

#1963—August 9, 2009—“Hall of Presidents”—6

[Gauger:] *Moody Presents* the Hall of Presidents.

[Houghton:] There's a song in eternity. Unto Him who loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood, it's the same song. It's the song of redemption, the song of the redeemed.

[Gauger:] From the Moody Bible Institute, this is *Moody Presents*, the Hall of Presidents. I'm Jon Gauger, welcoming you to this legacy look at the men who shaped the school that Moody founded. On our last broadcast we heard a compelling message from James M. Gray, third president of the Moody Bible Institute. In early 1934 Dr. Gray traveled to New York, where for the first time he heard the powerful preaching of William Houghton. At the time Dr. Gray was actually looking for a successor, and upon hearing and meeting Houghton, he said to himself, “There is the man to follow me at the Institute,” and later that year Will Houghton was named fourth president of the Moody Bible Institute. Now, Houghton was a fascinating man. Before receiving Christ as his rescuer and leader, Houghton had a brief vaudeville career in musical comedy. But when Jesus got a hold of his life, Houghton was entirely sold out. There is a published story about a hospital doctor who was rather annoyed by all the pastors who came into the hospital. The doctor asked, why should he become a Christian when even the pastors didn't live what they preached? So get this: The doctor hired a detective to follow Dr. Houghton without his knowing it and prove that Dr. Houghton didn't live what he preached. The detective found out just the opposite, though. Dr. Houghton did live what he preached, and his discovery led the detective to Christianity. The year was 1934 when Will Houghton's footsteps first echoed in the hall of presidents. It was also the same year an innovative, born-again scientist, Dr. Irwin Moon, launched his Sermons from Science evangelistic ministry. Ultimately this led to the creation of a film division, and for decades Moody Institute of Science films were shown all over the globe, literally. Dr. Moon was famous for a demonstration of electrical current. Listen to his voice as he prepares to send electricity through his body.

[Moon:] The demonstration is not an easy one, but it is one which illustrates our point in such a way that I hope you'll never forget. Power. Lights. On! Off!

[Gauger:] From the Moody Institute of Science film library, that's Facts of Faith. You're listening to an actual demonstration by scientist Irwin Moon. In 1941 the Bible Institute Colportage Association, which had been publishing gospel tracts, pamphlets, and books, became formally known as Moody Press, and of course that same year forever changed the landscape of American history, when President Franklin Roosevelt uttered these chilling words:

[Roosevelt:] Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

[Gauger:] And so World War II began. But at that war's conclusion, a man named Paul Robinson caught the vision for using aircraft to service missionaries in remote jungle areas. He shared his idea with Will Houghton, and Moody Aviation was born in 1946. Today 50 percent of all missionary pilots in service received their training at Moody. In addition to being a visionary, Will Houghton was a man of the Word. He loved the Scriptures. The message you're about to hear was preached in the middle of World War II. As Dr. Houghton speaks, listen carefully, and at one point you can even hear the drone of an airplane flying overhead. Could it have been transporting troops to the war? It was spiritual warfare, of course, that captured the heart of Will Houghton, and he takes us to Mark 14 in a message titled Christ, the Divine Song. Step into the

Hall of Presidents now as we hear from Will Houghton, fourth president of the Moody Bible Institute.

[Houghton:] The world may point at the apparent defeat of Christianity in such a world as this and say, how is it that the nations that have been Christian for a long time and have given missionaries to the rest of the world are the nations at war with each other? and accuse Christianity of having failed. Well, Christendom fails, but Christ never fails. Christ advances by the apparent defeat of His followers, just as He conquered by His own apparent defeat. To look upon this theme and to see a little frightened company assembled in an upper room, and their leader, their Master, their Savior to be taken from them, and yet to hear from their lips a song ... “When they had sung an hymn, they went out.”

Christ singing ... how it thrills the heart to think of it, that Christ sang. It must have been so. The song couldn't have originated with them, for they had the sense of defeat that He doesn't have. The song must have originated with Him. It must've started with Him, and then they joined in. But think of it. Choir, organist, Christians who join their voices in song, who praise God in the words of the hymns that have been given to us through the ages ... Just think of it. Christ dignified song by having part in it.

Did you ever stop to ask yourself how much there is in this service that is permanent? There are so many things that will disappear someday. There is coming a day when preaching will be no more, when the gospel has been proclaimed and men have received the Lord Jesus, and beyond that the proclamation of the kingdom shall be given forth. There is coming a day when preaching will be no more. There will be no occasion for it.

There is coming a day when probably prayer will be no more, when we're in the presence of the One who Himself is the satisfaction of every desire, the gratification of every need. There will be nothing for which to ask when we're with Him, for He is all things—not only has all things, but is all things. Probably prayer will be no more.

