

THE  
PRINCETON  
SEMINARY  
BULLETIN

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Robert Elliot Speer: A Man of Yesterday Today John A. Mackay  
Among the Thorns John W. Beardslee III

Sermons:

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# The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

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# ROBERT ELLIOT SPEER

## A MAN OF YESTERDAY TODAY\*

JOHN A. MACKAY

MY feelings are deeply mingled as I stand before you this evening. The invitation to give this centennial address on Robert E. Speer has brought to your speaker one of life's most signal honors; it also confronts him with his life's most delicate task.

The reason for my mixed emotion is this: the man we commemorate tonight was one of the greatest figures in American Christianity and in the history of the Christian missionary movement. That I should be chosen to set this unique personality in the perspective of his time and of our time is a distinction I profoundly cherish.

This honor involves me, however, in the most delicate assignment of all my years. You ask me why. Because this man, whose historic witness we celebrate, exercised a more decisive influence upon my life history than any other human being. In presenting such a one to an audience, how can I be adequately objective? That is my concern. But, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I will do my best to present the figure of Robert E. Speer in a

way that is loyal to history and meaningful for the Church today.

### I

Let me begin with the personal. Robert E. Speer was *the man who, under God, shaped my destiny.*

I met him first in the year 1910, when I was a student in the University of Aberdeen. He was the first American I had ever seen. For in those days Americans were novelties in the Scottish Highlands. This United States citizen happened to be in my homeland attending the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, the gathering that was destined to become the fountainhead of a new era in the world mission of the Church; the era which, some decades later, was given the designation "ecumenical." Dr. Speer, who played a leading part in the Edinburgh Conference, had come north to Aberdeen to give the Duff Mission Lectures. I attended the lectures. The impact was momentous. I had never seen a man so impressive in his demeanor. I had never listened to a speaker so overwhelming in his power of utterance as this mission lecturer. With the passage of the years, I have had no occasion to alter my youthful judgment. I say today, Robert E. Speer was the greatest personality I have ever known.

Something happened in that lecture hall. A student just turned twenty-one, for whom in his early teens Jesus Christ

\* This address was delivered by John A. Mackay, President Emeritus of Princeton Theological Seminary, at a special meeting held during the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A., in Portland, Oregon, May 17, 1967, to celebrate the Centennial of the birth of Robert Elliot Speer. It is substantially the same address as that delivered by Dr. Mackay when the Speer-Zwemer Centennial was celebrated at Princeton Theological Seminary on April 5, 1967.

had become real and dear, and who in the summer of 1909, at a student camp in Baslow, England, had signed the declaration of the Student Volunteer Movement ("It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary"), saw in the face and heard in the words of the Duff lecturer for 1910 a new dimension of the Christian calling.

The fact that this man had studied in an institution called Princeton Theological Seminary was a decisive factor three years later in luring one of Speer's Aberdeen auditors to cross the Atlantic to the small New Jersey town where the Institution in question was located.

In Princeton a new era began in the missionary commitment of this Scottish student. Epoch making in his experience was the 1913 quadrennial of the Student Volunteer Movement which was held in Kansas City, Missouri. The leading speakers at that huge gathering of 9,000 were the three missionary giants of their time, Robert E. Speer, John R. Mott, and Samuel W. Zwemer. The impact was overwhelming on the student-audience.

Speaking personally, the road to tomorrow was becoming clearer. In 1913 Dr. Speer had published a book entitled, "The Problems of South America." The reading of that book finally convinced me that South America was the region where God wanted me to be a missionary. My bride to be agreed. And in October 1916, following our wedding, and as the submarine campaign of the First World War was growing in intensity, we sailed on an old freighter from London to Peru as pioneer missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland.

Nine years passed before I saw Dr.

Speer again. The occasion was the "Congress on Christian Work in South America," which convened in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1925. He had chaired the committee that set up that historic gathering. Three years later we were fellow members of the Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council, which assembled for fifteen days on the Mount of Olives under the Chairmanship of John R. Mott. Dr. Speer, in close cooperation with William Temple, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, played a major role in the preparation of the famous Jerusalem Statement. The statement most quoted runs thus: "Our message is Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of what God is and of what man, through him, may become."

