

**CLOSED
SHELVES
BV
4022
.M34
1964**

This book is
from the Library
of



SOUTHEASTERN
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

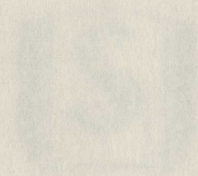
SPEEDY BINDER
Syracuse, N. Y.
Stockton, Calif.

Address in Chapel, Southeastern Seminary
April 23, 1904

By

Professor Edward A. McDowell

Special Collections
University of Toronto



SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY

Address in Chapel, Southeastern Seminary
April 23, 1964

by
Professor Edward A. McDowell

Edward A. McDowell

With respect to the present state of theological thought and New Testament study I would say that we are in a period of transition and transition. It is good to be a student in a theological seminary in such a time. In a time like this students and professors should be alive, alert, open-minded, willing to consider and discuss every new idea. But I have a word of caution. Do not be so quick to take a stance or adopt the latest opinions in the new studies or that one which will gain the most of fame and glory. I will illustrate from my own experience the need of a new approach to the Social Gospel movement was in vogue. At the meeting of the Council on Christian Education in the U.S.A. in 1930, the German scholar Adolf von Harnack in his book, *What is Christianity?* provided theological respectability for the movement. In this country some of the leaders in the movement were Walter Rauschenbusch, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and the staff of the University of Chicago School of Divinity.

Address in Chapel, Southeastern Seminary
April 23, 1964

by

Professor Edward A. McDowell

Now I have lived to see a reversal in the character of theological thought that is interesting, to say the least. It is now the so-called liberals who de-emphasize the historical Jesus, while the so-called conservatives embrace him. As representing the "liberal" camp I cite Rudolf Bultmann whose views concerning the minimal importance of the historical Jesus are too well known to amplify; and as representative of the "conservative" school I name Ethelbert Stauffer whose essay, "The Relevance of the Historical Jesus," in the recent book, The Historical Jesus and the Christian Church, would strike a responsive chord in the hearts of the members of the old University of Chicago liberal school. To further contrast the picture I should say I have improved it--in the position of the old liberal, Harry F. Van Dusen, who in his book, A Criticism of Liberal Theology insists upon the reality and relevance of the historical Jesus and at the same time argues vigorously for the actuality of the incarnation in the new Jesus, while repudiating Bultmann's mythologizing lack of faith and error. Let us not here that while the old historical Jesus-social Gospel liberalism as joined in the study of the gospel and the relevance of the gospel to modern man, the new so-called liberalism as based on piety and piety and seems to have little concern for the relationship of the gospel to social evils.

40550
SHELVED
BV
4022
M34
1964

Address in Chapel, Southeastern Seminary

April 23, 1964

by

Professor Edward A. McDowell

Edward A. McDowell

With respect to the present state of theological thought and New Testament study I would say that we are in a period of ferment and transition. It is good to be a student in a theological seminary in such a time. In a time like this students and professors should be alive, alert, open-minded, willing to consider and confront every new idea. But I have a word of caution: do not be too quick to take a stance or adopt the latest approach as the most scholarly or that one which will stand the test of time and truth. I shall illustrate from my own experience the peril of following such a procedure. When I went to Louisville as a young teacher in 1935 the Social Gospel movement was in vogue. At the center of the movement was emphasis upon the Jesus of history. The German scholar Adolf von Harnack in his book, What is Christianity? had provided theological respectability for the movement. In this country some of the leaders in the movement were Walter Rauschenbusch, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and the well known University of Chicago scholars Shirley Jackson Case and Edgar J. Goodspeed. The men who espoused the movement were known as liberals. The movement was salutary and had much in it that was good, notably a strong emphasis upon the ethical teachings of Jesus and an insistence upon the application of the gospel to social evils. During this period the so-called conservatives and fundamentalists insisted upon the centrality of the Christ of the Gospels, emphasizing the deity of Christ and having little to say about his humanity and its significance.

