate, fair-minded report on the actions of the Movement. Here is part of another of his observations as it appeared in *The New York Age*. During an interview, Mr. Smith queried FATHER DIVINE about the source of His income.

**FATHER DIVINE GRANTS INTERVIEW TO THE AGE
REPORTER AND SHOWS LETTERS OF
INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN LECTURER**

Father issued His usual statement that He did not accept or solicit money or aid from any persons or organizations and was not connected with any organization. He said, "I

AM a free gift to man and want to be received and known as such." [...]

Father Divine told me that hereafter there will be weekly meetings in St. Luke's Hall in West 130th Street, New York City, where there will be no collections of any kind and people may come and be healed and relieved of their burdens.

"There are also meetings of students... all over the city and world," said Father Divine and continued that, "at this time there is a party of students en route to Sayville from Europe for teaching that they may return and carry on the work." In explaining the meetings, Father Divine said that these meetings... are to heal, relive, teach and give people who wish, a chance to concentrate and to understand His mottos, as He gives them.

The two main mottos are:

"The Spirit of the Consciousness of the Presence of GOD is the source of all supply and will satisfy every good desire." Another is "The abundance of the fullness of the Consciousness of good, no space is vacant of the fullness thereof."

"This," says Father Divine, "is the key to My Teaching and the full understanding of its blessings promised and benefits derived from true faith and love of our fellowman." ... I have been questioned by some as to my belief, feeling, etc., toward Father Divine, and again say, I am not, nor have been a student or follower of Father Divine but write these articles as a newspaper reporter in the interest of telling the public through an unprejudiced, unbiased and uninfluenced paper what work Father Divine is carrying on.

Though He is hindered on some sides and mocked on others, He is a very kind, pleasant Person, tolerant, who meets everyone with kindness and a smile and is painstaking in explaining His Teaching and Works...

There is another letter which shows us what some people in Europe think of Father Divine and His Teaching.

An internationally known lecturer and speaker... writes as follows:

Leland Road
London, England
December 12, 1931

Dear Father:

The first copy of the book right from the press, entitled, It Is Wonderful went on its way last night to You. I know You will receive it with all the love it is given to You. I know it will bless and help many and lead thousands to You.

I have great joy in it all. It is my testimony of three hours I spent with You in person and the thousands of contacts I have had with You in the unseen. It is wonderful, Father, the glorious revelation You have poured through me....⁷

The letter was written by Walter Lanyon, who authored the book to which he referred in his letter, as well as many more. The book, *It Is Wonderful*, was inspired by the Teachings of FATHER DIVINE, and in the book, Lanyon freely acknowledged that the wisdom contained therein came from FATHER DIVINE.

Yet another report by Clifford Smith is found in the January 9, 1931, issue of *The New York Age*, telling of the acclamation that FATHER DIVINE was receiving-- and the

offer by a radio station of time on the air whenever HE wished.

FATHER DIVINE URGED BY RADIO TO BROADCAST

Sayville, L.I., N.Y. Again we find Father Divine on top of the heap. Again, we find His tolerance and theory placing Him in such a position that his foes are made to look like so much dust under His Feet, if we may put it so plainly.

From East, West, North and South, mail, phone messages and telegrams pour in from rich and poor, b---- and w----, offering their time, money, services and their very souls to this truth as taught by Father Divine. It is remarkable how many people of all races, creeds and colors, far and near, are lining up with Father Divine.

One of the local broadcasting stations has offered its services and aid to Father Divine in the past week, and in offering the use of the station, told Him that He may use it at any time He may want. So we look forward to hearing Him or attending one or maybe more of His meetings right in our own homes, if not able to be personally present.

The New York Age reporter has on hand many letters telling of healings credited to Father Divine and has met many people who have been personally healed by Him. In an effort to find out the sentiments of w---- people in a nearby community as to their attitude on Father Divine, the reporter conducted a poll, and it proved very interesting.

It was the consensus of opinion among rich and poor that the great work of Father Divine should and must go on. We found eight out of ten persons wanted Father Divine to stay and continue His work. There were five

persons who voted Him out of Sayville who have had a change of heart and now want Him to remain here.

The new Friendship Centre is growing stronger daily. Anyone wishing information may receive full particulars by sending a stamped and self- addressed envelope to Clifford Smith, 159 West Main Street, Patchogue, Long Island, N.Y.

Father Divine has requested me to state to the public that He wants everyone, man, woman and child, to realize that Christ is within him, as it will make it so easy to contact Him.⁸

It is understandable that writers of newspaper stories, magazine articles and books, during the past fifty years and more, have seen in FATHER DIVINE a choice subject. HE was natural copy, as any colorful, internationally known figure is who has stirred up endless violent polemics and disputations for various reasons.

The early writers harped mainly on two aspects of FATHER DIVINE'S image. One was prejudice against anyone of a dark complexion--especially if the person was very much in the public eye. The other was ridicule for FATHER DIVINE'S religious, political, educational and sociological precepts, and the radical manner in which HE and His followers pursued those precepts.

The reputation of the media for squeezing every drop of sensation out of a late- breaking report is well deserved. The media played the role of rowdy; it delighted in tormenting people who were considered inferior and defenseless, and who were therefore fair game for its insolent invective. There is no excuse for such yellow journalism. The articles presented in this chapter and the

two preceding prove that assertion. What an enormous difference between these reports and many of the other accounts that have been published concerning FATHER DIVINE! Certainly if reporters in the distant thirties were enlightened sufficiently to find even a modicum of merit in His Ministry, the ostensibly intelligent investigative reporters of these modern times should be at least as enlightened.

There were many occasions when the media scooped up what appeared to it to be startling news about FATHER DIVINE for its banner headlines and front page stories. Listed below are conspicuous happenings in the history of the Peace Mission Movement, some of which were pounced upon by the media as features that would sell its wares. Some of these occurrences were more intrinsically weighty with respect to the work of the Movement than those which the media played up--but which were not deemed sensational enough, according to materialistic media standards, for the media to waste ink on. Other developments that would reflect credit on FATHER DIVINE were likewise shunned by the media.

Probably many readers have never heard of some of these events because they were not publicized due to the policy of the Movement not to seek headlines. These events are given not only as a thumbnail history of the Movement, but also to highlight the vitality of the Movement as revealed by these sometimes arresting and kaleidoscopic milestones.

Burnham reported in 1979 that the *New York Times* alone carried hundreds of articles on FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement since 1931. *The Times*

however, has usually been quite fair minded in its journalism. *Newsweek* and *Time* have published several accounts. Many other newspapers and magazines also reported periodically on the Movement. There seems to be a Quality of Life about the Movement that continues to bubble up in such a manner as to be newsworthy.

SELECTED MILESTONES IN PEACE MISSION MOVEMENT HISTORY

1882 FATHER DIVINE married Peninnah on June 6. This date is celebrated every year in the Peace Mission.

1931 The famous biased Mineola trial of FATHER DIVINE in Nassau County, New York, and the death of Judge Lewis Smith made world- wide news.

1931 The fundamental tenet of the Peace Mission Movement was established- -which is that GOD is actually Present every moment of every day and night, not only within each person but all around him or her. The most significant motto is "The Spirit of the Consciousness of the Presence of GOD is the Source of all supply and it always has and always will, as it does, satisfy every good desire!"

From **1933** During the Depression, cafeterias and dining rooms in New York and New Jersey operated by Followers of FATHER DIVINE fed gratis untold numbers of people. For many years, nourishing meals for ten and fifteen cents were also provided, so that people could feel, by paying at least that much, that they were not receiving charity, but could take pride in themselves being independent by paying for their meal.

From **1933** Thinking that HE could swing votes their way, many politicians, including Mayor of New York City Fiorello LaGuardia, wooed FATHER DIVINE for support at the polls.

There were many parades for various causes.

FATHER DIVINE'S strong influence on people provoked opposition forces to instigate Court cases against HIM to thwart His Power.

-- The high-powered automobiles attracted attention-- Packards, Cadillacs, a Duesenberg and a Rolls-Royce.

-- The unheard of mixing of people of all complexions was big news.

-- The equally unheard of separation of the sexes was more big news.

From **1934** *The Spoken Word*, later replaced by *The New Day* in **1937**, published all of FATHER DIVINE'S Sermons and Messages, and some of His Interviews and Correspondence as well as some of MOTHER DIVINE'S Sermons and Correspondence, together with news pertaining to Peace Mission activities.

1935 In the thirties, FATHER DIVINE urged people to qualify themselves to pass the literacy test for voting, to be trained for better jobs, and to become eligible to procure citizenship papers. Accordingly, perhaps five thousand people swamped the evening schools in New York City in a short time, giving several hundred unemployed teachers a livelihood.

1935 When followers gave their new, spiritual names upon attempting to register for voting, in New York, there was much opposition until a judge finally ruled that the new names were legal.

From **1935** Hundreds of acres in Ulster County, New York, were purchased by followers, to be known as the "Promised Land."

From **1936** The Righteous Government Convention in New York City produced a political, economic and educational Righteous Government Platform.

1936 Lambert Fairchild, Alderman of New York City, stated that FATHER DIVINE saved the City at least two million dollars annually during the Depression by taking people off the welfare--feeding, clothing and sheltering them, and finding jobs for them, thus enabling them to be independent and also to pay back the welfare and their other delinquent debts.

FATHER DIVINE maintained an Employment Bureau both in Sayville and in New York City which charged no fee either to employer or employee.

1938 Purchase by Followers of the 500 acre Krum Elbow Estate, across the Hudson River from Franklin D. Roosevelt's Hyde Park Mansion, received wide publicity.

Real Estate worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, including a chain of hotels, was purchased by the Followers. The Divine Tracy Hotel is still serving clientele from all over the world. All property is owned by the Followers. FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE do not own anything.

Both the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations offered grants of several thousand dollars each to FATHER DIVINE, but HE refused both grants. Also, a man sent FATHER DIVINE a very large check, but FATHER returned the check to the man. Only bona fide members of the Peace Mission Churches and the Cooperative System may donate for the upkeep of property. No collections or love offerings are ever taken up. FATHER DIVINE is a Free Gift to the world. HE desired to demonstrate that the Gospel can be preached without purse and without scrip. FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE and the coworkers receive no salary.

1939 Judge Harry S. McDevitt and a civic group from Philadelphia visited FATHER DIVINE in New York City to issue an invitation to HIM to move His Headquarters from New York to Philadelphia.

1939 There was held a three-day demonstration of Praise Services and Holy Communion Banquets in a Philadelphia ball park.

1939 FATHER DIVINE proposed to the President that North, Central and South America be united as an International Defense for Peace. If that proposal was not agreeable, FATHER DIVINE proposed that the United States purchase Central and South America so as to make the three Americas one Democracy.

1940 FATHER DIVINE Personally took to Washington, D.C. petitions containing 250,000 signatures urging passage of the Anti-Lynching Bill. 136,000 signatures were added later.

1940-1941 The Six Churches of the Peace Mission Movement were incorporated under State Laws.

1941 Because of the abatement of crime, vice and debauchery in Harlem after FATHER DIVINE established the Peace Mission there, New York City Police made the wish that HE would have a place in every block.

1941 Purchase of the Tarrytown Estate, the former Rudolph Bing property opposite the Jay Gould Estate in Tarrytown, Westchester County, New York broke the color barrier in that area.

