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# The EVANGELICAL STUDENT

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## EDITORIAL

THE great fact about the Bible that must underlie all our thinking concerning it, and acting with reference to it, is the fact that it is *the* revelation from God to mankind. In an absolutely unique sense, it brings to men an authoritative message about God, about sin, and about the divine plan of salvation. It is upon the basis of this revelation that faith springs up in our hearts through the operation of the Spirit. Just here is the vital point. Faith does not engender revelation. It is the reverse which is true. Of course, the new being which results from saving faith will understand the divine revelation in a new way, but faith cannot produce revelation. That it can, is the mistaken idea which underlies a great deal of common talk and thought upon religious matters today. People say, "It does not matter so much what you believe, as long as you have a sincere belief," or, "You will find God by sincere trying, no matter what your particular form of belief." But there is no basis in the Scriptures for such ideas, nor are they borne out by sound practical experience. Sincere faith produces no revelation concerning the truth about God or man. The chief effect of its sincerity is to heighten its tragedy. The only sensible course is to beware of putting our faith in any form of spiritual or mystical exercise which has not solid authority in the teachings of Scripture. The purpose of Scripture is to reveal the truth about God and about man's relationship to God. Through the new birth, this scriptural revelation becomes a spring of living truth for each individual. It is the only safe fountain at which to quench one's thirst.

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"Sin" is a word which people ordinarily do not like to hear, because they do not wish to be reminded of the unpleasant reality which it describes. They prefer to believe that sin is simply a figment of the imagination or, if they admit its existence, they do not enjoy being reminded of its true character. Possibly these truths have something to do with the observable fact that in that science which enjoys such a vogue at present, the science of comparative religions, the teaching of the various religions concerning sin is given comparatively little attention. In his latest book, *Der Mittler*, Emil Brunner calls attention to the fact that were a general history of religion to be written from the standpoint of the conception of sin as the dominant standard of comparison, "the theories of historical religious parallelism would collapse like a spider's web." This is cleaving with Excalibur itself, for is it not the essentially heinous character of sin which is the factor universally interrupting the fellowship of God

with man? To make a restoration of this intercourse and communion possible was the purpose of the coming to earth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is only in the Atonement made by Jesus Christ that we find a satisfactory solution of the problem of sin. That is why Christianity is not one religion among many, *una inter pares*, but the one and only divine revelation. It alone has provided an actual solution of the problem of bridging the gulf which was cleft by sin between man and God.

It is a startling fact, and one that may well give pause for thought today, that the full glory of the gospel cannot be understood or appreciated without a realization of the essential justice of God and of the meaning of His anger. The obvious reason is that the gospel involves deliverance from something, and unless we know what our rightful deserts, without the grace of God, would be, and know from what we have been delivered, we cannot appreciate the magnitude of that deliverance. But our rightful deserts are not a pleasant subject for thought, so it is much easier, as Christians, not to think about where and what we would be without God but simply to go on enjoying the fruits of the gospel of grace. Nevertheless the wrath of God is tremendously real. Let us praise God that this is true, for without it the justice of God would be a mockery. The shield of the Christian, however, is the ransom paid by the death of our Lord. In thankfulness for the matchless grace of God we may find complete shelter under the blood from the fearful wrath which would otherwise be our just desert.

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“You cannot get any time to be alone and quiet at college” is the way one girl recently expressed, in the hearing of the writer, one of the major difficulties with which a Christian student has to fight. It is no new difficulty, though it is probably accentuated every year. Noise and restlessness are constantly on the increase in America as a whole, not only in college. However, the fact still remains that a period of quiet can usually be found, if one wants it ardently enough. The kernel of the problem lies here: Lack of time to be quiet, in meditation and in prayer, usually means that there is a superfluity of sleepy quietude in one’s soul, heart and brain. As soon as one begins to face one’s own lacks, failures, deficiencies and to contemplate the overwhelming completeness, perfection and sufficiency of God, there can be no quiet in the heart and brain until a new relationship is established, until God is again sought, that God concerning whom Paul said, “I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.” (Philippians 4: 13.) Then quiet will again be restored, but it will not be the quiet of mental and spiritual obtuseness but the quiet of confidence such as obtains when one knows that a supremely skilful captain is on the liner’s bridge. And this type of quiet is nourished by that regular prayer time for which supreme need will find a place.

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“Everything which is true in philosophy and religion is Christ!” Here in a nutshell is the essence of one of the principal tenets of Modernism. The figure of Jesus Christ who walked this earth as a man among men, Son of God though He was, has become so tenuous to the thought of

many that His name no longer carries to their minds a firm connection with historical fact, but rather has become a label for whatever ideals seem of highest worth and value. The fact that Jesus Christ lived on this earth, ate and drank, had intercourse with ordinary men and women, was condemned and crucified, rose again from the dead, and ascended,—all within the realm of time and space,—these matters of historic record have become so shadowy that the revelation of God which Christ specifically affirmed, the principles which he enunciated, his own conception of the work which he came to do, his specific declaration concerning the purpose of His death (“to give his life a ransom for many.” [Matthew 20:28]) have largely been forgotten. Indeed, what Kierkegaard said of the process of history with regard to an idea in general applies here, “Unfortunately this process . . . consists not in purifying the idea, which never is purer than at the inception; oh, no, it consists in gradually and increasingly botching, bungling, and making a mess of, the idea, in using up the idea, in . . . adding the impurer elements which it lacked: until at last, by the enthusiastic and mutually appreciative efforts of successive generations, the idea has absolutely disappeared and the very opposite of the original idea is now called the idea, which is then asserted to have arisen through a historic process by which the idea is purified and elevated.” These are strong phrases, yet they are an accurate description of the process which Christianity is today undergoing at the hands of many that call themselves its friends.

It is this confusion as to what Christianity is, which made it possible for Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick to say recently, to a large student audience at an eastern university, “The Christian gospel is not what we ought to be but what we are. You are the sons of God, and therefore you should be religious. The young people who have been taught that religion is what they ought to be rather than what they are take a disheartened attitude, because it seems impossible.” And again, “You are a son of God and because you are, you are.” Jesus was at the farthest possible remove from calling the natural, unregenerate men and women whom he met every day on the roads of Palestine “sons of God” in any such sense. On the contrary, he even said to some of them, “If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God. . . . Ye are of your father the devil. . . . He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God.” (John 8:42, 44, 47.) John tells us the way to become sons of God. It is not accomplished just by being what we are. It requires a change in our inmost beings, for, says John, “As many as received Him (Christ) to *them* gave He the right to *become* children of God, even to them that believe on His name.” (John 1:12.)

This is the gospel, belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, resulting in a changed heart and a changed life. Such a gospel requires a real Christ upon which our belief can center. A Christ made up of ideals, truths, values, synthesized by our own imperfect minds, will never work the change. The Jesus who died on the cross for the redemption of all men who would come to Him is the only sufficient Saviour.

## BEING IN TUNE WITH GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

LEANDER S. KEYSER

THE secret is an open one. How to be in tune with God and everything good is clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Many relevant texts might be cited, but my mind has become fixed on one special passage: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we now stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1, 2). It is ever so: we must always go to the Bible for the solution of our deepest problems. Mere human wisdom can never solve them.

The Pauline passage above cited reveals the only way and the sure way by which to be in accord with God and all the Good, namely, by accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Of course, that is precisely what Christ Himself taught. When Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Jesus made this terse reply, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

There we have it all made primer plain: the only way to find God and to find peace with Him is through acceptance of Jesus Christ. That is the gist of Christianity; indeed, it *is* Christianity. Christianity is not "a way of life." It is a way of salvation through faith in Christ, the Redeemer; and then its fruitage is the true way of life in harmony with God and all the Good.

Let us analyze this text of Scripture (Rom. 5:1), and see how wonderfully this comes about. "Therefore, being justified by faith," says the text. What does the Scripture mean by justification by faith, and what do our evangelical theologies mean? They mean, first, the imputation of Christ's work and merit to the penitent and believing seeker after salvation. Let us not be frightened at that big word "imputation." There is no *Schrecklichkeit* about it. When rightly understood, it is a holy word; yes, a sweet and rhythmic word. It simply means that everything that Christ did through infinite self-sacrificing love for the penitent sinner is counted over in his behalf on the simple condition of his accepting it. Would it not be so strange as to be anomalous if the Son of God should have become incarnate and so have done something benevolent and gracious for you and me, and then, when we accept the gratuity, God would refuse to reckon it to our credit and place it in our behalf? God does not act in so arbitrary and inconsistent a way. Even if a human being does another a gratuitous favor, the benefactor's gift is made over to his beneficiary the moment he accepts the gift. The substitutional atonement which Christ made for sinners lies in the very structure of a moral and spiritual economy.

Moreover, if the Son of God did not come into the world and suffer in our stead the condign punishment due us on account of our sins, then God does not truly love us, because then He was not willing to make any

sacrifice for our redemption; then all His professions of love are but hollow sound; then He let one of His human creatures go to the cross and suffer for some unknown reason, but was not Himself willing to be wounded for man's transgression. What a poor conception of God and His love!

