‘Every Christian A Priest,’ Says Theologian Ritschl In Chapel Talk

BY RICHARD BEST

With the sounding of chimes, the proclamation of Holy Writ, and the intonation of ancient canticles, the Rice University commemorated the nativity of Jesus the Christ, last Thursday evening.

The sermon on this impressive occasion was preached by the Rev. Dietrich Ritschl, Professor of Historical Theology at the Austin Presbyterian Seminary.

RITSCHL, WHO is leaving the Texas school to go East, took his text from the book of Galatians, “... when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law.”

Only a minority of men, claims Ritschl, have consciously been liberated from living as slaves, under the law, dominated by the world, loved ones, or by western culture.

Man has wanted law both to adore and to transgress, thus “when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.”

“BUT WHEN time had fully come, God’s son was born under the law, under fear and the limitations of us ourselves.” The coming intervened in time and made irrelevant all religious conceptions.

Ritschl believes that when Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” he meant “Blessed are those who doubt, who can not see everything on the horizon.”

“WE” SAID the German-born theologist, “are known by God better than we know him, and even our knowledge is supplied by him. We do not act for Christ, but because of him, for others. We do not pray, but the Holy Spirit prays in us.”

Every Christian is a priest among the laymen of the world: this is his status. As a man retains the status of marriage even though he doesn’t love his wife every minute of every day, so must the Christian maintain his status as priest in the world.