

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." II Corinthians 5:20.

It is the divine intention that every believer in Christ should be an ambassador for Him. Spiritual ambassadorship is not for a select few. Christ has His picked men for key positions, it is true, but there is not one true believer, however humble and weak, who is not His representative. The reason why we are left in this world of sin, after being saved by the grace of God, is that we may bear the message of reconciliation to those who are still the enemies of God. Not every Christian is a preacher, or a teacher, or a missionary in the sense that he goes to some distant land with the message of redeeming love, but every child of God is an ambassador. We know that we are very unworthy ambassadors of such a wonderful King, but we should never relinquish the office, neither should we do anything that would degrade it in any way. In the fact that we are ambassadors of the heavenly King we see the high dignity and supreme authority of our calling. Believers in Christ are His representatives in this world, beseeching men and women to be reconciled to God. We are poor representatives, it is true, but Christ has sent us, and He is depending on us to reflect His glory, bear His message and plead His cause before the many who know Him not.

Someone has imagined the scene which he thinks may have taken place in heaven when the Lord Jesus went back, after finishing the work that the Father gave Him to do. He imagined that Christ and Gabriel were talking together. Gabriel said: "Master, you died for the whole world, didn't you?" "Yes," said Christ, "I died for the whole world." "And do they all know about it?" asked Gabriel. "Oh no," said Christ, "only a few know about it so far." "Well," said Gabriel, "what is your plan? What have you done about telling the world that you died for them?" Christ replied, "I asked Peter and John and Andrew to make it the business of their lives down there to tell others, until all have heard the story." Thinking of how unreliable people are, Gabriel is supposed to have said: "But suppose Peter doesn't tell the others, or suppose the others don't tell others, what then? Have you made any other plans?" The answer the glorified Christ is supposed to have given was: "Gabriel, I haven't made any other arrangements--I'm counting on them." Then, let us remember that He is counting on us, and let us see to it that we do not let Him down.

Saint Teresa wrote: "God has no body on earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which is to look out Christ's compassion to the world; yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now."

Annie Johnson Flint expressed the same idea very beautifully in the poem:

The World's Bible

Christ has no hands but our hands
To do His work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in His way;
He has no tongue but our tongues
To tell men how He died;
He has no help but our help
To bring them to His side.

We are the only Bible
The careless world will read;
We are the sinner's Gospel,
We are the scoffer's creed;
We are the Lord's last message
Written in deed and word--
What if the line is crooked?

What if our hands are busy
With other work than His?
What if our feet are walking
Where sin's allurements is?
What if our tongues are speaking
Of things His lips would spurn?
How can we hope to help Him
And hasten His return?

Before we can be ambassadors for Christ we must have had a saving experience of His grace. Only those who have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, only those who have been recreated in Christ by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, can bear to others the message of reconciliation through the blood of Calvary. By nature we are enemies of God and opposed to Christ. Enemies are not sent as representatives. No matter how able, charming, learned, persuasive and earnest we may be, we cannot be Christian ambassadors until we are saved by Divine grace through simple faith in Christ. Natural gifts are very good, and they should be dedicated to God Who gave them, but they were never intended to take the place of the new birth, without which we are dead in sins.

Saul of Tarsus had many natural gifts, and he was very highly educated, but until he met the risen Christ on the Damascus road and was saved by Him he was not a Christian ambassador. There is no substitute for the redeeming, transforming, enabling grace of God.

I. An Ambassador Is The Citizen Of Another Country.

Just as the American Ambassador in London is a citizen of the United States, and the British Ambassador in Washington is a citizen of England, so the Christian ambassador is a citizen of heaven. As believers in Christ, we are pilgrims and strangers here. We are in the world and have a part to play in its affairs, but we should never be so taken up with worldly things that we forget all about the eternal homeland. No representative of his country in a foreign land forgets all about the country to which he belongs. Our citizenship is in heaven, so our interests should not be exclusively mundane.

If we will remember that we are citizens of another country, we shall not be disturbed too much when the things which are seen are crumbling around us. We know that the things of the Spirit can never be destroyed by the madness and sin of man. Remembering that we are citizens of another country, at times we shall long to see the eternal homeland. The anticipation of heaven will make us more spiritual, and will enable us to suffer uncomplainingly during our stay down here. In the eternal homeland we shall see our Saviour face to face; we shall meet loved ones gone on before; and we shall be all that we should be, for we shall be like Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us.

II. An Ambassador Is Commissioned By His Country.

No ambassador goes to another country just because he feels that he should go. He is sent by the government of his country, and behind him there is the authority of his country. So, having been saved by the grace of God, the Christian is commissioned by the risen Christ to go into the world to bear witness to the saving grace and keeping power of his Lord and Master.