From **1941** During World War II, Peace Mission properties served as air-raid shelters and the followers volunteered their services as air-raid wardens, auxiliary firemen, nurses' aides, et cetera. Upon the advice of FATHER DIVINE, followers bought United States War Bonds to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars, the government being named the beneficiary in most cases.

1942 FATHER DIVINE moved His Personal residence and the Peace Mission Movement Headquarters from New York City to Philadelphia.

1942 One of the six hotels, the Brigantine, in New Jersey, was loaned to the United States Coast Guard for the duration of World War II with the stipulation that there would be no discrimination. The Coast Guard offered to pay ten to fifteen thousand dollars rent per annum, which was refused by the followers.

1945 On May 7, FATHER DIVINE wrote Premier Hirohito of Japan, demanding from him an unconditional surrender, stating also that if he failed to surrender, Japan would be annihilated.

1945 On August 5, the Atomic Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, in Japan-- after which FATHER DIVINE declared that a Greater than the Atomic Bomb is here--in other words, Himself.

1946 FATHER DIVINE married His Spotless, Virgin Bride on April 29 in Washington, D.C., for the purpose of propagating Virtue, Honesty, Brotherhood and Democracy, and a New Era began.

1946 Philadelphia, the Cradle of Democracy and City of Brotherly Love, was proclaimed as the Country Seat of the World by FATHER DIVINE where all nations, languages, tongues and peoples will come together.

1948 FATHER DIVINE declared that this year marks the beginning of GOD'S Administration, wherein this whole generation and even this present civilization shall have a New Birth of Freedom under GOD.

1949 Unarmed followers carried over half a million dollars in cash to a bank to pay for the Divine Riviera Hotel, located in Newark, New Jersey.

1950 Because the cold war between Americanism and Communism waxed hot during this period, FATHER DIVINE proposed that Australia, New Zealand and America unite as one great Nation under the United States Declaration of Independence and Constitution, as a means of International Defense for Peace.

1952 A French Gothic Castle in the exclusive Philadelphia suburban Main Line section of Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, was purchased, known as the Woodmont Estate.

1953 The Woodmont Estate in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, was dedicated as the Mount of the House of the LORD from which GOD'S Moral Law shall go forth.

1954 FATHER DIVINE articulated His International Modest Code which HE had established. This Code prohibits smoking, drinking, profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, association between the sexes, and the receiving of tips, gifts and bribes. This Code became the Policy of the chain of Divine Hotels. It is espoused as a sound basis for effecting world Peace.

1965 On September 10, FATHER DIVINE at Woodmont, Willed to lay His Body down.

1968 The Shrine to Life was dedicated at Woodmont in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania.

1973 The Senate of the Pennsylvania State Legislature presented a plaque to FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE stating that FATHER DIVINE, a world leader over the past century, has set an eminent example of morality and good citizenship as an exponent of the Christian Faith. HE has an abiding faith and belief in the United States Constitution and in the United States Flag, and has promoted the cause of individual independence, and a free universal education. FATHER DIVINE states that "a man is a man--not a so-called color, creed or race."

1977 His Honor, Milton J. Shapp, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, presented MOTHER DIVINE with a citation bearing the date December 19, 1977, on the occasion of Her becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States of America in ceremonies conducted at Valley Forge National Park. The Governor stated that the

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has known MOTHER DIVINE as a dedicated and exemplary citizen for many years, and that even before becoming naturalized, SHE, in spirit and purpose, has truly been a Citizen of our Country and great Nation. On this date, on which the Federal Government formally recognized Valley Forge in Pennsylvania as a National Park, just so did MOTHER DIVINE become a National Citizen.

1979 The Home at 72 Macon Avenue in Sayville, New York, was officially recognized as a Historic Landmark.

1982 The Philadelphia City Council passed a resolution commending the Peace Mission Movement for fifty years of dedication and service to GOD and the community.

1982 Channel 6, WPVI, Philadelphia, broadcast a documentary on the Peace Mission Movement, Vernon Odom narrating.

1982 Palace Mission Incorporated, published a book written by MOTHER DIVINE entitled *The Peace Mission Movement*. It is a brief overview of what the Movement is, what it stands for, and what it does. Originally published by A.D.F.D. Publications, this book now may be read online at: www.libertynet.org/fdipmm/mdbook/mdbook1.html.

1982 The entry for "FATHER DIVINE" under the spurious name of G----- B---- in the catalog of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., was corrected. Material is now listed only under "FATHER DIVINE."

1984 The "Restore Philadelphia, Incorporated" Society presented the John McArthur Award to the FATHER DIVINE Peace Mission Movement for maintaining historic buildings

in their original state. Efforts to preserve these structures have been recognized also by the Victorian Society, whose members have toured some of the buildings several times.

1985 His Honor, W. Wilson Goode, Mayor of Philadelphia, which FATHER DIVINE has made The Country Seat of the World, and Mrs. Goode, came to Woodmont, The Mount of the House of the LORD, on April 28, the day before the Celebration of the 39th Anniversary of the Marriage began. They spent several relaxing hours with FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE in the Manor House and in the Shrine to Life. On September 11, the Mayor again visited the Woodmont Estate, this time to partake of the Holy Communion Banquet which was part of the Celebration of Peace Mission "Holy Days" on the Anniversary of FATHER DIVINE'S Sacrifice in 1965.

1994 The Victorian Society in America presented its Historic Preservation Award for the year to Woodmont in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, on May 20, for its preservation by Palace Mission Church since 1952.

1994 The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the William Penn Foundation sponsored the erection of a Marker at the Divine Lorraine Hotel, in Philadelphia, commending FATHER DIVINE for providing life's necessities at nominal prices, and for His Civil Rights and Economics Programs.

1994 Eight sisters and four brothers of the Peace Mission visited the United Society of Shakers at Sabbathday Lake in Poland Spring, Maine, in June. In October, four Shakers, two brothers and two sisters visited the Peace Mission.

1996 The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Marriage of FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE, that took place on April 29, 1946 in Washington, D. C., was duly celebrated on April 29. To accent this glorious Event, an 80 page Fiftieth Anniversary Issue of *The New Day* was published.

1996 FATHER DIVINE'S Peace Mission Movement went on the Internet's World Wide Web on December 2, where untold numbers of people will be able to learn about the Movement at www.libertynet.org/fdipmm or peacemission.info.

1998 The Committee of the National Park Service Advisory Board heard the Nomination of Woodmont for designation as a National Historic Landmark in Washington D. C. MOTHER DIVINE and representatives of Palace Mission Church were present. It was officially authorized on August 5.

2000 The Board of Commissioners of Lower Merion Township in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, presented MOTHER DIVINE with the Official Lower Merion Centennial Plaque and Wall Hanging on August 2, for the preservation of the Woodmont Estate.

2001 With three raps of her gavel on September 6 at City Hall, President Anna C. Verna convened the Opening Fall Session of the Philadelphia City Council, and said, "To give our Invocation this morning, the Chair welcomes MOTHER DIVINE Who is here today as my guest." MOTHER DIVINE stepped forward to say, "Let us all bow our heads in submission to GOD'S Will, His Power, Dominion and Authority. ...Almighty GOD, ...we humbly and with all sincerity, ask YOU this day, this moment, to overshadow

and embrace each member of Philadelphia's Governing Body... that this Council, responsible for the General Welfare of the people of Philadelphia and its future generations, be worthy of their calling. We humbly ask YOU to Rule and Reign on their minds. Let them move in Your Spirit!"

2003 Under construction for several months, The Welcome Center at Woodmont has two large rooms, the dining Room and the Orientation Room, plus a kitchen and rest rooms. It was dedicated on April 6.

2003 The AIA Philadelphia is a Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Its Historic Preservation Committee presented the 2003 Henry Jonas Magaziner Award to MOTHER DIVINE on May 15, for Her protection and care of many significant, historic buildings in the Philadelphia area... and above all, for a record of enlightened architectural stewardship that has extended over half a century.

In this chapter and the two preceding, the picture of FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement was seen to depict a great deal of activity, physically, mentally and spiritually. For the reader who is rediscovering FATHER DIVINE after a period during which thoughts about HIM lay dormant, these chapters will probably fill in gaps that the seeker finds in his or her recollections with tales which will gladden the heart.

For the reader who is just now discovering FATHER DIVINE, as he or she reads this book, *Rediscovering GOD*, these chapters will be an exhilarating revelation as to the intense effort expended by FATHER DIVINE, as well as by

His followers, in the endeavor to make the world a better place in which to live--both for themselves and for their neighbors all over the world.

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1. The New Day, August 24, 1974, 18
 2. 18-19
 3. 17-18
 4. 18
 5. 19
 6. Loc. cit.
 7. 19-20
 8. 20

CHAPTER XII

PEACEFUL PARADISE OF THE PACIFIC

Charles LeWarne, *"Father Divine's 'Peaceful Paradise of the Pacific'"*
Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Seattle;
University of Washington, January, 1984, Volume 75, 2-12.

FATHER DIVINE'S Ecumenism

A family of theatrical people visited FATHER DIVINE in the early Sayville days and were very much taken with His Teachings. The seed that was implanted in their souls was taken to their home in Australia where it took root among the followers there.

West of the Atlantic, the momentum of FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings caused them to leap from New York across the continent to California, the hothouse where New Thought doctrines flourish, and in the process, seeds were dropped all over the United States without regard to the station or complexion of the people among whom the seeds fell. In Canada, the soil is no less fertile, especially in far west British Columbia, not far from Seattle where other seeds took root. Joint meetings were sometimes arranged between Vancouver and Seattle followers.

The Name of FATHER DIVINE and His Peace Mission Movement, in the minds of many people, probably is

associated most often with slums, ghettos and Harlem in urban northeastern United States. The Movement is thought of frequently in terms of masses of people being fed, and joining together in noisy, rhythmic songs of praise and devotion to GOD, as well as in venting religious emotion through arm waving, foot stomping and individualistic dancing. Some may have known the Movement well enough to remember also the rural settlement in the "Promised Land" of Ulster County in northern New York State, with Afro-Americans in the majority.

But such a remembrance is only a segment of the picture. As pointed out above, FATHER DIVINE'S Way of Life is attractive to and embraced by people in other parts of the globe. It is not nationalities, or only certain economic, social or educational strata, or certain locations, lands or climes.

In some localities, dark-complexioned faces outnumber their lighter counterparts. Whereas in other communities, the opposite ratio prevails. In Switzerland or Australia, for instance, followers there are much pleased when someone in the dark expression visits them so they are enabled to "Enact the Bill," i.e. act out the Bill of Rights (integrate), at least for the duration of the visit. Among the non-followers in the world who admire FATHER DIVINE, and those who, according to Fauset, are almost followers without being aware of it, there may possibly be more of the light expression. Many followers of every complexion had the benefit of only very rudimentary education, but others are well-educated, professionally skilled--drawn to the

Movement in large part out of metaphysical searchings rather than desperate material needs.

Vendovi Island

Then there was FATHER DIVINE'S "Peaceful Paradise of the Pacific," Vendovi Island, scarcely a dot on the map, located just off mainland Washington State, west of Bellingham. *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, published by the University of Washington, presented an extended treatise on Vendovi by Charles LeWarne, who has written extensively on the Pacific Northwest region, as well as a textbook on the history of Washington State.

