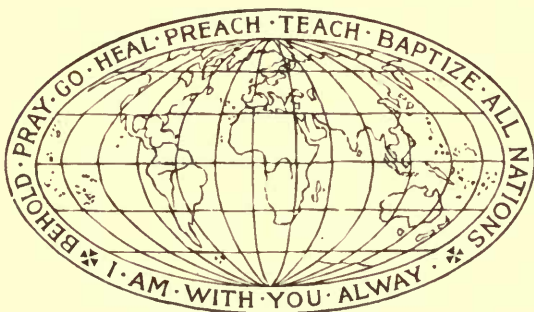


WORLD-WIDE EVANGELIZATION

THE URGENT BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH

ADDRESSES DELIVERED BEFORE THE FOURTH
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE STUDENT
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PREPARATORY SERVICE

Surrender, Indwelling, Freedom
Christ in the Life is Enough

SURRENDER, INDWELLING, FREEDOM

MR. ROBERT E. SPEER, M.A., NEW YORK

IN a striking passage in "Grace Abounding," John Bunyan describes his vision of the way of life and the entrance thereto, and the exceeding straitness of that entrance: "Forasmuch as the passage was wonderful narrow, even so narrow that I could not but with great difficulty enter in thereat, it showed me that none could enter into life, but those that were in downright earnest, and unless also they left this wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and soul, but not for body and soul and sin."

The truth which John Bunyan puts in this characteristic way is one of the most terrible and yet one of the most blessedly familiar truths of the Christian life. We came through that door ourselves, and there is not one of us this afternoon who is in the Christian life, who cannot recall something of the struggle of that hour when we found that part of us could come through that door and that part of us must stay on the other side. Round about us every day, in the lives of the men and women with whom we have to do, we see the human struggle against the necessity of letting something go in order that something else may come. The classic illustration of it all, of course, is the story of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus, and to whom Jesus spoke, saying, "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me." We have learned that lesson, so far as the gateway of the Christian life is concerned. But will you notice that our Lord did not say to the young ruler that the sale of what he had or the gift of it to the poor would make him a perfect man. 'If ye would be perfect, sell all that ye have, and come and follow me.' In that life of following Christ the young ruler would have discovered, if he had ever begun it, that every day brought to him the necessity of some new surrender, some fresh letting-go; that he was like a traveler mounting one hill only to discover a higher hill beyond which the first hill had hid from view; and that each new joy in Christ was a revelation to him of new things that were possible in Christ and of new surrenders to be made in order that these new blessings might come.

And I am very sure that those who are oldest and richest and most childlike in their Christian experience here this afternoon, are

the ones who understand most perfectly the truth of which I have been speaking. They have fought, not one battle, but as many battles as there have been moments in their lives. They have given up, not alone what they left at that narrow gate through which no sin can come, but a thousand things since that they did not know to be sins then, that they have discovered since to be sins, and to stand in conflict and antagonism with the better and the larger gifts of Christ.

I suppose the prophet Isaiah was as good and holy a man as lived in his day; but it was from his lips that the agonizing cry broke that year when King Uzziah died and he stood in the temple and the posts of the house rocked to and fro and the whole place was filled with smoke, and he cried out: "I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." I suppose that David was as devoted and earnest a man as lived in his day, but it was from David's heart that the deepest cries of woe and of need broke. I presume that Simon Peter was as sincere and earnest a soul as was numbered among the disciples of Christ, but it was Simon Peter who fell on the shores of the Tiberian Sea when he looked upon a fresh revelation of Christ's power, and cried, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The best man will say first with Whittier:

"Let the thick curtain fall,
I better know than all
How little I have gained,
How vast the unattained."

Can you see all this more clearly in any life than in the life of the missionary who wrote that epistle from which we were reading a little while ago? 'I count myself not to have attained,' he said, 'I am simply trying to apprehend that for which I am also apprehended in Christ. I am trying to forget those things that are behind and I press forward toward the mark of the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.' And the words that introduce this unveiling of the heart of St. Paul reveal to us something of the things for which he longed, "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings."

And even beyond all these deep human experiences we can see in this same epistle the passionate longings of the man's heart for better things still. "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ." And in the last letter that he wrote, out of the ripest experiences of his life, where he tells us that he has fought now, as he knows, a good fight and finished his course and kept the faith, he is conscious also of evil with which he must wrestle still; evil that would not be evil if it did not awaken some response in his own

heart, but from which — and these were almost the last words that he wrote — he knew that the day would come when he should be given deliverance.

My friends, if we hope for anything from this conference which we are now beginning, we must realize this first hour of all that every incoming means an outgoing, that every larger hold of Christ upon us means a relaxation of some lower grip upon us. And if you would have a word from the Scriptures themselves to describe the door through which each one of us must pass this day, you will find it in the twenty-first verse of the first chapter of the Epistle of James, "Wherefore, putting away, . . . receive." And I want to ask this afternoon, in order that we may make our meeting together personal and real and sincere, that each of us should address to himself four questions, and discover if possible some of those things that must be put away, if in the days of this conference we would more largely receive.