It was these two contacts with Robert E. Speer in Uruguay and Palestine that led me four years later, while at work in Mexico, to accept an invitation from the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to become Secretary for Latin America. The project was that I should succeed the senior Secretary when he retired. But God and Speer had other plans. Robert E. chanced to be a member of the Princeton Seminary Committee charged with nominating a new president. His secretarial colleague had already declined an invitation to succeed as seminary president that distinguished churchman, Dr. J. Ross Stevenson. But six months later, after it was pointed out to him by a Methodist friend that a theological seminary campus could also be a mission field, so that his missionary vocation need not end, he yielded to a fresh appeal. For a decade following his installation into office, your speaker had the joy of a contin-

uing relationship with Robert E. Speer, who became President of the Seminary's Board of Trustees.

In November 1947, Dr. Speer passed away in the Philadelphia suburb of Bryn Mawr. I was at the time in Mexico City attending the 75th Anniversary of the Mexican Presbyterian Church, and therefore was unable to attend the funeral. The deceased churchman had agreed to write the initial article for the new church publication called *Presbyterian Life*, which was about to be issued. But his sudden passing made that commitment impossible. The magazine's first article, when it appeared in February 1948, was the Speer obituary. It was written, at the request of the Editor, by him who first saw and heard the great missionary statesman in Aberdeen in 1910, and for whom in the intervening years Robert Elliot Speer became the man who shaped his destiny.

But let me now move beyond the lyrical. Let me set the figure of this man, who in the providence of God became interwoven in the very texture of my being, in the context of what he was and the contribution that he made to the Christian cause in the world.

## II

In the personality and life of Robert Elliot Speer there were three major facets. He was a *Christ-centered man*; he was a *missionary crusader*; and he was an *ecumenical pioneer*.

## A

This person whose centennial we celebrate was a *Christ-centered man*. He incarnated the classical core of the

Christian religion. In his thinking and living, he gave contemporary expression to the meaning of Christianity's first creed, "Jesus Christ is Lord," and to the ecstatic utterance of that missionary scholar and saint of the medieval era, Raymond Lull, "I have one passion in life, and it is He." Enshrined in Speer's inmost being as an existential reality was "Jesus Christ as God and Savior," the affirmation, which in 1948 became the basis of the World Council of Churches. For Robert E. Speer, "Christianity is Christ."

It is important to emphasize the fact that this Christ-centered man was a *real* man, according to the best secular standards. His was a rich humanity. In his Princeton University days, young Speer was a master athlete, a football star, the top ranking student scholar of his generation, and the valedictorian of his class. Later, as a theological student on another Princeton campus, while being a dedicated candidate for the ministry, he did not eschew, so his biographer tells us, that phase of campus humanity involving "student plots and dormitory battles!" In his mature years, Speer was an omnivorous reader, a tireless worker, and the author of many books. He was also a person of matchless wit and humor, a unique story teller, a camper, fisherman, and lover of children.

But the life center of this real man was Jesus Christ, the man of Bethlehem and Nazareth, of Golgotha and Olivet, the Crucified and Risen Lord, who was above him, beside him, and within him. For Robert Speer, Christ was more than history's most venerated and inspiring personality, the subject of more literary production than any figure in human annals. He was a contemporary

reality, a personal Presence in his daily life. While still in his mid-twenties young Speer gave an address in New York City, in the opening sentence of which he crystallized the abiding devotion of his long life, "Friends," he said, "I want to introduce you to my dearest friend, Jesus Christ." This busy executive was a mystic lover. How often to the end of his days he would in a quietly unsentimental manner begin his public prayer with the words, "Lord Jesus." Christ in the full dimension of apostolic witness was the object of his faith and the subject of his experience. Christ was the foundation of his theological conviction and the companion of his terrestrial journey. The poem he loved most was Frederick W. Myer's "St. Paul." Let me cite the two stanzas he was inclined to quote most frequently:

"Christ! I am Christ's. And let the  
name suffice you.

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

Lo, with no winning words I  
would entice you.

Paul has no honor and no friend  
but Christ.

"Yea, thro' life, death, thro' sorrow  
and thro' sinning

He shall suffice me, for He has  
sufficed.

Christ is the end, for Christ was  
the beginning.

Christ, the beginning, for the end  
is Christ."

