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**The Holy Shroud:
The Shroud of Turin
by Werner Bulst S.J.**

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promising are in Mr. Williams' handling made to yield such rich harvests of meaning that one is almost tempted to wonder whether the writer is not reading his conclusions into Pope's work. But full documentation and skill in interpreting the material make it difficult for the reader to withhold his nod of approbation. Previous acquaintance with the text of the *Dunciad* is helpful but not indispensable for a proper appreciation of Mr. Williams' study. Copious citations from the *Dunciad* enable even the beginner to follow and concur with Mr. Williams' many well-argued conclusions.

The author's painstaking effort to provide pertinent context for his interpretations fills many pages of the book with scholarly reconstruction of many phases of the eighteenth-century intellectual life. These interesting sidelights, besides supplying valuable information, help the reader, even at this distance, to arrive at a sympathetic understanding of Pope's high purposes in his decision to satirize so bluntly the literary perversions of his age. This thoroughness of treatment and a lucidly pleasant style combine to make Mr. Williams' book a valuable aid to any student of Pope and of the eighteenth-century generally. And if further commendation is wanted, it might be mentioned in passing that in its original version as a dissertation Mr. Williams' book was awarded the John Addison Porter Prize at Yale University where the author is assistant professor of English.

ANTONIO T. LEETAI

THE HOLY SHROUD

THE SHROUD OF TURIN, By Werner Bulst S.J., translated by Stephen McKenna C.Ss.R. and James J. Galvin C.Cs.R. Bruce. Milwaukee. 1957.

IS the Shroud of Turin the linen cloth in which the body of Our Lord was wrapped when it was laid in the tomb? That is the question that comes up when one undertakes to treat about that ancient linen cloth preserved in Turin, with its two life-sized images of the back and front of a man that was crucified, crowned with thorns and had his right side wounded with a spear.

In this book Father Bulst sets to work to answer that question. And it must be said that he does it in a manner that is entirely objective in weighing all the evidence. His conclusion is that the negative answer to the question cannot be sustained, while the accumulated evidence for an affirmative answer is all but convincing. Lest this should seem faint praise, it should be added that the author is satisfied at having silenced his adversaries and brought the modern controversy about the Shroud to bear on one single problem, which however, he does not claim to have solved beyond the range of high probability.

The modern controversy arose towards the end of the last century, when documents were brought to light showing that in the year 1389 the bishop of Troyes accused the canons of Lirey with duplicity and fraud for having exposed for the veneration of the faithful a piece of cloth bearing the images of Our Savior as the Shroud in which He was buried, whereas it was proved that the images had been painted recently by an artist. From that time the cloth was allowed to be exposed but with the condition that at each exposition it was to be clearly announced that it was not the original Shroud but a copy of it.

After passing through a number of hands, about the year 1578 the cloth was transferred to Turin. There it was regarded as the true Shroud in which Our Savior was buried, although there were always some who contended that the cloth was but a copy of the Shroud and that the images had been painted. They also contended that, since nothing was known of a Shroud before the year 1171 when one was shown in Constantinople, there are ten centuries of silence about the existence of the Shroud of Our Savior to be accounted for, if it had been preserved.

That was how matters stood from 1578 to 1898. In that year when the Shroud was exposed, the images on it were photographed and to the surprise of all, it was found that the photograph was not the expected negative but a positive. This showed clearly that the images on the Shroud had not been painted, as the bishop of Troyes had claimed in 1389, but that the impression was made by the body that had been anointed and wrapped in the Shroud. This impression therefore served as the negative image that gave the positive on being exposed to the camera. And the idea of painting a negative could never have occurred to a medieval painter.

At this discovery the defenders of the Shroud took heart and were led to undertake further studies. Recourse was first had to

the history of weaving, and it was found that the weft of the Shroud was of a pattern that was unknown in medieval Europe, but was common in the ancient East. From anatomy it was proved that the images on the Shroud could not be a painting but the impression made by the body of a man that had been crucified. Reference to the manner of burial among the Jews and to the details in the Gospel of the burial of Our Savior give grounds for the probability that the man crucified, crowned with thorns and with his side pierced, was Jesus Christ Our Lord.

The author sees the possible alternative that the body was that of one of the many men crucified in ancient times. But he insists that in the various accounts of crucifixion one will search in vain for an instance of the crucified being crowned with thorns and having his side opened with a spear. What he will find is that the crucified were left hanging on the cross to die of exhaustion or be devoured by dogs and wild beasts, and if they were taken down from the cross, it was not to be wrapped in a shroud of fine linen, but to be thrown into a ditch.

The author is to be congratulated for the objectivity that characterizes his work, for having shown the futility of the arguments urged and not without bitterness by his oponents, and for having advanced the problem of the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin down to the present stage where it still remains to find evidence of its existence during the years that intervened between 33 A.D. and 1171. The author should be encouraged to pursue that search.

For the future as in the past the exposition of the Holy Shroud of Turin will continue to be an occasion for nourishing the faith and increasing the devotion of the Christian people directly to Him who was crucified, wrapped in fine linen, laid in the tomb and now reigns in glory.

This book is well printed in clear type, has two indices, thirty-four illustrations, thirty-five pages of notes and eleven pages of bibliography.

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