In this essay, LeWarne gives a graphic account of the everyday life of the followers who inhabited the island for several years. In the essay, he also touches here and there on the development of the Peace Mission Movement. He includes some of the nonsense that has marred other journalistic efforts, but in the main has treated the Movement appreciatively as though it is a respectable endeavor and as though FATHER DIVINE wrought a good work in the land. However, LeWarne could not refrain from repeating some of the unfounded, unproven, slurring innuendos that have been made about FATHER DIVINE'S Character.

Here is the first paragraph of his article. Perhaps it is fitting that FATHER DIVINE'S Name was established on the antipodes of the continent--Sayville in the east and 3000 miles to the west, there was Vendovi, both on the water amid large scale fishing: *"Fishermen and other boaters plying the western San Juan Islands of Washington State on a summer evening grew accustomed to hearing hymns just off the northern shore of Vendovi Island. By daylight, they*

might have noticed a cove with a cluster of frame buildings hidden amongst trees; one roof bore the word "Peace," and the slogan "It is Wonderful!" was spelled out in the white clamshells on the beach. For several years in the 1930s the island held a Mission of one of the more notable Christian sects of the mid-20th century, The Peace Mission Movement, headed by [...] evangelist Major J. (Father) Divine." ²

Growth of Vendovi

According to LeWarne, two followers of FATHER DIVINE, Henry Joerns and Ross Humble, obtained a permit for the use of Vendovi as a Peace Mission extension in the early thirties. By 1930, New Thought groups had sprung up on the Pacific coast. The dynamic, Canadian-born evangelist, Aimee Semple McPherson, had established her 5000-seat Angelus Temple in Los Angeles in 1923. In this climate, there were many lesser known practitioners of the new Gospel of JESUS CHRIST on the west coast, one of whom was Henry Joerns, of the Absolute Science Center, who held classes and sermonized on metaphysics.

He published a newspaper, *Metaphysical News*, which at that time was a forum for the new, higher way of thinking. It listed over forty Truth Centers on the coast, such as Divine Science, Theosophy, Rosicrucianism and Unity. The paper was concerned with imbuing its readers with the "Spirit." In 1931, the paper reported on FATHER DIVINE for the first time. The next year, Joerns made a pilgrimage to Sayville and returned filled with ecstasy. In 1933, his paper was renamed *The Light* and henceforth published nothing but news of the Peace Mission and FATHER DIVINE'S Messages.

Ross Humble was another truth practitioner. After coming from Canada, he had religious training, possibly at McPherson's Angelus Temple and possibly with an early associate of Mary Baker Eddy as well. Humble taught classes and lectured in the New Thought vein in the west coast cities, eventually locating in the Everett, Bellingham and Seattle area. He wrote a column in the *Metaphysical News*, entitled "The High Watch."

Probably Henry Joerns and Ross Humble never issued a formal statement as to why the Vendovi Mission was established. After both had made personal contacts with FATHER DIVINE during their visits to the Missions in the east however, there is no doubt that they had visions of a similar cooperative community being developed on Vendovi, and they with others, probably hoped to spread Peace Mission Teachings across the United States as they criss-crossed the land on their transcontinental pilgrimages back and forth to the New York Headquarters.

Humble and Joerns were well-grounded in New Thought metaphysics. They knew the Law of the Spirit and had worked the Law in their lives. Hence, they entered into the Vendovi Island enterprise with the inner assurance that it would thrive. Some of the metaphysical practitioners talked about a Utopia-like community, but Humble and Joerns not only talked about what should be done to found such a community, they did it! They used Vendovi as a means of practicing FATHER DIVINE'S Precepts and of demonstrating the actual Ever- and Omni-Presence of GOD. They made FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings work and produced the positive results despite being 3000 miles from His Personal Body. They were with their FATHER, dwelling "in

the secret place of the most High." (Psalms 91:1), undisturbed by the push and pull of modern living.

The sojourn on Vendovi Island was a very pleasant one, as noted below. The little settlement was a model of communal living in the mode of FATHER DIVINE'S America where Peace, Joy and Happiness reigned. The faithful residents who maintained the Mission and took care of the buildings the year around were kept together in unity and harmony for several years. But the attraction of being close to the Personal Body of FATHER DIVINE gradually drew them away and the island paradise eventually became the property of others and turned to other uses. Vendovi thus did not become a permanent Mission, but it served beautifully as a retreat for followers and others who came for visits or for periods of personal renewal. The west coast however, was a Peace Mission stronghold second only to the east.

Life on the Island

Vendovi Island, which was usually called "Vendovia" by the followers, contained 220 acres of lush, green vegetation and orange brown rock. There were two hills on the island, the eastern hill rising to over 300 feet. There were cedars and firs with a thick underbrush of Oregon grape, berry vines and salal, as well as wild flowers, as reported by LeWarne. Clams and other sea life were found on the rocky beaches. At the northwest extremity of the island, there was a cove protected from all but the worst storms. Here was the main building as well as several other structures, none large.

"Life on the island required a high degree of self-sufficiency. Chores were shared. Each person knew what

had to be done, and all participated, as if in an agreeable family. An attitude of good will and an atmosphere of mutual help prevailed. ...Everyone carried water from the spring in buckets for use in cooking, drinking, and washing, although some bathing was done in the salt water of the cove. Firewood was cut, carried, and stacked by both men and women. Residents maintained paths and walkways between buildings, and cut a few trails across the island. They tried to beautify the surroundings of the cabins. ...Members raised chickens, kept several goats, dug clams and fished. The wild rabbits that thrived on the island furnished meat and skins, which were tanned and sewn into blankets." (8)

A garden rich in humus provided fresh vegetables and strawberries. Heating was by wood stove. There was no electricity and water was hand drawn from a nearby spring; *"Clearly, chores took much time, but hiking and relaxing were also components of life on Vendovi. Specific periods were set aside to read the Messages of Father Divine and other religious materials." (9)* LeWarne states, *"For the small contingent who lived permanently on Vendovi, life centered on thoughts of Peace, Prayer, and daily subsistence." (8)*

They did no negative talking and endeavored to be truthful in thought, deed and action. They stressed positive thoughts and comments. As a result of this virtuous living, they were a *"most free and happy group and also healthy and lacked for nothing."* Life of the Vendovi settlers is somewhat reminiscent of the Shakers--the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming--who, beginning in 1787, established substantial, rural societies from Maine to

Kentucky to Indiana, some of which persist into modern times.

Stimulating Activity on Vendovi

It would seem that such a small, removed province would offer only an austere existence to the residents, but from his research, LeWarne discovered that Vendovi Island offered an appealing, absorbing life to those whose bent allowed them to thrive in such a habitat: *"Despite geographic isolation, Vendovi was no cloistered mission. Residents maintained frequent contact with others in the Peace Mission Movement and with families and friends. The Osage, a mail boat that served the San Juans [Islands], stopped on call for mail or passengers. Members occasionally left Vendovi for short trips to nearby towns, often visiting Bellingham..."*(10)

The residents did not lack for company, especially during warm weather. Vendovi was something of a modest resort which was very different: *"Visitors came each summer from neighboring Peace Mission centers. Many found their visit very moving. One woman who was part of a delegation from Seattle for example, spent a single summer day that she remembered clearly almost five decades later. By bus and then by boat, she and her companions had traveled to the island, where they enjoyed meals, religious services, prayers, testimonials, and walks in the woods and along the beach. It was much like a present-day religious retreat in surroundings of natural beauty, an 'uplifting, wholesome, spiritual atmosphere' among fellow believers."* (10) *LaWarne describes the ambience: "To the religious folk who came ashore, the island exuded Peace amidst the glories of nature. They sensed a oneness with GOD, a spiritual*

magnetism that affected believers and visitors alike. Indians ...had long attributed healing powers to the rocks and water. A red pigment found on the island was said to have been used by nearby Indian tribes as a healing salve." (7)

It can be seen that the island was popular among high-minded folk. They came in such numbers as to strain the accommodations: *"Weekend excursions from such nearby cities as Everett, Seattle, Bellingham, Vancouver and Victoria were common during summer months. Guests brought a few personal articles, but the mission provided the essentials. Dormitories were often full. Sometimes the Banquet overflowed the dining room and tables were set up outside in good weather. Visitors could hike trails, stroll the beaches, gather clams, and study sea creatures, or swim in the cold and clear water of the cove. Most important, there was time for meditation and for soaking up the peaceful beauty of the island. Occasional visitors came from farther afield. Several times Humble arranged for busloads of the faithful to come north from Los Angeles..." (10)*

After one group had come from New York to Vendovi Island, an account of it in *The Spoken Word*, which LeWarne quotes, revealed the strong, spiritual feelings of the participants: *"Peace! Here we are at last, blessed to enjoy the Peace of this sweet 'Peaceful Paradise.' The only touch of mainland being an occasional letter and those precious words of Father's Message printed in The Spoken Word, which we look forward to. ...Here there can never be but 'One.' When two or more, apparently, get on the ferry boat and land here, each individual seems to melt and lose an individual consciousness of being separate and apart, and all are welded together in One. The ordinary things*

that one considers even slightly important are never even thought of here. Everything seems to fade into insignificance except the Loving Presence of Sweet Father. We hear Him speak in the breeze as it whistles or murmurs through the trees--we hear Him in the merry toss of white-capped waves on the rocks and in the soft swish-swish of a rising tide on the sandy beach. We hear His voice in the song of birds as they tell us that Spring is budding out." (10-11)

LeWarne quotes the article further after a hilltop climb and a stroll took the visitors to yet other picturesque spots. The visitors said that they moved *"...along mossy cliffs where we finally had to dig in our toes and go carefully, then through a woodsy place, then up a high hill to our destination."* At a resting place they could at last *"enjoy the beauty of trees silhouetted against calm waters and blue skies."* (11)

Vendovi was acknowledged as truly a nirvana-like harborage for those identified and associated with the Peace Mission Movement and the Work of FATHER DIVINE.

Resurrection!

