

# The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

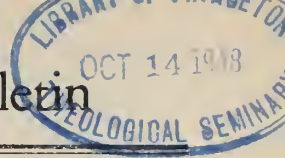


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and that no other Christ is needed. He loved to quote the lines of Christina Rossetti used by him in his last public address and with which he prefaced his volume on "The Finality of Jesus Christ."

"None other Lamb, none other Name,  
None other Hope, in heaven or earth or  
sea,  
None other Hiding Place from sin and  
shame,  
None beside Thee."

Possibly this interpretation was set forth in the clearest and most comprehensive way in the Stone Lectures delivered here in Princeton and published under the title of "The Finality of Jesus Christ." Here was revealed the Man whose ideal character was sketched by Dr. Speer in one of his earliest books, "The Man Christ Jesus." Yet here was One of whom we should employ the phrase quoted by Dr. Speer from the heading of a chapter by Horace Bushnell, "The Character of Jesus

Forbidding His Possible Classification with Man." That is to say, he was the God-Man, one to whom we can pray, one worthy of our worship. Yet he was also "a divine sacrifice for sin" as well as "an ensample for holy living." He was also the risen and ascended Lord whose will we must obey. He was also the coming King, and Dr. Speer dwelt with power and emotion upon the great reality of the return of Christ as the great hope of the Church and of the world. This finality and sufficiency of our divine Saviour were expressed in lines dear to Dr. Speer taken from the noble poem of Frederick W. H. Myers entitled *St. Paul*.

"Yea, through life, death, through sorrow  
and through sinning,  
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed;  
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,  
Christ the beginning for the end is Christ."

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## THE MISSIONARY STATESMAN

JOHN A. MACKAY

IT is as a missionary statesman that the name of Robert E. Speer is engraved forever in the annals of the Christian Church. His incomparable greatness as a man, the unique insight which he had into Christ, he made tributary to what he loved to call the "missionary enterprise."

Professionally speaking, Dr. Speer was a Foreign Missions Secretary. For forty-six years he held that office in the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United

States of America. During his time in that office, and under his leadership, the number of missionaries representing the Board in many parts of the world reached the figure of 1600. At that time the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions was the most powerful single denominational Board in the whole world.

There were two things about Dr. Speer which should make clear that he was supremely and above all else a missionary statesman. In the first place,

*Christ's missionary cause was his master passion.* Following his conversion when a student in Princeton University, he was profoundly influenced by Robert Wilder, the founder of the Student Volunteer Movement. He became immediately a leader in that Movement, and his impact upon youth in the universities of this country became greater than that of any other man, young or old. It may be said in this connection that as a missionary leader Dr. Speer influenced more men and women to become missionaries than any person, I believe, in the whole history of the Christian Church. It was Christ's missionary cause that lured the youthful Speer from our Seminary campus, while still in his middle year in this institution. Then followed the great forty-six years which carried him across the frontiers of many mission fields. He was an indefatigable traveler. Wherever he went he grasped the human situation and the missionary problems involved. He wrote profusely and with deep insight about the things which he saw and heard.

Speaking personally, it means more to me than I find it possible to express, that it was Dr. Speer's book about South America which was a decisive factor in interesting me in that particular mission field. Speer the Missionary Statesman was profoundly dissatisfied, in 1910, when the first great ecumenical gathering, which met in Edinburgh in that year, refused to consider the validity of countries where the Roman Church dominated as legitimate spheres of action for Protestant missionary activity. Shortly thereafter, he visited the South American countries and wrote, as a result of his six months' journey, one of the most illuminating and incisive studies of that great area

that had appeared to date. I have no hesitation in saying that it was his statesmanlike insight into those countries as a legitimate sphere of evangelical activity which led to their incorporation within the orbit of the world-wide activity of the Christian Church. It can be regarded as a tribute to his memory that the next world gathering of the International Missionary Council, which at one time excluded representatives of the South American countries, will be held in Rio de Janeiro. When we gather there, some years hence, we will remember that missionary statesman whose insight and resolution, six years after the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 had rejected Latin America as an illicit sphere for evangelical activity, promoted and presided over a conference held at Panama in 1916, which considered the religious problems of that great area.

In the course of his many journeys, Speer, the Board Secretary, amazed all who heard him. Those of us who give our lives to administration tend to become notoriously dry and appallingly monotonous, because administrative activity is so absorbing, and can be so deadening. Whether it be true or not that Dr. Speer had to force himself to be an administrator, he was the greatest and most gifted and most meticulous of administrative officers. When he went through China on a famous visit, he never repeated, we are told, a single address. Why? His vast reading and the assimilation of the material he studied, made it possible for him to be fresh with geyser-like freshness, fresh with all the beauty and variety of wild nature, as he came to love it in boyhood days in a Pennsylvania valley. This man was the most widely and intelligently read man in the Christian

Church. How did he do it? In all sorts of situations, at moments when others were beguiling time in less profitable pursuits, in some secluded nook in a steamship, sitting on a seat or standing on the platforms of railroad stations, sometimes sitting it out all night when no train was available until the next day, Robert E. Speer mastered books of the greatest variety, so that his mind was literally a well of living water.