Now I have lived to see a reversal in the character of theological camps that is interesting, to say the least. It is now the so-called liberals who de-emphasize the historical Jesus, while the so-called conservatives embrace him. As representing the "liberal" camp I cite Rudolf Bultmann whose views concerning the minimal importance of the historical Jesus are too well known to amplify; and as representative of the "conservative" school I name Ethelbert Stauffer whose essay, "The Relevance of the Historical Jesus," in the recent book, The Historical Jesus and the Kerugmatic Christ, would strike a responsive chord in the hearts of the members of the old University of Chicago liberal school. To further confuse the picture--or should I say improve it?--is the position of an old liberal, Henry P. Van Dusen, who in his book, A Vindication of Liberal Theology, insists upon the reality and relevance of the historical Jesus and at the same time argues cogently for the actuality of the incarnation in the man Jesus, while repudiating Bultmannian demythologizing lock, stock and barrel. Let me add here that while the old historical Jesus-Social Gospel liberalism majored in the ethics of the gospel and the relevance of the gospel to social problems, the new so-called liberalism majors on piety and liturgy and seems to have little concern for the relationship of the gospel to social evils.

LIBRARY
SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Wake Forest, N. C.

Where, then, are we now? Perhaps I can describe it this way. Against the background of an extended period of intensive critical study of the Gospels, sparked in the nineteen-twenties by the introduction by Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann of Form Criticism, and also against the background of Albert Schweitzer's Quest of the Historical Jesus, and the Social Gospel movement, came Bultmann's demythologizing, which though now described as a hermeneutical principle, is in fact the application of a theological pre-supposition to the person of Christ. With the application of Bultmann's double-barrelled approach to the Gospels the Jesus of history got lost in the fog of Form Criticism, hermeneutics and demythologizing, and Bultmann's old students, notably Fuchs, Conzelmann and Bornkamm, went to the rescue. Under the respectable banner designed by James M. Robinson, inscribed with the slogan, "A New Quest of the Historical Jesus," the movement now proceeds apace. Above the confusion in the ranks of the "lesser lights" stands the majestic, calm and unperturbed figure of the giant among theologians, Paul Tillich, who will have no part of any interpretation of the New Testament which is not controlled by the criterion Jesus as the Christ.

Perhaps after this recital you will agree with me that we are in a period of ferment and transition. I renew the admonition: keep an open mind, confront all the new ideas, but do not accept the new as the most scholarly or as final truth. If you are too quick to take a stance, like Bultmann's disciples and others you may have to find later a respectable banner under which to retreat nearer the center, such as the one inscribed as "Post-Bultmannian," or another inscribed as "A New Quest of the Historical Jesus."

But what of the future? I believe it is rich in promise for New Testament study and theological thought. My own view is that the next great advance will be in the direction of a genuine rapprochement between Christian theology and science, or the new universe science is uncovering for us. Bultmann tipped his hat, as it were, to the new world of science with his dictum that modern man could no longer believe in the three-storied universe that was the cosmological context of New Testament thought. But then he went off and left the new world and never came back to it. This can never prove adequate as a thinking man's approach to the interpretation of the gospel in the space age and the era of atomic energy, astro-physics and the new anthropology. I am of the opinion that the great Jesuit anthropologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, in his epochal book, The Phenomenon of Man, has opened the way for us as Christian thinkers to accept the new universe and evolution, standing firmly at the same time upon the reality of the incarnation of God in the man Jesus, the Jesus of history. Which means that we do not simply accept the Incarnation as a confession in the kerygma of the primitive church, but that we vitally identify ourselves with it by

committing our lives to the Jesus of history as the incarnate Son of God. This we can do upon the basis of the facts concerning him and the interpretation of him given to us in the New Testament, and by faith in him as Risen Lord.

A word about Southeastern Seminary. Those of us who came here in the early days of its existence shared the dream of its founders that here would be a seminary that would derive its spirit and motivation from Jesus Christ as he is revealed in the New Testament, never deviating from commitment to him as Son of God and Lord of Life. Our dream was and is that the spirit and inner life of the Seminary shall ever be in keeping with that commitment. At the same time the dream was and is that this Seminary shall maintain the highest standard of competent scholarship and honest inquiry. The dream assumed that there would be here that degree of academic freedom consonant with honest responsibility to our denomination and our evangelical constituency. Furthermore, the dream envisaged here a brotherhood, a fellowship of learning in which faculty, students, staff, alumni and trustees are bound together with strong ties of love that cannot be broken. From such an institution we knew would go trained and dedicated men and women whose leadership would lift the spiritual and cultural level of our denomination and whose ministries would serve the cause of Christ around the world.