In his essay, LeWarne relates this experience. A young woman living in Oakland, California, had been afflicted from childhood with frequent illness, including occasional unconsciousness and loss of sight. After much fruitless search for cure, at length she wrote to FATHER DIVINE Who assured her that through her faith she would be healed. Presently she *"...suffered an attack and faced imminent death. She later recalled looking down in her delirium upon her own inert body as friends and family hovered around.*

An unfamiliar face appeared to comfort her and she revived. Several days later the family attended a prayer meeting led by Ross Humble. For the first time they saw a photograph of Father Divine, whom the daughter immediately recognized as the man who had returned her from death. ...Drawing from her experience, she adopted a new name, "Resurrection," commonly shortened to "Rezy." She remained on the island for over two years and in the Peace Mission movement for 30 more." (8)

Between January and April of 1935, Miss Resurrection and another sister, Miss Buddy, were alone on Vendovi, the others having business elsewhere: *"Alone, the two young women nevertheless felt safe in the care of GOD and were not frightened despite winter storms and unexpected visitors that the weather sometimes brought to their shore. ...Such experiences strengthened the faith of the two women, who knew that even in cold and isolation the LORD would look after them." (9)*

What FATHER DIVINE Offered

In Charles LeWarne's narrative, he gives some insights into the Teachings of FATHER DIVINE. He analyses FATHER DIVINE'S religious Principles thus: *"His emotional religion seemed to mix aspects of old-fashioned fundamentalism, spiritualism, Christian Science, and New Thought views, and some homespun sociology. For many years the church thus endured and grew, one among many. Yet Father Divine, as his name emerged, possessed a special magnetism that drew followers into a close personal bond." (3)*

"Positive thinking and faith healing were essential. ...He preached that death would not come to true believers; if

one had faith strong enough, life was everlasting. The Kingdom of GOD was everywhere." (4)

LeWarne, as with other investigators over the years, though he never saw FATHER DIVINE, was impressed and perhaps a little overwhelmed by FATHER DIVINE'S Personal dynamism: *"Father's personal presence exuded Peace and Harmony that caused many to accept Him as GOD incarnate. (3) Especially in those early years, religious cohesion, such as it was, depended entirely upon the diffuse, emotional, and seemingly spontaneous deliverances of Father Divine."* (4-5)

Mr. LeWarne summarizes his review in the last paragraph as though Vendovi was a new departure among Peace Mission Movement communities, but one which extended a serene, interim haven to those seeking a place in which to relax and reconsider what their purpose in life should be: *"the Vendovi Mission was a rare, rural exception in an essentially urban, religious movement. As such it offered an idyllic, somewhat primitive respite amongst quiet, peaceful and natural surroundings, an experience much different from that of most eastern followers. Though hardly unusual in a nature-oriented American religious tradition that dates back at least to the transcendental teachings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the island retreat was at variance with the normal conditions of the movement it represented. Yet, for those who were a part of it, Father Divine's Peaceful Paradise of the Pacific afforded a life-giving experience in their search for GOD and religious meaning."* (12)

CHAPTER XIII

"I WILL NEVER FORGET HIM"

Tributes to FATHER DIVINE

"The World Has An Invitation To Come!" (The world came--and is coming still.) In so saying, FATHER DIVINE flung wide the doors of His Peace Mission Movement Churches and Extensions. In so saying, HE flung wide also the door to His Heart. HE welcomed everyone to His Holy Communion Banquet Table and to His other Church Services--critics as well as friends.

Many of these people spoke the thoughts of their hearts concerning FATHER DIVINE and what HE is doing for Humanity. They perceived that here is a Benefactor of the first order Who gave His all in His efforts to make things better for people. HE held back nothing.

The comments of these guests and visitors were set down verbatim by FATHER DIVINE'S secretaries and published in *The New Day*. They form a body of testimony that is as varied as flowers and as qualified as encyclopedias. They are an eloquent extension to the thoughts of the authors reviewed in this book, *Rediscovering GOD*.

The Honorable John Morgan Davis, then Lieutenant-Governor of Pennsylvania, on November 30, 1961, spoke at

the Circle Mission Church of Philadelphia: *"I was very much heartened today as I broke bread with your great leader.... I have been thrilled by FATHER DIVINE'S belief that we must accept our responsibilities in life. I feel that I have been privileged in a rare manner today, both in meeting your great Spiritual Leader and in going forward with the same belief that you have--that Peace can only come through GOD."*¹

Remarks of Attorney Lawrence H. Eldredge at Woodmont in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, on September 14, 1968: *"I am not one of your followers, but to me this has been a deeply moving experience this afternoon. If we could just send through the streets of Philadelphia . . . the things that have been said here today that you believe in, and not only believe in, but actually live, Mayor Tate might solve some of his... problems...."*

*"People don't believe, at least they don't practice the things you teach. If they would just practice the Sermon on the Mount and the things you teach, we wouldn't have any problems. . . . We must try to get more people to believe in the Spirit that's here today."*²

Attorney Eldredge is listed in *Who's Who in American Law* as Professor of Law, University of Pennsylvania, 1938 to 1944, Attorney-General of Pennsylvania, 1948- 1949, Professor Emeritus, University of California Hastings College of Law. His book, *Law of Defamation*, was published in 1978.

Reverend Leon H. Sullivan, Pastor of Zion Church in Philadelphia, founder of Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), member of the Board of Directors of General

Motors Corporation, spoke at Woodmont in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, September 11, 1968: *"I want all of you to know how moved I have been and how moved I am now. It is truly wonderful! And to see how the Spirit of FATHER yet abounds in our midst and in the world!...*

"One of the first wonderful and glorious experiences I had was when I had the great privilege and honor of being in the Presence of FATHER.... On many, many occasions, whenever I was faced with problems of perplexity ... I would seek an appointment and counsel with FATHER.

"I will never forget Him! HE will always be with me like HE is with you.... Wherever I go, the Spirit of FATHER is in and with me.... If any success comes to my work... FATHER is in that success too."³

Dr. Joseph Wagner, Cardiologist at Bryn Mawr Hospital in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and Past President of the Heart Association of Southeastern Division of Pennsylvania, who attended FATHER DIVINE, spoke at the Dedication of the Shrine to Life at Woodmont on September 11, 1968: *"Thank FATHER and MOTHER also for the opportunity of having known FATHER DIVINE. I was most impressed with the effect which HE had on so many, and ... I shared that effect to a large extent. [...]*

"I quickly came to know the uniqueness of His Love. ...The uniqueness of His Love was also apparent in the devotion and love... of all those who were so close to Him. ...This love and devotion for FATHER DIVINE was not limited to a few but that it was broad and had spread out throughout the length and breadth of the world. Now one isn't [often] given in their lifetime to meet such a Person

Who can so profoundly affect so many people. I quickly acquired a great affection for Him. [...]

"I saw also something else, and that was the Power of His Love, His care and concern, His care and concern over small things as well as big things as they affected His followers, and by reason of His Love, He had the Power to help. ...HE gave all HE had--His Life--for His followers.

"And now I hope and pray that this Shrine, this Temple, will be a symbol to not only all of you but to all people for all time, of the Peace and Strength of Love, which we all had an opportunity to witness in the Life of FATHER DIVINE." ⁴

At the Unity Mission Church in Philadelphia, the late Archbishop William Henry Francis of the Roman Catholic Church of Christ on the Mount, Woodstock, New York, remarked on April 29, 1975: *"I can never put into cold English the love and affection I have for all of you. You've helped me in my life. You see I knew FATHER way back in 1926-- something like that--and HE has been the Source of inspiration. Now I'm a young man of ninety-one. ...I had to come here, it was not duty--it was love, because my heart is filled with love for all of you people. You've been the source of inspiration to my whole life, so that it's not only what you do, it's what you've done to others."* ⁵

Mr. Makoto Oshima, Professor of Linguistics in Tokyo, Japan, lived at the Divine Tracy Hotel while he was attending graduate school. On September 14, 1980, he spoke at Woodmont, thanking FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE for everything-- the singing, the food, and the Peace and Love: *"I know the United States of America is a great country. I know also that there are many problems*

including racial problems, and I know there are beautiful phrases but no actions. But I have been very much impressed while I was staying at the Divine Tracy Hotel that there is very, very beautiful harmony between beautiful phrases, and beautiful actions. Really it was a most surprising thing. Thank you very much for my enjoyment at the Divine Tracy Hotel." ⁶

Remarks of the Honorable Phyllis Beck, Judge of Superior Court of Pennsylvania, formerly Vice-Dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, at Woodmont, November 7, 1981: *"My message is one of great thanks and gratitude. I have shared this sumptuous, beautiful, gracious meal with such wonderful company. I have been presented with the message of life, the message I believe in, which is Love and Virtue and GOD and Goodness. But it wasn't just the message I was presented with, it was the way it was presented. This is probably one of the most unique evenings of my life, and for that I thank you all."* ⁷

A prominent Philadelphia attorney, J. Austin Norris, formerly member of the Board of Revision of Taxes in Philadelphia and Editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, addressed the congregation at the Unity Mission Church in Philadelphia on April 29, 1950. In speaking of the change of attitude toward FATHER DIVINE, he queried, *"What has that change of attitude been due to? HE [FATHER DIVINE] has earned it. HE has earned it by the most exemplary Work that any personality has brought to this City or to this country. [...]*

"I know that there are a number of students who are studying like I have been and like a hundred of others have been who have commonly accepted the accommodations

of FATHER DIVINE, and if it was not for that, they could not remain in school."

The following year, on April 30, 1951, during the Marriage Anniversary Celebration at the Unity Mission Church, Attorney Norris commented on the Marriage between FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE and on the Position of MOTHER DIVINE: *"I am reminded that this is one of the most significant Marriages of all times-- and there have been a number of important marriages in history-- marriages that have had their impact in time and on all times."*

Mr. Norris recounted illustrious marriages of the past-- Jupiter and Juno in Greek mythology, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in biblical times, Louis the Fourteenth, the Sun King, and his Spanish cousin, Marie Theresa, and his second wife, Francois d'Aubigne, known as Madame de Maintenon, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Wally Simpson and the Duke of Windsor, Crown Prince of England. He continued: *"But of those marriages, none have had more Religious effect than this Marriage of FATHER DIVINE and MOTHER DIVINE."*

With reference to MOTHER DIVINE, Mr. Norris stated, *"I don't know anyone who has the Grace, I don't know one who has the unspoiled Virtue, I don't know anyone who has tolerance and the humanity ... that MOTHER DIVINE has exhibited. ...I have heard a lot of talk of the First Lady, the first lady of Philadelphia, the first lady of Pennsylvania, the first lady of these United States. ... Well, I have a Lady that I consider the First Lady of the World [MOTHER DIVINE]!"*⁸

A famous man and wife in the medical field have added their accolades. Dr. Katherine Boucot Sturgis has a lengthy

list of accomplishments to her credit besides being Emeritus Professor of Preventive Medicine at the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia. On August 31, 1961, she said at Woodmont, *"It's a great joy and a revelation to be with you today.... You have found the secret, the real secret of joy and freedom, which is self-discipline. The happiness in your faces and the wonderful quality of your singing bears testimony to the fact that you are living Christianity, something which we are in dire need of today. ...I want to tell you how much we admire you and what a great honor it is to have been with you."*⁹

Dr. Samuel Sturgis also has been honored often, not only in this country, but by the King of Sweden, the Queen of Holland and others, for his brilliant work in the medical field. He stated at Woodmont on the same day, *"When I entered the grounds, of course the beauty was the first thing that struck my mind... but that was only a momentary affair.... I did not drive but a short distance in the grounds before I felt something. That something is what has been expressed here in many ways--Peace! ...'Then following that, all of the integrity and charm and dignity and happiness and willingness and service ...and finally to have had the pleasure and the privilege of MOTHER DIVINE'S company. ...But the thing that has impressed me secondly--your patriotism! That is my great thought in life in America. ...GOD help you! Thank you!"*¹⁰

Mr. Bernard Kramer (Uncle Ben), at that time owner and publisher of the *Main Line Chronicle* in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, spoke at Woodmont on September 10, 1967 concerning FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE and the members of the Movement in part, *"They achieve something that the*

*churches fail to succeed in, in any large measure, and that is, they make Christians out of people... They also have solved this business of integration, and it's very sincere, it's not forced, it's not put on, it's natural! And another reason why I admire this place so much... is that it makes good Americans out of people."*¹¹

Mr. Kramer wrote an editorial which appeared in his paper on September 21, 1977, excerpts of which follow. *"Those who visit Woodmont are impressed with the beauty of the open space so lovingly preserved. They admire even more the moral character of the happy followers...The people are patriotic Americans to whom the American Flag symbolizes the hope of the world. They revere the Constitution and our American traditions."*

"Brotherhood is not a pious, utopian goal among the followers. It is an actuality. They have no consciousness of ethnic differences. [...]"