But, no! such is not the God of Christianity. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"; "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Therefore, in justification all the gracious vicarious work that Christ did for sinful humanity is counted over to the sinner's credit on condition of its acceptance by faith, and thus the sinner is acquitted.

Of course, justification is the ground of pardon and goes with it. The justified sinner is, by the very nature of the case, a forgiven sinner. Thus when the believing sinner is justified and pardoned, all alienation between God and him is removed, and so he has peace with God. It is beautiful to note how thoroughly God forgives us sinners when we repent and believe. He is not like the people who say that they "will forgive, but will not forget"; which means that within their hearts they will continue to cherish a grudge. Not so with our justifying God. He says, "I will blot your sins out of the book of my remembrance"; "I will remove them as far from you as the east is from the west," which can never come together; "I will cast them into the depth of the sea."

Bible teaching is always basic: always in accord with fundamental principles which lie in the very structure and constitution of things. Why is it, then, that men are justified by *faith*? Why are they not justified on some other condition? Our answer is: Because God knows human psychology. He created the human mind in His own image, and, therefore, knows all about its constitution. We are saved by grace alone, not by any human merit. But if man were justified, say, by love, he would contribute something to his salvation, and so it would not come purely by grace. If man were justified by good works or the keeping of the law, he would contribute something to his salvation, and that again would nullify the principle of saving grace. Faith is the only faculty of the human mind which simply *receives*, but which contributes nothing—the only purely receptive functioning power of the soul.

Hence faith has no merit; it simply accepts God's gratuity. And that simply adds to the sinner's demerit, because he must accept salvation just like a poor beggar, and can do nothing whatever to merit it. Hence salvation is "through faith that it may be according to grace." Again: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Oh, "the sweet reasonableness" of the gospel of justifying faith!

One of the blessed results of justification by faith is "peace with God." It must be so. Since God has pardoned the sinner on account of Christ's vicarious work of self-abnegating love, surely all estrangement between God and the justified sinner has been removed. Then, too, a new and holy principle of life has been created in and imparted to man through regeneration—for justification and regeneration, although distinct acts of God,

must always be linked together; thus the believing person is at one with God through both imputed and inherent righteousness. God has forgiven him, and that means that God is reconciled; and the person has been cleansed from sin and made a new creature in Christ, and that brings him *en rapport* with the holy God.

No wonder the apostle speaks of "the peace of God which passeth all understanding!" Our Lord also accentuated this same accordant principle when He said: "Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you"; "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God and believe in me." Composure of soul can come only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Peace with God causes peace all around. In tune with God puts one in tune with the universe. One does not need to ask, "Is the universe friendly?" for Christian believers know that the God who created, upholds and redeems the universe is their friend, and, therefore, the universe is friendly. They can say, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

But more. If we have peace with God, it will put us at peace with our own consciences. Our sins are forgiven; our hearts are cleansed and renewed; we have become "new creatures in Christ."

Nor is that all; peace with God and the universe and our own consciences, begets within us love and good will toward all our fellowmen. How happy is he who can say, "I hate no one! I love everybody in the whole round world! I love even my enemies and pray that the blessing of heaven may come richly upon them."

What is the grand resultant of it all? This: Justified by faith in my Lord Jesus Christ, I can look upward into God's face, and find peace there. I can look about me at God's heaven and earth, and feel at peace with them. I can look within my own readjusted and harmonized soul, and feel a blessed peace reigning there. I can regard my fellowmen, and feel good will toward all of them. Thus I am in tune with God and the universe.

## IS THE BIBLE RIGHT ABOUT JESUS?

II. THE WITNESS OF PAUL <sup>1</sup>

J. GRESHAM MACHEN

WE are considering the question whether the Bible is right about Jesus. This morning we considered, in a necessarily very brief and summary way, what the Bible says about Jesus; because obviously it is necessary to determine what the Bible says before we can consider the question whether what the Bible says is true. Certainly what the Bible says about Jesus contains many mysteries; but the distinctive features of it at least can be put almost in a word. Jesus of Nazareth, according to the Bible, was no product of this world, but a Saviour come voluntarily into this world from without. His entrance into the world was a stupendous miracle. While He was on earth He manifested a wondrous control over the forces of Nature. His death was no mere holy martyrdom, but an event of cosmic significance, a sacrifice for the sins of the world. His resurrection was no mere vain aspiration in the hearts of His disciples, but a mighty act of God. That is what the Bible says about Jesus.

That account, in practically all of the larger Churches today, is faced by an alternative account. According to that alternative account Jesus of Nazareth was the fairest of the children of men. He lived a life of wonderful purity and unselfishness. He was conscious of a wonderful closeness to God. He felt that He had a mission to bring others to that closeness of relationship with God that He Himself had. In order to express His sense of that mission He was unfortunately forced to use the categories of thought that prevailed in His day, and so He made the claim to be the Jewish Messiah. At first He won the favor of the crowd, but since He would not be the kind of leader that they desired He fell under their condemnation. He fell a victim, finally, to the hostility of the leaders of His people and the cowardice of the Roman governor, and died the common death of the criminals of that day upon the cross. After His death, His disciples were utterly discouraged. Even when He had been with them they had been far inferior to Him in spiritual discernment and in courage, and now that He was taken from them what little power they might have had seemed to be gone. They fled from Him in cowardly flight in the hour of His dire need. But then after His death they began to meditate upon His life with them, and as they mused thus upon their intercourse with Him the impression that His person had made upon them was too strong for them to believe that He had perished. Predisposed psychologically in that way they experienced certain hallucinations—experiences in which the optic nerve is really affected, but affected

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<sup>1</sup> This is the second of a series of three addresses, given in King's Hall, London, on June 10, 1927, under the auspices of The Bible League of Great Britain. It has been revised by the author for *The Evangelical Student*, and is printed by his kind permission and that of The Bible League. The first address of the series was published in the October 1928 issue of this magazine, and it is planned to publish the third and final one in the next issue, that for April, 1929.



by a pathological condition in the subject himself, not by something in the external world. They thought they saw Him; and perhaps they thought they heard a word or two of His ringing in their ears. These pathological experiences were the means by which the influence of Jesus was continued upon the earth; they were the means by which those weak, discouraged disciples were changed into the spiritual conquerors of the world! It was really, we are told, just the personal influence of Jesus; but the personal influence of Jesus made itself felt, according to this account, in that pathological form.

The really great question in the modern Church is this: Which of these two accounts of Jesus is correct? People often obscure this issue, and tell us that we should not pay too much attention to theological controversy. Let us just be good Christians, we are told, and have faith in Jesus, and not bother our heads about the theological issue of the present day! Of course, such a way of thinking ignores the central question at issue. The central question is whether Jesus of Nazareth was such a one as that faith in Him for men of the twentieth century is absurd, or whether He was such a One as the Bible presents to us, in whom we can have confidence for this world and for the world to come.

How shall we as historians investigate this all-important question? It is customary in modern discussion of the question to begin with certain interesting documents which have come down to us from the first century of our era. I refer to the Epistles of Paul. There we have a fixed starting-point in all controversy. All serious historians of the present day, whether they are Christians or not, are agreed that most of the Epistles of Paul, to say the least, were actually written by the man whose name they bear. There we have at least a fixed point in controversy.

Now, if you will examine the Epistles of Paul, you will discover, even on the basis of those Epistles alone, quite apart from the Gospels, and quite apart even from the Book of Acts (though the general outline of the life of Paul in the Book of Acts is generally accepted even by sceptical historians of the present day), that the Paul who wrote those letters was actually a contemporary of the Jesus of Nazareth whose life we are studying today. He speaks in one of the universally accepted Epistles of having come into contact with the brother of this Jesus (namely, in Gal. 1:19). So Paul was a contemporary of Jesus, a man of the first Christian generation, a man who according to his own testimony had been in direct contact with the brother of Jesus and with Peter, the chief of the intimate friends of Jesus.

The testimony of such a man with regard to the all-important question of the origin of our religion, which is also the question of the truth of our religion, is certainly of the utmost value.

If you will examine the Epistles of Paul you will discover one fact at least—you will discover that Paul was a man who had among his other gifts a remarkable gift of self-revelation. It is perfectly true that we know comparatively little of the details of his life; even if we use all the sources of information which are contained in the New Testament long years of his life are a complete blank. During a large part of his life

we cannot trace his movements; we are left entirely in the dark. Despite that fact, however, we are given in the Epistles such intimate contact with the man himself that it is a true word which, I believe, has somewhere been spoken, that Paul is probably the best known man of antiquity.

There are men whom one never comes to know. There are men with whom I have had contact day after day and year after year, and whom yet I have never come to *know*. There are other men into communion with whom I can come by the briefest intercourse. So it is with the Apostle Paul. Without a touch of morbid introspection, without vanity, in the most natural and genuine way, he has allowed us a glimpse into his very inmost soul. He has revealed to us the depths of his life; he has revealed that which makes him great in the history of the world, namely (if I may use the fashionable modern term), his wonderful "religious experience."

