

FACING OUR DAY

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12:1.

I am glad to speak to young people. I admire, appreciate and love youth. In one of his novels, Disraeli places strange words on lips of one character, "Youth is a blunder, manhood is a struggle, and old age is a regret." That is not true. For those who become Christians and live right youth is opportunity, manhood is achievement, and old age is a holy memory. There are various glories of youth--frankness, idealism, strength, enthusiasm, adventure, optimism and trustworthiness. One faces three questions in youth:--

"What can I do to be saved?", "What can I do to achieve happiness?" and "What can I do to succeed in life?" The three greatest choices are--a Master, a companion and a vocation.

I. Characteristics of Our Day.

We are living in a world of rapid and constant changes. Modes of travel, methods of communication, means of commerce, and inventions for pleasure and comfort change so frequently as to keep the whole industrial world in a stir.

Bewilderment, confusion, apprehension and uncertainty are evident throughout our world. It is a world of appalling problems. Fear and unrest are prevalent. It is a world of startling changes. These changes occur over night. No one knows what a day will bring forth. All around us are changes--grand, stupendous and unimaginable. What lies just ahead? Nobody knows.

II. Challenge of Our Day.

I wish that I might get you to see and believe that you have the greatest opportunity of any generation of young people who have ever lived. The sweetest songs are yet to be sung, the noblest poems are yet to be penned, the greatest books are yet to be written, the finest sermons are yet to be preached, the truest lives are yet to be lived, and the most heroic exploits are yet to be achieved.

For you God is an absolute necessity. Just as your physical nature is dependent upon food and drink, so is your soul dependent upon the living God. There is simply no getting along without God. Men need God because they need strength, guidance, encouragement and comfort in the tremendous task of daily living. Anybody is foolish who imagines he can get along and get the most and best out of life without the strength and help of God.

The Greeks had a beautiful word for man--"anthropos," meaning the being with the up-turned face. Man is so made that he cannot be content with forever looking down. He may look down a long time, so long that he may forget that he was made for God, until something happens, until some crisis comes. Then, he remembers and looks up. You may try to get along without God, but some day you will be struck with the impossibility and the absurdity of living without Him. You can't get along indefinitely without God.

You will never outgrow your need of God. It is Christ alone who can satisfy the craving of the human spirit for salvation, for goodness and for usefulness. You will always need His strength, help and comfort. He is the only one who can satisfy the needs of your soul, and you will never have a need that He cannot supply. In the midst of all of life's changes stands this unchanging Christ, Who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

1. He is the Christ of history.

With what divine impression He has marched down these twenty centuries! But there is nothing about Him which would make us leave Him to the past. The past cannot hold Him. He is ours today.

2. He is the Christ of today.
Yesterday is history and today is experience. We match our Christ against everything today can be.
3. He is the Christ of tomorrow.
He will be sufficient. The presence of the living Christ will be our only inspiration to holy living, heroic endeavor and high achievement. This wonderful Christ is able to strengthen your courage, brighten your hope, illumine your faith, and warm your heart. I challenge you to get a new vision of Him, a new knowledge of Him, and a new grip on Him. He is truly a living, thrilling, pulsating personality.

As the helper of His people, Christ is ever the same. He is always available for our needs. He has not failed; He does not fail today; He will not fail tomorrow. What a tonic for our faith such words are! He is the same in His work yesterday, in His grace today, and in His glory tomorrow.

For what is His grace sufficient? It is sufficient to save. Grace provides salvation and faith appropriates it. It is sufficient to secure. It is sufficient to sustain. Sufficient to sustain in the midst of our: --

1. Temptations.
Regardless of the temptation we shall encounter, the grace of Christ is sufficient to supply the necessary strength to withstand the temptation.
2. Mistakes.
All of us make them, but His grace is sufficient for them.
3. Trials.
We shall be called upon to endure numerous trials, but His grace will prove sufficient.
4. Troubles.
Sooner or later, we must face and experience trouble, but His grace will be sufficient to see us through that.
5. Sorrows.
When sorrow comes, Christ gives extraordinary strength and comfort.

Not knowing what life may bring to us, it is well to remember that God has said, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Those words were spoken by the One Who knows what our days will be, who orders them, who measures our days, who has an unchangeable love for us and infinite resources on which we can draw throughout the days, and who will be with us to the end of our days.

God would have us to stop living in the past. It is such a temptation for us to use up our powers living over the past, and regretting old mistakes, short-comings and decisions, and when we do, we have very little strength left to grapple with the insistent problems and tasks immediately before us. Mulling over the mistakes of yesterday paralyzes the efforts of today. Excessive regret over the blunders of the past freezes our energies, and wholly unfits us for radiant and effective living in the present. The past is gone, utterly and irretrievably gone. Then, put all you have into today's opportunities and duties. Quit trying to solve future problems before they ever arise.

1. Tomorrow may never come.
The future you are so anxious about may never come. So don't waste today's strength handling a tomorrow which may never arrive.
2. If tomorrow does come, its character may be altogether different from what you anticipate. It may be much less unhappy than you think.
3. Whatever the character of tomorrow, God is adequate for it.
Whatever the future may hold for you, His grace will be sufficient. He will supply

every need of yours and see you safely through. Commit the uncertain future to Him, and trust it to His grace and power. He will never disappoint you.