We are sent by Christ to tell a sinful world of the love and grace of God revealed in the Cross of Calvary. No one can fathom the depths of His love or exhaust the riches of His grace. His love is world-embracing in its scope, and His grace is all-sufficient in its power.

His love yearns for the return of every prodigal, and His grace can save everyone who believes. Are we bearing this redeeming message to a lost world? Many Christians are silent about the things which matter most, and eloquent about things which matter very little. Because Christ is our enthroned Lord, and has all power, He has the right to claim the absolute allegiance of the heart, and to send us into the world to witness for Him. Once we see the dignity of His person we realize the dignity of our calling. Since we are sent by Christ, it follows that He is able and willing to supply our every need. He is able to supply every need which arises, no matter how great it may be. Those who have gone at His bidding, depending on His faithfulness to His word, have proved Him able to meet every need. The consciousness that we are sent by Him should fill us with a real joy. No emergency can arise with which He is unable to deal.

III. An Ambassador Keeps In Touch With His Country.

He is no ambassador who does not keep in touch with the country which he represents in a foreign land. Ambassadors of Christ should be in touch with their Lord every day and every hour. There should be daily communion with Him. Satan always does his best to get us out of touch with Christ, because he knows that out of fellowship we are helpless and useless. In order to keep in touch with Christ certain things are very necessary:

1. A surrendered will.

We must be submissive to the will of God for us. If we dare to set our wills against the will of God, we cannot enter into the joy of fellowship. We must say, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

2. A trusting heart.

Unbelief in the heart of a child of God breaks fellowship with Christ, spoils our joy and keeps us out of the fulness of blessing. We are to keep on trusting, even where and when we cannot fully understand. Our faith must be fed on the strong meat of the Word.

3. Believing prayer.

This means getting in touch with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. The neglect of prayer hinders fellowship and leads to barrenness of life.

4. Bible study.

Through this God speaks to us, and we are built up in the most holy faith. Through His Word we are brought into a fuller fellowship with God. The Bible is the final court of appeal in all matters of Christian faith and practice. No one can neglect the Bible and prosper spiritually.

IV. An Ambassador Is Acquainted With The Policy Of His Country.

An ambassador knows the policy and plans of the government he represents. In an given situation he is informed as to what his country intends to do. So we should know the mind and will of Christ. As we enter a deeper and richer fellowship with Christ, we see His plans more clearly. He reveals His plans to us in order that we may cooperate with Him in their outworking.

V. An Ambassador Has Behind Him All The Authority Of His Country.

When an ambassador makes an official utterance all the military power of his country will come into action to carry it out. So we have behind us all of the authority of heaven. As ambassadors for Christ, all the power of the risen Christ is at our disposal. We have supernatural foes, but for the warfare we have supernatural power. Natural resources may be exhausted; human power may be overthrown; our own plans may go awry;

but the divine resources are inexhaustible; the divine power is invincible; and the divine plans are perfect. Being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, we are backed by all the power of God.

VI. An Ambassador Delivers The Message He Receives.

An ambassador declares the policy of his country to the nation to which he is appointed. He does not give his own opinions and views, unless they coincide exactly with those of his government. If his ideas and policies are in conflict with those of his government, the only course for him is to resign or be dismissed.

So we should deliver the message of Christ to those who need it. As ambassadors of Christ, we are not to preach our own views unless they are those of our Lord. Once we proclaim our own views or give our own speculations we cease to be Christian ambassadors. The word which Christ has commissioned us to preach is the only adequate message for a lost world. It may hurt, but then it heals. It shakes us out of our lethargy, and brings us into the fulness of life. It unveils us to ourselves, and then it unfolds to us the all-sufficiency of Christ and His sovereign grace.

God has committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation. This reconciliation is by the blood of the cross. It is not enough to say that Jesus came to show us what God is like, and to teach great ethical principles, and that He died because of His loyalty to truth. The fact is He laid down His sinless life in atoning sacrifice. He shed His precious blood for the redemption of souls.

The true Christian ambassador preaches the cross in its Godward, sinward, worldward and Satanward aspects. God was satisfied, sin was put away, the world was redeemed and Satan was conquered by what Christ did on the cross. Salvation, which was purchased at such tremendous cost, is offered on God's terms, that is, repentance, a clean break with known sin, the full trust of the heart, and the unconditional surrender of the will. God has a perfect right to lay down these terms for He was the One against whom sin was committed, and in Christ He made a complete atonement for it. It is through the message of the cross alone that men are reconciled to God.