The dream we dreamed is still a reality, and that intangible something about Southeastern that we call "spirit" is intact. There are forces at work in the world that could destroy both the dream and the spirit. These are first, betrayal of our commitment to Jesus Christ as Son of God and Lord of Life; second, exaltation of academic excellence at the expense of the cultivation of spiritual insight and the interpretation by preaching and by life of the message of the gospel; third, conceit or smugness and sophistication, which can kill any seminary; fourth, indifference to ethical imperatives. These forces are our enemies and we must be ever alert as to their presence and danger. But I am confident that they will not prevail, not now or ever. The dream will go on being realized so long as trustees, administration and faculty believe it and are willing to sacrifice to preserve it.

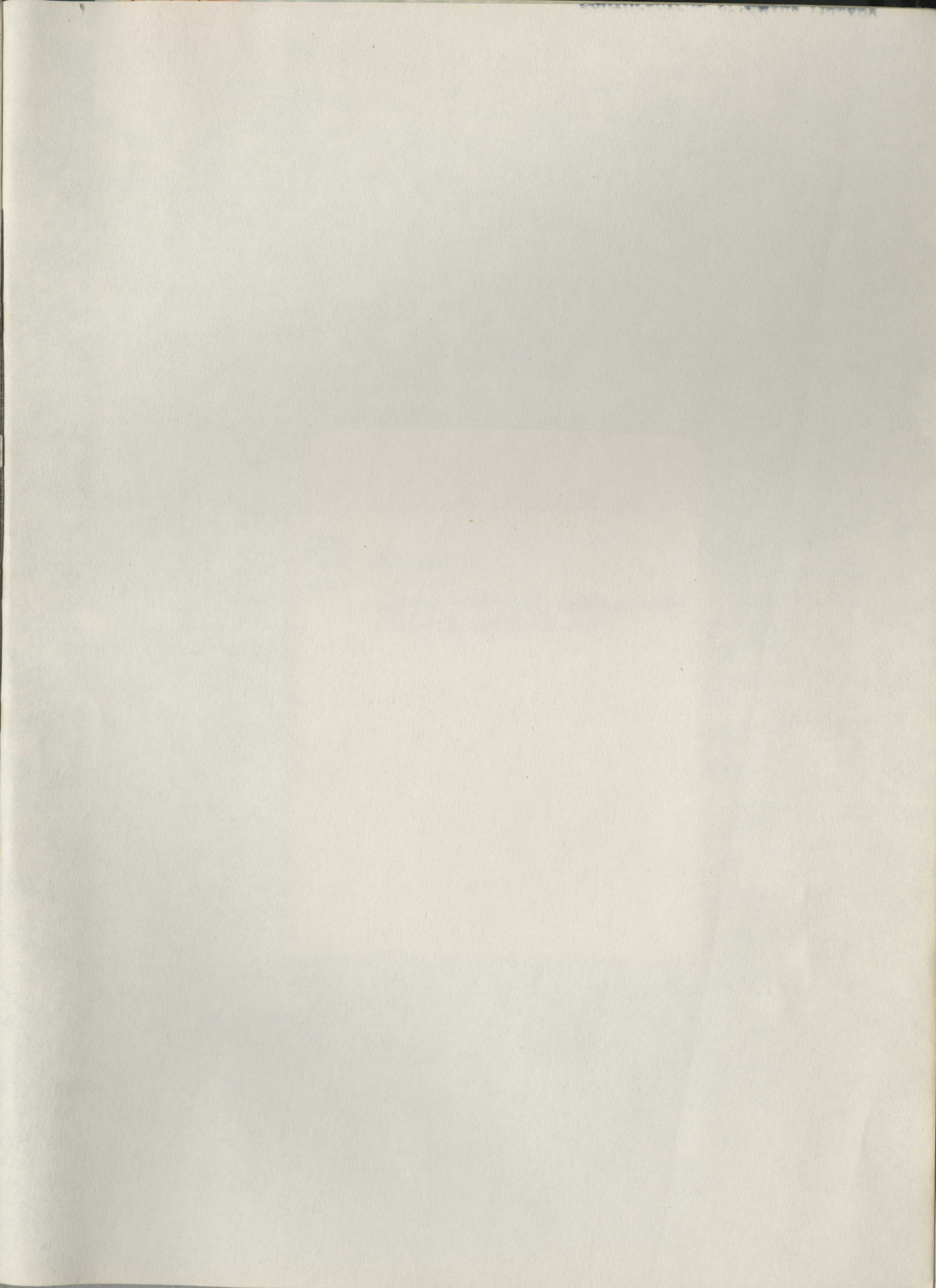
Be faithful to the gospel! What is the gospel? The gospel is Jesus Christ--the Man Jesus, in his earthly life the Son of God, dying an atoning death for the sins of all men, rising from the dead to complete God's redemptive act of salvation and coming in the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of all those who commit their lives in faith to him as Lord. The gospel is this same Jesus made relevant to every area of life; giving hope and freedom to the dispossessed, the poor, the distraught of every race and station in life; pronouncing judgment upon injustice and exploitation of human beings; subduing selfishness and pride; bringing light to the dark places of the earth; teaching men the ways of love, beauty and fulness of life, and always calling them, ever challenging them to be the sons of God.