As it is looked at thus from the outside by modern historians, the religion of Paul is a matter about which there can be some agreement. The religion of Paul, it is discovered, is distinctly a religion of redemption. It is a religion of redemption in that it begins with the most thoroughgoing pessimism with regard to the condition of humanity that could possibly be imagined. You may understand the difference between a religion of redemption and what is not a religion of redemption by comparing the religion of Paul with the religion of the Modernist Church. The religion of the Modernist Church is a distinctive example of a religion which is *not* a redemptive religion. It begins with optimism as to the present condition of humanity. It begins with what a famous preacher in America has designated as an article which should certainly be put into our creed, namely, "I believe in man." That is not a religion of redemption.

But the religion of Paul—as is recognized just as clearly, in some instances at least, by modern historians who do not at all accept that religion for themselves, as it is by conservative scholars—the religion of Paul is distinctly a religion of redemption. It begins with the most radical pessimism with regard to the present condition of mankind that could possibly be imagined. Such pessimism, of course, fills with disgust and horror the modern historians of whom I have spoken; but they must recognize the fact that whether they themselves like it or not such was the religion of Paul. Paul believed that the human race is lost in sin, and that a divine event took place outside the walls of Jerusalem when Jesus of Nazareth died apparently as a criminal upon the Cross—that there an event took place which put a new face upon the world, an event of cosmic significance that brought about a revolution in those who were affected by it so far as their relation to God is concerned.

Of course, that character of the religion of Paul as a redemptive religion involves necessarily a certain view of the One by whom redemption was wrought. It is inconceivable that a mere man could by his death thus effect something of cosmic significance. So it is not surprising that Paul held a very peculiar view of this Jesus of Nazareth. It is perfectly plain—I mean on the basis of the Epistles alone—that Paul separated Jesus from ordinary humanity, and placed Him on the side of God. It is indeed

disputed, though I think wrongly, by modern historians whether he ever applied to Jesus the Greek word which we translate by the word "God" in our English Bible. According to any common-sense interpretation of Romans 9:5, he certainly did; and the fact is recognized even by some whose general view of the religion of Paul might make another interpretation to them more agreeable. But that is a question of minor importance, because it is perfectly plain, at any rate, that Paul constantly applies to Jesus the Greek term which is translated "Lord"; and that term is the term which is used in the Greek Old Testament, that Paul used, to translate the word "Jehovah," the most awful and holy name of the God of Israel.

Moreover, it is interesting to observe that just the most recent research has demonstrated, or thinks it has demonstrated, the fact that even in the pagan world of that day that word "Lord" was distinctly a term of divinity. Hence it is a case where "a little learning is a dangerous thing" when some modern preachers never use the word "Lord" in reference to Jesus, but use only the word "Master." It is perfectly true that the Greek word *kyrios* ("Lord") is used to designate "master" in ordinary human relationship; but it is also perfectly clear that its connotation as it is used in the New Testament is entirely different. Modern men sometimes use the word "Master" predominantly with reference to Jesus with the notion that they need a simple word used in ordinary life. But as a matter of fact they should not seek an ordinary word if they are to translate the word *kyrios*; but they should seek a highly specialized word; and such a word is the word *kyrios* in the Epistles of Paul. Paul's terminology for the Trinity is this: *theos*, "God"; *kyrios*, "Lord"; *pneuma*, "Spirit."<sup>2</sup> But it is just the same Trinity of three Persons in one God as that which is designated by "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost."

So the terminology bears out the fact that Paul regards Jesus as clearly on the side of God. But we do not need to depend upon the terminology; because the thing itself is perfectly plain. At the beginning of the Epistle to the Galatians, we have these truly stupendous words—to modern sceptical historians they seem to be most extraordinary, however familiar they may have become to us—"Paul, an apostle not from men nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." There we have a separation of Jesus Christ from ordinary humanity and the placing of Him on the side of God!

It is true that Paul elsewhere speaks of Jesus as a man. He speaks elsewhere of "the man Christ Jesus." But if you will examine those passages you may discover that Paul speaks of Jesus as a man as though it were something strange, something wonderful that He should be a man; and at any rate the prevailing way in which he speaks of Jesus involves a clear separation of Jesus from ordinary humanity and a placing of Him on the side of God.

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<sup>2</sup> See Warfield, *The Lord of Glory*, 1907, p. 231.

But you do not need to appeal to individual passages, because the outstanding fact is that Paul stands everywhere in a religious relationship to Jesus Christ. The religion of Paul does not consist merely in having faith in God like the faith which Jesus had in God, but it consists essentially in having faith in Jesus Christ. Modern sceptical historians again may be our teachers here; for they regard that as the supreme problem in the history of the Church. The supreme problem to these historians is the problem how in the world a faith in God like the faith which Jesus had in God and which these historians regard Jesus Himself as having inculcated in His disciples can ever have given place, by a stupendous, a momentous change, upon which nineteen centuries of history have been based, to a faith in Jesus Himself. And that change took place before the time of Paul. That is a fact which cannot be denied—Jesus was for Paul not primarily an example for faith but an object of faith.

Of course, if you hold, as most of us here present no doubt hold, that Jesus was truly God, then this attitude of Paul is cause for no surprise. But far different is it if you occupy the position of modern historians who regard Jesus as a mere man. In that case, you have Jesus, a mere man; and then you have Paul, one of His contemporaries, according to the Epistles whose genuineness everyone admits, separating this Jesus from ordinary humanity and placing Him on the side of God. If that be the way in which we are to look at it, what we have here is an extraordinary instance of deification, the attribution of deity to a mere man on the part, not of later generations, but of one of His contemporaries.

I have often quoted (for I think it is significant) the admission of a man who, I suppose, was the typical representative of that view of Jesus which regards Jesus as a mere man, namely, the late H. J. Holtzmann. Holtzmann said that for this extraordinary deification of the man Jesus as it appears in the Epistles of Paul he was able to cite no parallel in the religious history of the race.<sup>3</sup> Oh, you may say, how about the deification of the Roman Emperors, either at their death or during their lifetime? But that is totally different in its lack of seriousness, and far more important than all that, it is totally different from this deification of the man Jesus because it is found in a polytheistic environment. If Paul had been a polytheist who could believe in many gods, then perhaps he might have added Jesus to the gods that he already worshipped. But Paul was clearly a monotheist; for if the Pharisaic Judaism of the first century was anything it was an enthusiastic monotheism. I suppose its insistence upon monotheism was not exceeded even by the Mohammedanism of the present day. Monotheism was the very centre and core of their belief—a horror of many gods, and a separation of God from the world. Yet it was this monotheist, sprung from a race of monotheists, who in his Epistles everywhere places the man Jesus, who had lived a short time before, and had died a shameful death, clearly on the side of God, and pays to Him homage that is due to God alone.

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<sup>3</sup> Holtzmann, in *Protestantische Monatshefte*, iv, 1900, pp. 465f, and in *Christliche Welt*, xxiv, 1910, column 153.

If we went no further we should be led to ask who this Jesus was who could thus be raised to deity by one of His contemporaries. But our surprise as historians reaches its height when we observe this curious fact—that Paul does not argue about this strange view of Jesus. Paul does not seem, in his earlier Epistles at least, where he is dealing with Palestinian Judaism, to regard this lofty view of Jesus as a thing about which one word of argument was needed. “Oh,” you may say, “Paul, of course, was not in the habit of arguing!” Well, was he not? When it came to matters about which there was a dispute in the churches of his day, we may thank God that Paul was not a man who was averse to argument or controversy, because if Paul had been a man averse to controversy, as many leaders of the Modernist Church say that they are, we should have no Christianity today—I mean, when we look at the thing from the human point of view. God might have raised up another instrument; but as a matter of fact it was through the Apostle Paul and men like him that our Christianity was preserved.

No, Paul certainly was in the habit of arguing. He argues about the place of the law, for example, and the all-sufficiency of faith, and the like; but when it comes to this truly stupendous view which he has of Jesus he seems to assume that his view is also the view even of his bitter opponents like the Judaizers attacked in the Epistle to the Galatians. Nowhere does there appear to have been in the early apostolic age any color of support for disagreement with the view held by Paul of the person of Christ.

One can hardly avoid the conclusion, on the basis of a study of the Epistles of Paul, that when Paul does not argue about this matter it is because no argument was needed, because Paul's view was accepted as a matter of course. That involves this stupendous conclusion, that Peter and the very brother of Jesus, men who had walked and talked with Jesus on earth, who had seen Him subject to the petty limitations of human life—that these men actually agreed with this stupendous view of Jesus as a supernatural Person, an object of worship, as He is presented in the Epistles of Paul.

On the basis of the Epistles alone, therefore, we should ask ourselves: “Who was this Jesus? What manner of Person was He that He could thus be raised to divine dignity, not by later generations, but by His own intimate friends?”

