

Episcopal Racial Fight

Bishop Manning Breaks Into Church Locked Against Negroes and Speaks His Mind on the Need of Racial Equality

ALL Soul's Episcopal Church is in Harlem, New York's "black belt." This once lily white congregation has been engulfed by the spreading colored population. Opposition to negro parishioners reached a point when an element of the white vestry asked the rector, the Rev. Rollin W. Dodd, to resign. He refused. When he arrived at church the following Sunday morning the door was locked. Repairs were being made inside, it was said. The keyless Dr. Dodd appealed to Bishop



Manning

William T. Manning, whose especial charge is the wealthy congregation at the great Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Wearing his miter and vestments, the conservative Episcopal prelate hied himself to All Soul's church. The door was still locked. He in turn called for a locksmith. While policemen lined up outside, the lock was broken and the bishop entered and unburdened himself of his views of racial equality before a mixed congregation augmented by the commotion.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, for all are one in Christ Jesus," he said in asserting that the colored race had the right "to the full and free use" of the edifice. Bishop Manning's extemporaneous sermon was a rebuke to the rebellious vestrymen. He said in part:

Until a few years ago this community and the congregation of this church were formed almost entirely of white people. In recent years, however, the community has changed more and more to a community of colored people until at the present time the great majority is of the colored race, and many of them are members of our own Church.

The rector of the parish holds that it is his duty and the duty of the parish to minister to the people who now live in this neighborhood and to admit them all to the services and ministrations of the church. In this the rector is supported by four members of the vestry and opposed by seven. Three of the four vestrymen who support the rector live in the neighborhood. Of the seven who oppose the rector and demand that the colored people shall be excluded, only two live in this region.

My judgment as bishop of the diocese is that it is the plain duty of All Soul's Church to minister to the people of the community, white and colored alike, and that the rector has taken the only position that he could take as a faithful minister of the Church of God.

In these days of world crisis when we are in the midst of movements social and racial the results of which none can foresee, we must stand more than ever before for that divine vision of the Holy, Catholic Church, that great visible Family of Christ in all the world, which St. Paul sees and holds up before us in his epistles, in which there is to be neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, for all are to be one in Christ Jesus. It is the realization of this New Testament, divinely given, ideal of the church of God, uniting men of all races and creeds which is needed to draw all races together in love and fellowship, to sweep out the spirit of hate and fear, to banish war, and to draw us into one great brotherhood of Christ throughout the whole world.

British born, Bishop Manning received part of his education in the South where, from 1898 to 1903, he was rector of Christ church, Nashville, and previously was professor of dogmatic theology at the University of the South. It was Bishop Manning who last summer caused former Judge Ben Lindsey, modernist, to be evicted from his cathedral and ousted a "Body and Soul" clinic from the church of St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery.