

DEDICATION

William David Davies, B. Dec. 9, 1911

We honor you on your sixty-fifth birthday, and give thanks to God for your life among us. You have given us good scholarship, warm friendship, and wise teaching. You are an example to all of sound judgment and careful intellect, plants which grow in the soil of personal humility. You have brought forth abundantly; long may you continue to bear fruit for us.

We offer you these essays to show our esteem, our gratitude and our affection. We are moved to this expression by the quality of your spirit. We know you to be a kind and compassionate man. You care for the truth in argument, yet we have never known you to treat an opponent without generous respect and consideration. You have a profound sense of our common humanity, and are laboring to understand that most mysterious rift of all, the division between Jews and Christians. A Jewish colleague describes you as a "genuinely ecumenical man"—no hidden agenda in your conversation with Jews. In your dealings with students you show a passionate concern for their academic and personal well-being. As colleagues we find you generous in praise, gentle yet firm in criticism, and always loyal to the truth, as we are given to know it.

In your work hitherto, as witnessed by your three major books, you have struggled patiently with the problem of law and gospel, a problem which appeared to you in three guises. Historically, it is the matter of Jesus and Paul and how they related to their ancestral religion; and you are a consummately fine historian. Personally, it is the perplexity of life together for Judaism and Christianity, daughters of the same mother who have treated each other shamefully down the years and are now seeking peace with integrity; and you have loved and honored the Jews, as you are a profoundly Christian man. Philosophically, the problem of law and gospel has been for you a problem of reason versus "enthusiasm"; you are attracted by the sober realism of the Jewish ethical tradition, its practicality, its ability to grow with human history, the word in the flesh; yet you have loved the word who became flesh, "Emmanuel", who could modify Moses' law because he is "God with us", who could take

the place of the Torah in the consciousness of the perfect Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, because he is the law written on the human heart.

And you have felt, as few gentiles can, the Jew's love of his special land. You have labored in Israel, demonstrating your support for its fragile existence by your presence there. Yet you know, and have made the world to know, that Christians believe the blessing given to Abraham to be universally available, regardless of sacred places and sacred times. Could your interest in the land, in roots and rootlessness, have grown out of your own experience of exile? Even though Wales is not the promised land nor North Carolina Babylon.

So, there are antinomies in your thought. Patiently you have sought to resolve them by probing deeper and deeper the historical soil from which for Jews and Christians they first emerged. We believe you would be glad to acknowledge that your labors have done more to illuminate the corners and the crevices of the question, to show its persistence and gravity, than to provide any answers. For the antinomies you have felt are surely those of life itself, rules and passions, laws and spontaneities, reason and intuition,—and who would want to loosen the violin's strings, the tense fibre on whose surface the melody line of life is played?

You have not answered life's question, but you have asked it, with all the skills at your disposal. As an historian you have provided information and insight; as a preacher clearly heir to that legendary Welsh gift, you have asked it directly and passionately; as a friend and counselor you have enabled us to feel it and to see with hope that there will be an answer. And all the while the gracefulness and poise of your person witnesses what each of us already knows, that the question is proleptically answered in the living of those who hold the antinomies together in themselves.

We trust you will recognize yourself in this dedication. We have exercised the privilege of editors in speaking on behalf of our distinguished contributors, and of students in speaking for the many whom you have taught and guided into their careers. We trust they will make generous allowance for sins of commission and omission.

One sin of omission we shall not commit, however, is to forget to record our thanks to those who made this tribute possible: to our distinguished contributors whose names lend lustre to these pages, especially to Jacob Neusner for including the volume in his prestigious series, and to our diligent assistants, Sandra Ragan of Stanford Uni-

versity, and Carol Cost and Barbara Kaiser of The Chicago Theological Seminary; we tender warm thanks.

Greetings William David on your sixty-fifth birthday!

διὰ τοῦτο πᾶς γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν
ὅμοιός ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότη ὅστις ἐκβάλλει ἐκ τοῦ
θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ καινὰ καὶ παλαιά

Matthew 13:52.

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