But song will continue. Singing is going on. There is a song in eternity. “Unto Him who loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood ...” It's the same song. It's the song of redemption, the song of the redeemed, the song of the cross, of the Man of Calvary. If you haven't that song, you haven't any song. If you don't know anything about the One who purchased you by His blood, you may be very religious, but you don't know anything that endures. You haven't a song—the song of eternity. It's the song unto Him who loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood.

Christ started the song, but the disciples joined in the song. For it is written, “When they had sung an hymn, they went out.” I suppose nearly everyone within the sound of my voice is acquainted with the picture that's supposed to be Holman Hunt's masterpiece, *The Light of the World*. Well, I'm not an art critic, and I wouldn't put my opinion against those who do know art, but to my mind that's not Holman Hunt's masterpiece. Holman Hunt was a great Christian artist. In the museum at Manchester, if it has not been destroyed by enemy bombs, there is a picture that, for my part, is Holman Hunt's masterpiece: *The Shadow of the Cross*. The picture is something like this: His mother has gone out to the workshop where the young carpenter—sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years of age—is at work. She has gone out there, and her stalwart son is there at work on the bench. Under the bench is a chest in which the mother has kept some of the mementos of His early days—perhaps some of the gifts brought in by the Wise Men at His birth, some other things, reminders of early days. Today she is opening the chest to look at these things. As she holds some of these things in her hands, she looks up at her son, and

the son has raised Himself from the carpenter's bench and, like a workman tired in body, is stretching to rest His body. The sun from a window strikes His body, and there on the wall is the shadow of the cross of His own form. The artist is presenting perhaps the mother's realization then that ahead is the cross for that son of hers, the shadow of the cross appearing for the first time.

Well, it's only a conception of the artist, but here certainly is the shadow of the cross, for Jesus has taken this Passover feast, this with which they are so familiar, this which pictured historically a former deliverance, and saying to them, "This is My body, and this is My blood." We know it is customary for the Jews to chant Psalms 113 through 118 at the Passover feast. Perhaps when you read these psalms it will mean a little more to you in the realization that Christ probably sang one of these, started the singing of one of these psalms, these Passover songs on this occasion, Psalms 113 to 118.

But He started a song, and how we marvel that He could sing. Ahead of Him, the fulfillment of the prophet's utterance given so long ago: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the [Jehovah] hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." This was to be the realization of it. Just ahead, the awful hour of separation from the Father, because a holy God could not look up sin. And He who knew not sin had the load of sin rolled upon Him—no sin in Him, so He could take it up Him. And God averted His glance, and the Son cried out in the agony of that separation, "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It was just ahead, and He saw it. And yet He sang.

[Gauger:] For anyone just joining us, we're listening to a unique broadcast on *Moody Presents*, the Hall of Presidents. This is a World War II-era message from Dr. Will Houghton. Our entire Hall of Presidents messages are available in a commemorative edition at our Web site, moodypresents.mbn.org. Now, here's Will Houghton with part 2 of Christ, the Divine Song.

[Houghton:] God's use of time and our use of time are entirely different. If we were planning things, if we were planning crops and seasons, for instance, we'd have one month of sowing and husbandry and eleven months of reaping. But God doesn't plan that way. God laid His hand on Moses and gave him eighty years of education. Some Christian workers haven't time to take a few years of training, but Moses had eighty years. God gave him forty years in the schools and colleges and university of Egypt and another forty years at the backside of the desert to get him ready. Sometimes God spends most of a person's life in training some Christian for perhaps some one act. It may be but one word—who knows?

In fact, just before the war, at the time of the war, the time we got in the war, we had an evening school student at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Bill Tollberg by name. He was thirty-seven years of age. Bill Tollberg had served a term in the navy in his early days. After his years in the navy he became a Christian and became a student—he and his wife both—evening school students at the Moody Bible Institute, desiring to get out into the field as a full-time worker for Christ. Then the war. He saw the war just ahead. He wanted to get into the chaplaincy, but he didn't have enough education for the chaplaincy. He said to his wife, "I'm going back in the navy. I know the ropes, and now that I'm a Christian, I can serve my country and I can serve Christ too. I can help other boys to Christ in the navy." And Bill Tollberg went

into the navy. He was on a destroyer at Guadalcanal. A shell penetrated the engine room and killed twenty-two of his associates there. It blinded Bill. In his blindness he staggered across the bodies of his associates, got hold of a valve on the side of the wall, and turned it off. He saved the lives of nearly three hundred men and saved the ship. Bill Tollberg died.

Two months ago down at Norfolk, Uncle Sam launched the ship the *USS Tollberg*. That isn't the most important part of it, though. The most important thing is the sheaf of letters Mrs. Tollberg has telling what Bill's testimony meant to this sailor and that sailor, the boys he led to Christ. You never know if you let Christ have your life, what He'll do with it in a short period of time, but don't be afraid of all the training and all the preparation.

