

~Other Speakers M-R: Charles S. Price:

IT WAS out of the wilderness of a world of blind, misunderstanding that the Christ cried, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" He was always eager to establish in hearts His identity. "Whom do men say that I am? Whom do you say that I am?" It was the cry of a lonely Man. Though He was the King of Glory, He could not establish Who He was in the midst of the crooked and perverse generation among whom He walked in the days of His earthly pilgrimage. "And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He said unto them, BUT WHOM SAY YOU THAT I AM?" Matt. 16:14, 15 Who is He? Who is this Person standing in the midst of the multitudes? They valued everything more than the Person of the Christ. In the short time of His absence from them, they returned to their fishing.

In the few words of the Father of which we have record He was intent upon establishing Who Jesus was. "And lo a Voice from heaven, saying, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED!" Matt. 3:17 That is enough! If He pleased the Father He should please us! And again at the Transfiguration, the same Voice came, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON: HEAR HIM!" Luke 9:37 It was not building three tabernacles; neither was it honoring Moses or Elias, but the thundering voice of the Father proclaimed that the Son, the Beloved One, was there and they were to hear Him Heaven's King was in the midst of earth!

"O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that killed the prophets, and stoned them which are sent unto thee how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate!" Matt. 23:37, 38 AND YOU WOULD NOT! No wonder the houses of earth are left desolate! Through every avenue at His disposal, the Son tried to convey to men Who He was. To the farmers, He spoke in the parable of the sower and the seed. He used the familiar terms of business and of life in the countryside of the Judean hills that He might make plain His identity! And yet men came to their own conclusions and in a moment were on their "hobbyhorse" of legalism and contention for forgetting Who He is and What He is! He knew that if He ever took second place, He would soon be in third and then fourth and fifth and down the scale into oblivion; for it is the nature of men to push Him back and back out of the picture entirely! He tried to establish the values which He knew were true values! "Seek you FIRST the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33 Though you gain the whole world and lose your own soul, what doth it profit! He cried out again that He might be established in FIRST PLACE. "In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily! In Him was Life and Light! "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the light was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not!" John 1:3-5 He was the mighty God in the midst! And yet men persist in turning from the glorious Person of the Christ to establish some little group; to organize a class while they argue vainly about this and that! In some of the modern "temples" we find Christ relegated to the corner with other "great men". They place Him with Aristotle, Socrates, Plato and Confucius! And He is THE WORD! "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the WORD WAS GOD! John 1:1 The true values of eternity have been hidden under the rubbish of men's intellect and in the midst of their confusion they have put Him down with everything else. Room for Jesus

In the whirl of the world systems, men use His Name for diplomatic reasons. At the close of a speech, the name of "God" is injected. And yet these same hearts are failing them for fear of the things coming upon the face of the earth. Fear is possessing them because they have failed to lay hold of that life and power and magnitude that comes from putting Him first. We shall never know the true values of the Christ until we ABANDON OURSELVES TO HIM. We are often interested to know what He would have us do But we shall never know that until He is enthroned as King of our lives and then there will be such a Divine rush of glory and wonder through our beings that it will overflow and bring the answer to every question and every need. Every situation will be met in Him. God's Presence will be our shelter in time of attack Underneath are the Everlasting Arms. He would undergird us with His strength and power. He is lonely, indescribably lonely, to find a place in which He may dwell. There was no room in the inn at the time of His first advent. During His life among men, the lonely heart of Jesus cried, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head." Matt. 8:20 And now, in the time of His appearing, He is seeking where He may lay HIS HEADSHIP. And He finds the hearts cluttered with other values. Some have set their desire upon wealth and gone off after it. Others have longed for fame and have given all their time and attention to securing it. Others have placed their affections here and there and there is no place for Him. It is time TO BE ENTIRELY HIS! It is time for UNION WITH CHRIST! "All things are ready: come unto the marriage!" Matt. 22:4 "But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise;" Matt. 22:5 "And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee

have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come!" Luke 14:18-20

But naked we came into this world and naked we shall go out! And He would CLOTHE US WITH HIMSELF! And the world would have none of Him. Could any good thing come out of Nazareth? Was not this the carpenter's son? They surrounded Him with questions that would trip and trap Him. "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.... Tell us therefore What do you think? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt you me, you hypocrites. Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then he says unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. And when they heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way!" Matt. 22:15-22 What, are You going to disobey the law of Caesar! But so Divine was His answer that they "marvelled and left him, and went their way!" He confounded them by sending them to open the mouth of a fish in which the tax money would be found... money to pay your taxes and Mine! Yet they understood not that He was the Creator of all things!

Now at the end of the age, He is coming to those "upon whom the ends of the world have come." Down through the centuries He has sought to reveal Himself unto men and in men. Now he seeks a pure, uncontaminated stream and He seldom finds it. He would take the poorest and the most humble vessel that He might pour Himself through it. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through out the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." II Chron. 16:9 He is looking for that "perfect heart." That heart that is Himself STRONG! "But the people that do KNOW THEIR GOD (in this union of the perfect heart) SHALL BE STRONG AND DO EXPLOITS." Dan. 11:32

To the average person of the world, religion forms a part of the life in order that such a one may be a "decent citizen." Church-going may be endured and it is frequently a bore. But for the Christ, the Son of the Living God, to occupy FIRST PLACE would be an intrusion. Many have other things to do. Their values are placed in many other directions! "How oft would I but YE WOULD NOT!" "Whom TO KNOW is life eternal!" That we might "KNOW HIM and the power of His resurrection." Such knowing is that intimate union of being MADE ONE. We can never know a person intimately to whom we open the door but a few inches and call, "How are you?"