... containing our lives to the Jesus of history as the incarnate Son of God. This we can do upon the basis of the facts concerning him and the interpretation of his given to us in the New Testament, and by faith in him as Risen Lord.

A word about Southeastern Seminary. Those of us who came here in the early days of its existence shared the dream of its founders that here would be a seminary that would derive its spirit and motivation from Jesus Christ as he is revealed in the New Testament, never deviating from commitment to him as Son of God and Lord of Life. Our dream was and is that the spirit and inner life of the Seminary shall ever be in keeping with that commitment. At the same time the dream was and is that this Seminary shall maintain the highest standard of competent scholarship and honest inquiry. The dream assumed that there would be here that degree of academic freedom consonant with honest responsibility to our denomination and our evangelical constituency. Furthermore, the dream envisaged here a brotherhood, a fellowship of learning in which strong students, staff, alumni and trustees are bound together with strong ties of love that cannot be broken. From such an institution we knew would go trained and dedicated men and women whose leadership would lift the spiritual and cultural level of our denomination and whose ministries would serve the cause of Christ around the world.

The dream we dreamed is still a reality, and that intangible something about Southeastern that we call "spirit" is intact. There are forces at work in the world that could destroy both the dream and the spirit. These are first, betrayal of our commitment to Jesus Christ as Son of God and Lord of Life; second, exaltation of academic excellence at the expense of the cultivation of spiritual insight and the interpretation by preaching and by life of the message of the gospel; third, conceit or arrogance and sophistication, which can kill any seminary; fourth, indifference to ethical imperatives. These forces are our enemies and we must be ever alert as to their presence and danger. But I am confident that they will not prevail, not now or ever. The dream will go on being realized as long as trustees, administration and faculty believe it and are willing to sacrifice to preserve it.

Be faithful to the gospel! What is the gospel? The gospel is Jesus Christ--the Man Jesus, in his earthly life the Son of God, dying an atoning death for the sins of all men, rising from the dead to complete God's redemptive act of salvation and coming in the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of all those who commit their lives in faith to his as Lord. The gospel is this same Jesus made relevant to every area of life; giving hope and freedom to the oppressed; the poor, the distraught of every race and station in life; proclaiming judgment upon injustice and exploitation of human beings; upholding selflessness and pride; bringing light to the dark places of the earth; teaching men the ways of love, beauty and fairness of life, and always calling them, ever challenging them to be the sons of God.



TX33

M138 McDowell

Pam

Address in Chapel, Southeastern
Seminary, April 23, 1964

Southeastern Baptist Seminary Library

BV4022 .M3 1964

McDowell, Edward Allison, 1898-

Address in chapel /



B001219834