First of all, has Jesus Christ His right place with us? Has He His right place in our hearts? Let us in all candor be honest and sincere in this matter. Were you thinking about Him as you sat in this hall a few moments ago, waiting for this meeting to begin? And were you thinking about Him on your way to this hall this afternoon? Did you think about Him yesterday on your way to Toronto? Are you thinking about Jesus Christ now? Have we brought every one of our thoughts into captivity to His obedience? The Psalmist says of one that "God is not in all his thoughts"; possibly he means that God is not in any of his thoughts; possibly he means that God is not, as He should be, in every one of his thoughts. Is Jesus Christ the Lord of my thought this moment, or am I thinking of myself speaking to you and the next thing I am going to say? Is Jesus Christ in your thought now, or are you thinking of what I am saying to you and the thing I last said? Does Jesus Christ have His right place in our thoughts?

There is a little lad who is more than all the world to me, and now and then he looks up and he pleadingly says, "Father, won't you look at me, please?" It is just the child's desire to be sure of companionship and of thought. We are always willing to make those we love the objects of our thought. Is that loved one out of your thought one moment of the day? Christ is. But for what else were memory and imagination given us but that Christ should never be absent from our thought, that we might keep the words that He spake, the deeds that He did, His loving ways with the little children, and the power, the gentleness of His look, the kindness of His heart, as an ever living presence in our lives; that He might stand out before us as the most real image of all our dreaming, until at last in the night even He Himself would rule all our unconscious thought? I ask again, does Jesus Christ have His right place in our thoughts? Why, all this world thinks more of Him than we do!

You remember the truth — it is a truth — as Sidney Lanier puts it in his "Ballad of the Trees and the Master":

"Into the woods my Master came,
Forespent with death and shame;
Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forespent, forespent.

"But the little gray leaves were kind to Him,
The olive tree had a mind to Him,
The thorn bush it was kind to Him,
When into the woods He came."

I think even the little leaves must give Him in their little lives a better place than we. We allow every other thing to dull and blur the image of Jesus Christ in our lives; it shrivels, and they live. Let us lay aside this afternoon our forgetfulness of Christ, our love of other faces than the face of Christ, and of other words than the words of Christ, and let us give Jesus Christ pre-eminence in our thoughts these days.

Does He have His right place in our wills? I speak not alone to those who suppose that they have given themselves to Him in the surrender of a great sacrifice, but to all here to-day. Is Jesus Christ first in my will? Have I grasped what Horace Bushnell, in what Dr. Munger calls the greatest sermon ever preached in this Western world, on the "Dissolving of Doubts," describes as the first principle of every sincere and honest life? Have I willed to do the right as Christ gives me to see the right? Is He first in my will? My will was given me that I might make it His.

Is He first in our affections to-day? I went into my office a few days ago, and there was lying on the table a delicate green-bound book, which I opened and found to be a little privately printed memorial volume of the late Peter Carter. Very few of you perhaps have ever heard of him, but there were none of those who touched him who did not love Christ more for that touch. As he lay dying, those who stood by his bedside heard him over and over again just murmuring to himself, "Oh, my precious Lord Jesus! Oh, my precious Lord Jesus!" Well, you may say it is a matter of temperament whether a man can say that aloud. But it is not a matter of temperament as to whether a man will feel it in his heart. And have you to-day any time just gone back from the world with all its pressure and stress to say quietly to Him, "My precious Lord Jesus, my precious Lord Jesus?" Does He have His right place in our love to-day?

One of the greatest astronomers of America I heard speak years ago of his favorite hymn; it seemed especially significant as the hymn of one who had seen more things with his eyes than any man in this Western world:

"Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of Thine,
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.

"I see Thee not, I hear Thee not,
Yet art Thou oft with me,
And earth hath ne'er so dear a spot,
As where I meet with Thee."

Is He there with you and there with you and there with you now?
Are you conscious this moment that He is with you, the light of
your life, the life of all your life? Is Jesus Christ in His proper
place in our thoughts, our wills, our love?

I ask you, secondly, are we right with God to-day? Do I live in
Him and His life and His ways and His thoughts, or do I live in
myself and my ways and my thoughts? Have I ever broken over
the shackles of the self-bound life into the liberty of the life that
has lost itself in the freedom of God? You remember the lines at
the close of "Hymns of the Marshes," by Sidney Lanier:

"As the marsh hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God.
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies.
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God."

Are we so right with Him that His presence is the most real and
living presence with us, and that we abide always in the light of His
countenance?

