

THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

VOL. XXXVII.

JULY, 1926.

No. 4.

THE NEW PRESIDENT.

BY R. A. LAPSLEY, JR., D. D.,

Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S. C.

"The Presidency of Union Seminary is the biggest job in the Southern Presbyterian Church today!" "The best qualified man in the Southern Presbyterian Church for the Presidency of Union Seminary is B. R. Lacy, Jr., of Atlanta, Ga.!" These statements, made at different times by a minister of our Church express the conviction of the author of this article and constitute his apology for writing it.

The first of these statements scarcely requires argument. The men who shape the thinking and direct the training of the Presbyterian preachers of the next generation will exert the predominating influence upon the future of our Church. Union Seminary is the largest of our four seminaries. Just a few less than one-half of the ministers serving our Church today were educated at Union. Of the candidates of our Church in theological training in 1925, Union enrolled one more than the other three seminaries combined. Such facts imply that the President of Union Seminary will be the outstanding figure in the realm of theological education in our Church.

It is the second statement that challenges attention. Every true lover of the Seminary has viewed with anxiety the decline in the health of her beloved former president. They have dreaded the time when he would be forced to relinquish the office he filled in so incomparable a way. Wherever alumni have gathered, this question has been asked, "Where will the Seminary turn for a successor?" It is my deep-seated con-

whence cometh our help. "Lift up your heads, oh, ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory will come in."

Why say ye not a word about bringing back the King? The King is on his throne when the King's Ethic and the King's Evangel and the King's Dynamic are held up to the weary gaze of the children of men.

OUR TRUSTWORTHY BIBLE.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR J. GRAY McALLISTER, D. D.,
LL. D., D. Litt.,

*On the Occasion of His Inauguration as Professor of English
Bible and Homiletics in Union Theological
Seminary in Virginia, May 9, 1926.*

In the Bible we hold as our own today we have, it need hardly be said, no ordinary book. Whether regarded from the viewpoint of historical content, or of literature, or of instruction on moral and religious subjects, or of influence upon the life and speech and literature of the races of the world, or of romance in the very preservation of it through centuries of fire and sword, the Bible stands apart from every other book this world of ours has knowledge of. But this, still, is not its chief distinction. It comes to us with an authority and a finality that can be considered nothing less than astounding. It comes to us claiming to reveal, in unique degree, God's character and purposes and our duties and privileges, and freighted, like treasure-ships, with priceless promises and immortal hopes. Has it the right thus to speak? What credentials does it bear? And will these credentials abide the full light of day? The importance of the enquiry and our own personal interest in it will be at once conceded. I shall

ask you to follow me as I attempt to present a succession of facts bearing intimately on the subject.

How is such a question to be decided? Not, let it be said, by any *ex cathedra* utterance of Pope or Church, though the Church of the early Christian centuries had the all-important part of registering and broadcasting the evidence that traced the New Testament books back to the men who were commissioned to write them. Nor is the question to be decided subjectively, each man ruling out of his own consciousness that what suits him is Bible and what does not is not, even though what he rejects (let it be noted) has equal textual authority with what he accepts. This is the tenet of multitudes in the present day, but observe how the principle works out in practice. One man who has never believed in the fulfilment of prophecy anyway (however strong the proof) expurgates the Gospel of Matthew. Another man, who is morally certain that miracles are myths (though he accepts quite without a question the first great miracle of Creation), says that the Gospel of Mark must go. Still another man, one who is chary of the virgin birth of our Lord, has no difficulty in dispensing with the Gospel of Luke. And a fourth man, who prefers not to believe in the deity of Christ, throws overboard the Gospel of John. Get about twenty-seven such men together and allow each man his scissors, and if all collectively accept the judgment of each individually, the entire New Testament goes by the board. Or, reduced to a single sentence, it simply means that each man makes his own Bible. What is truth to his neighbor may be veriest falsehood to him. What binds his neighbor may have no binding force for him at all. Every man becomes a law to himself. Apply that principle to government and you have anarchy. Then there arises this further curious situation. The man who thus subjectively makes his own Bible is about as liable to change on this subject as on any other, so that what may be Bible to him this week may be Koran the next, with the possible result of a whole string of Bibles that have had their day and ceased to be.

