

DATE: March 15, 1970

SUBJECT: "THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE" 'the Inn of the Seventh Happiness'

Cladys Tyler was a young British domestic who wanted to be a missionary. She had dreamed it from the time that she was a little child. But being born into the economic class into which she was born, she did not have an opportunity to go to school, to prepare herself. She was trained only to be a domestic to eek out a living but her dreams never dimmed. Finally when she became a young woman she went from one missionary society to another begging that they send her to China. She was not educated, she did not have any kind of specialized gifts. She offered herself simply as a laboring, woman, anythin, just to take me there so that I can help win the Chinese to the Christian faith. But everywhere she turned she found only failure. No one was willing to accept her. So she followed the only course that she knew how and that was to continue her work as a domestic, saving all of her shillings and all of her income until she could pay her own passage. And that's what she did. Finally the day came when she set sail for China. A stranger in a completely foreign land. No one to contact there for any direction or help. She was completely on her own. Her struggle was magnificent. The day finally came when she came to an inn and there she worked as a domestic. But she worked teaching those who came there to spend the night the stories about her Christ. It seemed that the Chinese loved more than anything else at the end of the day to sit and let somebody tell them a story. And that's what she did. Not trained in theology, she only sat as they sat about her and she told the Bible stories that we tell our children.

War broke out and a tremendous display of courage came fourth in the life of this young woman among the Chinese. Her story was written up in a book and finally a movie was made of it and the movie was entitled "The Inn of the Sixth Happiness." But there's an end beyond the sixth happiness, the inn of the seventh happiness, is what she was trying to introduce them to, to tell them about. But as mindful of the words of our lord as we bring his life into perspective during lent. That all that is incorporated in the limits of his life are but a beginning. They are only in preparation for that which is eventual and ultimate. All of us as we seek out those things that give us satisfaction and pleasure in life, we might say that we are passing through the ends of increasing happiness. For we surely do find things that bring meaning into our lives, that bring satisfaction into our souls, that bring gratitude for life itself. But ~~what~~ 100 years from now what of any of these ends, there's only one that matters then to any of us.

We have tried to simplify things so many times in order to put over truth and oftentimes we get bogged down in the simplification itself, but we must never become victimized by that. But it remains true that oftentimes truths that are so great, that we can hardly encompass them, we can understand them to an extent through simplification. And so it was that Jesus told many of his parables about life and about life yet to come.

In the \_\_\_\_\_ book, "The Act of Thomas," there's a very interesting tale that is told. It seems that after the birth of Christ all of the disciples lingered for awhile in Jerasaulem waiting for it to be revealed what each one of them were to do. Finally it was descided that a particular part of the world would be given to each of the disciples and that they would go there and evangelize that pat of the world for Christ. It fell upon the lot of Thomas to go to India, but Thomas demurred. He said, "I don't want to go to India, its no place for me, surely there's some other place to go." And as the other disciples went on to the places assigned to them, Thomas refused to go. Until one day there came with the group a merchant prince from India, he was seeking a man who was a carpentar to do a special assignment for the King of India. He was introduced to Thomas and he asked Thomas whet he was able to do. And Thomas said, "I can do anything ~~xxxx~~ with wood. I can make plows, ox yokes, I can make boats and orrs and masks. And out of stone, I can make buildings, houses, temples." And the merchant prince said, "You're the man I'm looking for. I have an assignment for you that will give you such riches in return that you can't even dream of." And so he took Thomas and returned to India, his assignment complete.

It seemed that the King of India wanted a beautiful palace to be built. Something that would be so beautiful that they would stand in awe when they approached it. And this was to be done with no thought to costs. Money was not to be considered in any way. Only beauty and achievement was important. And so Thomas was brought to the King and introduced by the merchant prince that brought him there. Convinced that Thomas could do the assignment that was to be done, the King gave him full leave of the treasury. He took him out to a place in the country where a stream of water ran near by. Overahdowed by beautiful trees - here is the place where the palace is to built. The king left, with the admonition, when it is built, let me know and I will come and look upon it. I don't want to see it while it is being built, I want to see it when it is done. And so he left. Thomas took the money that had been given him to build the palace and he went all over India buying food and clothes, building houses for the poor. Helping everyone he found in need. Time passed by, years built upon years. And finally the King asked one day, how is the palace coming along. And Thomas answered, "It's complete except for the roof." But not one stone had been layed. The time had been used in helping the people of India and telling to them the story of his Lord. One day word came to the King that no progress at all was being made in the building of the palace. And so he sent for Thomas. And discovering that slowly Thomas had taken his wealth and had gone among the people meeting their needs, Thomas was imprisoned. The brother of Gad was so insensed by what had happened, seeing the wealth of his family disapated among the poor of the land, became so angry that he demanded of his brother the King, that not only Thomas be executed for his crime but that he first be beaten unmercifully and then he be thrown bodily alive into a consuming fire. He became so angry in his demands that he fell dead at the feet of his brother. And so Gad the brother of the King went to Heaven. There he was met by the angels of heaven, carried along the streets. He saw beautiful buildings there, he came upon one that was a magnificent palace. And he said, "Oh, if only I could have a room in that palace, I would be the happiest man in all of heaven." And the angels who were accompanying him said, "That is not yours that has been built for your brother by Thomas the Christian.