There is suffering in body today and there are many crying out to God to know His will. For the most part such crying to know the will of God involves knowing what God would have them do or where He would have them go. And God is not half so interested in where we go as WHO GOES WITH US or, rather, Who goes "in us." The emphasis is on "Be still and KNOW that I am God!" "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." Zech. 2:13 When one is "on the way for God" he feels in a measure justified that he is in right relationship with God. If one is "on an errand for God" in activity there is usually a certain amount of feeling that all is well between God and oneself. When one is "attending to his holiness" there is apt to be a measure of self-justification. But when one has absolutely abandoned one's self to God there is a helplessness - an utter helplessness - and one is then occupied with His Holiness! Such a one finds his justification and strength coming from OUTSIDE HIMSELF, even as Samson's strength was in that which was outside himself.

The values of Heaven always point to CHRIST HIMSELF! God is concerned with the SOURCE. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM!" "Thus you shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM HAS SENT ME UNTO YOU." Exodus 3:14 And it was the Son who cried, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM!" John 8:58 "Father ... You loved Me before the foundation of the world!" John 17:24

And yet for all that they cannot see Him! The evil deeds of men are so great; the darkness is so gross and the cup of iniquity is so full that mankind is hindered in contacting God and so they turn to counterfeit worships. The great lusts welling up in the hearts of men are in evidence. The appetites of the earth turn to gambling, horse-racing, sooth-saying and other forms of amusement and diversion to satisfy the inner craving. All are counterfeit satisfactions for that which He has put within us that we might seek after the Living God. Such lusts are a perversion of the very thing that He has given us that we might contact and enjoy our God. The desire in the human heart of launching out into the unknown places for a thrill or a "kick" is a perversion of that God-given faculty to reach out into the unknown\_\_beyond time and sense\_\_into the infinities of God; there to love and fellowship with the Creator! The appetites of the flesh find temporary satisfaction in lower levels but the capacity given man for God has been profaned. All through the written Word we see the values given by the Spirit and we watch the chaos, tragedy and disorder to nations and individuals when such values are satisfied on a lower plane.

Yet the call of our God is that we put Him first! If we will establish Him in FIRST PLACE, we shall know the love

and comfort of the Mighty One. "O, My son, give Me your heart!" "Give Me the SEAT OF YOUR AFFECTION!" "If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above not on things on the earth For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:1-4 "Give Me the reins of your heart and you will be satisfied when you awaken in My likeness!" Then all these other things shall be added." He knows that the humble tasks of earth must be done; that the house must be cleaned and the fields ploughed and the children fed and the family provided for. But His order is "Seek first the kingdom of God and ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED.. ."

He is giving us this time (our life span in the flesh) to establish our contact with God Almighty. We can crown Him King in this time. What we do with Him now will be for all Eternity. That we might KNOW HIM! He wants to have FIRST PLACE! Not that we know "about Him" and not, merely, that we spend specified times in church but that our entire being be utterly abandoned unto God! Then "all these things" will be added and the right values will be placed upon all things. True spiritual values will be shown.

O, the loneliness of Jesus as He walked among men! O, the loneliness of His great heart as He seeks His resting place in the temples of men today! What is worse than to long for love and not receive it! He is thirsting today for the love of His own! And He has promised that those that hunger and thirst for Him shall be filled!

We see the loving adoration of a little child towards its mother. We see it is blind to all else and concerned with only the object of its worship. It is a love that the heart of man can scarcely comprehend and yet a love for which the heart of man is breaking! And the heart of God! How unbalanced have our scales of value become. Know we not that friendship with the world is enmity with God. We cannot be a friend of the course of this world and be united with our God. For soon we will find our God far away in some ethereal heavens and the mainspring of our life coming from some other source!

"Whom do men say that I am" cried the Christ, longing to be known for His true value. "Who is this?" "This is My Son!" the voice from heaven speaking would reveal the Person of His Beloved. He was to be the Center; the Source; the Beginning and the End; the Author and the Finisher. He was and He is! "I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death!" Rev. 1:18

If one tells of his love for God, the world turns upon him, even as it turned upon the Christ, and would trap him. They watch closely to seek how you act; what you say and how you dress, if you dare to make such an affirmation! Upon such a testimony the critical eyes of a cold, Christless world looks askance and sits in judgement They watched Him through narrowed eyelids. Surely He couldn't be good. He came out of Nazareth and there was question and mystery surrounding His birth. He could not be understood. And so He was weighed in the balance and found wanting! He was spurned by a world that needed Him for its very life and light and existence! "This is My beloved Son; hear Him."

And the lonely heart of the Saviour hungers for love. There is no connection if there is no love!

Once again we hear His great appeal, "Come unto Me!" Come unto a PERSONAL CHRIST! ".. all ye that are weary and heavy laden. And I will give you rest!" Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for my yoke is easy and My burden is light." Yes leave your fishing-nets if needs be and the apothecary's shop or the receipt of customs and come into that great flow of love from the heart of a personal Saviour whom to love is to know and whom to know is to love! He is the answer so every perplexity In that love will be found our completeness in Him for spirit, for soul and for body.