

**CAN WE STILL
BE CHRISTIANS?**

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Can we still be Christians? by Rudolf Eucken & Lucy Judge Gibson

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CAN WE STILL BE CHRISTIANS?

BY

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NOBEL PRIZEMAN, 1908

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"LIFE'S BASIS AND LIFE'S IDEAL," ETC.

TRANSLATED BY

LUCY JUDGE GIBSON

CLASSICAL AND ORIENTAL TRIPOSES, CAMBRIDGE



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PREFACE

SINCE a book like this has a decidedly personal note, it seems fitting that I should devote a few words to setting forth my personal position in the matter. Influenced by the sombre side of life, I was keenly interested in religious problems from very early days; but at the same time I could never come into friendly relation with the Churches, and I never thought of entering their ministry. Later on, indeed, when philosophy became my life-work, I sought to suppress the religious interest altogether, else I should scarcely have devoted myself so assiduously to a study of Aristotle and philosophical terminology. The old interest, however, would not die, and ever and anon it broke out again, even in the midst of my philosophical pursuits. But the old problem also remained: In the light of our freer convictions, what attitude can we take up, and ought we to take up, towards Christianity? For a long time it has been on my mind to speak out on this subject, but again and again I have postponed the task in the hope of being able to treat it more worthily as years brought me added experience, and to undertake more confidently the no slight responsibility involved in such treatment. It seems to me now, however, that the time has at length come when I should carry out my intention. For, as regards myself, old age draws near, and there is no knowing how long I may still be fresh enough for work. Then, too, the time is ripe. For the conflict over this question has now broken out in earnest, and it becomes a manifest duty to take up a definite position and

do all I can to further the end for which the conflict is being waged. Thus I have resolved to keep silence no longer.

As regards the content of the book, it will scarcely commend itself to everyone, even leaving party-feeling out of account. Where the problem is so deep-rooted in the personal life, every man has his own particular questions and preferences, and what seems too little to one will be too much for another. So in justification of my method of arranging and unfolding the argument, let me make the following brief observations. Many perhaps will be of opinion that the philosophical exposition occupies too large a space and wanders too far from the main problem. But it was nevertheless quite indispensable in order to give a firm support to my own convictions, so that I might not merely set one opinion against another, — a proceeding which makes discussion of this kind so stale and unprofitable. Many again would have liked a more detailed treatment and more definite suggestions as regards the distinctively religious problems. But we are of opinion that the time for this is not yet ripe. It is important first of all to come to an agreement as to the main direction of our quest, to sketch the outlines of a religious thought-world, and to show that besides tying down religion to a creed, or allowing it to evaporate in subjective sentimentalism, in the manner so popular to-day, there is still another course, — we purposely avoid calling it a middle course, because in this matter there is no question of compromise. How far this course will take us and what further problems we shall find upon the road, it is for the future to determine and our own united effort.

RUDOLF EUCKEN.

JENA, October, 1911.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

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MELBOURNE, December, 1913.