I was awakened the other morning about four o'clock in my
room by a little voice just beside my bed in the dark asking for a
drink. I got the little lad a drink, and he lay quiet a moment and
then he said, "Father, may I sing myself to sleep?" And I said,
"Yes, dear, go ahead." But soon he got up so much enthusiasm
that I told him he would better stop, or none of the rest of us
could sleep. Then he was quiet awhile, but soon I heard his little
voice again in the perfect stillness of the night, "Father, have you
got your face turned toward me?" And I said, "Yes, little boy,"
and the darkness was as the light of day to him.

"We older children grope our way
From dark behind to dark before,
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day,
And there is darkness nevermore.

"Reach downward to our sunless days
Wherein our guides are blind as we,
Where faith is small and hope delays,
Take Thou the hands of prayer we raise,
And let us feel the light of Thee."

But are we in this light to-day, are we conscious that our Father's face is turned toward us? Nay, my friends, do we want it turned upon that pruriency of imagination, that uncharitableness of judgment, that selfish plan of life, that thought to our will rather than His will? Do we live in the blessed light of His countenance to-day?

And it is right here that the problem of our life of prayer rises to confront us. Do we sustain right relations with God? Has prayer been to us to-day a real thing? You would assent to any form of words about it this afternoon, but has it any reality and power in your life? Are we praying now? Are we men and women of prayer? Is God in His right relations to us, and are we in our right relations to God?

And, thirdly, are we right with one another? It would not be enough for any one of us in this Convention to feel great thrills of emotion Godwards, dream of His presence and imagine that the house was now filled with the smoke of His glory. There is a little quatrain of Charles Hahn, descriptive of the life we try to live:

"The joy of peace! the joy of peace! By me
The seeking one is found in cloisters dim;
The path I've chosen is apart from men,
And with the angels I now walk with Him."

No, no one of us will walk with Him during the days of this conference in the glory of a right life, who does not walk in the glory of a right life with men. Have you surrendered a single right to-day; have you given up one prerogative; have you once to-day yielded that some one else might have what was your right? Are you right with men in this? Have we taken home to our hearts those words of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, — they are no hyperbole, — "Each counting other better than himself," as we have in us the lowly mind that was in Christ. Do I esteem all these my friends better than myself, and these strangers also? Am I resolutely holding my life in its right place in all my thoughts regarding other men? Am I at peace with them? Possibly some of you have come up here with delegations with some of whose numbers you are not at peace; there have been unkind words, or you have expressed bitter opinions regarding them. If we would enter into larger blessings during these days, we must make sure that now we have put away all jealousy and evil speaking, all frivolity and shallowness, all emptiness and unkindness, all unworthiness and unchristlikeness of life.

And, lastly, are we free? Are we free from the sin that clutches us when we would rise? One of the members of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, who was at the last Convention of the Brotherhood and which was attended, I think, by Phillips Brooks, — it was held

in his own church in Boston, — told me how in the concluding session of the Convention Phillips Brooks came down out of the chancel and stood on the floor just in the midst of the men, and opened up that great, clean, loyal heart of his as he spoke to them from the verse from Isaiah, "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." Are we clean? Am I free from all defilement? Have my eyes looked on any wrong thing? Am I in my heart as pure as Christ and a little child? Am I free this afternoon from sin, from slavery, from fear of all wrong, from every idolatry, from every weak and foolish and wicked thing? Am I free for freedom, for fellowship, for life, for the larger blessing of these days? It may be a very little thing that is holding us down in slavery and out of liberty. It requires no great sin to bar the doors of the larger life and the richer blessing to us. You remember the only two incidents that are recorded on the last Monday of our Lord's life, — the one the withering of the fig tree, and the other the cleansing of the temple, — and you recall that when He cleansed the temple He was not satisfied merely to drive out from it those who sold oxen and doves and the money changers, but also that He would not suffer that any man should bear a vessel through the temple. I suppose the public opinion of the people about Him was with Him in driving out the money-changers and those who sold oxen and doves, but I suppose when He forbade the bearing of vessels through the temple, some of them might have said: "This man is an extremist. Why was He not satisfied when He drove out the money-changers and those who sold oxen and doves? Why was it necessary for Him to push matters to extremes?" My friends, Jesus Christ viewed right as right whether large or small. A lie is a lie whether an inch long or a mile, as water is wet whether you take it in the ocean or the drop. It will require no very great evil in our lives to bar us out of a greater blessing during these days. Let us come creeping close, close, oh, closer still, to the side of Christ to-day, that in the light of His countenance we may perceive what is the debarring, the weakening and the enslaving thing, and putting it away out of our life, be then where we can receive!

CHRIST IN THE LIFE IS ENOUGH

MRS. F. HOWARD TAYLOR, CHINA

Two days ago my husband and I went as strangers into a great city not far from here, where we knew no one. We were received at the station by a man whom we had never seen before. But as soon as he spoke to us and we stepped into the conveyance, a strange, sweet sense came upon our hearts of something