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EDITORIAL

DR. J. GRESHAM MACHEN AND THE LEAGUE OF EVANGELICAL STUDENTS

On January 1, 1937, God called from our midst and unto Himself the Rev. J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt.D., Professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary and a Trustee of the League of Evangelical Students. In the passing of Dr. Machen the whole Christian world has sustained an irreparable loss. Nowhere will the loss of this great leader and friend be felt more keenly than in the student-world. It was in the student-world that Dr. Machen's heart lay; it was there that he gave his life in utter abandonment to the cause of Christ. Dr. Machen loved students. This is seen with particular clearness in Dr. Machen's devotion to the League of Evangelical Students. From its very inception the League of Evangelical Students was close to his heart. To the very end he remained one of the *League's* most helpful and faithful friends.

Twelve years ago some students of the old Princeton Seminary returned from a meeting of a students' association now popularly known as The Interseminary Movement. At this meeting of theological students a spiritual state was disclosed which resulted in the open denial of Jesus Christ as God's only begotten Son and man's only Saviour. The Deity of Jesus and John 3:16 were rejected as a doctrinal basis of that association. It was even declared by one of the students that "Buddha could save us as well as Christ." There were Christian leaders then as there are now who counseled these students to stay within this blasphemous movement and to try to "leaven the loaf"—as if by staying in a movement that denied our Lord we could ever raise a testimony to our Lord. In loyalty to Christ these students and many others formed a separate movement on an evangelical basis and named it The League of Evangelical Students. Several of the Professors of this seminary bitterly opposed the *League*. One Professor even refused to permit the use of student body stationery bearing his name for purposes of furthering this League of Evangelical Students. What did Dr. Machen do at a time like this? Though to befriend these loyal students meant enmity in high places, Dr. Machen stood openly with these students. Their reproach he made his reproach. Under the hostility of personal attack which became cruel and bitter he did not for one moment forsake these students who were standing for the Lord Jesus Christ. He befriended them; he encouraged them; he counseled them; he defended them in high places. He loved them.

Throughout the twelve years of the *League's* existence Dr. Machen continued one of its most faithful and interested friends. Exceedingly busy man that he was, he was always willing and anxious to minister to the needs of students. When he was needed as a speaker at *League* Conventions he would give liberally of his time and means to make that possible. Pressed with the duties of a teacher and a church leader, he would travel hundreds of miles to speak to a humble

RISEN WITH CHRIST

JOHN MURRAY, M.A., TH.M.

Col. 3:1-4

The Church at Colosse was encountered and endangered by an antichristian philosophy and morality, which had as its tendency preoccupation with earthly material things. Concentration of the mind upon the material, whether it be in the one extreme of asceticism or in the other extreme of unbridled licentiousness, is always the enemy of true sanctification. And so the Apostle in the interests of holiness, of true heavenly-mindedness, exhorts the believers at Colosse to seek and set their affection upon those things that are above. It is thus that sanctification is to be promoted.

The exhortation in accordance with Paul's uniform custom is not exhortation abstracted from doctrine but exhortation grounded in doctrine. He states two things as the basis of his exhortation to holiness, first the foundation and second the goal of sanctification. The first is the statement of fact, the second is the promise of hope. The one, we may say, is retrospective, the other prospective. Both stand in the most integral relation to the process of sanctification. Exhortation, therefore, is grounded in the premises of ascertained fact and assured hope.

"Ye died." "Ye died with Christ." "Ye were buried with Him in baptism." "Ye were raised together with Him." "He quickened you together with Him." Christ is at the right hand of God and "Your life is hid with Christ in God." (Cf. 2:12, 13; 2:20; 3:1, 3). It is apparent that the foundation, establishment, validation, and guarantee of sanctification is the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ and the death of believers and their resurrection and exaltation with Him. But what does the death and burial of Christ mean? In a word, it was death to sin. For "in that He died He died unto sin once" (Rom. 6:10).

This once-for-all-ness means that that with respect to which He died, or for the purpose of which He died is ended. That with respect to which He died is sin; and therefore He made an end of sin and made reconciliation for iniquity. There is completion and finality. He offered Himself once and never again can or will He or any one else die such a death with like intent and effect.

But believers also in a mysterious sense die with Him and in Him. And if they die with Christ they also share in that once-for-all-ness that characterized His death. What does that precisely mean? In the matter of sanctification it means that they are also dead to sin, dead to its controlling power and affection. It means that in them as the efficacy of His death was applied to them the power and dominion of sin was once for all broken. This breach with sin's dominion cannot be reversed nor will it ever need to be repeated. It is surely that thought that underlies what John the Apostle says: "Everyone who is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God. (I John 3:9.) And it is that thought that underlies Paul's affirmation: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). Believers died once for all to sin, to the old man, and to self-righteousness.

Christ rose again from the dead on the third day. He died unto sin once but He liveth unto God. (Cf. Rom. 6:9.) As once for all He died, so once for all He entered upon endless indissoluble life. But believers also have risen with

Christ. And this means that they have once for all been raised to newness of life. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:5). The resurrection power and life of Christ is operative in them.

Christ ascended that He might fill all things. He is exalted as Head over all things to His body the Church. And again believers are in a mysterious, yet real and apprehendable sense, exalted with Him. Their life is hid with Christ in God. Their citizenship is in heaven. They are made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. (Cf. Col. 3:3; Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:6.) The source and seat of the very life they live here and now in the world is in Christ who is seated in the heavenlies. Their life is not earth-determined; it is heaven-determined. Their standpoint and outlook is that of the heavenlies. Their allegiance is to heaven, their rights are from heaven, their credentials bear the seal of heaven. Their protection and care is from the exaltation of Christ; their power and authority proceeds from Him.

The vinculum that binds to this death to sin, to this resurrection life and to this heaven-determined security is faith. But the very faith itself is faith that is of the operation of God who raised Christ from the dead (Cf. Col. 2:12). And faith is not the foundation; it is that that unites to the foundation. It unites them to resistless grace and efficacy that insures progressive conformity to Him who is their Head and King. They die daily to sin and live unto righteousness.

It might seem as if the exalted privilege that belongs to believers in the possession and enjoyment of life hid with Christ in God rendered unnecessary the hope of future glory. Does not, it might be asked, the engrossment with present privilege exhaust the believer's interest? Does not the expectation to be realized in the future at the manifestation of Christ's glory bespeak an under-estimation of the significance of the present joy? The fact is that Paul brings those two thoughts into the closest conjunction—a present life hid with Christ in God and the realization of hope at the manifestation of the sons of God. "Our citizenship is in heaven." Yes. But "we also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be transformed into the likeness of the body of His glory" (Cf. Phil. 3:20, 21). The high privilege of the present is guarantee of and also incitement to the realization of hope. "And everyone who hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure" (I John 3:3).