The question is to be decided on the ground of *evidence*, both external and internal. Were there the time it could be

shown that all the books of the New Testament were in existence before the year 100 of our era; that these books were written by Apostles or by members of the Apostolic Circle; that these books are trustworthy; that we have trustworthy copies of these trustworthy books; that in these trustworthy books we have Christ vouching for the divine authority of the Old Testament (which disposes of any question as to the authority of that part of the Bible) and promising inspiration to those who were to write for us the New; that in these trustworthy books we have this inspiration either assumed or claimed by those who wrote them; that we have certain of the writers of these books claiming this inspiration for their fellow writers; and that, finally, we have this inspiration claimed for these writers by those who follow them at the very time they are disclaiming it for themselves.

In the limited time at our command I shall ask you to consider with me just one of these topics: the trustworthiness of these New Testament books, and its implication: *Our Trustworthy Bible*. And, dispensing with further introduction, even to the statement of Greenleaf's rules of evidence, let us observe—

As the first element of this trustworthiness, *the absence on the part of the writers of any motive for fabricating these writings*.

Do you recall the North Pole controversy of 1909-10, Commander Peary on the one side and Dr. Frederick A. Cook on the other? Bold headlines in all our papers, receptions to Dr. Cook, banquets, the freedom of proud cities all arranged for, wreaths of flowers bedecking the conqueror—and then Commander Peary broke out of the frozen north and cabled some caustic criticisms of the doctor's way of handling news items about the Arctic Circle; pretty soon the doctor went into retirement; then came a retraction and then a retraction of the retraction. Both men were out for the fame of discovering the North Pole, and it seems pretty certain that one of the two (and the public is apparently quite well convinced which of the two it was) was all too willing to substitute fiction for facts in order to compass that end.

Not so with these writers of the New Testament. The publication of these books could mean to them, at that time, at least, no personal glory and no financial gain. They wrote of One whom the Roman world of the day considered a peasant of a despised and subject land and people. They espoused a Person and a cause held in contempt by the leaders of their own race. They braved financial loss, ceaseless toil, untold privation, bitter persecution, imprisonment, exile, death itself, to send out the glad tidings to the ends of earth. Whatever else men may question, they cannot with justice doubt the whole-souled honesty and sincerity of the writers of these books.

A second element in the trustworthiness of these writings is closely connected with the first. It is *the atmosphere of veracity* which everywhere plays upon these pages. They wear the air of truth. There is in them no evasion or suppression, but uniform and refreshing frankness from the first page to the last. They have no human heroes to glorify or defend. The very opposite, indeed, is true, for, without explanation or apology, they are accustomed to record the severest criticisms of themselves or of their beloved fellow-workers: The ambition of the Apostles for chief places in the Kingdom; their false conception of this Messianic Kingdom until Pentecost changed it all; the unbelief of even Jesus' brethren; the rebuke of Peter by Christ; the denial of Christ by Peter, and that with oaths and curses; the desertion of Christ by all the Apostles; their surprise at His resurrection; the rebuke of Peter by Paul at Antioch; and the sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas over the case of John Mark—was ever book so truthful? We can account for the faithful, matter-of-fact mention of these things only on the grounds that the things mentioned were true and that the purposes of the truth would be subserved by the faithful record of them. What a chasm here between this and so many other books, other books even that have claimed to be divine! It is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Bible that it speaks the truth in love, in love of the souls of men.

Another element in the trustworthiness of these New Testament writings lie in the fact that *they accord with the g30-*

graphy and topography of those sections of the earth of which they treat.

In reading these pages we are impressed by the fact that we are not in lands of fairies, myths and legends. We are on solid earth, and in places very many of which we may identify today: continents like Asia, Africa and Europe; principalities like Egypt, Palestine, Asia Minor, Italy and Greece; islands like Cyprus, Crete, Patmos and Malta; cities like Jerusalem, Joppa, Bethlehem, Hebron, Rhegium (all but destroyed in the Italian earthquake of 1908), Thessalonica (the Salonika in the streets of which King George of Greece was assassinated March 18, 1913, the Salonika that will go down in history as the eastern headquarters of the Entente in the World War), Smyrna (given to the flames in 1922), Damascus (the scene of fighting in the recent months), Athens (proud of its past but resolutely facing the future), and Rome, still the "Eternal City" and a capital, civil and religious, for millions of the human race; rivers like the Jordan, lakes like tiny Galilee; seas like the majestic Mediterranean; routes of travel and of trade like those which carried the great Apostle over land and sea, through Asia Minor, across the Aegean, through Macedonia and Greece, back to Judea and later across the Mediterranean to years of imprisonment and work in Rome.