It was both logical and symbolic, therefore, that Speer's last major work, a great theological treatise, and the most extensive of the more than thirty books that he wrote, should be en-

titled, "The Finality of Jesus Christ."

At this point may I pause a moment to offer a reflection. When the Christ-centeredness of this man of Yesterday is set in the focus of Today, we are confronted with a most crucial question: What does it mean to be a "Christian"? Is it possible to be a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, a Lutheran, a Methodist, to have been baptized, to be a communicant member of the Church, to be a Church officer, to be interested in the Church's Mission, to be theologically orthodox, without being a "Christian"? This is a question that preoccupies today the great Roman Catholic communion. Said a Jesuit theologian in my hearing three years ago, in Santiago, Chile, "We Catholics must make Christians." He was aware that his own church has been plagued with religious nominalism. His words reflected the concern that is growing in a large segment of the Catholic Church, that the reality of a personal, dynamic relationship to Jesus Christ should mark the thought and life of those who bear the name "Catholic."

To this concern, which becomes manifest also in Protestant circles today, the witness of Robert E. Speer to the centrality and significance of Christ has a decisive contribution to make. A Christian must be a "Christ man" in the timeless, New Testament tradition. We *are* in a changing world. Let us recognize that fact. But in doing so, let us remember that there are certain changeless truths, both in the natural and in the spiritual order. One of these unchanging verities is the abiding contemporaneity of Jesus Christ, and the timeless relevancy of his call, "Come to me; Believe in me; Follow me."

May I offer a further reflection. In

contemporary Christianity there is another phenomenon that gives equal relevancy to the faith of Robert Speer. At a time when the "death of God" is being heralded, or bemoaned, the status given to Christ as a meaningful, living reality, increases. But the new "Christian atheists" proclaim that the Christ who illumines and inspires them is a "product of man's imagination," a mythical response to human anxiety and despair. For Speer, however, as for St. Paul, Christ was the living Lord, a personal Presence in sorrow and in joy, on all life's highways and by-ways, in sunlit meadows and gloomy caverns, the one who can give his followers creative communion with the Eternal God.

## B

Let us now move to the second facet of our theme: Robert Elliot Speer was a *missionary crusader*. The young man who in his college days was gripped by Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord, gave himself crusadingly to the cause which Christ launched nineteen centuries before, when he addressed this mandate to his Apostles, "Go and make disciples of all nations." Influenced by a Princeton senior, Robert P. Wilder, who in 1886 at a student gathering in Northfield, Massachusetts, initiated the Student Volunteer Movement, Robert Speer changed his resolve to be a lawyer and decided to become a foreign missionary. Three years later, he served for one year as secretary of the new movement, whose slogan was "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation." In the course of that year the student crusader visited college and university campuses throughout the United States. By his winsome manner,

incisive utterance, and crusading zeal, he succeeded in arousing eleven hundred students to volunteer for foreign missionary service. With this "student missionary uprising," as John R. Mott called it, a new era was being born in the history of Christianity, which was to have repercussions in the academic world, and in the Protestant churches throughout the globe.

For decades thereafter, Robert Speer while fulfilling all the proprieties of his secretarial office and the responsibilities connected with inter-board relations, and while achieving a unique literary record, lived literally the life of a crusader. He had one consuming passion: to make Jesus Christ relevant, and his call to service imperative. He spoke with overpowering appeal in school and college chapels, in churches and auditoriums, in summer camps and winter conventions.

His impact upon British students was equally tremendous. It was after hearing Speer speak in Keswick, England, that a young Scottish student, Donald Fraser, spent a night in spiritual struggle, and the next day decided to become a foreign missionary. Fraser, who later went to Africa, was destined to become the greatest missionary figure in Scottish history since the days of Alexander Duff.

From time to time Dr. Speer, the Mission Board Secretary, would rove through "mission" lands. In those journeys he brought inspiration to the new communities of Christ. Imbued by the spirit of St. Paul he would confront non-Christian audiences in a compelling manner. But in his public presentation of the Christian faith, whether at home or abroad, the crusader never repeated himself or propagated mere

clichés. In each address, whatever the issue discussed, the reality of Christ was invariably central. The resounding appeal was always to the same life commitment. But the language, illustrations, and the lines of poetry cited, were boundless in their rich variety. The impact on the auditors was overwhelming. In his own homeland, Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and Yale University were the academic centers that heard Speer most frequently.