The religion of Paul is a phenomenon of history that requires an explanation, and the modern historians have been willing to accept the challenge. The central problem, I suppose, which has confronted modern historians who have tried to construct the origin of Christianity without building it upon a supernatural Christ, is the problem of the origin of this religion of Paul. Four hypotheses with regard to it may be distinguished.

The first is the simple one that Paul's religion was founded upon the real Christ; that Paul came to believe Jesus to be a supernatural Person for the simple reason that as a matter of fact Jesus *was* a supernatural Person; in other words, that Paul's religion is founded upon the actual descent of a supernatural Person into this world for its redemption, whose

death was an event of cosmic significance, and whose resurrection followed as the completion of His redeeming work. That is the supernaturalistic hypothesis, and if that be accepted the whole problem is solved.

But there are other explanations which have been proposed in recent years, and they are alike in denying the entrance into this world of any creative act of God in distinction from the use by God of the forces of nature. The first of these explanations is the "Liberal" or Ritschlian view, which has been dominant in many quarters in the Church for a good many years. There are some indications that among scholars this reconstruction is tottering to its ruin, but still in America, and I believe in this country as well, it dominates the popular presentation of Christianity from the modern naturalistic point of view. According to this explanation, Paul was a true disciple of Jesus in his religious experience, but Paul's theology was the mere temporary form in which in his day that religious experience had to be expressed. That is the hypothesis. You must distinguish the kernel from the husk, it is said. Paul was really affected by the lofty moral life of the real human person, Jesus of Nazareth; but he had to express what he owed to Jesus in the (now outworn) categories of his time—the notion of the atoning death of Christ and the like. It is the business of the modern Christian, according to that view, to discard the husk in order to retain the precious kernel. Paul's religion, according to that formula, comes from the real Jesus, and is a permanent possession of the human race, while Paul's theology, being the mere temporary husk to preserve that kernel, was derived from other sources, and may now safely be discarded by the modern Church.

That hypothesis has been set forth in dozens or hundreds of brilliant books. But in 1904 it suffered a most extraordinary attack, not from a conservative scholar, but from a radical historian, namely William Wrede of Breslau, who pointed out that the whole separation between Paul's religion and Paul's theology, is quite unhistorical, that the religion of Paul is intimately connected with his theology, and that in the Epistles of Paul you do not find quotations of the words of Jesus and citations of His example, but what you do find is the reiteration again and again of the cosmic significance of His death and resurrection.

Of course it was easy for the "Liberal" or Ritschlian historians to point out the excesses of Wrede's view. It was perfectly easy for them to show that Wrede was wrong in supposing that Paul knew little or nothing about the details of the words and deeds of Jesus. It was easy to show that Paul tells in his Epistles more than Wrede supposed, and that he knew far more than in the Epistles he has chosen to tell. The incidental way in which he refers to the institution of the Lord's Supper, for example, seems clearly to show that his information was taken from a fund of further information which was given to the Churches in the beginning. "The Lord Jesus, the night in which He was betrayed"—do you not see that it presupposes a whole account of the events connected with the betrayal? We know what is meant because we have read the story in the Gospels, but it would be a riddle if we did not know about the betrayal by Judas. And elsewhere, as well as in this passage, it is

easy to see that Paul had evidently told the Churches far more than in the Epistles he has found occasion to repeat. And indeed that is altogether natural; because if these people in the Churches were asked to take a man who had lived but a few years before as their Saviour, the object of their adoration, questions would have to be asked and answered as to what manner of Person this was.

Wrede's opponents in the camp of modern Liberalism were able to point out the defects of his reconstruction, but they utterly failed to refute him at the central point; it is perfectly clear, as Wrede observed, that the very centre of Paul's religious life is found just in those things which the Liberal historians had rejected or had minimized as a mere temporary expression of some deeper experience, namely, the significance of the Cross of Christ, and so on. Where does the current of Paul's religious life run full and free? Surely it is in the great theological passages of the Epistles—the second chapter of Galatians, the fifth chapter of II. Corinthians, the eighth chapter of Romans. Those are the passages in which you have the very centre of Paul's life; and so much, at least, Wrede observed, even though he himself did not believe for himself one word of what Paul teaches in these matters. Never was Wrede really refuted by his opponents in the Liberal camp. According to Wrede, Paul's religion and his theology go together; and if his theology came from somewhere else than the real Jesus, his religion came from somewhere else too. So Wrede ventured on the assertion that Paul was the second founder of Christianity, a more powerful influence in historic Christianity, perhaps, though not a more beneficent influence, than Jesus Himself. If you hold that Jesus was a mere man, do you not see the justification for that view? Liberal historians had produced a Jesus who had really little in common with the Apostle Paul, and the radical view of Wrede was the nemesis to which they were naturally subjected. So a vast literature on the subject sprang up. But you have a feeling, as you read the works of the Liberal historians, that in refuting Wrede they get nowhere. They refute him in detail, but they do not touch the central point.

What would the solution be? It is perfectly plain. The Liberal theologians were quite right as over against Wrede in holding that Paul knew much more about the details of the life of Jesus than Wrede supposed. There the Liberal historians were right. But Wrede was entirely right as over against them in holding that the Jesus upon whom Paul's religion was based was not the reduced Jesus of modern naturalism, but the stupendous Person who is presented in the Epistles themselves. What, then, is the solution? It is perfectly simple, as I have said. It is simply that Paul's religion was based upon the Jesus whose death and resurrection were events of cosmic significance, that that Jesus was the real Jesus, that there was not that amazing break between the man Jesus and the One whom Paul, with abundant opportunity of acquainting himself with His life, presented in his Epistles, that the Jesus of the Epistles of Paul was the real Jesus who walked this earth.

But then, if you reject this supernaturalistic solution, and hold, with Wrede, that Paul's religion was not based upon the real Jesus, whence

did it really come? Wrede said that it came from pre-Christian Judaism, that Paul had a lofty idea of the Messiah before he was converted, and that no essential change was wrought by his conversion except that he came to believe that this Messiah had come to this earth. But that view has been generally felt to break down; there are few who hold it today. It must be rejected for many reasons, and particularly for the reason that the loftiest view of the Messiah which you find in the apocalyptic books that are thought to preserve for us the doctrine upon which Paul is supposed to be dependent falls far short of the view which Paul holds of Jesus. There is no doctrine of the deity of the Messiah in those Jewish apocalyptic books, and no trace of the warm religious relationship between the believer and the Messiah. So you would be obliged to come to this extraordinary conclusion, that when the lofty Messiah of pre-Christian Jewish speculation was identified with a mere human being, that identification with a mere human being, instead of drawing down this pre-Christian Jewish notion of the Messiah, lifted it far beyond men's wildest dreams.

The last of the naturalistic hypotheses is that Paul's religion and theology came essentially from the religion of the contemporary pagan world. But that hypothesis is faced with many difficulties with which we have not here time to deal—the difficulty, for instance, of answering the question how contemporary paganism could ever have influenced the life of Paul at the centre either before or after his conversion, and the difficulty found in the fact that the supposed parallels on examination really break down. Therefore, I think, we may say that unless Jesus be the kind of person that is presupposed in the Epistles of Paul, the attempts which have so far been made to explain in some other way the origin of the religion of Paul have not yet attained success. In the Epistles we discover a problem which leads us on beyond our easy complacency in a naturalistic view of the world toward what modern men think of with antipathy as the abyss of supernaturalism; and then we are led to the question whether the stupendous Saviour who is presented in the Epistles of Paul was not truly One who came to this earth for our redemption, and in whom we may have confidence alike for this world and for the world to come.

Let us unite in a word of prayer:

We thank Thee for the witness of the Apostle Paul who was Thy chosen messenger. We rejoice in the glory of these matchless books which have enabled men to live lives of victory over sin and have stayed their souls. And we pray that this great Apostle may again be heard, that the darkness may be dispelled, and that men may find here the great charter of Christian liberty, that without merit of their own, but through the blood of Christ, they may be free for evermore. Amen.



OUR TESTIMONY<sup>4</sup>

J. OLIVER BUSWELL, JR.

OUR constructive testimony is an exhaustless subject, and yet I wish to emphasize two or three things within this field which I believe to be of great value. The world outside looks upon us as a sort of queer animal with horns and hoofs, I suppose, with a very bad temper, always seeking to stir things up. We are supposed to eat with our knives and to use bad manners all the time. I suppose that is the picture which some would draw of us. On the contrary, I should like to emphasize that we have primarily a constructive testimony. We are not here only to tear down and pull down, but to build and to plant. The only reason that we have a contention is that our constructive testimony is offset and destroyed by other things which are being taught broadcast in the world today.