The hour of the Son of God ... what was it? Not the hour when He came into this world, as wonderful as it was, that He should deign to come by the womb of a virgin. Not any hour of His earthly ministry, as glorious as those hours were. For He said, "Mine hour is not yet come." But facing the cross He said, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified," and He went on to say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." It seems to me that in this incident we read, Christ has given to these disciples a parable in action. He has said to them in action, not in words, something like this: "You have observed My life for these three years of companionship. You have seen the perfection of My character, and you know that you cannot possibly imitate me successfully. But now I'm going to the cross, and this life that you've seen will be broken on the cross in order that it might be distributed to you." And He said, "This is My body, which is broken for you," and He distributed the bread to them.

I think it's a parable in action. He's saying, "The hour is come. This is the hour, then hour when My righteousness, the perfection of My character, is to be broken in order that it might be distributed, distributed to you. 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.'"

Oh, Christian, this is a dark world in which you live, but you can sing. You have a right to sing. Because your Master, knowing this world and facing the darkest hour of all of His existence—He sang. Apparent defeat may open the way to the greatest victory, so sing. Christ has for every Christian a song of comfort and courage.

I remember years ago reading of some atheist—I've forgotten his name. The obituary notice was in the newspaper, and it followed with this word: "Announcing the funeral service. There will be no singing." Of course not! What would you sing at the grave of an atheist? What would you sing when the agnostic is carried to the tomb? The Christian can sing. The Christian has the courage and comfort that song gives. For Christ said, "Lo, I am with you always." Always! He must have had in mind you in your age, and this day, and every day. He must have had the darkness of such an hour as this in mind, for He said "always." "And lo, I am with you always," even unto the very consummation of the age, the working out of the age to its dark and dreadful climax. "I'm with you! I'm with you," with every last believer. So sing! In the midst of the darkness of this hour, sing.

Let me close with this incident that was very close to us in Chicago, though it happened several years ago. Dr. William Hoffman is the director of our missionary course there in Chicago. Young Robert Hoffman, his son, Dr. Robert Hoffman, made the second highest grade ever made onto the Illinois Board of Medical Examiners. A surgeon wanted to take him into his office, but he said, "No, I can go to Abyssinia and use whatever skill God has given me and preach the gospel at the same time." This was before the Italian occupation of Abyssinia. He went out there, and in

the time of the Italians' attack on Abyssinia, young Dr. Robert Hoffman was killed. So often when those things happen, Christians say, "What a tragedy, that a young life with that kind of preparation should be cut down." Well, it's a mystery, but it's not a tragedy. There are no tragedies in the life of a Christian.

His young widow had gone up to Cairo to welcome to the world their first baby. When the news came that the young husband was gone, this young wife cabled to her folks in this country just "Philippians 4:7," just the reference. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall [garrison] your hearts and minds [in] Christ Jesus." Only a Christian can talk that way. Only those who know Christ can sing in such an hour.

Ah, how wonderful it is to see Christ singing and to know that we too can sing.

They sat within the "Upper Room" at evening dim.
He spoke of his impending doom,
And then as fell the gathering gloom,
They sang a hymn.

I wish I could have heard that song; 'twas sweet, I know;
For loving John would sing out strong,
And Peter's bass would roll along,
So rich and low.

Voice after voice took up the strain as it arose;
The sweetness of that grand refrain
Excluded thoughts of loss or pain and cruel foes.

But purer, sweeter than the rest His voice was heard.
The angels in the region blest,
With hands on throbbing heart-strings pressed,
Drank in each word.

"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out."

[Gauger:] Dr. Will Houghton speaking on Christ, the Divine Song. And speaking of hymns, what could be more powerful, more appropriate than "The Lord's Prayer"?—this rendition sung by nearly two thousand pastors gathered together on the Moody Bible Institute campus at Pastors' Conference. "The Lord's Prayer"—let's listen.

[music: "The Lord's Prayer"]

[Gauger:] Nearly two thousand pastors gathering together on the Moody Bible Institute campus at Pastors' Conference to sing "The Lord's Prayer." You're listening to the Hall of Presidents, a legacy look at the men who shaped the school that Moody founded. A reminder that you can get a CD compilation of all eighteen messages in our Hall of Presidents series, including the actual voice of D. L. Moody. It's all available at our Web site, moodypresents.mbn.org. Just look for the Hall of Presidents icon. As our Hall of Presidents series continues next week, we'll hear from William Culbertson, who led the Institute through the turbulent 50s and 60s, a gifted communicator. You'll want to be around then to hear his message. I'm Jon Gauger. Thanks for listening, and again, join us next week right here on *Moody Presents*, the Hall of Presidents.