

# The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

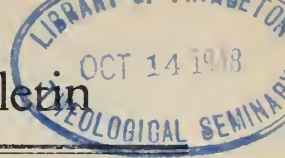


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of Robert Speer thought that no woman could be good enough for him. The Harrisburg and Bryn Mawr friends of Emma Bailey thought that no man could be good enough for her. Both were wrong, as fifty-four years of their life together proved. We of the Seminary Board thank God that when our leader has been taken from us, his dear wife remains in our unofficial family, a constant reminder of "the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

And what shall I say, in closing, of Dr. Speer's relation to us who shared with him in the oversight of this Seminary? Was it not providential, when the Boards of the Seminary were rent asunder by schisms, that this ecumenical man, who had served as President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, who alone in our time had been elected Moderator of our church by acclamation, should be called on to use his prestige and his ability to heal the schisms and lead the Seminary to greater service than it had ever before performed? What a privilege to serve as Trustees under the presidency of the greatest Presbyterian, yes the greatest Christian, of our day! What harmony of the members of this Board with him at its head! In

all our deliberations and activities he exhibited restraint; yet he could instruct us and teach us in the way which we should go: he could guide us with his eye.

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees in October he was with us for the last time. One month before he had attained the age of four score years, apparently with his natural force unabated. But he had left a sickbed to perform his duty, and though he presided at a long meeting of the Administrative Committee the evening before the Board meeting, he was unable, on account of bronchitis, to conduct the meeting of the Board. His private conversation, at the luncheon at Springdale, was cheerful and animated, but during the meeting for the first time he sat silent. Like his great prototype, the Apostle to the Gentiles, he was now ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand. He had fought a good fight, he had finished his course, he had kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give him at that day: and not to him only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

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## THE INTERPRETER OF CHRIST

CHARLES R. ERDMAN

**D**R. SPEER'S interpretation of Christ was expressed by the way in which he valiantly and with constancy followed the Master. It was embodied in the life and character which Mr. Buchanan has portrayed with such sympathy and insight. It was mani-

festated also in the Christian statesmanship of which President Mackay is about to speak from his own personal knowledge and his participation in world-wide vision and endeavor.

It was also expressed in that continuous series of arresting and compel-

ling public addresses delivered during half a century in schools and colleges and churches and assemblies and conventions at home and abroad. One of the earliest of these messages was entitled: "Remember Jesus Christ," the phrase taken from the second letter of Paul to Timothy. It seemed that whenever Dr. Speer rose to speak he had this injunction in mind.

His interpretation of Christ was expressed further in unnumbered published articles and in more than thirty printed volumes. These are on various and diverse themes, but they all reveal the unflinching desire to discover the mind of Christ. Even when writing on problems of personal concern he entitled his volume "Jesus and Our Human Problems." His writings were all expressions of the mind of the Master.

His interpretation of Christ was manifested still further in his continual endeavor to promote the fellowship among the various groups of Christians. This was particularly evident during his service as President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. He always insisted that we should not regard it necessary to strive for church union, but should rather seek to manifest the spiritual union already existing. He regarded the Church as the one united body of Christ and he urged upon the Church to so express this existing unity that it might thereby give testimony to the world as to the divine mission of our Lord.

To what sources did Dr. Speer turn in his endeavor to interpret Christ? Obviously to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, but particularly to the Gospels and supremely to the Gospel according to Saint John. He regarded that version of the Gospel as

"the greatest book in the world." Probably when Christianity has been given its final interpretation it will be in the terms supplied by the "Beloved Disciple."

However, there was another source upon which Dr. Speer relied. It was that of personal experience. He knew Christ because of a long and daily companionship. His interpretation was not theoretical; it was experimental. It is significant that one of his last volumes should be entitled "The Meaning of Christ to Me."

However, he found the Master revealed further in the lives of other believers. One of his greatest services to the Church is found in the biographies which he composed. These included names well known in Christian circles, but also names which otherwise might not have been remembered. All may be familiar with such characters as Dr. Cochran of Persia, Dr. Ewing of India, Dr. Lewis of China, but possibly some of us would not have known the consecrated life of George Bowen of Bombay, or of Horace Pitkin or Louise Andrews or Hugh Beaver or many others which might be listed, had it not been for the patient work and affectionate memoirs prepared by Dr. Speer.

He interpreted Christ from his knowledge of the Christian Church. In its growth, its activities and its achievements, he continually traced the hand of the Spirit of our living Lord.

Who then is the Christ as interpreted by this exponent of his character? The answer is beyond all question or doubt. He is the Christ of the Gospels and Epistles; the Christ of the creeds of Christendom; the Christ of the universal Church. Dr. Speer was convinced that there is no other Christ

and that no other Christ is needed. He loved to quote the lines of Christina Rossetti used by him in his last public address and with which he prefaced his volume on "The Finality of Jesus Christ."

"None other Lamb, none other Name,  
None other Hope, in heaven or earth or  
sea,  
None other Hiding Place from sin and  
shame,  
None beside Thee."

Possibly this interpretation was set forth in the clearest and most comprehensive way in the Stone Lectures delivered here in Princeton and published under the title of "The Finality of Jesus Christ." Here was revealed the Man whose ideal character was sketched by Dr. Speer in one of his earliest books, "The Man Christ Jesus." Yet here was One of whom we should employ the phrase quoted by Dr. Speer from the heading of a chapter by Horace Bushnell, "The Character of Jesus

Forbidding His Possible Classification with Man." That is to say, he was the God-Man, one to whom we can pray, one worthy of our worship. Yet he was also "a divine sacrifice for sin" as well as "an ensample for holy living." He was also the risen and ascended Lord whose will we must obey. He was also the coming King, and Dr. Speer dwelt with power and emotion upon the great reality of the return of Christ as the great hope of the Church and of the world. This finality and sufficiency of our divine Saviour were expressed in lines dear to Dr. Speer taken from the noble poem of Frederick W. H. Myers entitled *St. Paul*.

"Yea, through life, death, through sorrow  
and through sinning,  
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed;  
Christ is the end, for Christ was the  
beginning,  
Christ the beginning for the end is  
Christ."

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## THE MISSIONARY STATESMAN

JOHN A. MACKAY

IT is as a missionary statesman that the name of Robert E. Speer is engraved forever in the annals of the Christian Church. His incomparable greatness as a man, the unique insight which he had into Christ, he made tributary to what he loved to call the "missionary enterprise."

Professionally speaking, Dr. Speer was a Foreign Missions Secretary. For forty-six years he held that office in the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United

States of America. During his time in that office, and under his leadership, the number of missionaries representing the Board in many parts of the world reached the figure of 1600. At that time the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions was the most powerful single denominational Board in the whole world.

There were two things about Dr. Speer which should make clear that he was supremely and above all else a missionary statesman. In the first place,