I suppose if you were to ask any of us here to outline our Christian testimony we should all begin with Christian theism. We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. I am glad to be connected with this movement among the students of America because that is my belief. I believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. I cannot believe that God is only a natural process. I cannot believe that He is to be identified with the totality of the cosmic flux. I do not believe that God is to be identified as the personification of the social consciousness, a sort of glorified Uncle Sam or Santa Claus. I cannot understand Christian faith along these lines. I have heard eloquent addresses arguing that the modern world believes in God as much as any world ever did, but we have changed the definition of the term. We believe in a God imminent and not transcendent. We believe in a God that is a personification rather than a person. There are many different attempts to maintain a connection with the sentimental and psychological associations of the word to the abandoning of the historical content of the word. It seems to me that the "Philosophy of Religion" by Professor Harald Höffding is an attempt to rid the word "God" of its theistic meaning and yet retain the sentimentality in the associations of the word.

We are gathered together because we believe in God without quibbling or changing definitions. Our idea of God may change just as the idea of a great mountain may change as one climbs from the foothills to the summit. I have heard people use this illustration to argue that no theological idea is permanent.

Our idea may develop as more of the reality is poured into our souls, and yet I cannot believe that Moses was wrong when he said in the words of the Lord, "I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." I cannot believe that Isaiah was wrong when he said, "I saw

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<sup>4</sup> From the stenographic report of the opening address at the Fourth Annual Convention of the *League of Evangelical Students*, given at the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago, Friday, December 7, 1928.

the Lord high and lifted up." It is, of course, perfectly true, that with the on-going of the world and the unfolding of life we have more and more of a knowledge of God, but this does not change the objective reality.

We believe in a personal God without quibbling about that word "person." We believe He is the creator and the ruler of the heavens and the earth. We do not believe that any definition, or phrase, or creed can comprehend all the meaning that is involved in a definition of God, but we do believe in "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

Believing in God, believing in the theistic view of the world, we have what seems to be a rationale of life. We are driven to the personal view of things. I contend that the simplest and most obvious facts of life are personal, that the most elementary experience of humanity is that of personal causes. We are born into a world of persons: mother and father, sisters and brothers. We are born into a world of personal relationships: schools and Sunday schools and the world at large.

Children begin, however, with mechanical toys, and go on through physical sciences all of which are splendid. We get an old Ford car, take it apart and put it together again with a few parts left over. In the development of the average young man in the world today he gets tangled up with machinery, he loses his identity and seems to feel that he is no more than a cog-wheel. It is so easy for us to forget the simplest and most elementary explanation of things and go on to the acceptance of a mechanical explanation of the world.

We have no quarrel, of course, with the progress of mechanics. We have no quarrel with the fact which has been brought home many a time in personal conference with individuals—the fact that many things formerly regarded as personal are really mechanical. A friend of mine said to me, "You are living in the back ages." Of course, that is nothing new to me. He said, "Your great-grandmother believed that when the milk soured the souring was caused by witches and she used to burn the milk pails in order to burn the witch." It was actually true that my great-grandmother once did that very thing and at that time a very godly woman in the town received a severe burn. That cured my great-grandmother of belief in witches. This person said, "Your grandmother and grandfather learned that the souring of the milk was due to bacteria." History goes from one extreme to another; from the extreme of a personal view of the world we come to the mechanicalistic view of the world. We forget that we are personal beings in a mechanical world. We believe in the personal explanation of life. And, of course, if we are not complete determinists, if we rather draw back from the view that we are mechanical dummies, if we really believe it is possible for somebody to do something, if we think it is possible for a man to raise his hand without believing that that event is entirely determined by heredity and environment, if we do believe in our own power to do something, we admit all that is necessary to the acceptance of the Christian view of the world, that God can raise the dead, that God can bring

a world into being, using natural forces and supernatural forces. God is, and "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

I talked with Dr. Wilson some years ago, and as he paced up and down in his interesting study in Princeton he said to my brother and me, "Gentlemen, I find it rational and intelligent to believe that God made the world. I find it irrational and unintelligent to believe the world has made itself." The answer to the riddle of the universe is not some *thing* but it is some *one*.

The essentials of life are personal. The eternal relationships are relationships between personal beings in the eternal kingdom of God. These things are primary, elementary, and necessary. It would stretch my credulity to the breaking point to accept any other philosophy than that of Christian theism.

Of course I do not need to say to this gathering that we have no argument against anything that can be examined under a microscope or in a test tube. We have no argument against any part of reality. But we find in the world the evidence of mind. We have in the very orderliness of the universe the evidence of the Supreme Mind, the supreme personal God, and we find even within ourselves, made in the image of God, personal beings responsible to the Supreme Personal Being, an illustration of the answer to the problem of life. For if we are in His image then surely we can a little understand His plan and His way and the personal causality by which things are brought to pass.

The second great point of emphasis in our testimony is that upon which I had intended to spend the entire time. We believe that the Jesus of history is God manifest in the flesh. We can place Him in no lower category than that. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." "Who proved to be as much better than the angels as his inherited name is better than theirs." The Jesus of history proved to be God, as much beyond all created beings whatever their rank and order may be, as much above all the principalities and powers and all the imagining of the gnostic world, as much better than all these things, real and imaginary, as His inherited name is better than theirs. We believe that Jesus is God.

Mr. Harry Ironside gave an illustration at Wheaton some time ago that I should like to repeat. He told of a Hindu philosopher studying a hill of ants. The thought flashed into his mind, I wish I could talk to those little beings. As he studied them the thought came to his mind again, for he was an educated man though not a Christian,—I could not talk with them. If I could learn their language, if they have a language and are capable of expressing themselves, still I have no thought that I could put into their language. I could not communicate with them in their terms of speech. But if I could become one of them, taking upon me their nature and at the same time retaining my personality and self-consciousness, then I could talk with them, then I could express myself to them. Then like a flash came the thought to him,—This is exactly what

those Christians have been telling us all the time, that the God by whom the worlds were made has become one of us, has taken upon himself our nature, has been made in the likeness of sinful flesh. The Jesus of history was tired out at the end of the day's march, exhausted by His labors, disappointed and heart-broken. This Jesus is God. God has come into this world and has stood in visible form before the crowds of men and has said in an audible voice to all who would hear, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Jesus is God.

I want to give you another illustration that appeals to me as being rather helpful. I once had a pastorate in a city where there was a large industrial establishment. A certain young man was the owner of it all and of a great world organization of which this establishment was but a branch. This young man came to the city, found this establishment, located the foreman and applied for work. On Saturday afternoon he drew his pay with the rest of the men. He lived in the same boarding-house, joined the same organizations. He literally and definitely became an employe in the establishment. He did not cease to be himself and not for one moment did he cease to be the owner of it all. He was fully and completely the owner and at the same time, in the same person, he was fully and completely and really one of the men of the plant. I think it is something like that that God has done for us.

I have talked with quite a number of young people who have not been able to understand that God could come into the world. They seem to hold that the very size of the universe would make it impossible. They are staggered at the idea that the God who swings the stars at his finger tips would ever become man, live and die and rise again. But I think we have an illustration that will help us.

Suppose you were to ask this young man in the factory about the management of the institution or of his plans for the future. He would doubtless say, "I do not know. Ask the foreman, he is over me." He could know, but he does not choose to know just at that time and under those circumstances. He has consciously limited himself without ceasing to be himself, without resigning one part of all of his power as the owner of it all. He has taken upon himself these circumstances consciously, voluntarily. Maybe it is something like that with Jesus Christ. He was just as tired at the end of the day as you are, just as much heart-broken when people did not receive His message, surprised at their hardness of heart. In the days of His flesh He said, "The Father is greater than I." At the same time He said, "All men must honor the Son even as they honor the Father." He said during the days of His flesh that He knew not the time of His return. After His resurrection He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and lo, I am with you until the consummation."

Think of the wonder of it, that you might have walked along the dusty roads of Galilee and talked with God. Yet this is the confirmation once and for all, in the objective terms of history, of the eternal reality of communion of individual hearts with God, for as men then could walk and talk with Him and take His hand and commune with Him, so today

we know that prayer is real because objectively God has come and spoken. I never tire of emphasizing the objective realities of history. It does not detract from the subjective experience. I go into my office at the beginning of the day with such responsibilities facing me as we all have. I bow my head before the Creator of the heavens and the earth. I ask Him to help me and He does. I can testify that this is not a subjective imagination. It is a reality in my life and in my experience, verified by the Jesus of history.

A young man said to me some time ago, "If the Christian gospel is true, why did not God make it plain?"

I was more or less astonished at the question but I think the Lord gave me the answer, for I said, "What would you suggest that God could do that He has not done?" Honestly, men and women, I cannot think of anything that omnipotence could do that has not already been done to make God plain. God has spoken unto us and He has spoken plain language. The best attested fact of ancient history, beyond question, is the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is evidence mountain high that these things are true. Jesus is God.

A missionary in Africa was speaking to a group of natives, many of whom had never heard the gospel. One black woman was heard to say to a neighbor as the missionary told of God and of God's Son coming into the world, "I always thought there ought to be a God like that." If there is any story that grips our hearts with its inherent probability it is this one, and the evidence objectively in history is better than that for any other event in the ancient world. Jesus is God.

