THE SAYINGS OF JESUS
by T.W. Manson
(Zerdman's, 346 pp., $7.95 paper)

First published in 1937, this New Testa-
tament study has proved a classic. Its reappearance in paperback is most well-
come. Manson's understanding of Jesus is highly ethical and opposed to the themes of "crisis theology" that were becoming dominant in the 1930s. He contends that Jesus did not propose a mere "interim ethic" for a sect of frant-
ic exchatological hope, but a universal, albeit not legislatable, direction for hu-
man life both individually and in com-

Correspondence (from p. 4)

given Kissinger's sense of history and given the enormous effort to write so
detailed a book, a defense based on lies
could at best buy time while it com-
pounded the indictment history would
inevitably bring down. Perhaps when
all the records are open, that will be the
verdict.

To say that Kissinger was guided at
least to some extent by moral principles
is not to require concurrence with his
particular moral judgments. In fact it is
not at all clear to me how well the dis-
tinction between necessity and choice
holds up. Exactly how necessary is
necessity? Surely the degree differs
from case to case, and surely practical
considerations color the evaluation.
Was the "necessity" of Vietnam worth
the thousands of lives, the billions of
dollars? I do not ask that question rhe-
torically, the "necessity" of pursuing a
particular policy in Vietnam may have
come at too high a price. And the price
we should be willing to pay for one
"necessity" (say, defending our borders
against invasion) is not necessarily the
same as that for some other "necessity"
(defending South Vietnam).

But if there is room for moral debate,
it cannot come about by denying one
side of the debate any moral principles
at all. As an active partisan in the Viet-
nam debate, I have been unable for ten
years to look again at Vietnam. The
White House Years and the recent vol-
ume by Guenter Lewy are the first I
have been able to consider. The con-
tinuing assessments of Vietnam will
occupy all of us for years to come, but
they will be with my generation for its
entire life, just as the Depression and
the Second World War were with the
previous generation. Together with the
Civil Rights movement, the antiwar
movement defined our political con-
sciousness. But we will not expiate the
shadow of Vietnam by casting doubt on
the morality of those with whom, per-
haps wrongly, we disagreed.

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THE POPE AT DROGHEDA

To the Editors. Your magazine should
be commended for being, to my knowl-
edge, the only American publication to
make reference to the pope's speech at
Drogheda, in Ireland, before he came to
this country (Paul F. Power, "The Pope
and Northern Ireland," January-February).

In my view, the Drogheda speech
was the pope's most significant of his
entire trip. It was a fervent attack on
terrorism. Coming on the heels of John
Paul's visit to Auschwitz, the site of
crimes by Christians against the Jewish
people, it was obvious that his remarks
were not only intended for the ears of
Irish terrorists but also for the PLO and
other Arab terrorist groups intent on
destroying the Jewish state of Israel,
which the Christian world helped es-
tablish as an atonement for the crimes
at Auschwitz....

The most significant part of the
speech was the pope's announcement
that he would use the same appeal in
his address to the United Nations! This
is what he said on that subject: "I hope
to address the United Nations Organi-
zation on these same problems of peace
and war, justice and human rights.
These questions I shall be discussing
before United Nations Assembly in a
few days." However he did not. He
mentioned nothing about terrorism and
violence in his speech before the U.N.

The question therefore arises. What
went wrong? Why did the pope change
his mind and delete the attack on ter-
rorism in his U.N. address?

Friends of mine who are close to the
Vatican have intimated that he was
sought forgiveness for his political par-
ticipation in the Vietnam war, an
oblique contribution as executive of
the World Bank would scarcely qualify
him for pardon.

There are breaches of duty. One con-
sists of acts of commission, while an-
other entails acts of omission. As to the
former, perhaps Robert McNamara
is not culpable. His commitment to the
Vietnam war and policies might very
well have been undertaken in total
good faith. On that score, judging him
is difficult. But, respecting the latter
(acts of omission), Mr. McNamara
stands guilty.

After leaving office why couldn't he
provide us with the benefit of his expe-
rience and insights and furnish us with
guidance relative to the continuation of
the war under Nixon and Kissinger?

What course of extrication?

Forbear and Forget?

To the Editors. With regard to "The
Vietnam War: Is It Time to Forgive and
Forget?—Three Views" (Worldview,
January-February), permit the under-
signed yet a fourth view.

If one forgets, then, alas, there is no
lesson derived therefrom, that would
be immoral. Forgiving, however, re-
quires mutuality of obligation, it can-
not be a unilateral act. Hence, it
appears that if Robert McNamara
sought forgiveness for his political par-
ticipation in the Vietnam war, an
oblique contribution as executive of
the World Bank would scarcely qualify
him for pardon.

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What course of extrication?

Misplaced loyalty, personal pride,
and prestige accounted for his silence.
A bolstered image, for him, was deci-
sive. Thus, Robert McNamara merits
our scorn and is deemed unworthy of
the award.

Elliott A. Cohen
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