Then God had understood what had happened and he begged for just a moment to go back to his brother to tell his brother what had happened. And he was granted that wish. He went back to India and he told his brother that Thomas had built him a magnificent palace that the eyes couldn't imagine, but it was in heaven waiting for him there. And he begged for the leave of one room for his own use. And the King became so impressed, so touched by what had happened that he became a Christian and was baptized by Thomas on that day. Written as truth by the author of the "Acts of Thomas", its obviously a tale of imagination and yet it's so consistent with what Jesus taught us about life. That all that we are to achieve and experience is not compressed within our lifetime here on earth, but that does not begin to match the importance of what we are living for. Jesus expressed it in these words, "Lay not your treasures up on earth, but lay up your treasures in heaven."

With that he told the story of a rich man who had spent all his energy and all his time gaining wealth and possessions here on earth and when he had gained the very zenith of his achievements, when he was a successful man above all else, then he died. And Jesus called him a very foolish man.

We need to arrest our movement through life for just a moment to ask, 'do I have a priority properly in my mind?' Are my energies used for the purposes that are for my best interests or somehow have I lost sight of the fact that there is far more to life than simply the accumulation of things and the achievement of stance that life can give me here and now. For one thing that we need to realize that there are more than one meaning to be attributed to the idea of success. I think if we were to compress into one word what most men are seeking for we would easily say that most men are trying to be successful men. And success is a wonderful thing, it is a worthy achievement. To say that any man is successful is to lay accolades upon him that make his life significant and worthwhile.

I heard a sermon preached on the title, "Success, New Testament Style." What an intriguing thought to take the concept of success as our society normally thinks about it and measure it according to success as we would fair it out of our understanding of the new testament, and its teachings of what life ought to be. Success and wisdom are not necessarily synonymous. One who is successful is not necessarily wise about the things of life. We recognize people who have gained in their particular field as being expert in almost every field. When we turn on a television commercial, it's usually someone who has gained some measure of recognition or achievement in his particular field. And therefore, he becomes an expert to ~~recommend~~ speak in other fields and recommend things that are for our own best interest. This is one of the many attributes that we attach to success. When we look back through history, it is so evident that success is not always the thing that we have seen it to be in our own day. The Bible itself is the story of the struggle of man. Letting his soul be the center of his thought and action, attempting to communicate with God that brought him into being in the first place. And yet that Bible is not the story of men's success; its more a story of man's failure.

Remember the story of Brer Rabbit and how he is caught by Brere Bear Brere Fox and they know that they are going to heap the worst indignity upon him because they have waited so long for this moment. They have tried to trap him for so long and Brere Rabbit thinking about his fate suddenly hits upon a plan and he begs of them "Don't throw me in that briar patch, above all else I hate a briar patch." And Brere Fox and Brere Bear wanted to do the thing that Brere Rabbit hates most of all, flings him into the briar patch. Only to hear Brere Rabbit jump out and sing, "Born and bred in a briar patch, born and bred in a briar patch."

Today much of our crime is because of the briar patch in which we are forced to wind our way, and establish our lives. But when we find the greatness of life through all of history, it is the story of briar patches and if anything the church was born and bred in a briar patch. For just a moment, emerging out of a land that is the lowest of all the provinces of the world. Among people that have become the most despised and hated of all races of people. The leader crucified upon a cross. When we think about success we are looking at one side of man that isn't always the true picture of man. For success in life is success in discovering some of the intangibles that are not always apparent to the ordinary person. Discovering those factors that most people overlook in trying to discover what life is all about, and making life a successful adventure.

We are conditioned to material things and well it ought to be. Because we are materially constructed, we enjoy material things. But's that's just the beginning. There are those intangibles that do not react to our senses, to our materialistic grasp of things. These are the things that we so often overlook in our fightings, in our battlings; for other things that are more obvious and yet are far less important, when we have attained them. We overlook the obvious worth of man in trying to gain the things that are part of man's society. If we were to take the attitude of most people in America today about Communism and about other ideologies that are foreign to our own, we would have a unanimous rising-up against them in favor of Americanism. And yet this is a beggery within itself. Because in our battling against Communism, we are battling a name, many times committing the same offenses against ourselves and against our fellow man that Communism itself stand for. And the revolutionary forces to bring a better society to the 'fore.' Many times that which is most important is trampled upon in the gaining of objectives that are of less worth than those that are trampled. If we pair off everything else that is to be said about Christianity and the teachings of Christ, if we peel away the layers that we have laid upon it in our attempt to be Christian disciples, we will eventually come to the heart of the teachings of Christ and it is simply this. The worth of each individual man.