*"Where conventional churches have failed to make practicing Christians of their communicants and where this great nation has failed to gain sound social and economic goals for its citizens, FATHER DIVINE has succeeded."*¹²

The Honorable W. Wilson Goode, Mayor of Philadelphia, was a guest at Woodmont on September 11, 1985, during the annual Celebration of the Anniversary of the Dedication of Woodmont. In his remarks, he alluded to Philadelphia being declared by FATHER DIVINE to be the Country Seat of the World. The Mayor speaks as follows: *"Peace, FATHER; Peace, MOTHER; Peace, Everyone. Each time I come, there is always a very special feeling, a very special kind of fellowship, and I feel very enriched because of the experience. I feel a closeness here, I feel a warmth here, I*

feel a sense of community here, and I feel at home here. My wife and I are pleased that you invited us here to join with You in this Special Celebration at this very special place dedicated to GOD....

"I am pleased to be the Mayor of the Country Seat of the World. Philadelphia of course, is a very special place and it holds a very unique place in our history. It is the Birthplace of this Nation, and therefore, if for no other reason than that, has earned its place as the Country Seat of the World. But beyond that, it is the City of Brotherly Love, it is the City where all people can come and feel as one..."¹³

These are but a minuscule sampling of the constant crescendo of tribute that has been directed toward FATHER DIVINE since the 1930s. Scores of other eminent people have spoken their praise of His Ministry. In addition to the eminent, the man in the street--thousands of him--have fervently thanked FATHER DIVINE, inwardly and/or openly, for real, tangible, hands-on help in their days of adversity.

No less a person than General Dwight Eisenhower added his encomium to the crescendo of tribute. Upon his triumphant return to the United States from the European Theatre of War to accept the Republican Presidential Nomination, as reported in the *New York Times* of June 8, 1952, against the warnings of his political advisers, he boldly defended FATHER DIVINE: *"I have been bombarded with a lot of advice about the very great disadvantage there would be for me if I should ever start talking about 'Peace, it is wonderful!' So... I am going to talk for a moment about 'Peace, it is wonderful'--borrowing a phrase from the*

*Reverend Major J. (Father) Divine. ...I cannot conceive in this day and time of anything that is more important to any American citizen than the question of the secure Peace in the world. ...If ever I can get a new idea of developing and reaching the objective of 'Peace, it is wonderful,' I shall do it and without apology. ...I am quite fed up with people making fun of Peace."*¹⁴

Making this harmonious expression toward FATHER DIVINE did by no means work to a disadvantage for the General. It had the opposite effect. He was elected President of the United States in 1952 in a landslide victory.

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1. The New Day, June 3, 1971, 17
 2. October 19, 1968, 28
 3. September 28, 1968, 16
 4. September 21, 1968, 4
 5. May 24, 1975, 13
 6. October 18, 1980, 18
 7. December 12, 1981, 18
 8. May 5, 1951, 20
 9. September 20, 1969, 9
 10. loc. cit.
 11. October 7, 1967, 24
 12. October 1, 1977, 19
 13. September 28, 1985, 6-7
 14. November 22, 1952, 3

CHAPTER XIV

A WORLD SET APART

MRS. M. J. DIVINE, better known as MOTHER DIVINE,
The Peace Mission Movement,
Philadelphia: A D F D Publications, 1982.

Eight years after the Thirteen Colonies divested themselves of the heavy hands belonging to King George III, a county was born in Pennsylvania. On September 10, 1784, Montgomery County was established as a political entity.

Also on September 10, but in 1965, at the Mount of the House of the LORD in Montgomery County, in Pennsylvania, there was another divestiture, but of a different category. On that date, FATHER DIVINE willed to lay down His Physical Body--that HE might not be thought of as being located in and confined to a certain Personal Body, but that HE might dwell more actively in the bodies of many people throughout the world.

Thus, perhaps there is a supranatural affinity between Montgomery County and the Peace Mission Movement inasmuch as September 10 was the date of the beginning for the former and the date of a new departure and the beginning of a new outlook and projection for the latter.

In 1884, there was published a full scope, 1200-page history of Montgomery County, which chronicled the first hundred years of the County. The Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies published a similar history in 1984, spanning the second hundred years of the existence of the County. It is a two-volume, 1700-page work.

In it, activities of the several religious bodies flourishing in Montgomery County during the second hundred years were reported. Because the history would not be complete without coverage of the Ministry of FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement, the editor prevailed upon MOTHER DIVINE to write concerning that Ministry.

For anyone looking for a thumbnail sketch of the Peace Mission Movement, this report is an excellent four-page overview of the Movement in capsule form. It will be found on pages 1190 to 1194 of Volume Two. (*Montgomery County--The Second Hundred Years*. Two Volumes, Norristown, Pennsylvania, Montgomery County Federation of Historical Societies, 1983, Jean Barth Toll, Michael J. Schwager, Editors).

Out of the account that MRS. M. J. DIVINE, better known as MOTHER DIVINE, provided, grew a gem--a 191-page book entitled *The Peace Mission Movement*. It is the only source of authentic information about FATHER DIVINE available for purchase by the public, and is therefore the only book that is approved and endorsed by the six Churches of the Peace Mission Movement.

This is a handsome book--in appearance as well as in content. Between its covers, MOTHER DIVINE, in Her direct,

unaffected, lucid style, sets forth Her Personal Conviction, knowledge and understanding of the Peace Mission Movement. Section One contains a brief account of the Work and Ministry of FATHER DIVINE as well as the activities carried on by His Movement. The account in Section One serves as a base from which excursions into the topics treated in Section Two may be begun. After digesting Section One, the reader will easily be able to weave these topics into the fabric of the Peace Mission Movement. These topics give coverage to certain viewpoints, concepts, situations, proposals and events in the ongoing of the Movement which have provoked endless debate without clear comprehension of factors involved. Reading this book is comparable to experiencing refreshing zephyrs after leaving the stuffy atmosphere of a hoary, brassbound oligarchy.

In the preceding chapters of the present book, *Rediscovering GOD*, the whole thrust has been to present comments on the Work of FATHER DIVINE written by non-followers. It is to be expected that comments by followers and friends of FATHER DIVINE are biased in His favor, and hence, probably not to be considered by the non-follower's world as an impartial evaluation. Therefore it was deemed expedient to highlight the writings of non-followers in the belief that it is valuable and enlightening for the reading public to be aware of what has been said about FATHER DIVINE by an unprepossessed jury.

In this chapter however, the opinion of FATHER DIVINE'S most eager partisan, MOTHER DIVINE--the Spotless, Virgin Bride--is given, relative to much talked about aspects of the Peace Mission Movement as discussed

in Her book, several of which will be discussed below. The reader would be intrigued by a comparison of MOTHER DIVINE'S book with books written by non-followers. One of the aspects concerns followers acclaiming FATHER DIVINE as GOD.

Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omniscient

The core fact of Life that a person may possess is that GOD IS! From this base and with this knowledge, the person is equipped to conquer worlds. This is the Aladdin's lamp which when rubbed, will open doors to endless opportunity. MOTHER DIVINE writes that GOD is creative and expressive by nature. Hence when a person recognizes GOD, all things are possible: *"In selecting, electing and enthroning GOD as supreme in one's life and as dwelling at the Center from which the cause and effect of one's being and existence emanate, it is with the understanding that GOD is the Creative Force of the Universe, the Universal Mind Substance, the Fundamental Principle and Source of all Goodness--Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omniscient and Omnipresent."* (44)

Any person who uses this knowledge to its limits is standing at the zenith of his or her productive capabilities.

JESUS CHRIST is GOD in the Sonship Degree: *"However, Jesus in the Sonship Degree knew that HE did not have the Power to effect the universal Emancipation of man. Therefore HE had to ascend to the FATHER and come yet again in the Power of the FATHERSHIP Degree of expression for this universal Resurrection and complete Redemption of all Mankind. According to the conviction*

through Revelation to the followers of FATHER DIVINE, HE is that One come again." (44-45)

Thus it follows that FATHER DIVINE, according to the inspiration of followers, is GOD in the FATHERSHIP Degree.

GOD is both female and male. GOD is both Personal and Impersonal. The conception of many people that GOD is Personal to them is very precious and meaningful--and rightly so. Intimacy with GOD is a powerful medication in the lives of the devout. MOTHER DIVINE treats the other side of the coin: *"FATHER DIVINE is the Person of the Impersonal. HE came in this expression for the purpose of lifting Mankind out of the personal into the Impersonal. HE let everyone know it is nothing HE does as a Person to reach anyone's condition or circumstance, but if one contacts HIM mentally and spiritually, one gets the desired results, and it would not matter where one was geographically, for HE is Omnipresent and Everpresent. It is according to the Faith of the individual, and with or without His Personal Presence HE is just the same. ...FATHER stressed living the Life of CHRIST and being the same in His Personal absence as in His Personal Presence. HE let His students and adherents know it was not necessary to come where HE was Personally to get a Blessing or to live the Life."* (45)

One's relations with GOD are extremely personal and as intimate as marrow in the bones. No amount of argument will convince anyone that FATHER DIVINE is GOD or not GOD. Arriving at a finality in this matter must be the province of one's intuition--the speaking of the "still, small voice" within the Heart of each person.

The deduction from this discussion is that GOD is an Indispensable Factor in the Life of every individual. If the individual ignores GOD, then GOD ignores the individual--and he or she is in deep trouble. All agencies in the land have ignored GOD--which is the root cause of all the world's maledictions and the reason for the quagmire in which the world finds itself. The world will never be pulled from its quagmire until it reckons GOD in all its affairs.

The "Open Sesame"

Observers from earlier times began immediately to ask where the money came from to enable FATHER DIVINE to feed, dress and house the multitude that thronged His door--when no source of income was visible. Observers wondered when they saw high-powered automobiles standing at the curb--and when they sat at lavish, poly-course Banquets. They wondered still more when followers of FATHER DIVINE purchased real property, including six hotels, valued at hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Charles Braden and William Kephart say that there is no mystery here. They explain the Abundance matter-of-factly as a product of using the materialistic working of the mundane world smartly. The opulence is a result of very wise planning and astute dealing by FATHER DIVINE.

Be that as it may, there is another face to the phenomenon--the spiritual.