The topographical references are equally as accurate and striking. The streets of the little town of Bethlehem, with fields nearby, still lures the feet of countless pilgrims to the birthplace of our Lord. Jerusalem, six miles away, has still its spacious area on which stood the beautiful Temple of Herod, and the sweeping range of the Mount of Olives, where cluster priceless associations from the days of David down to the battle in 1917 that gave Allenby possession of the city. Nazareth, where our Lord was brought up, is still built upon the brow of a hill that slopes to a height of five hundred feet above the level of the lowest street of the town. Our Saviour, on leaving Nazareth, is said to have gone *down* to Capernaum. Of course He did, for Nazareth is about 1,400 feet above sea-level and Capernaum is 700 feet below. The man in the parable went *down* from Jerusalem to Jericho. Of course he did,

for from the crest of the Mount of Olives, 2,700 feet above the sea, one descends in twenty miles 1,300 feet below sea-level and lands in the deepest depression on the globe, deeper by several hundred feet than the famous Death Valley in California. On the outskirts of Cana flows the bold fountain from which, almost certainly, the great water-jars were filled for the first miracle of our Lord. In the Vale of Shechem, you may stand by Jacob's well, seventy-nine feet deep, in the sight of Mount Gerizim, where the Samaritan Temple once stood, and think of the day when our Saviour here conversed with the Samaritan woman and drew for her from a deeper well the waters of eternal life. In Jerusalem you may descend the steep, winding steps that will bring you to the Pool of Bethesda, fifty-five feet long by twelve feet wide, where our Lord bade the impotent man walk home, a well man, and within half an hour be standing by the even larger Pool of Siloam, which once witnessed the joy of a man who looked out upon the world and the faces of others for the first time. A mile and a half away is Bethany, from one of the caverns of which the dead Lazarus came out and back to life; nearer still, just across the Kidron, is Gethsemane, under the great trees of which our Saviour bore in full anticipation the sins of the world; and just over the brow of Olivet, near Bethany again, is the place of His ascent upon the clouds to the better tabernacle and the abiding home and throne. In Athens one may stand within the Old Market, built by Julius and Augustus Caesar, in which Paul reasoned every day with people who spent their days in telling and hearing some new thing; and from "Mars Hill" in Athens one may still look upon the stately ruins of the Parthenon and the other temples on the Acropolis and think of the day when Paul, beholding them in all their glory of gleaming marble and gigantic statues and thronging worshippers, could point to them and declare that "God that made the world and all things therein . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands" nor is the "Godhead like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man" (Acts 17:24, 29). Well has Palestine been called "The Fifth Gospel". Travel through the land and you

will find it true to the multitude of geographical references contained in the books of Scripture, whether Old Testament or New. You will find Bible names borne by people you meet and so many Bible names of places you pass or visit that the index to Baedeker reads like a Bible dictionary. But the other lands—Syria, Asia Minor, Southern Europe—have written their Fifth Gospel, too, in direct statements and in a very wealth of incidental and illuminating touches. Every writer of these books uses geographical terms with an accuracy that none would dare dispute. Man after man of them, if living today, would be honored members in every geographical society in which they would accept membership.

Another element in the trustworthiness of the New Testament books is to be found in the fact that *they accord with the customs and institutions of their day.*

In reading these books we are conscious of the fact that, while they were intended for the widest clientele, their setting is distinctly Eastern. We are mainly among Orientals. The form and the furniture of their homes; their caravanseries; their city walls and gates and bazaars; their customs of marriage, divorce and burial; their table customs; their dress; their occupations, for much of the New Testament, at least, are Oriental. We are in the presence, too, of elders, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, publicans, Roman governors, tetrarchs, priests and Levites and an elaborate ritual within the precincts of the Temple. Then the Acts and the later books bring us into touch with customs of Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome. Yet this is true; that all are faithful to the life of the times as we know it from the best sources of information, Jewish and Roman. And there stands the Near East as witness. You find the dress of the people practically unchanged. You find their homes and their home life, and their occupations, and their manner of conducting them, largely what they were in Bible times. One who idealizes Palestine into a Utopia will be disappointed in a visit to the land; but one who travels through it, Bible in hand, will find testimony everywhere to the truthfulness of the Book.