Ours is a great industrialized society today. We take pride in the fact that we have gained what we have done in the realm of industry and industrial achievement. Yet if we have overlooked the roll of the individual in producing things, our society is not the great society that we think it to be. If our working through the realm of science entering into a computerized age is to rob man of his worth and his individual right, then we are a lessening society, a growing society of work.

If you go to the court house in one of the county-seat towns of Virginia, you'll find a will that is written by a slave owner, listing his possessions at his death and the worth of each of them. Listed among those possessions are his slaves, named there and the worth after each name. One of them is Booker T. Washington, the value \$200. Few men have had such an inherent greatness at a particular time in history as Booker T. Washington. Moving into a impoverished society of his people, he sought to bring light to their minds and hope to their hearts. But the owner of this slave saw a man worth \$200. We have victimized the size and the worth of things because of how much there is of it. Great states in size, great educational institutions merit by the number of students enrolled and the number of faculty members that teach and the number of millions of dollars of the endowment. And yet the members sitting there in the classrooms are the important factors and many times they are lost in the bigness of the institution itself.

Now here's why a lot of people today who are sensitive to the fact that the individual worth of man is being trampled upon is crying out against the institution. Here it is simple and piece-mealed. Because we have become so enamoured with the structure of the thing, that we are willing the lay upon the altar of sacrifice the persons whom it ought to serve.

We cry for law and order today. But law and order today is good only to the extent that it is protective of the individual. And that's why we have law and order, to protect the right of the lowliest of the individuals. Granted we don't always live within that perspective of things or upon that scale of values.

One college coed was writing an article for her college newspaper. And she went to a coach of a southern college and she said, "Well, tell me what's the secret of your having a successful football team?" And he said, "Well we have a color that we have chosen to wear and we go out on that football field and we try to knock everybody down that's not wearing our color." When we talk about social progress, quite frankly, we see if they are wearing our color and if not, then we'll knock them down and that's a element of our own success. We have too many people in the world today and particularly in America who are self-assigned to know what's best for everybody else. To set up the rules by which everybody else is to live. Our nation became great because we realized that the individual is far greater than the technology of his society. Jesus taught us that above everything else.

And so as we try to develop some phylisophy to our lives and try to have a meaningful life, too often we have a veiled understanding of what's in for it. We overlook the real essentials and become mired in the non-essentials. We forget people in order to be more aware of things.

But then we must have a spiritual concept of life apart from physical if we are to attain the end to the seventh happiness. We're not going to be preserved from the storms that play upon life. Just as a tree sits upon a hillside and the wind beats upon it and the rain falls upon it, it stand there many times when many other tress have

fallen. Not because the winds have passed it by, not because the rain has not fallen upon it, but because it has sank roots deep into the soil and when the wind blows it stand when lesser trees are blown away. We must have that spiritual quality to our lives, if we are to sustain our lives in such difficult times to live.

Now we find many things to distract us and to erase a sense of need spiritually in our lives. Yet if are honest with ourselves, we can look at our society and know that never has there been a greater need for some spiritual foundation for people to live. For there are here in a time when there are more material blessings that any era man has know there is an emptiness in people's lives that is grosser than ever before. And that's why drugs have tried to erase a plight of man's spiritual hunger. At a time when the church is needed above all else, we are trying to find the answer in other places.

We need to keep our eyes on Christ. Once we falter there its easy to loose the way. As long as our eyes are centered on him the way will constantly open and become clear.

When World War II broke out there was a explorer from England on his was the Anarticia. When he came into the first port, he learned that his country had declared War on Germany. And he immediately wired home and said, "Do you want me to return with my men and the ship?" And the first war of the Admiralty wired back one word, "Proceed." He realized that here was a venture far greater than war and not to be distracted for the sake of temporary need. That ought to be the functioning power within your life. An awareness of the fact that while I'm living in this life of ends of increasing happiness that bring many adventures and exciting things into our life everyday that there is a constant yearning toward that which is ultimate. Keeping our eyes on the pole stars and not getting lost in a world of lesser things.

And now this. We live now in a world that satisfies every need that we have, if we are willing to identify it and grasp it and utilize it. Until that one time when physically we are no longer to able to enjoy and enhance. Then only one factor is important above all else and that is the promise that Jesus made. In my father's house and many mansions and I go to prepare a place for you. And that's the end of the seventh happiness.

Let us pray.