Speaking of Yale, here is a striking coincidence. It was a Yale student, David Brainerd, a young man who a century and a half before became one of the pioneer missionaries of the modern era, who wrote in his diary these words, "Oh for more of God in my soul; oh this pleasing pain!" God in the soul of Robert E. Speer was also a "pleasing pain." God in Christ was literally his supreme good, his all in all, both emotionally and intellectually. But God in his heart and in his mind did not make him ingrown. It did not detach him from life, making him purely pious, pietistic, or whatever word be used to describe religious experience when it becomes an end in itself. In Speer's case, as in Brainerd's, the experience of God created a "pain" that drove him out of himself to express the reality of the love of God in concern for other people in the total dimension of their being.

In the truest sense he was a "man for others." He presented the reality of Jesus Christ in such a way that those who responded would be willing to give themselves unreservedly to the imitation and service of Christ. It was theirs, according to their talents, to accept the call to be men and women for others, as evangelists, doctors, nurses,

teachers, agriculturalists, social workers.

This spirit had its repercussion in the secular order. Said Prime Minister Nehru in an address to leading members of the Indian government some months before his death, an address which I read while in India six years ago, "What we need in government service today is missionary zeal." Where did Nehru get this concept "missionary zeal"? Not from the great Hindu tradition of his own country. He got it from a Christian project in the environs of his native town of Allahabad. It was there, in the days of Nehru's youth, when Robert E. Speer was Mission Board Secretary for India, that a Presbyterian missionary, Sam Higginbottom, founded an agricultural institute to be devoted to the welfare of India's peasant masses.

At this point another reflection is in order. When we contemplate the current confusion that marks human relations, nationally and internationally; when we observe the violent upsurge of passion that is reflected in the eccentricities of large segments of our population, involving the incidence of crime, narcotic addiction, aberrational behavior; when we witness the concern of an increasing number of people, inside and outside the churches, to grapple creatively with the complex problems of individuals and groups in our society, one thing becomes clear.

Let me say it again. In the Christian church today, top priority must be given to making it a much more meaningful and exciting thing to be a Christian. Christ and the new life in Christ must be taken seriously. In the light and strength of Christ, the complex human situation must be confronted with intelligent understanding and cru-



sading zeal. Among church members, and especially among church "alumni" (whose presence in the sanctuary is limited to the great festive occasions), there must be rediscovered a creative dimension of life. That dimension nothing can produce but a living, personal relationship to Jesus Christ, and a response to his missionary call within the context of the world's need today. Said an anonymous author of last century, "No heart is pure that is not passionate; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic." The contemporary quest for hearts that are passionate and pure, for action that blends enthusiasm with virtue, has much to learn from a study of the dedicated life of Robert Elliot Speer.

### C

Thirdly, the man whose centennial we celebrate was an *ecumenical pioneer*. And this pioneer, let it not be forgotten, was a layman. Robert Speer was a symbol of the significant role that laymen have played in the Christian church through the centuries. He was also a precursor of the increasing responsibility which laymen and laywomen must assume in the church of today and tomorrow.

As regards ecclesiastical affiliation, Speer was a Presbyterian in the tradition of John Calvin, who, in the judgment of some historians, was also a layman. At the same time, the only designation which this Presbyterian layman whom we commemorate was willing to accept was that of "Christian." "For my part," he once remarked, "I want no label but Christian, and try to call no brother Christian by any other name." In the spirit of this man there was nothing sectarian or even de-

nominal. Above all groupings he set the community of Jesus Christ, the Church Universal. "Christian unity," he said, "is not something we achieve *for Christ*. In the deepest sense, unity is something Christians *have*, not something they *make*."

Speer was profoundly "ecumenical" in the pristine missionary and communal meaning of that word. And yet I cannot recall his use of the term "ecumenical," either by lip or by pen. He was not an "ecumaniac," but he lived to carry the Gospel into the *oikoumene*, the "whole inhabited earth." And in his affection for people, in his relations with people, he crossed all ecclesiastical boundaries. He was interested in meeting "Christ's men and women" anywhere, at any time, whatever their name or sign. And where social righteousness was the issue, he championed cooperation between Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews.

