

DR FORD LEWIS BATTLES: A PRAYER FOR THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES

Born in 1915, Ford Lewis Battles, hailed as 'eminent among an ecumenical college of Calvin scholars', contributed much to the renaissance of Calvin studies this century, bequeathing his legacy in the masterly translation of Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, published under the editorship of the equally distinguished Canadian-born scholar, the late Dr. John T. McNeill.

Battles was a devout churchman, who saw within the Christian Reformed Church a depth of piety and commitment to Reformation principles which, if carefully cultivated, could be used by Christ for the furtherance of His kingdom. To achieve this objective, the Christian Reformed Church would have to abandon its insular status and transcend its cultural boundaries by entering fully into the mainstream of American culture, but, as Battles hoped, without sacrifice of loyalty to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Following appointments at Pittsburgh and Hartford Theological Seminaries, Dr. Battles died on Thanksgiving Day, 22nd November, 1979, while still immersed in various academic projects.

The year 1985 marked the 425th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation, which proudly proclaimed the intimate relationship between education and piety. This theme is likewise embodied in this prayer by Battles for theological colleges, calling Christians to remember their heritage, and reminding them of the prophet Isaiah's injunction to 'look to the rock from which they are hewn, and to the quarry from which they are dug' - an appropriate invitation to all members of the Scottish Reformed faith to mark an important anniversary which passed without conspicuous comment in the press or Church literature.

Let us pray for those called to teach the Christian faith, catholic, evangelical, and reformed.

Thy Word, O God

Is in its season marvellously renewed.

We, servant seminaries of thy servant Church,

Are children of the Apostles,

Children of the Fathers and the Schoolmen,

But especially we are children of the Reformers

Who four hundred years ago in the Western world

Cleansed thy Church;

Through them thou didst marvellously renew thy Word.

O Father, we have not always been faithful to thy Word;
We have not always taken up our cross to follow thy Son;
We have too often been people of books rather than people
of the Book.

O Father, too often we have forgotten the Church we exist to serve.
Renew in our hearts and in our minds
The faith that was in Peter and Paul,
The faith that strengthened the ancient martyrs,
The faith that moved the pens and lips of the Fathers,
The faith that built cathedrals and universities,
The faith that moved the Reformers to renew cathedral and
university.

O Father, teach us how to impart that faith to the congregations of
thy people
Whose servants we are.
These petitions we lay before thy presence
In the name of thy Son our Lord,
Confident that thy Spirit will do thy will in our hearts.
Amen.

W Gerald Jones
Kirkmichael

CAP THIS

As I hung around in the vestry of Warriston Crematorium, awaiting the end of the previous funeral, my eye was drawn to this cryptic note scribbled down for the benefit of the organist: "HANDLES PASTORIAL MASSIAI".

Or perhaps it wasn't for the organist. Could it have been a message to the local scrap merchant: "Handles passed; all really messy" ?

WGN