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# CHRISTIANITY TODAY



||| A PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL DEVOTED TO STATING, DEFENDING  
AND FURTHERING THE GOSPEL IN THE MODERN WORLD |||

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## Editorial Notes and Comments

### A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION



*HIS is a faithful saying, and worthy of all accep-  
tation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to  
save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15).*

This "faithful saying" was cited rather than coined by Paul. It was apparently a phrase that the early Christians currently employed to express their practical belief in the Incarnation and so comes to us not so much as an utterance of Paul's—though obviously it has his endorsement—as of the primitive Christian community. In succinct, almost proverbial form, it expresses the very essence of the Gospel as it was understood and experienced by that first generation of Christians.

This noble summary of the Gospel assumes the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. It makes clear that the early Christians did not think of Him as one whose conscious existence dated from the day of His birth in Bethlehem, but rather as one who had existed in a previous state and who voluntarily *came* into this mundane sphere. Not for one moment did they suppose that He was simply a product of the forces ordinarily resident in nature, that heredity plus environment afford an adequate explanation of His personality. If we share their view, the event we commemorate on Christmas day will be not so much the birth of a great man as the entering into human conditions of a divine being. Moreover, only as we interpret the work of Christ in the light of His pre-existence is it possible for us to appraise adequately the service He has rendered us. Let us never forget that the Son of Man *came* not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. It would be much if as an unusually gifted man he had devoted himself wholly and entirely to the service of his fellow-men but it is infinitely more that the Son of God should have denuded Himself of that glory that He had had with the Father before the world was and entered into the conditions of humanity in order that He might spend and be spent in its service. As Alexander Maclaren put it: "His service began long before He rendered help to any of the miserable here on earth. His service began when He laid aside not the garments of the earth but the vesture of the heavens, and girded Himself

not with the cincture woven in man's loom but with the flesh of our humanity and being found in fashion as a man bowed Himself to enter into the conditions of earth. This was the first and the chiefest of all His acts of self-sacrifice, and the sanctity and awfulness of it runs through the list of all His deeds and make them unspeakably great."

This ancient saying not only tells us that Jesus Christ *came* into this world, it tells us *why* He came. He came to *save* sinners. If this statement is to mean for us all it ought to mean, we must take the word "save" with that fulness of meaning that is attached to it in the Scriptures. The word is so often used in a weakened sense as when we speak of Washington as one who saved his country, or of the Salvation Army worker as one who saved an outcast, that unless we are on our guard we may employ it in this same weakened sense when we are thinking of Jesus Christ. But as the late B. B. Warfield said in a sermon preached on this text: "Jesus did all that is included in the great word 'save'. He did not come to induce us to save ourselves, or to help us to save ourselves, or to enable us to save ourselves. He came to *save* us. And it is, therefore, that His name was called Jesus—because He should save His people from their sins. The glory of our Lord, surpassing all His other glories to usward, is just that He is our actual and complete Saviour; our Saviour to the uttermost. . . . Nothing that we are and nothing that we can do enters in the slightest measure into the ground of our acceptance with God. Jesus did it all. And by doing it all He became in the fullest and widest and deepest sense the word can bear—our Saviour. For this end did He come into the world—to *save* sinners; and nothing short of the actual and complete *saving* of sinners will satisfy the account of His work given by His own lips and repeated from them by all His apostles. It is in this great fact, indeed, that there lies the whole essence of the gospel. For let us never forget that the Gospel is not good advice but *good news*. It does not come to us to make known to us what we must do to earn salvation for ourselves, but proclaiming what Jesus has done to save us. It is salvation, a completed salvation, that it announces to us; and the burden of its message is just the words of our text—that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save* sinners."

There have been and no doubt are those who suppose

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## Letters to the Editor

[The letters printed here express the convictions of the writers, and publication in these columns does not necessarily imply either approval or disapproval on the part of the Editor. If correspondents do not wish their names printed, they will please so request, but all are asked kindly to sign their names as an evidence of good faith. We do not print letters that come to us anonymously.]

### Dr. McAfee Defends Board

Editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY:

THE following possible reply can be made to the questions raised on page 128 of your issue of October regarding the work of the Board of Foreign Missions:

1. No secretary of the Board is a signer of the Auburn Affirmation; one of its 44 members is a signer. All are elected by the General Assembly and none by the Board itself.

2. No members of the Board are in sympathy with or supporting by their influence those elements of the Report of the Laymen's Commission which have been rejected by the General Assembly and by the full declarations of the Board which are widely available.

3. The Board realizes quite too clearly that the service of its present President must end before many years pass, but it is grateful for his continued service and it does not know when there will be a successor in that office.

4. The Board has sincerely investigated every report that has come to it regarding false teaching and preaching on the Mission field. It does not hold the missionary force in suspicion and counts its members honest and trustworthy. Certainly it is not now and never has been "bluffing" anyone. It has not instituted a drag-net investigation and considers that any such efforts would be unworthy of the Church until the General Assembly institutes a similar investigation of ministers, ruling elders and other church workers at home, which it believes to be wholly unnecessary.