In the course of his years of active service, this Christian layman held many key positions in the church life of America. He was president for four years of the Federal Council of Churches, at a crucial moment in the Council's history. He was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of his own denomination when the Assembly met in San Francisco in 1927. For thirty years he was Chairman of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, the organization that secured ecumenical status for Protestant churches and missions in the Southern Hemisphere.

Basic in Dr. Speer's thinking regarding the Church was that it must never live for itself, but for Christ's mission in the world. The Church must, of course, confront the world with evan-

gical passion to convert men to Christ. But it must also confront the secular order with ethical principles that proclaim the rights of all men as human beings. It was natural, therefore, that a central emphasis in Speer's writings and public discourse should be the Kingdom of God and the Kingship of Christ. In fact, he spoke more about the Kingdom than he did about the Church, more about corporate Christian action than about organizational churchly union.

It was during the period of Dr. Speer's presidency of the Federal Council of Churches that the Council confronted the great steel corporations of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It protested the industry's practice of employing its workmen twelve hours a day. The Council won, and the steelworkers' lot was humanized with the reduction of their hours of toil. But at a crucial moment, when it looked as if the Council would not hold its ground, and might fail to sign a manifesto addressed to the corporations, the Council president said this to the secretary of the Commission on Church and Social Service, who was deeply concerned, "I will sign that myself if you wish it." Speer was ready to stand alone. Years later, the secretary in question, the distinguished F. Ernest Johnson, who is still with us, said this about Dr. Speer, "He had social vision and the courage to back it up. He was a stalwart if I ever knew one."

This champion of social justice was also a valiant promoter of other human causes. He stood for the equality of women in Church and Society. And well he might, for this son of a Pennsylvania congressman was married to another Pennsylvanian, a lady of

Quaker background and a graduate of Bryn Mawr College. Emma Bailey, the lifelong companion of Robert E. Speer, was one of the greatest women of her generation. For many years she was president of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association. It is clear that her husband's stand for the equality of women was not inspired by an abstract human assumption, but by a concrete feminine reality!

Another great cause of which Robert Speer was an ardent champion was the cause of international peace. In 1914, the year when World War I broke out, and the tragic era of international strife, which still rages, began, Dr. Speer became a charter member of the Church Peace Union. The Union was designed to promote international friendship and had the support of Andrew Carnegie, then alive. There is no doubt where Robert Speer would stand in relation to the bloody, inhuman struggle that now rages in Southeast Asia. This man, let us be quite clear, was not a pacifist. He did demand, however, that whenever war becomes an issue in the national life, a country's citizens must face certain timeless standards. Listen to his words: "The only absolute and sovereign values that justify war are truth and righteousness." Were he alive today, when our world is confronted with the Vietnam crisis, Robert E. Speer would undoubtedly proclaim that no nation has a right to make truth its captive and to canonize a lie. Neither does any country have the authority to equate righteousness with its own self-interest. Nor dare it identify true greatness with the possession of boundless economic and military power. Still less must a people claim a creative role

in history in a spirit of Messianic arrogance. Speer would proclaim, as we his successors must proclaim, the sovereign Lordship of God, and the primacy of God's love, God's truth, God's righteousness, in all human affairs and relationships.

### III

Tragedy and Triumph marked the closing years of Robert Speer. The last decade of his official service to his own church and to the Church Universal was lived in the shadow of tragedy. In September, 1934, his eldest son was mysteriously assassinated, Elliott Speer, for several years headmaster of the famous Mt. Hermon School, located not far from the ground where the Student Volunteer Movement was born, was shot through the window of his study by someone whose identity was never discovered. Nor did the reason for the act ever become known. The Speers were plunged into gloom, but their Christian faith and spirit triumphed.

This painful experience came in the wake of two others, both in the realm of theological controversy. The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and its missionaries throughout the world, were charged with heresy. Those Presbyterians who, conscientiously but erroneously, attacked the Mission Board and its missionaries substituted ideas about the Bible and about Christ for a living faith in the Bible and in Christ. The results were calamitous. Dr. Speer, with equanimity, candor, and a profoundly Christian spirit, answered the attack upon the Church's missionary enterprise in two masterly pamphlets. What he said then is equally relevant today.

