

**THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO; THE RECOVERY
AND RESTATEMENT OF THE
GOSPEL; A DISSERTATION**

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The University of Chicago; The recovery and restatement of the gospel; A Dissertation by Loran D. Osborn

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LORAN D. OSBORN

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CHICAGO; THE RECOVERY
AND RESTATEMENT OF THE
GOSPEL; A DISSERTATION**

The University of Chicago

FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

THE RECOVERY AND RESTATEMENT OF THE GOSPEL

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE DIVINITY SCHOOL, IN
CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY)

BY

LORAN D. OSBORN

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L. D. O.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE QUESTION STATED.

THE purpose of the following pages is to show how the gospel of Jesus has become obscured during the course of its historical development, and that it is therefore necessary to go back of this in order to recover the gospel which he taught; and further, that, inasmuch as the world's culture has radically changed during the centuries since Christianity received its first dogmatic expression, this recovered gospel needs restatement in terms of modern thought and life.

In asserting that the gospel has been obscured, no one would claim that it has ever been wholly lost. During even the darkest of the centuries it has still been a mighty power in the world. It has transformed lives and determined the destiny of nations. It has leavened society, influenced the movements of thought, and produced a civilization that is at least semi-Christian.

Yet there are good reasons for suspecting that a real obscuration has taken place. As thought is handed down from age to age it tends to become dead and stereotyped tradition. The new gen-

eration attempts to appropriate the statements of the former time, but life has moved on and the old forms of expression no longer possess vital force. Again, when Christianity entered the world, it came into an alien and unfriendly environment. In process of time it was modified by these outside influences, and lost something of its original power. Yet again, the gospel came at first in the form of life and speech. It had to be reduced to writing and brought into relation to the world's thought. Then, as it came into contact with the nations, this original literature was translated into other languages. Thus the gospel has been subject to radical transplantings as it has been transferred from the soil of Jewish life and forms of thought to that of Greek, Roman, German, and English life and culture. It has been called upon to pass out of one civilization into an entirely different one, in coming from the ancient to the modern world. It would be strange, indeed, if this long and intricate process had not affected Christianity and caused later conceptions of the gospel to depart from the original. Hence, on *a priori* grounds alone, we should expect that, after eighteen hundred years of such a history, the gospel would have become obscured.

If we turn now to the great claims that Christianity makes, and reflect upon its com-