5. *Women and Missions*, to the definite knowledge of the Board, has not turned to a Unitarian writer for any message for Presbyterian women either for Easter nor for any other time. The Board is keenly interested in the magazine but it shares with the Board of National Missions in that interest.

6. The Board seeks to secure the production of proper books, of a sound evangelical character, for Mission Study. It cannot always guarantee the "Calvinistic soundness" of their authors. When books appear which are not suitable in the mind of any leader of mission study groups, it is entirely proper for these books to be rejected.

7. No man or woman is retained on the Board with unsound faith because of money or for any other reason. The money of such persons would not be "needed" in the Board's work.

8. The Board cannot decide for any donor whether his money shall go directly to a missionary or not. It seeks to be trustworthy

itself and it believes it does not have untrustworthy missionaries. Obviously it cannot tell any donor what will be "really more satisfactory" to himself.

9. The Board is not connected with any University in China that is under Unitarian control and therefore it is not true that \$20,000 is going to such an institution in China or elsewhere.

These categorical answers are given with no expectation that they will be acceptable to the inquirer, but as simple statements of fact. They have probably been given directly to the inquirer before this and have been rejected as false, but they are true for all that. The Board can merely reiterate its assurances of earnest desire to set forward the work of Christ in purity and sincerity. This paper is not to be taken as an authoritative or official statement from the Board. It is by the undersigned and is the outcome of his intimate and long-continued knowledge of the facts involved.

CLELAND B. MCAFEE.

[It should be noted that Dr. McAfee, now a secretary-emeritus of the Board of Foreign Missions, writes as an individual and not as a representative of said Board. Our readers are asked to compare Dr. McAfee's statements with the questions raised by the author of "We Want to Know" in our October issue (p. 128) and decide for themselves to what extent his replies are adequate. We confine ourselves to two or three comments. While no secretary of the Board is a signer of the Auburn Affirmation its senior secretary asserted in the Memorandum he submitted to the Presbytery of West Jersey that the fact that there are signers of the Auburn Affirmation among the missionaries under the Board affords no evidence that "the Board of Foreign Missions has sent out or retained in its service missionaries who do not believe the doctrinal teachings of our Church." The Board has not as yet, if we mistake not, kept its promise to report to the Church the result of its inquiries concerning the conditions alleged by Dr. Barnhouse. While the author of the Easter message printed in *Women and Missions* (April, 1934) is not a member of a Unitarian Church there is good reason to believe that she is "Unitarian-minded"—certainly she is not an evangelical, still less a Calvinist. While it is technically true that the Board is not connected with any University in China that is under "Unitarian" control yet there is reason to believe that it is connected with a University in China in which essentially Unitarian views have been taught. We know of no one who wants the

Board to institute a "drag-net investigation" but at the same time we fear that its attitude toward the evidence that has been presented of unsoundness among its missionaries is fitted to lead the Church-at-large to infer that the situation on the Board and in the field is worse than it is. It seems to us high time for the Board to abandon its policy of silence.—EDITOR.]

### Appreciation from a Missionary

Editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY:

In my last copy is notice to renew my subscription to your valuable publication. I very much want it—but I scarcely feel able to use the money that way. There are so many little—unwanted—hungry little girls—not always unwanted—but a mother or a father helpless to provide for the loved little one—Willing to give her to us where they know she will be well cared for and lead along the Heavenly Road. They are kept clean and patched in a clean home and to the outsiders they look so well dressed and cared for. They are sturdy and well nourished. We can feed and clothe a little one on \$25.00 (U. S.) a year. So this dollar would care for one of these precious little ones for about 2 weeks.

I hope there will be a gift subscription—for I like your magazine and receive great help from it.

As the aftermath of the nearby terrible floods of last year—there are many, many starving women and children. Usually the men can manage to eat. But the helpless women and children! In one small district of our Tengersien field there are 600 hungry families. With the advent of cold weather, conditions for them will grow worse and worse.

To take these girls of all ages and train them for the Master is a very definite, important piece of evangelistic work—God has provided for our needs. I covet the prayers of you and your friends. This orphanage is a faith work—not sponsored by the Board of Foreign Missions, U.S.A.—although they know about the good work it is doing and say "God bless you." There are no Foreign Mission funds to help support it. Please pray that if it is His will for it to increase in size and numbers that there may be the money as a sign that we should enlarge.

I glory in the fact that Mueller's God is my God. "Permit the little ones to come unto me and forbid them not—Whoever gives unto one of the least of these gives unto Me."

Please pray definitely. So often if we can take the girls, the rest of the family can manage some way.

I started out to tell you how sorry I was not to be able to renew my subscription.

God bless you in your work for Him, and give you wisdom and understanding.

ALMA D. DODDS.

TENGHSIEN, SHANTUNG, CHINA.