In MOTHER DIVINE'S book, FATHER DIVINE'S Words on this score are quoted: *"People came to Sayville; they did not know and they could not understand how these things could be. It was beyond the comprehension of the human mind. Therefore they could not, did not, know how these*

things could be--that GOD could set, as though a man, a table spread free for one and for all and not allow any soliciting to be done, and not allow anyone to contribute anything, and yet the Abundance of the fullness of the consciousness of Good, no space was vacant of the fullness thereof. They could not understand how these things could be, when I emphatically refused to allow contributions, volunteer offerings, or anything of that kind, and stood out in the Liberty wherewith CHRIST hath set you free, knowing that all good gifts and Blessings come from GOD anyway." (91-92)

John Henry Titus is quoted as saying to an interviewer, *"As to your direct question concerning FATHER DIVINE, as to where HE gets His money and other matters of secular interest, I will say to you as I have said in the hearing of thousands, 'What is that to thee?' By His Works ye shall know HIM. I have never thought about money in connection with FATHER DIVINE, for I know all things are possible with GOD." (74)*

In Paul's time, as now, questions of discipline and morality arose in the Churches. Possibly shortly before Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, he wrote to Timothy, his "dearly beloved son" in the Faith, *"For the love of money is the root of all evil."* (I Timothy 6:10)

FATHER DIVINE reiterated this biblical aphorism in 1932: *"The love of money is the root of all evil. Even the lack of money, the fancy for money, when it grows up it will be a love for money. I have never done a greater work than to cast out of My own Consciousness that I have sent out on the earth plane, the love of money, for the love of money is the root of all evil. And you cannot abolish the love of*

money until you cast out of your consciousness the lacks, the fancies, and even the care for money. Anything that you care for and keep about, you will come to care for it." (87)

FATHER DIVINE elaborates on the working of the Spirit in giving: *"Every penny I spend rightfully and righteously, unselfishly and lovingly, with Love for My fellowman as a free gift to them with no thoughts of return, I gain a HUNDRED PENNIES FOR THAT ONE PENNY. There it is, \$1.00 for every penny, and \$100 for every dollar, and \$10,000 for every hundred dollars, and \$1,000,000 for every ten thousand dollars."* (89)

The question remains--"But how is it done? What force is at work generating the funds? What machinery is set in motion to produce the hard currency necessary to do all this?" The "open sesame" is FATHER DIVINE'S most famous formula. When this formula is employed vigorously and persistently, no good thing is withheld. Every necessary thing is forthcoming.

**'THE SPIRIT OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE
PRESENCE OF GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL SUPPLY,
AND IT ALWAYS HAS AND ALWAYS WILL, AS IT DOES,
SATISFY EVERY GOOD DESIRE!'**

Because HE works this formula to the hilt, FATHER DIVINE is enabled to say, *"I AM a Free Gift to the world--gratis to Mankind!"*

This formula is efficacious for the reason that when and where GOD is stressfully and acutely recognized and realized to be actually Present, the Abundance is manifested there and then, because the Presence of GOD,

by its very GOD-like nature, is intrinsically expressive and creative, and it automatically creates whatever is necessary. The skeptical doubting Thomases "from Missouri" may have to deploy the formula for themselves and see it work to be convinced.

The Only Infallible Birth Control is Self-Control

Popular acts among a majority of the people are to marry and have sex--not necessarily in that order. Puzzled people ask, "Why does FATHER DIVINE place a taboo on sex and marriage among His true followers?"

In a letter to the Ephesians, written in 64 A.D. while Paul was in Rome, he explained the mystery of true, spiritual marriage thuswise: *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."* (Ephesians 5:31-32)

MOTHER DIVINE continues this train of thought: *"Hence it follows that when one exits the parental domicile to marry, one should marry GOD, even as CHRIST married the Church. Men and women marrying GOD precludes them from taking husbands and wives as mates, and therefore frees them from ties to persons and personalities. They become independent of all other people and dependent solely upon GOD to be their Soul Mate and Provider. FATHER DIVINE stresses the all-importance of mating with one's Soul Mate, and have the sweet intimacy of this relationship with GOD. In a message HE gave January 30, 1936, HE describes it."*

"GOD is your Soul's Mate, not matter. I AM not speaking of personality; I AM not speaking of sex, nor a visible

expression; I AM not speaking of masculines and feminines. I AM speaking of the Impersonal Presence, yet with or without a person the same forever throughout all Eternity. Your Soul's Mate should mate with your soul continually. Even though it may be lying dormant in your subconsciousness, your Soul's Mate should be there, resting comfortably, undisturbed, and you should be unmoved and undisturbed saving as HE moves on the Altar of the Heart and causes you to cooperate with HIM." (53-54)

Men and women should not marry each other, but should marry GOD. Many followers of Father Divine wear a gold wedding band on their ring finger as visible evidence of the fact that they consider they are married not to a mortal person, but to GOD. FATHER DIVINE outlaws worldly marriage between men and women, but establishes the Sacred Union between GOD and Humankind--His Creation.

One purpose of worldly marriage is procreation. Obviously, if worldly marriage--both heterosexual and homosexual--is outlawed, then procreation is also outlawed-- and if procreation is outlawed, then traffic in sex is outlawed as well, because there is no need for it. Indulgence in sex between a man and woman for a purpose other than procreation is nothing more or less than lust of the flesh. Sexual indulgence has degenerated into a sport.

Shortly before he was martyred, the Apostle Paul wrote another letter to Timothy, "his dearly beloved son." In this touching letter, Paul entreated Timothy to "*flee also youthful lusts.*" (II Timothy 2:22) Four years prior to Paul's letter, Peter had made a similar plea against carnal desires to Jews and Gentiles. "*Dearly Beloved, I beseech you as*

strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." (I Peter 2:11)

At about the same time, probably around 60 A.D., Paul sent an Epistle to the fickle Galatians. *"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."* (Galatians 5:16) In the same year, Paul sent a mighty, meaty letter to the Romans, in which he was very positive in stating distinctive Truths that had been revealed to him, such as, *"They that are in the flesh cannot please GOD."* (Romans 8:8) He went on to say, *"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* (Romans 8:13)

Paul sent one of his many Epistles to the Corinthians in this same time period. One admonition he broadcast to them was, *"Dearly Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of GOD."* (II Corinthians 7:1)

Paul was a long standing, confirmed bachelor, a status which he felt that the Spirit established for him. It is thus eloquent and momentous to learn that he wrote to the Corinthians, in the year previous, *"I say therefore to the unmarried and widows- -it is good for them if they abide even as I."* (I Corinthians 7:8) He was desirous that those who were not married remained single as he was.

Paul climaxed his charge to the Corinthians with the compelling, consequential Morality, *"It is good for a man not to touch a woman."* (I Corinthians 7:1)

This exposition of worldly marriage and procreation as well as adventures in promiscuous sexual relations between--and among--the sexes underscores the wretched,

immoral state of the world and the desperate need of the Gospel Truism of Holiness and Virtue to sink into the soul of Humanity. FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings, both intrinsically and objectively, speak to this need.

MOTHER DIVINE has included Her revealing thoughts on the Concept of Birth on pages 52 and 53 of Her book. Among other thoughts, SHE quotes FATHER DIVINE as saying, *"when people cease to propagate, they will cease to die."* Her concluding sentence is: *"Self-Control, not contraception or abortion, is FATHER DIVINE'S answer to the great need for Birth Control."*

Fusion of Heaven and Earth

Another prickly question is "If FATHER DIVINE outlawed marriage, why did HE marry--thus violating His own decree?" This does seem to be an act of hypocrisy--if FATHER DIVINE'S Marriage is placed in the same category as conventional marriages. But this is no ordinary marriage. MOTHER DIVINE writes that this Marriage *"is purely spiritual. It illustrates how all others should be joined to HIM through the Conviction that HE is the Personified CHRIST. [...] This Marriage--the Marriage of CHRIST to His Church--consummated the union of GOD and Man and the fusion of Heaven and Earth as spoken of in the Book of Revelation. The Marriage was neither for the satisfaction of lust and passion or for physical propagation but is wholly Spiritual and magnifies the qualities of Virginity, Honesty, Competence, Truth and Brotherhood."* (57)

This Marriage was designed to signal a change in the Moral and Spiritual atmosphere of the globe--a change in the thrust of humanity's endeavors. MOTHER DIVINE interprets the Marriage as follows: *"The Marriage of*

FATHER DIVINE consummated His Work of legalizing the Life of CHRIST. His Mind and Spirit could now go forth to universalize this Life of Honesty and Virtue as it was personified in MOTHER, practiced by His followers and nurtured in the Peace Mission Churches. Therefore, though FATHER'S Personal emergence on the public scene had initiated a New Dispensation, designated by the addition of the letters F.D. (FATHER DIVINE) after the customary A.D. on the Gregorian (Christian) calendar, the year 1946 heralded the beginning of the New Era from a calendar point of view, and is the Year One." (58)

The reader will do well to study this beautifully profound section of the book, pages 52 to 58.

The World Thirsting for Virtue

Two personal characteristics are not commonly topics of conversation among most people. These are saintly attributes. One is Holiness--the other is Virtue. In many respects they are synchronous. One can hardly be truly Holy without being Virtuous, and the converse is equally relevant. Yet the earth is scorched for lack of Holiness and Virtue being actualized in the day-to-day functions of the world.

Catholicism has all but deified the Virgin Mary. Its nuns and priests have taken vows to reproduce her Virginity in themselves. All Christianity no less holds the Life of Jesus sacred. Christians everywhere are expected to reproduce His Virginity in their own lives.

The burning need of the day is individual Virtue--personal Purity. This means Virginity and Purity especially in body, but also in mind and spirit. This means honesty and

fair dealing in all things as well as no indulgence in lustful appetites.

One of the Creeds of FATHER DIVINE'S Rosebuds, a female song and action group, states that they *"must reproduce and repersonify the very Virtues of Mary and the Holiness of Jesus.... [They] must be Virtuous in spirit and mind as well as in [their] bodily form."*

Correspondingly, a male group called the Crusaders, in its pursuit of Virginity, has as one of its Creeds, *"The True Crusader shall live a righteous, useful, consecrated Life which is devoted to Holiness, Purity, Honesty, Love, Faith and Humility."*

In Her book, MOTHER DIVINE wrote about legalizing and universalizing the Life of CHRIST. This is Her charge to Humankind--to live in Holiness and Virtue in this New Era.

GOD Has Not Gone Anywhere

Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep My saying, he shall never see death."* (John 8:51) FATHER DIVINE vigorously preached the same gospel. It has been instilled into people from their youth that they must grow old and they must die. FATHER DIVINE declared that holding such a curse over humanity is dead wrong--a delusion--and that if people live the Life to the letter, exactly according to the Law of the Spirit of Life that Jesus the CHRIST taught and lived by, and keep the faith, their physical bodies will be preserved alive, and they will never die.

In the light of this preachment, there seems to be a contradiction to fact. Many folks do not understand, if it is

meant for people to live forever as FATHER DIVINE has said, why HE in 1965 took His Body from view. MOTHER DIVINE gives one reason in an interview that SHE gave to two college professors in 1971: *"Without seeing FATHER as a Person, HE'S just as Real! HE said HE would never let His Body stand in His way. HE knew that His Personal Body was a stumbling block to many, because GOD condescended to come in the valley of the nations--come to them in a way that they would least expect GOD to come. ...Jesus came in the least way they expected HIM to come; that's why the Jews couldn't accept HIM. They wanted a King, but they couldn't accept HIM the way HE came and what HE stood for. The same way with FATHER. ...HE said that HE would throw off His Body and HE would enter in, though the doors were shut! So HE'S entered in now. But HE also said, 'After I have entered in, then I will put It on again, because no man has power to take My Life, but I lay It down and I take It up again, and I will prove to them that a Spirit has not flesh and bones!'"* (99-100)

Because of prejudice toward dark skin, some doors were apparently closed to FATHER DIVINE, thus denying HIM access in the pursuit of His Ministry. To solve this problem, FATHER DIVINE removed His Body in 1965, thereby removing the stumbling block that MOTHER DIVINE mentioned above. Removing the stumbling block cleared the way for MOTHER DIVINE, as SHE continued in FATHER DIVINE'S footsteps, because HE knew that SHE would be accepted and welcomed in places and circumstances where HE would be rejected.