The second thing that may be said about Dr. Speer as a missionary statesman is this: *His administrative concern embraced both principles and persons.* As a supreme administrator he had a penetrating grasp of the principles involved in the cause that he served. He had an equally sympathetic interest in the men and women who served that cause. I recall that it was his grasp of missionary principles, and the impressive, logical, architectonic way, in which, with that deep sonorous voice of his, he presented the great issues in the missionary enterprise, that held me enthralled in 1910, when, as a student in Aberdeen University, I heard him for the first time. I felt then, and there has been no change in my opinion since then, that I was listening to the greatest man I had ever seen.

No one in the last missionary generation succeeded as Dr. Speer did in formulating the ultimate issues and principles involved in this great enterprise. It was his clear insight into these principles that led him fifteen years or so ago to take issue with that famous inquiry known as "Re-thinking Missions—A Layman's Inquiry After One Hundred Years." Dr. Speer wrote a critique of that report entitled "Re-thinking Missions Examined—An attempt at a Just Review of the Report of the Appraisal Commission of the

Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry." There was one issue in particular which he met head-on. That report, strangely enough, although written on the edge, so to speak, of the rumbling volcano which was to burst forth and disrupt contemporary society, did not suggest anywhere that Communism was becoming a major issue. No mention was made of the cataclysm that was to break forth. There was no sense in that report of the on-coming tragedy. It went on record rather as believing that all religions had something to offer to an eventual religious synthesis, and that now it was time to look forward to "The New Testament of every existing faith." Christianity was, of course, the highest religion to date, but beyond Christianity, when merged and fused with what was best in the other religions, the "New Testament of every existing faith" would be written. Dr. Speer saw the issue and repudiated the doctrine. He did so violently, in a notable piece of polemic, in which, as in everything else, he was nothing but a Christian gentleman. What happened shortly afterwards? The greatest revolutionary era in the world's history began, and some of those religions which were supposed to flower and to contribute to "The New Testament of every existing faith" are in full and complete disintegration.

Dr. Speer's unqualified, unswerving loyalty to Jesus Christ, and his insight into Christ and the Christian missionary movement, shaped his thought, made his heart strong and his mind luminous, and his words flaming. But his grasp of principles never made him impersonal. Some of the finest and most touching missionary biographies of recent years have come from his pen. Not only so, his letters to mis-

sionaries are incomparable Pauline epistles of modern times. These were written to many men and women who otherwise would remain anonymous and obscure. Who were Appelles and Aristobulus, Tryphaena and Tryphosa? They are known only because Paul wrote a letter to the Romans. And when Speer's missionary letters, which I believe will constitute one of the classical series of letters, are published, there will appear there anonymous people, simple people living on the world's frontiers who will be remembered in the Christian Church, like their counterparts in the old Christian Church at Rome, because Robert E. Speer wrote to them. For his letters, when he wrote administratively, were full of things personal, of things of

human interest written with literary charm, which make them a treasure for study.

I have no hesitation in saying that this man was the most truly Pauline figure of his generation. It is surely nothing casual that his favorite poem should be that great masterpiece, Myers' *St. Paul*, from which Dr. Erdman has quoted the last verse and I will quote the first:

"Christ, I am Christ's; and let the name suffice thee.

Ay, for me, too, He greatly hath sufficed.

Lo, with no winning words I would entice thee.

Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ."

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## ROBERT E. SPEER MEMORIAL MINUTE

### THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WITH profound sorrow and a sense of irreparable loss, the Board of Trustees makes record of the death of its beloved and esteemed President, Robert Elliott Speer, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D. at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, on November 23rd, 1947. Each individual member has lost the earthly fellowship of a cherished personal friend. The Board of Trustees and the Seminary have lost a truly great and trusted leader.

The Board would express to Mrs. Speer and the other members of the family its prayerful sympathy in their bereavement and its gratitude to Almighty God for His assurance in Christ Jesus of eternal life and everlasting fellowship in His heavenly home.

Dr. Speer was born in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, on September 10th, 1867. After studying in public and private schools in Huntingdon, he graduated from Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, in 1885, and in 1889 from Princeton University, then still called The College of New Jersey.

While in College he came under the influence of, and became one of the leaders in, the Missionary Movement among students, and was led to dedicate his life to the world mission of the church. In 1890, he entered The Theological Seminary at Princeton, but in 1891, early in his second year, he was called by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to become one of its Executive