I suggest, thirdly, that it is necessary for us to emphasize the doctrine of the infallible book. Christianity has been a religion of a book. Now I do not wish to get into an argument about the interpretation of particular phrases and clauses and verses and historical views, yet I do believe that the doctrine of the infallible book is of great importance. I have never been protected from the doubts of those who deny this doctrine, and yet I have never found it false in one single point. I suppose we should have a great time coming to a definition of the inspiration of the Bible. I think we ought not to have so much confusion of thought and lack of clarity in the use of words. Yet somehow I believe it is of great importance to bring our thoughts together in some way so that we can give force to the testimony that this book is true, reliable, dependable. We have reliable information about these things of which we speak. I believe that the more of criticism we can have the better it is for the Word of God, for it vindicates itself at every point. The more historical study, the more lower criticism of the texts, the more investigation of the historical setting that can possibly be had, the better it is. This book is reliable.

Then, briefly, let us discuss our contention. I am a contender. I am willing to fight most anywhere and any time. I do not believe in "Peace, peace" when there is no peace. And I am just wondering how to make it plain. I should prefer not to quarrel with my neighbors. But there is something wrong and it is necessary for us to make distinctions. A wise

philosopher from overseas has said, "We are giving the world the words 'both . . . and' when we should give the words 'either . . . or.'" There is a difference between right and wrong. There is a difference between truth and falsehood and that difference wears a groove down through eternity. Some things are so and some things are not so. Some things that are not so are not worth arguing about, but some would completely undermine the constructive testimony which we desire to give. And if our children are to be taught in the schools that God is nothing more nor less than a glorified Uncle Sam or Santa Claus, that kind of teaching is wrong, and so subtle is it that it should be spoken against.

I was a student volunteer in the University of Minnesota. My wife and I fully intended to go to the foreign field. Then the war came in and completely upset our plans. Our professor in sociology said one morning, "What business have you student volunteers to go to Africa and impose your religion upon the natives of that dark continent? You put them way down on some lower plane. Don't you know it is all a matter of social evolution? Their religion has developed in their climate and yours has developed in your social background. Why do you impose your religion upon them? One religion is just as good as another."

Then he went on with an explanation of how God came into being. You have heard it. Through fear, natural objects began to be regarded as persons. In tribal warfare one tribe dominated another and the gods became fewer. Then you have henotheism and monolatry. About the time of Amos people began to think that Jehovah was the God of heaven and as heaven dominates everything so the idea of monotheism came. I do not know how many times I have been taught "The Bible says that God created man in His own image, but as a matter of fact, man has created God in his image." In one theological seminary the professor of systematic theology teaches that every generation must create its own deity. This is a thing against which I protest. It is all wrong. It is definitely opposed to the constructive testimony which we wish to give.

Our sociology professor went on to say that there is no standard of right and wrong. It is a matter of social custom. There is no "Thus saith the Lord" in the decalogue. "Thou shalt not steal" is just a matter of social custom. There is no right and wrong about anything in principle or application. You teach that to a group of university sophomores! That is what spoiled my disposition and made me a fighting Fundamentalist. I thank God that I reacted against it. I had a godly father and mother who helped to turn me the other way. A very popular philosophy of today is definitely opposed to the Christian faith and to moral decency and the ethics of the Christian religion. I protest against these things.

Now just a word about the spirit of our testimony. I am afraid that sometimes we neglect one side of the Bible teaching along these lines and emphasize the other. Not very long ago I was visited by two groups of people on two different occasions. The one group was a little too hot and the other too cold. The one told me about all the passages in the Bible which teach that we should not have fellowship with false brethren. The other group told me that we should love our enemies and pray for them

that despitefully use us. There are two sides to that question. I think the two sides come together at the foot of the cross, and I do believe that here is a case in which the example of the Lord Jesus Christ may well be borne in mind. When it comes to a matter of compromise we have no right to keep quiet. We must give a constructive testimony in order to make the word plain to the world in which we live. No teacher ever was successful in the instruction of young people unless he contrasted truth with falsehood. But I am sure I will be understood when I say that the spirit in which we give a clear-cut and positive testimony is the spirit of the Man Christ Jesus who was led as a lamb to the slaughter. In the speech of the Apostle Paul we would say, "Though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day." We are to go forward bearing the cross. How dare we preach a crucified Christ and refuse to live a crucified life?

I know of an institution where there was confusion and strife and I know of a group of individuals that said, "By the grace of God we will live the crucified life. We will give a clear, positive, patient Christian testimony, without compromise." There was great victory. The truth was vindicated before the eyes of all and the testimony went forward. We cannot lay down any general rule by which to solve all problems, but if our earnestness is the earnestness of the Man who went to Calvary, then, though we may sometimes be misunderstood in our contentions, surely we shall be doing the best that we can, by no means causing friction and difficulty merely for the sake of self-advantage but willing to be crucified for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

A certain noted liberal told this story which I shall relate in closing. On Monday morning in one of our great cities the ministers' union assembled in their comfortable club. They were all well dressed and well fed and showed not much of the marks of toil and fatigue. The door opened and a little, bent old man came in. His clothes were torn and his face was bruised as though with stones. His hands were cut and scarred. This little old man walked in and said, "Is this the ministers' association?"

"Yes, what can we do for you?"

"Well," he replied, "my name is Paul. I preached at Lystra yesterday. Where did you men preach?"

I know that physical violence is not done usually to those that uphold the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, but I am sure that the criticism of the world is just, in that we do not bear in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus. We preach a crucified Christ who bore the sins of the world, but too often we refuse to live the crucified life that men may know the meaning of the crucified Saviour.

## COULD JESUS CHRIST SIN?

ALBERTUS PIETERS

THE above question was asked at the recent meeting of the League of Evangelical Students at Chicago. The chairman ruled it out, as having no bearing upon the subject just then under discussion, but it is an important question, and deserves a reply.

Two opposite replies may be given, each perfectly correct from its own standpoint.

Could Jesus Christ sin? Yes, certainly he could,—if the question is one of power. That is the primary connotation of the verb “can.” We say a man “can” do this or that, if nothing would hinder the act, in case he should will to do it. If, no matter how much he might will to do it, the contemplated act would not take place, because of some limitation in his resources, knowledge, or power, then we say “he cannot do it.”

“I would like to give a thousand dollars to the League of Evangelical Students, but I cannot, for I haven’t it”—limitation of resources. “I would like to help you solve this problem in trigonometry, but I cannot—for I don’t understand mathematics,”—limitation of knowledge. “I would knock him down if I could, but I cannot, for he is much stronger than I, and a more skilful boxer”—limitation of power.

If we use the word in this sense when we ask: “Could Jesus Christ sin?” then the reply must be: “Certainly he could. There was in him no limitation of knowledge, power, or anything of that kind to hinder him from doing sinful deeds.”

“Could Jesus Christ sin?”—No, certainly not, being God incarnate.

This reply is equally correct, but the connotation of “can” and “cannot” is different. Here the question is not whether, if he willed to sin, he would be able to do so, but whether it is conceivable that he should will it. We frequently use the word in this manner, and such an impossibility we call a “moral impossibility.” For instance, suppose a man should know, by years of intimate association with his wife, that she is a Christian lady in every respect, chaste, pure, strongly adverse to the use of strong drink, etc., etc. Suppose that she left home to attend the National Convention of the W.C.T.U.; and that a day or two later her husband should be informed that, instead of going to the convention, she was spending her time in low resorts, dancing, drinking, and gambling with dissolute men. He would at once say: “That cannot be true. I know my wife too well to believe it. She could not do such a thing.” He means, not that the acts described are physically impossible to her, but that they would be wholly contrary to her character.

In this sense we say of God: “It is impossible that God should lie.” We do not mean that, because of some limitation of power, He could not utter an untruth if He so willed, but that, being the God of truth, perfect in holiness and righteousness, it is inconceivable that He should will to do it. Obviously, for a perfectly righteous and holy being to do an unrighteous and unholy thing, would be a contradiction in terms—much like speaking of a round triangle.



Since this is the case with God, all possibility of sin is excluded from our thoughts of Jesus Christ, as soon as we believe him to be God incarnate.

But please perceive clearly what follows.

When a person fails to perform a sinful act in the first sense, as discussed above, he is in an unfree state, so far as his conduct is concerned. He wills to do the thing in question, but is restrained by his limitations. Hence his non-performance of the act has no moral value. Everyone sees this clearly, that a person who cannot perform this or that sinful act, is entitled to no credit for not doing it. Therefore, confusing the two meanings of the word "can," they say: "If Jesus Christ could not sin, where is the merit of his goodness? Such a person has won no triumph over sin." This would be entirely correct if we meant by saying: "Jesus Christ could not sin," that he was restrained by lack of power.

If, however, we mean it in the second sense, the case is different. If we say: "Jesus Christ could not sin," meaning what we mean when we say that God cannot lie, namely, that, being perfectly good, just, and holy, he constantly wills not to sin, and cannot be conceived of as willing anything else, under any circumstances, then the situation attributed to him is not that of being under some restraint which prevents his yielding (an unfree state of no moral value) but that of turning away resolutely from the suggested evil, and clinging with all his affections and will to the opposing good. This is a free situation, a real triumph over evil, one that has the highest moral value. In this case, the contemplated invariableness of his moral triumph does not lessen its moral value: it enhances it, because it results from perfection of moral attitude.