Another reason for FATHER DIVINE disjoining Himself from His Body is that for every great cause, there must be

Sacrifice. The Founding Fathers sacrificed their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor and indeed, their very lives to make Independence a reality for the United States of America, thereby concluding the maneuvers that weaned the Colonies from Mother Britain. The analogy between the Founding Fathers and FATHER DIVINE is apt. Just as a child is weaned from its mother's care and protection, FATHER DIVINE sacrificed His Body so as to prove to His Followers that they could carry on His Work and be independent without His Body being visible to the world.

It was necessary for FATHER DIVINE to come in a Body and remain in a Body for a season as HE shepherded His flock, taught them the way to go and nurtured them in Love and Wisdom. But when they had finished their course, it was evident to them that, as FATHER DIVINE said, HE did nothing Personally to accomplish His purposes because the Principle that HE uses is Impersonal. It will work for anyone who applies the formula correctly and accurately. Therefore the Followers could thenceforth operate independently of FATHER DIVINE'S Body. MOTHER DIVINE states, *"When I think of the Sacrifice FATHER has made--that is why we rest, because the Sacrifice has been made, because nothing is a reality until the Sacrifice is made to make it Real! You know, we had the Declaration of Independence and it was just on paper, but it was because of the lives that were willing to be sacrificed to make it a reality that we have Independence today.*

"And that's the same way with FATHER and the Peace Mission and His Principles of Righteousness--not just those in the Peace Mission, but everybody, every person who is willing to suffer to establish a Principle or for a cause of

Righteousness. You see, the willingness to suffer makes that particular Principle a Reality. Isn't that Wonderful?

"And that's why I know that with or without any of us, what FATHER stands for and what HE lives for and lived for and what HE sacrificed for, will be! Heaven and Earth could pass away, but our GOD stands firm!" (100-101)

FATHER DIVINE has stated hundreds of times that it was not necessary to write to HIM, talk with HIM, shake hands with HIM, dine with HIM, or contact HIM Personally in any way. HE wanted those who desired a Blessing of some kind to contact HIM mentally and spiritually so that they, in their bodies, could stand alone.

A final reason why FATHER DIVINE removed His Body, as was stated at the beginning of this chapter, is so that people would not think of HIM as being limited to His Body nor look to His Body to do anything for them. His desire is to be transmitted to the hearts and minds of the people and guide them in the right paths for the sustenance of their bodies and the preservation of their souls. His aim was to Universalize HIMSELF. MOTHER DIVINE elaborates on this thought: *"But I will say this, HE came in a Body, and we can see HIM now if we attune ourselves to HIM. HE has a Body, you know, like I say--if you would raise your consciousness, you can see, and many do see FATHER."* (103)

The two professors enjoyed their long interview with MOTHER DIVINE, only a portion of which is reproduced in the book on pages 99 to 103. The reader will find it absorbing.

Woodmont, Divine Grandeur – A World Set Apart

"Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah..."

So reads a part of the first verse of II Chronicles, chapter three. Mount Moriah is the hill of Jerusalem on which the Temple was builded. In this chapter of II Chronicles begins the involved narration of King Solomon building the Temple.

FATHER DIVINE calls attention to this episode in history repeating itself: *"as it was with the building of the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, in Mount Moriah, so it is in the rebuilding of the Temple of the LORD... at Philadelphia in Woodmont."* (59)

In Her book, MOTHER DIVINE uses this statement by FATHER DIVINE as the basis for observing that the acquisition of the Woodmont Estate in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, is of the same order of ascendancy as the building of the Temple at Mount Moriah. Anyone sensitive to consummate mystical refinement who visits Woodmont will readily perceive that the Estate has a celestial, spiritual air and great moral, noble Significance.

Isaiah states that it shall come to pass in the last days, *"the mountain of the LORD'S House shall be established in the top of the mountains ...and all nations shall flow unto it."*

Many people shall go to this mountain--to the House of the GOD of Jacob, Who will teach them of His ways, for out of Zion shall go forth the Law. (Isaiah 2:2-3) Micah tells the same story almost word for word. (Micah 4:1-2) For this cause, Woodmont, being at the highest point of

Montgomery County, is called the "Mount of the House of the LORD."

Palace Mission, Incorporated, one of the six Churches of the Peace Mission Movement, presented the property to FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE as a country estate to be used as a residence for Them. Although it is a private Home, it is also a retreat for coworkers of the Movement. It is the Spiritual Center of the Movement--a mecca toward which the thoughts of all Followers are turned, and to which they come as often as possible.

But the Blessedness of Woodmont is not only for Followers. FATHER and MOTHER DIVINE are of no private interpretation. They and Woodmont are for everyone. Woodmont is open to the public every Sunday afternoon from April through October between the hours of one and five. Groups are welcome on other days by special appointment. Guides conduct tours of the Manor House, the Shrine to Life and the grounds. There is no charge for admission or for tours, and no tipping or donations are allowed.

The castle-like Manor House is one of the finest in the French Gothic tradition, built in America's Victorian Period. Its features include breath-taking oak woodwork and rose colored Philippine mahogany, magnificent fireplaces, and a chapel dining room, complete with organ and saintly figurines in niches at the cove. On a direct axis with the Manor House stands the Shrine to Life--a white sierra granite structure with a pyramid roof and a massive bronze door.

"The purpose of the Shrine is twofold: providing a sanctuary in which the Body of GOD is enshrined, and

acting as a reminder of His Covenant fulfilled from the beginning of Biblical History. Reminiscent of the Tabernacle containing the Ark of the Covenant, the Shrine brings the ancient and modern together. Its powerful simplicity denotes the Personal Life of FATHER DIVINE, its atmosphere of Peace conveys His serenity and humility, its strength and purity of line, His staunch stand for the high moral and spiritual values of life made clear by His own Example, which are the foundation stones of the Peace Mission Movement as it stands today, a Bulwark of Faith in a troubled world." (61-62)

The Ark of the Covenant was an extremely sacred reliquary in Old Testament times. It was a chest made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. The lid constituted the "mercy-seat" or the place of propitiation over which extended the protective wings of two cherubim. There was nothing in the Ark but the two tables of stone that Moses put there at Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai) when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel after they had escaped from Egypt. (I Kings 8:9)

The expansive lawns are punctuated with flower gardens, walks and stately old trees. There are paths throughout which lead to scenic spots around the House and Shrine as well as in the wooded areas.

FATHER DIVINE has said, *"The World has an invitation to come!"* The reader is invited to enjoy the Peace and beauty and serenity of the Woodmont Estate. Probably nowhere on earth will he or she discover such an atmosphere as that which permeates Woodmont.

CHAPTER XV

STREAM OF THE SPIRIT

Exodus

No More Tears

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:1-3)

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write:

for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Revelation 21:1-6)

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Revelation 21:7)

Perhaps there are no words in the Scriptures more beautiful--and more meaningful--than these. These are artless words--simple, gentle--bespeaking the love of a tender, All-Wise FATHER-MOTHER-GOD for His little "children." The Apostle John, who wrote these words sixty years after the Resurrection, used an expressive Greek word for children that translates as "born ones," which supplies further evidence of an affectionate FATHER'S love. This chapter of I John is most intimate, and is indicative of the closeness that should prevail between people and their Creator, just as tiny, delicate baby fingers curl tightly around a mother's finger.

The words in Revelation were written not long after Apostle John wrote the book of I John. They also are words that a solicitous FATHER would deliver to His young and growing family. In the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of Revelation are described the Seven New Things--New Heaven, New Earth, New People, New Bride, New Temple, New Light--and New Paradise. These are fresh, invigorating horizons--especially the first three, which

are the issues dealt with most in this book--a New Heaven, a New Earth, and a New People.

The grimy old tatters that cling to people have been stripped off. The sea of doubt and ignorance is displaced by the placid waters of trust and inspiration. The Tabernacle of GOD dwells among men. They are His people and HE is with them, and HE wipes all tears from their eyes. GOD makes all things new! It is done! Those who are athirst for the Peace that surpasses all human understanding are able to partake freely at the Fountain of the Water of Life!

Had Ali Hafed absorbed these eleven New Testament verses, what a different life would have been his! Before the old priest talked to him about the power of diamonds, he was happy because he was content--and he was content because he was happy. Every amenity was his at the clap of his hands--except inner peace. If Ali Hafed would have assimilated the message of these verses into his sensibilities, he would have grown to be as stable as the Rock of Ages, and would have not only achieved a state of Heavenly Bliss here on earth, but he would have enjoyed incomparable longevity, while his contemporaries languished in their grave clothes.

FATHER DIVINE'S Ministry

It is evident to the reader, having traversed these chapters of *Rediscovering GOD*, that FATHER DIVINE is about His Work of bringing the ultimate level of Utopian Awareness to as many as will hear HIM and follow the blueprint HE has drawn. The whole thrust of FATHER DIVINE'S Ministry is to lead men, women and children into the green pastures of this New Heaven on Earth--to let them experience the joy of seeing the FATHER as HE is--to

help them realize beyond any doubt that they are, in indisputable fact, inhabitants of a New Order--a New Kingdom. They are with their FATHER and HE is with them. *"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."*

FATHER DIVINE brooks no compromise with this attitude. His Standard is nothing less than Perfection. HE tenaciously lives unto Perfection, and because it is the Birthright of every creature, HE exhorts everyone to be content with nothing short of Perfection. The person who triumphs over adversity without and self-pity within can rightfully claim GOD as his or her FATHER--and HE, the FATHER, will claim him or her as His legitimate Son or Daughter--the heir to the FATHER'S Wondrous Legacy.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

Hallmarks of Concurrence

In the preceding chapters of *Rediscovering GOD*, thoughtful reactions to and discussions of FATHER DIVINE and the Peace Mission Movement have been presented. This writer categorically does not sanction everything that Charles Braden, Arthur Fauset, William Kephart, Kenneth Burnham, Ronald White, Roma Barnes and Robert Weisbrot have set forth. Strenuous objections have been raised to some of their commentaries. Other parts of their observations hold water, and these parts were highlighted.

However, there is a continuity among these seven authors that is eloquent. Running through the writings of the seven are recurring references to an agreement on

certain features or phenomena peculiar to the Peace Mission Movement. These are:

1. The very close relationship between FATHER DIVINE'S Teachings and New Thought doctrine.
2. The importance to FATHER DIVINE of Patriotism--of instilling Love of Country in people to the degree that they revere the Constitution with its Amendments and the Declaration of Independence as Sacred Documents comparable to the Bible--and to the degree that citizens will consider that Americanism is actually their Religion, with all the implications thereof.
3. The zeal with which FATHER DIVINE and His followers advocate and pursue Righteous Government as it applies to City, State and Federal Administrations.
4. The fact that there seems to be a unique quality about American Soil that spontaneously propagates a new breed of American Citizen, and further, spawns a New American Culture that is a prototype for the not-so-distant future world.
5. The existence in some parts of the world of unorganized, un-numbered, undeclared thousands who have no contact with each other, who constitute a secret, underground Following of FATHER DIVINE.