There is a place, said he, for differences of opinion among Christians, but there is no place for any other loyalty save to Jesus Christ, and to the Bible as the book where we learn about Christ, and about God's purpose for the world through him.

The other painful experience which befell Dr. Speer in that same period was the publication of the historic volume *Rethinking Missions—A Layman's Enquiry after One Hundred Years*. This book, published in 1932, was the fruit of a study of missionary work in Asia by a commission composed of a group of eminent men and women, clergy and laity. The chairman of the Commission was William E. Hocking, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University. Hocking, one of Speer's most loved and admired friends, wrote the first part of the volume which dealt with the theological principles that govern, or should govern, the Christian missionary movement throughout the world. The ultimate goal that Christian missions should pursue, it was alleged, was to engage with other religions in a common quest for truth. This truth, when discovered, would be "the New Testament of every existing faith."

This syncretistic goal of missionary thought and action ran counter to everything that Dr. Speer had experienced and stood for throughout his life. There came to him the saddest and bitterest moment in his career. Nevertheless, he spoke, wrote, and acted as a gentleman. In his total repudiation of the theological thesis upon which *Rethinking Missions* was based, he emphasized the absolute centrality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ

and the Christian Gospel. But in the militant and luminous pamphlet that he wrote to make his position clear, there was no drop of hate or venom. There was, in it, however, the distilled essence of the greatest and truest definition of Evangelism ever given, and which runs thus:

To evangelize is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Saviour, and serve him as their King, in the fellowship of his Church.

This definition, the fruit of an Anglican Committee of Enquiry on the Evangelistic work of the Church, appears in a book entitled *Towards the Conversion of England*. The volume is dedicated to William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, the other beloved friend with whom Robert Speer had cooperated in producing the Jerusalem Message of 1928.

#### IV

At last came the sunshine of retirement for Robert Elliot Speer. In his farewell statement to colleagues of the Board of Foreign Missions, which he had served for forty-six years, he made one of those quaint remarks for which he was famous. His chief joy, he said, as he looked towards retirement, was that he would not have to attend any more meetings of the General Assembly! For many decades Speer's impact upon Assembly gatherings had been tremendous. But if anyone sought him out while he was not officially on the platform, he would most likely find him in a remote corner of the back

gallery. There was nothing he shunned more than public attention or publicity. In this, as in prohibiting that any biography of him be ever written, he may have been an extremist. But the self-effacement practiced by this man of Yesterday has a message for Today, when publicity has become a major deity in the pantheon of our time.

During the closing decade of his life, following his retirement, Speer lived in rhythmical motion. One period of the year he would devote to reading, gardening, growing roses in Rockledge, his rural home in Lakeville, Connecticut, and to participation in the life of the local community; the other period he would dedicate to Faith and Life seminars for ministers and laymen throughout the United States. These seminars were the precursors of what we now call "continuing education."

In this New Jersey town of Princeton to which Speer was related for a longer period than to any other place in his native land, and on the campus of this institution from which he went as a seminary student to become a mission board executive, and of whose Board of Trustees he was President at the time of his death, we have a unique structure called the Speer Library. When that library was dedicated in 1957 by another great Christian layman, Nathan M. Pusey, President of Harvard University, a plaque was unveiled to the memory of the man whose name is engraven above the front entrance. The words of the plaque read thus:

THIS BUILDING  
WHICH BEARS THE NAME  
OF A CHRISTIAN STATESMAN  
SCHOLAR AND SAINT

ROBERT ELLIOTT SPEER  
LOVER OF BOOKS  
AND OF THE  
KINGDOM OF CHRIST  
IS DEDICATED TO THE HOPE  
THAT WITHIN THESE WALLS  
THE LIGHT OF LEARNING  
MAY ILLUMINE THE LIFE  
OF PIETY IN THE SERVICE  
OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
THE TRUTH

Devotion to books and to The Book; missionary zeal and social passion; dedication to Righteousness and Truth, love of God and love of people—that is Robert Elliot Speer's legacy to us who commemorate the centennial of his birth, as we seek, in this revolutionary time, to share Christ's mission to the world. To this Christian saint we say: "Man of Yesterday, we of Today greet you; and, in gratitude and love, we bid you, farewell—till Tomorrow."