This leads us to consider another element in the trust-

worthiness of the New Testament books; namely, that *they accord with the history of their times.*

Certain writers who have never lived in our land, and certain others who have, find our dual government, State and Federal, with numerous political subdivisions, not altogether easy of comprehension. But keeping to the channel of American history would be child's play compared with steering a straight course through the intricate and often-changing political seas of the Palestine of New Testament days. I might challenge you here to a memory-test in the rapidly shifting scenes of the Herods assigning their provinces and being deprived of them and of these provinces now directly and now indirectly ruled from Rome. Suffice it to say that there were three radical changes of government in Palestine in the short space of seventy-five years, conditions, be it said, that were even further complicated by the attitude of the Roman emperors towards Palestine and their relations with its rulers.

Moreover, the political changes in other parts of the New Testament world were only less complicated: new provinces added and the old ones changed from Senatorial to Imperial, and then from Imperial to Senatorial, and appointees changing with them. Who but the most accurate of historians could thread his way through this political labyrinth? The New Testament writers do so. Take only one statement from the Gospel of Luke (3:1-2): "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." Detailed information in two verses from a historian! Quite a remarkable statement, too, with reference to the high-priesthood. Why *two* high priests? Josephus furnishes the explanation. Annas was deposed by the Governor of Judea about 16 A. D. This did not end his career, however. Far from it, for five of his sons became high priests and this Caiphas was his son-in-law. Deprived of

the office (if a high priest could ever legally be deposed), he still held the power, and held it as a family affair.

Now turn from the Gospel Luke has written to the other and later book, the Acts. If the Gospel was bold in the statement of fact, what of this Book of Deeds? It fairly bristles with references—religious, social, geographical, historical—not in one country alone, but in many countries, and these wide apart in miles and circumstances. It marches from Jerusalem through Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, by land and by sea to Rome. It threads its way through complicated and rapidly changing political conditions—all with the sureness of the master. It gives accurately official titles. Its statements fit into the shift of provinces from Senatorial to Imperial and from Imperial back to Senatorial. It speaks of Gallio and Sergius Paulus as proconsuls residing in Corinth and Cyprus, respectively, when we know they were there. It gives the account of supposedly sane men shouting for two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," in a theater the ruins of which have been laid bare and concerning a temple which stood as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. But why multiply the references? Luke is the only historian of Roman days (of modern days, too, no doubt) whose accuracy has been proved at every possible point of testing, and these points have been legion. I do not, of course, compare him with other writers of the New Testament, whose wealth of historic detail is smaller, but whose accuracy is equally as noteworthy and impressive. There is not a man of them, if they were living, who would not be members of every historical society in which they would accept membership.

Another element in the trustworthiness of the New Testament is found in the fact that *these New Testament books accord with each other.*

Here are twenty-seven books, written by as many as eight or nine authors, written in different places and in different circumstances and to different audiences; books that show difference of purpose and of style and independence of treatment—and yet what marvelous harmony! Note the portraits of the Christ, to be later spoken of. Note the varying application

of doctrine, and the development of doctrine, and yet the same abiding truths. Note the multitude of undesigned coincidences in the Gospels when compared one with the other, or with the Acts, and those to be found when the Epistles are compared with the Acts or with each other.

A thousand years before our Saviour came to earth, Solomon's magnificent Temple rose on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, and in silence, for there was no sound of chisel or hammer. Thus, too, was fashioned another structure. In separated places wrought the writers of these books until, when they were brought together, silently each fitted into its place and there rose to the view of men the spacious, stately, symmetrical temple of the New Testament Scriptures.