## THE FOURTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

AT the end of the high-wainscotted hall stood two or three tables, behind which were seated smiling members of the Welcome committee of the Northern Baptist Seminary chapter of the League. Unless these faces were obscured by delegates already registering, this was the sight which greeted the newcomer who entered Byrne Hall on Friday afternoon, December 7, to register as a delegate to the League's Fourth Annual Convention and to be assigned to his place of entertainment during his stay in Chicago. The local Rooms committee, headed by Walter E. Benton, had done a noble piece of work and an abundance of accommodations were on hand for the arriving delegates. This hospitable reception by Chicago friends who opened their homes was but the first of many pleasing features of the Convention. The visiting speakers and the national officers of the League were graciously welcomed and made comfortable by members of the Seminary faculty.

Before the opening meeting on Friday evening many of the delegates had an opportunity to sample the cuisine of the Seminary Inn, the student dining place, which swung wide its doors and increased its service that the visitors might be made welcome.

At seven-thirty all gathered in the chapel of the Seminary. This was to be the meeting place for all public sessions of Friday and Saturday, and it proved to be remarkably well adapted to the purpose. The size was such that the business sessions could be effective, since everyone was within easy hearing distance of individual speakers from the floor, while the capacity was just sufficient to seat the audience which gathered on Saturday evening to hear the first address of Dr. Machen.

The Friday evening session was a rousing opener. Each delegation present was welcomed by the applause of the others in attendance. In order to expedite the business planned for Saturday, Ways and Means, and Nominating committees were appointed by the chair at this session. It was a source of heartfelt regret that our retiring president, Ralph T. Nordlund, was prevented by illness from being present at any of the Convention sessions. However, the whole Convention was admirably conducted by his assistant, retiring vice-president, Nicolas H. A. Bruinix.

The opening address was given by President J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., D.D., of Wheaton College. That it provided the audience with considerable food for thought will be apparent to every reader of the *Evangelical Student*, for it is printed elsewhere in this issue. The editor is glad to bring just a little taste of the Convention to every reader.

Following President Buswell's address, President George W. Taft, D.D., of the Northern Baptist Seminary extended his greetings on behalf of the Seminary to the assembled delegates, and indicated his great hopes for the future proclamation of evangelical truth in the churches of the land.

It was a great joy to have with us at this session and those of Saturday Dr. Leander S. Keyser, D.D., one of the valued members of our Advisory Board.

On Saturday morning the delegates gathered at 9:15 for a season of earnest, united prayer before the public sessions of the day should begin. This gathering was repeated at 1:30 on the same day, and at 2:15 on Sunday afternoon. This frequent coming together for heartfelt intercession on behalf of the Convention and its speakers gave all an opportunity to carry the business and problems of the sessions before our Lord, and to seek from Him light upon the way, both for personal and corporate questions.

The first business session of the Convention convened at 9:45 on Saturday morning, and continued until adjournment was taken for lunch. Meeting again from 2:00 to 3:00 in the afternoon, the final session was called to order at 9:45 P.M., and business was completed thirty to forty minutes later. A résumé of the actions taken and reports presented will be found below.

At 3:00 P.M. the delegates convened to listen to the address by Professor J. R. Mantey, D.D., of Northern Baptist Seminary on "Is Jesus God?" Would that there were space to summarize adequately all of these valuable addresses! Dr. Mantey emphasized particularly the *original* character of the New Testament picture of Jesus as we have it in the gospels and, making clear the fact that we must not rule out the supernatural as impossible, urged that we do not proceed to form our views of Gospel history by adding to the self-evidencing account and portrait given in the gospels elements drawn from our own imagination or the imaginations of others no better qualified to contradict the account presented by eyewitnesses.

Before Dr. Mantey's address the Convention had the unexpected and delightful opportunity of hearing a powerful word of greeting and testimony from Dr. Winfield Burggraaff of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Dr. Burggraaff has just recently received his doctorate in Amsterdam and spoke with conviction grounded upon knowledge concerning the antithesis between evangelical Christianity and that which, in the name of modern thought, is trying to usurp its place. There is only one name "under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved," and in the light of that fact we cannot afford to compromise our testimony by one jot.

Not the least valuable feature of the Convention was the opportunity which it afforded for intercourse and exchange of experiences between delegates, for spiritual fellowship between student servants of God from different institutions of learning, from different churches, and from various sections of the continent. This mutual intercourse was especially helped by the Convention Banquet, arranged by the Northern Baptist Seminary hosts and held at the Alcazar Hotel at five o'clock on Saturday. A member of the local chapter, Mr. Harvey E. Preston, presided at the head of the long and well-filled board.

The banquet was brought to an end in time to permit the delegates to assemble again in Byrne Hall for the seven o'clock vesper service. This introduced the Rev. F. Noel Palmer of Toronto to those who had not previously met him. The service was entirely in his charge, and carried

forcefully to everyone's attention the necessary connection between a reasonable faith and a living faith.

The chief address of the evening brought to the platform for the first time during the Convention Professor J. Gresham Machen of Princeton. Speaking from that great summary of the apostolic gospel, I Corinthians 15:3f, he proffered the question "What is Christianity?" and then in a ringing reply to the challenge thus laid down showed that the answer can only be obtained by a study of the beginnings of Christianity. These are recorded in the documents which make up the New Testament. Christianity is not simply a life but a life founded on a doctrine. It is based upon facts set forth with their meaning. This was the apostolic "good news," and it is strange to ask us today to believe that the men who were actually with Jesus were all mistaken about Him.

Sunday morning dawned bright and clear, and brought with it the opportunity for each delegate to attend the church of his own choice. Afternoon, however, concentrated the Convention members once more, this time at the Tabernacle Baptist Church, which opened its doors with a wide welcome to receive the Sunday sessions. After the gathering for prayer, the afternoon session climaxed in the address by Mr. Palmer on "Faith is the Victory." The relation of the Christian to Christ is a personal relationship, for both parties are persons. The essence of a personal relationship is mutual trust and frankness. In view of this there can be no *clinging* to sin, but rather must the Christian follow Paul in reckoning himself "to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."

This message was reinforced by the words of Dr. Howard Guinness at the evening vesper service. Dr. Guinness has just finished his medical work at the University of London, and is on this continent for a few months as the fraternal delegate of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions, of Great Britain. It was a great pleasure to have him present at the Convention, and thus to bring the delegates into closer touch with the evangelical witness in Britain, which is being so greatly blessed of God.

The climax of the Convention was reached on Sunday evening with the address of Dr. Machen at the closing session. Presenting in detail the tremendous conflict between Paul's epistle to the Romans and what the Modernist would put into such a letter today, he showed the absolute contrast between the two messages, between scriptural Christianity and Modernism. It was a thrilling indictment of the emasculated, sentimentalistic character of the latter. In the face of this petty trifling, the terrible *fact* of sin was emphasized, and a powerful call went forth to look for a great revival of true religion on the basis of the gospel once for all delivered.

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The institutions represented at the Convention by registered delegates were:

Austin Theological Seminary, Austin, Texas.

Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Cleveland Bible Institute, Cleveland, Ohio.  
Des Moines University, Des Moines, Iowa.  
Evangelical Theological College, Dallas, Texas.  
Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.  
Marion College, Marion, Indiana.  
Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois.  
Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois.  
Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.  
Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.  
Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan.

Four or five other schools were unofficially represented by students who attended some of the sessions.

For the convenience of chapters not represented at the Convention the following partial summary of actions taken at the business sessions is presented:

The President was instructed to assume and discharge the responsibility of promoting quarterly contacts between members of the Executive committee.

The *purpose* of the League was declared to stand as set forth in its Constitution.

It was recommended that appropriate action be taken looking forward to the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution whereby existing local student organizations would be accepted into League membership only after unanimous consent of their members had been obtained.

It was recommended that local chapters use their own initiative in promoting League district conferences in cooperation with neighboring chapters and general headquarters.

The Executive committee was instructed to select a Conference committee to be composed of the Executive committee, Advisory Board, General Secretary, and such other persons as should seem to them expedient. (The purpose of this committee shall be to direct the shaping of the advance program of the League.)

Three invitations were extended to next year's Convention. The choice of the place of meeting was committed to the Executive committee, with the Convention going on record as recommending Dallas, Texas.

Seven new chapters and one new branch were admitted to membership in the League.

The Treasurer's report was a remarkable record of God's grace. The last six and one-half months since the present forward policy of the League has been in effect, June 1 to December 15, have seen a total income to the League of \$1,832.53. Yet at no time has there been more on hand than was needed for the immediate future. The gracious provision of the Lord financially has been plain, for from sources unexpected and previously unknown He has often sent in the needed funds. It is a joy to see God work in answer to believing prayer. Only a small fraction of the amount needed for the League work comes from student dues. All other funds must be given by individuals interested in the witness to the trust-

worthiness of the Word of God and to the power of Christ for which the League stands, as they are led of God to do so.