Below is a brief resume of the unusual deductions by the authors concerning these points.

1. New Thought and FATHER DIVINE

Eugene Del Mar was deeply involved in New Thought when he investigated FATHER DIVINE in Sayville but made no mention of it affecting FATHER DIVINE in his findings. James Maynard Matthews, who was inspired to take the

spiritual name of John Lamb and who later became FATHER DIVINE'S confidential, personal Secretary, lectured in London at one of the largest New Thought centers in the world. Walter Lanyon, well-known in England and on the continent as well as in the United States in the 30s, lectured and wrote several books on New Thought. He was one of FATHER DIVINE'S most ardent admirers.

Charles Braden pointed out that the importance of success, prosperity and happiness is common ground between New Thought and FATHER DIVINE. Visualization of the Positive is a mutual practice. Kenneth Burnham noted the similarity of the terms used by FATHER DIVINE to those employed by New Thought writers and lecturers.

The thesis written by Ronald White is devoted almost exclusively to the proposition that FATHER DIVINE is harmonious to the New Thought Movement. The discussion of his thesis is in some measure the centerpiece of this book. White observes that FATHER DIVINE conveyed His thoughts via much the same symbols and motifs that identify the religious tradition known as New Thought. FATHER DIVINE'S popularity among both intellectuals and the nondescript stems from the Practicality, Life and Vibrancy HE gave to New Thought concepts--which were sometimes only conceptual and dry.

Roma Barnes saw the fact of many New Thinkers being inured to the rigors of spiritual living and religious discipline as a factor in the easy transition they experienced in becoming followers of FATHER DIVINE when they became acquainted with the Beauty and Potential of the Social Order that HE espoused. Robert Weisbrot was impressed by FATHER DIVINE smiling upon the mystical, yet

fashionable exponents of New Thought such as Robert Collier and Jiddu Krishnamurti.

2. Americanism, Patriotism and the Constitution

No minister has preached Americanism with as much force as FATHER DIVINE. Indeed, political leaders and national patriots do not preach Americanism with His Conviction. Charles Braden was struck with FATHER DIVINE'S statement that Americanism, Brotherhood, Christianity, Democracy and Judaism are one and the same if they are true and genuine. This statement opens the door for another FATHER DIVINE declaration--"Americanism Is Our Religion!" This Social Passion came from the depths of FATHER DIVINE'S Consciousness, and is one of the Ideals which HE preached with all His strength. Ronald White writes that true Americanism fosters Unity within Society, and from thence, the inner strength that Unity induces enables Americans to reach out to embrace Christianity and Judaism.

It is Roma Barnes' opinion that FATHER DIVINE came to restore America to its First Principles and to reconsecrate America to the Patriotic Fervor voiced in the Declaration of Independence and the Idealism set forth in the Constitution. FATHER DIVINE was an "American Messiah" who believed that true Americanism will redeem the nation and bring the American Dream into Reality. Robert Weisbrot declared that by invoking the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the power of these two documents would overcome all obstacles in the path of the nation becoming the "New America."

3. Righteous, Principled Government

Perhaps few documents have disturbed the American psyche in the manner that FATHER DIVINE'S Righteous Government Platform has ruffled feathers in some circles over the length and breadth of the land. Charles Braden discusses a number of the Planks of the Platform, which were designed to shape legislation aimed at solving social problems. Braden deems some of these Planks as "exceedingly sensible." He calls attention also to FATHER DIVINE'S International Platform as enunciated in some of FATHER DIVINE'S nineteen proposals and declarations affecting various countries. Colored stickers--or "Peace Stamps" as they are known in the Peace Mission Movement--contain these unique messages. William Kephart observes that FATHER DIVINE was the first in the Nation to speak out on many of the issues set forth in the Righteous Government Platform, and he notes that many of the Planks thereof were implemented following World War II.

Kenneth Burnham also, states that soon after the Righteous Government Platform was published, Congress began to pass federal legislation fashioned to address the injustices mentioned in the Platform. He devotes most of one chapter to discussion of the Platform's thirty-two Planks. Ronald White writes that FATHER DIVINE exhorted His followers--and all the world as well--to strive for Personal Righteousness, Justice and Truth as a flowering of Americanism, because living thus virtuously will automatically bring about a Righteous Government.

As unlikely as it may seem, a British scholar gave more play to "Righteous Government" than any of the other

writers. Roma Barnes labels two chapters in her titanic work, "Evangelical Politics and Righteous Government," Part I and Part II, which cover 132 pages. In Part I, she includes a section on Communism and how the Peace Mission Movement treated it. In Part II, she charts the political "rise and fall" of the Movement as well as FATHER DIVINE'S Proposals which affect International politics as printed on the Peace Stamps.

In her Appendix is the complete text of the Righteous Government platform in twenty-three pages. It is manifest that Ms. Barnes was much touched by this Document of the Movement.

Robert Weisbrot scrutinized the Platform in detail. He writes that it "seriously addressed difficult issues of justice and social planning." The Platform considered everything from segregation to unemployment and was significant for its insight into the plight of the poor and the minorities.

4. Pregnancy of the American Ethos

Arthur Fauset indicates that the activities of the Peace Mission Movement transform the yearning for Peace and Happiness into dynamics of the new American Culture. Kenneth Burnham heralds the ingenuity and creativity germinating in the collective distinctive American nature. There is a spring of effervescent uprightness deep in American soil that continually bubbles up through the milieu, that bears witness of the Greatness that is America.

Ronald White states that FATHER DIVINE tapped this spring and synthesized a unique Culture. America is intrinsically companionable to HIM and His Work--a partnership that augurs well for Humankind in this New Era.

Roma Barnes writes that FATHER DIVINE'S Kingdom of GOD on earth sprouted from deep-seated traditions and the thirsting for Salvation. Robert Weisbrot hints that the United States could be the first to externalize the Good Society, both for itself and the World.

5. A Loyal, Undeclared Following

Arthur Fauset posits the bewitching probability that, in his words, *"there is a considerable secret, one might say unconscious following of FATHER DIVINE which probably exceeds the many thousands of public followers who might be assembled in a huge convocation."*

These are the people who in some manner over the years have come under the influence of FATHER DIVINE. Perhaps they have enjoyed many a hot, nutritious soul-and-body-saving Peace Mission meal--which they paid little or nothing for-- during a lean time in their lives. Perhaps they were given clothing and/or shelter. Perhaps they were scrambling students who would not have received a diploma had FATHER DIVINE not made decent housing and food available to them during their matriculation, at rates they could afford. Perhaps they received personal advice and encouragement from FATHER DIVINE HIMSELF which enabled them to hold up their heads, straighten their shoulders, and forge ahead. Perhaps they shook hands and exchanged a few words with FATHER DIVINE and/or MOTHER DIVINE, or sat at a Holy Communion Banquet with Them. Or perhaps they have experienced the transcendence of Woodmont, the Mount of the House of the LORD.

These are the people who are waiting in the wings, so to speak, until the hour when the pressures of existence will

cause their hearts to pour out their Gratitude in testimonial to FATHER DIVINE. William Kephart presages this outpouring by implying *"that sooner or later there would be an inextinguishable resurgence for the Divinites."*

Millicent Fauntleroy in a book review echoes the sentiment of this book on *Rediscovering GOD* when she states that FATHER DIVINE'S appeal bears re-examination. She contends that *"a second look is in order.... This is especially so... when people may once again be searching for a messianic figure."*

Charles Braden meditatively projects the views of these writers in an arresting statement. After interviewing a follower on the stark eventualities of life, Braden caught the import of these views in what resembles a Benediction: *"Salvation, then, is here and now. The Kingdom of GOD is already come. It will go on extending itself--out beyond Harlem and Jersey and Philadelphia until it takes in all mankind."*

These are not idle prophecies by these four journalists. Jesus said, *"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."*

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." (John 10:14, 16)

FATHER DIVINE has repeatedly intimated that HE has many followers who are not members of His Churches and who do not frequent the Churches or make themselves known in any way. They are the Secret Following who are convicted of the certainty that FATHER DIVINE is the

Wayshower because HE knows and understands the Secrets of the Ages.

In speaking to His disciples one day, FATHER DIVINE exclaimed that everyone in the world has as much right to love HIM as His immediate followers do. And HE has the right to love everyone in the world as much as HE loves His followers. After a meaningful pause, with teasing smile and twinkling eye, HE added, "And I have the right to love them a little more than I love you!"--at which His adoring, high-spirited audience screamed its gleeful approval.

These are FATHER DIVINE'S Words of sixty years ago, *"I AM contagionizing the atmosphere! ...I AM not confined to those who are called My followers alone. This may be the nucleus but the influence of this Contagion is... operative and expressive."* (*The New Day*, June 22, 1985, 13. Spoken September 16-17, 1946)

Because the Contagion of FATHER DIVINE'S Goodness is operative and expressive, Professor Braden contends that it will extend itself *"out beyond Harlem and Jersey and Philadelphia..."*

The Lighthouse

The writers whose works are reviewed in this book, *Rediscovering GOD*, labored independently at various times over a span of forty years. They were widely disparate in their backgrounds. They wrote in a 6000 mile geographical expanse-- from the Pacific, across the United States, to Great Britain. Yet without meeting each other, they individually identified and agreed upon these five themes as Hallmarks of the structure that FATHER DIVINE has wrought in the Land.

The sparkling Stream of the Spirit that courses through this book is evidence that FATHER DIVINE is neither a myth nor a will-o-the-wisp. These writers agreed on these themes for the reason that they recognized in HIM a substantial, persevering consistent Force. FATHER DIVINE is no phantom who capriciously blinks and twinkles on and off--but a Lighthouse whose faithful beacon is steady and unfaltering. HE is a mighty pillar Who undergirds the moral standard of the social order according to the Law of the Spirit of Life that was and is in JESUS CHRIST. The authors featured here acknowledged this steadfastness--firstly by writing understandingly about FATHER DIVINE, and secondly by concurring precisely on several elements, as discussion of these five topics bears out.

The little dog cited in the Introduction joyously unearthed a succulent bone that he had put away for future reference. Some readers are like that--they are jubilantly rediscovering FATHER DIVINE after having contact with HIM long ago and then putting HIM away in their consciousness. Ali Hafed did not dig in his own backyard, thereby not finding the acres of diamonds that lay there. Other readers, in contrast, are not like Ali Hafed. They are now eagerly investigating what has been on their doorstep all the while. They are happily illumined by the discovery that FATHER DIVINE is truly our "International Treasure" in Whom they will find riches beyond measure. They are discovering the exhilaration of knowing FATHER DIVINE and learning of His Words and His Works of "Infinite Goodness!"

FATHER DIVINE, in Installment XXXII of *The Word of GOD Revealed* (*The New Day*, February 1, 1975, 20) referred

to Himself as being a Choice Prize! HE said: *"You came by the Breath of the ALMIGHTY GOD Who created you in Himself's likeness, expressing Himself through the ages of the past, bringing you to the present, old and yet new! That is the GREAT TREASURE of ME!"*

"And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

Revelation 22:17