Another element in the trustworthiness of the New Testament books is found in the fact that *they accord with the Old Testament Scriptures.*

Here one must be brief when much could be said. Confessedly the Old Testament Scriptures are not complete in themselves. Like the Old Testament dispensation which they enshrine, they look for their fulfilment in something that is to come. Their types must have antitypes; their promises must have fulfilment; their stages of revelation must have further stages that will bring them to completion. The New Testament gives every evidence of supplying what the Old Testament lacked and promised. How marvelously the types and promises and prophecies of the Old are fulfilled in the New! With what impressiveness the orders of Priesthood and Prophecy and Kingdom find their goal in the Christ who as Priest and Prophet and King is portrayed in these pages! With what naturalness the scattered and inexplicable prophecies of the Old Testament meet in the person and the work of this Messiah whose coming and whose traits are narrated in the New! Could one mind have wrought into these pages a record of fulfilments so remarkable and have fitted them so wondrously into the intricate history of New Testament days? If one could not have done this, could eight or nine have done so? We can account for this New Testament record in one way

only: the writers recorded actual events and recorded them with matchless accuracy.

We see another element in the trustworthiness of these books of the New Testament in *the portrait they present of Christ*.

Here are four Gospels, marked by difference of authorship, of purpose, of method, of style, in the word, of independence of theme and treatment, and yet we see moving in majesty through these pages the Matchless One, so presented that words such as man had never spoken fell naturally from His lips and miracles such as men had never dreamed proceeded naturally from the power that dwelt within Him. And yet more wonderful if possible than even His words or His works is His Person, God shining out through the veil of flesh and revealing through the depths of this Divine Word the everlasting purposes and the beating heart of the Father. Who has so spoken since time began? Who has so wrought for men? Who has so lived? Who has so died? Who has taken up his life again by his own power? Who has ascended on high leading captivity captive and giving gifts unto men? One who could invent such a figure is himself more than man. Four who could invent such a figure, working independently and yet producing a harmony as beautiful as it is undesigned—what shall we say? Another has said it for us: “If we have no Christ, then we have four Christs.” And do not overlook the fact that the Epistles and all the other writings of the New Testament sketch the same regal Figure, the suffering, the dying, the risen, the glorified, the reigning Lord, and with such naturalness and such evidence of truthfulness that even the unbelieving John Stuart Mill was constrained to observe that “it is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical”.

But what is the bearing of it all? Much in every way. It will not do, for example, to assume that the New Testament is inspired and then attempt to prove its inspiration from its pages. This is arguing in a circle. But once show that the New Testament is *trustworthy*, and we may accept every statement it makes as we should accept the statement of a man whose word is as good as his bond. This means that we ac-

cept as true what the New Testament has to say about Christ and the great redemptive purpose that streams through its pages. It means also that we accept as true what Christ had to say about the Old Testament, which He called and appealed to and used as the Word of God; and that we accept as true the inspiration He pledged and gave for the writing of the New Testament. We have, in a word, a Bible absolutely trustworthy and from end to end inspired; God's Book sent through men and coming to us with an authority and an appeal that cannot be set aside. It stands against all the assaults of men unmoved and immovable. It furnishes the warrant for our fullest and most implicit trust and the infallible guide for the living of our lives. It bids us to find here the sufficient answer to life's great questions and, most of all, to behold within its pages, and to follow, the Living Word, the Lord Christ.

BENJAMIN RICE LACY, JR.—THE MAN.

BY JOHN SPRUNT HILL,
Durham, N. C.

[One of the leading business men of the South, an elder in the First Presbyterian Church of Durham, an active church worker and deeply interested in many philanthropic enterprises, Mr. Hill is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary and one of its most loyal and liberal friends. He and his good wife, who is a daughter of the late George W. Watts, do not cease to remember the Seminary in their prayers and gifts. We give below a brief outline of the remarks made by Mr. Hill when he seconded the nomination of Dr. Lacy for President of the Seminary at the meeting of the Trustees, May 11, 1926.—Editor.]

It gives me pleasure to second the nomination of Dr. Lacy for President of Union Theological Seminary.

Of course there is only one Dr. Moore, and we need not expect to find a man like Dr. Moore for this position, but I believe that Dr. Lacy will prove a worthy successor to Dr. Moore.