In the light of these facts, let us face our day: ---

1. Confidently.
"Have faith in God." Trust Him and rely upon Him implicitly. Have confidence in God's wisdom, goodness and mercy. Now is the time to exercise great faith in God. God's people are kept out of many lands of promised blessings because of their lack of faith. They doubt God's ability or His willingness, and sometimes both. "According to your faith, so be it unto you." Moody used to say, "If God be your partner, make your plans large." Judson said, "The future is as bright as the promises of God." We are standing upon the threshold of the most challenging hour that Christianity has ever known.
2. Conscientiously.
Study the Bible, learn its glorious truths, have some definite convictions, be true to them, and conscientious about standing for them.
3. Courageously.
Have enough courage to live for Christ, to witness for Him, to serve Him, and to glorify Him with your lips and your life whether or not anybody else does so.
4. Consistently.
Practice what you advocate to others. Never tell anybody, "Don't do as I do, but as I say." Be willing to do what you ask others to do.
5. Cooperatively.
Don't get the mistaken idea that you have a monopoly on wisdom and Christianity. It is easy to arrive at the conclusion that you have superintelligence. That opinion may be far from the truth. It has caused many to make themselves ridiculous. Two women were discussing married life. One said, "Has your husband changed any since you have been married?" The other replied, "Not a bit. He still talks about what 'a fool I used to be'."
6. Charitably.
Your attitude is exceedingly important. It will have much to do with your happiness or unhappiness. It will be a major factor in determining the esteem in which others will hold you. It will either attract others to you or it will drive them from you. He gets the most out of life and puts the most into life whose attitude is that of appreciation instead of criticism. Cultivate the habit of looking for the best instead of the worst. "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." You will reap exactly what you sow, except more of it. A man sold a five pound rock in butter for 40¢ per pound, and the next spring bought the same rock in a bag of grass seed at \$2 per pound.
7. Consecratedly.
God has a will. To make it known and get it accomplished has been His biggest undertaking. Our Saviour wanted the Father's will to be done regardless of what it was. He was obedient to the will of the Father in everything. It should be our supreme desire that God may have His way with us. It is infinitely more important that God's will shall be done than that we should have the things upon which we have set our hearts. God's will ever seeks our highest good. "Thy will be done"---whatever it is; wherever it leads; whatever it costs; whatever it means! If it means broken plans, blasted prospects, faded hopes and disappointed expectations, "Thy will be done." God's will for us is right and best. Stonewall Jackson, the great Christian soldier, was wounded accidentally by one of his own men. As he lay dying at the battle of Chancellorsville, he said: "If I live it will be for

the best; if I die it will be for the best. God knows and directs all things for the best of His children. God's will be done." That is the way to pray. The will of God is something glorious for us. We shall never do the will of God until we see it as Christ saw it, namely, as the most glorious ambition and purpose of life.

What marvelous possibilities in you and through you and by you and with you and for you under the mastery of Christ! What great possibilities if salvation has been received and a full surrender to Christ is made! What heights are attainable if you will just give Him the continents rather than the corners of your personality! What mighty works will show themselves in you if you will only do His will!

Cheerfully dedicate your all to Christ.

(1) Your Personality--all that you are.

a. Your body--the physical.

"Present your bodies." "Glorify God in your body."

b. Your mind--the intellectual.

Let Christ regulate your thoughts. "As a man thinketh."

c. Your heart--the emotional.

Christ claims the first place in your affections for your highest good.

d. Your will--the volitional.

Consecration involves the complete surrender of your will to the wise and loving will of God. His will is not something to be dreaded, or to be accepted reluctantly. It is something to be accepted gladly and fully.

(2) Your Possessions--all that you have.

a. Self.

Lay yourself on the altar and say: --

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,
Over mountain, or plain, or sea;
I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord,
I'll be what you want me to be."

b. Talents.

c. Time.

d. Money.

e. Influence.

(3) Your Plans--all that you hope to be.

When you surrender your plans to Him, He will not blight them but He will bless them. Lay all of them on the altar for Him.

Some years ago the King of England opened the conference on disarmament. A small room in New York City was carefully prepared to receive the short wave and broadcast it to America. A moment before his speech was to begin, a careless workman passing through the room tripped on the connecting wire and broke it. Mr. Vivian, in charge of the apparatus saw the situation and knew that it would take twenty minutes to repair it. Mr. Vivian sprang forward, gripped one end of the wire in one hand and held the other end in his other hand for twenty minutes and let the message go through his body. He was the connecting link. Here are the needs of the world and there is God's supply of those needs. Dedicate your all to Christ and be a connecting link between the supply and the need. Christ can do far more with your life than you can ever do with it, so give it to Him completely and cheerfully. As you lay your life on the altar for Him, say: --

"Naught that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the Giver;
My heart, my life, my hope, my all,
Are His, and His forever."