Particular attention is called to the new officers whose names will be found on the inside front cover of this issue. They were unanimously elected by the Convention and warmly welcomed into office.

This sketch may fittingly close with a doxology. Will not every reader, as he thinks over what God has wrought, join the song:

*"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."*

### NEWS AND NOTES

THE General Secretary has followed up his presentation of the League at various conferences last summer by visits to twenty-four schools between October 1 and December 15. Space cannot be devoted to a detailed account of these visits, but the need for the League is overwhelming in many schools, and the welcome with which it is frequently received is made plain by the number of new chapters indicated in the list given below.

Honors for being the first new chapter to affiliate with the League this fall go to Bucknell University. Application for this affiliation was made to League headquarters on October 10, and the recent convention in Chicago approved the application. Congratulations to Bucknell. May God bless this chapter very richly in all of its activities this year. Pray that the testimony of its members may be so true to the Word that others may rapidly be "added unto them."

The active chapters of the League, as of December 15, are at the following institutions:

*(Asterisks indicate new chapters.)*

- \*Austin Theological Seminary, Austin, Texas.
- \*University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- John E. Brown College, Siloam Springs, Arkansas.
- \*Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.
- University of California, Berkeley, California.
- University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.
- Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Cleveland Bible Institute, Cleveland, Ohio.
- Evangelical Theological College, Dallas, Texas.
- Hampden-Sidney College, Hampden-Sidney, Virginia.
- \*Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.
- \*Lincoln University, School of Theology, Lincoln University, Pennsylvania.
- Marion College, Marion, Indiana.
- \*Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Illinois.
- Muskingum College, New Concord, Ohio.

Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois.

\*University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.

\*Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan.

Xenia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

There is also a group of students in close connection with the League at Union College, Schenectady, New York.

All of the institutions marked with an asterisk in the above list have chapters or branches which were admitted to League membership at the Chicago Convention just held. Let every other chapter give them a hearty welcome!

The first state conference which the League has ever held took place at Calvin College and Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, on November 23. It proved to be of such value that it should furnish an example to other states and districts. The following account was written by one of those chiefly responsible for the undertaking and its success, our retiring vice-president, Mr. Nicolas H. A. Bruinix.

#### MICHIGAN STATE CONFERENCE

At the opening of the school year the suggestion was made at Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan, that a state conference of the League of Evangelical Students would prove to be beneficial and helpful and that such a conference should be held at the school of one of the League chapters in the state. It was decided to interview at once the officers of the chapter at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, and when it was found that the latter were in sympathy with the attempt, the two institutions jointly resolved that a Michigan state conference should be fostered by them and that it should be held as soon as possible. Committees from each Seminary were appointed to work cooperatively with the result that the conference date was set for November 23, that a program was arranged, that the conference was advertised intensively within the city and by the press, and that the various colleges of the state were invited to attend the gathering at Grand Rapids.

The day of the conference arrived and what were the results? About seventy students attended, as well as a number of theological professors and ministers of the city. The three chapters in the state had present large delegations and two schools outside of the organization were also well represented. The afternoon program consisted of a devotional period and an address by the League Secretary, Mr. Paul Woolley, regarding the aims and work of the League. The address was followed by a very helpful period of discussion, also under the direction of the Secretary and continued with interest for nearly an hour and a half. The organization was discussed from every angle and many remarks, pro and con, were heard from the floor. It must be admitted that some of the remarks

concerning the League were critical and even skeptical, but because of this the worthwhileness of the discussion need not be questioned. It did a great deal of good. It cleared the atmosphere of much misapprehension and led to the inevitable conclusion that the League has a purpose to fulfil, even though some of its policies have not reached the full state of efficiency—a requirement which can hardly be expected from an organization as young as the League. One of the interesting suggestions was that in case schools do not consider the League necessary for themselves, because of their generally conservative faith, that such schools must consider themselves necessary to the League so as to encourage groups in the faith at institutions where such desirable conditions do not prevail. The discussion period was very effectively closed with excellent appeals by Dr. A. Pieters of Western Seminary and Dr. C. Bouma of Calvin Seminary to carry on the work of the organization and to give it every chance to make good, since it is an organization of worthwhile caliber and with great possibilities for the future.

After a fine conference dinner in the spacious dining-hall of Calvin College, where real fellowship was enjoyed between the various delegations, the assembly met for the evening conference. The devotional period was followed by an address from Mr. Woolley in which he showed the present-day tendency toward spiritual frost in our educational institutions. This frost may present itself in any of three forms—naturalism, secularism, or humanism. There is a threefold manner of overcoming these frosts—prayer, intensive Bible study, and sound thinking. Then followed an address by Prof. H. Schultze of Calvin Seminary. The speaker pointed to the value and validity of the Bible as the Word of God and the only foundation of faith. To accept it as such is possible only if one possesses the testimony of the Holy Spirit in his heart. If we lack the Holy Spirit, it is impossible for us to see the earmarks of the divine origin of the Bible. Prof. Schultze made the thought-provoking statement in his conclusion that if the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the members of the League of Evangelical Students is lacking, it may as well disband, for without it the organization has no purpose.

What shall we say about the conference as we look upon it in retrospect? Has it met its purpose? Has it done any good? We must answer these queries in the affirmative. It helped to give a better understanding of the League and its work; it reassured the delegations of its worthwhileness and necessity; and it gave some conception of the way in which other chapters carry on their work. In addition it served as a great advertising agency. Schools over the entire state were invited to be present. Although the invitations were in the main unheeded, the various schools were made acquainted with the existence and work of the League at least by way of correspondence. Many ministers were informed of the organization and various publications, including the public press, carried announcements and reports of the conference. The Michigan state attempt has been vastly worthwhile and it may well be our wish that other states or sections may see fit to hold similar conferences and that results may be equally gratifying.



The following notes are culled from the short reports concerning the local groups given at the Chicago Convention:

*British Columbia*—Activities:

- (1) Open meeting, every Monday at noon, addressed by some prominent evangelical preacher.
- (2) Prayer meeting, every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon.
- (3) Study group on the life of Christ, every Friday at noon.
- (4) Missionary study group, once a month in the evening.

*Calvin College*—Membership, 65. Monthly meetings with special speakers. All the members of this chapter are looking forward to theological seminary study.

*Calvin Seminary*—The League branch has hitherto been identified with the Seminary Corps organization, but it is now contemplating separate organization for greater efficiency. Every student in the seminary is a member of the League.

*Evangelical Theological College*—Every student is a member of the League. Student Fellowship meetings are held four to five times a week and special student prayer meetings once a month.

*Northern Baptist Seminary*—Monthly meetings with special speakers at each. Gospel team actively at work. The membership has already reached 75 this year, the largest in the chapter's history.

*Princeton Seminary*—Membership, 112. Weekly prayer meetings, on Thursday at 8:45 P.M.

*Western Seminary (Holland)*—The student membership is 52, thus including the total seminary enrolment. The branch is known as the Adelpic Society. Weekly meetings, on Tuesday evening. The latest League undertaking of magnitude has been cooperation with Calvin in promoting the Michigan state conference.

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As a result of the organization of a League chapter at Muskingum last year, a Bible group of some sixty or more members is studying the Epistle to the Romans every Tuesday evening this winter.

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It is a fact worthy of attention that of the eight new chapters admitted at the Convention exactly half are in non-theological institutions.

## WHO ARE THESE WRITERS?

Leander S. Keyser, D.D., is Professor of Systematic Theology in Hamma Divinity School, Springfield, Ohio. A leading defender of the faith, his writings are welcome contributions to apologetic literature. Among his books are: *The Problem of Origins*; *A Handbook of Christian Psychology*; *A System of Christian Evidence*; *The Philosophy of Christianity*. Particular attention should be directed to the last-named, Dr. Keyser's latest book, a systematic setting forth of the Christian world-view.

J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt.D., is Assistant Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis in Princeton Theological Seminary, and is one of the outstanding conservative theologians of the present time. Among his books are: *Christianity and Liberalism*; *What is Faith?*; *The Origin of Paul's Religion*.

J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., D.D., is President of Wheaton College. His able work in that institution since his inauguration in 1926 is making him more and more widely known as a Christian administrator and scholar throughout the evangelical world. He is the author of: *Problems in the Prayer Life*.

Albertus Pieters, D.D., is Professor of Bible and Missions in Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan. Long years of missionary experience in Japan have given him a unique background against which to carry on his scholarly work. His book, *The Facts and Mysteries of the Christian Faith*, is a concise statement of the reasons why Christianity is the only satisfactory faith.

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## TO THE READER

If this undertaking interests you, note that *The League of Evangelical Students* exists for the purpose of maintaining a witness to the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God, and to all of its saving truths, in the colleges, universities and seminaries of North America. This witness can only be extended as the readers of this magazine make it possible by their financial support. Will you not send a generous gift today to John H. De Groot, Treasurer, 25 Edwards Place, Princeton, New Jersey.