

The Discipline Of Dismay

~Other Speakers S-Z: Utmost For His Highest:

“And as they followed, they were afraid.”
Mark 10:32

At the beginning we were sure we knew all about Jesus Christ, it was a delight to sell all and to fling ourselves out in a hardihood of love; but now we are not quite so sure. Jesus is on in front and He looks strange: "Jesus went before them and they were amazed."

There is an aspect of Jesus that chills the heart of a disciple to the core and makes the whole spiritual life gasp for breath. This strange Being with His face "set like a flint" and His striding determination, strikes terror into me. He is no longer Counsellor and Comrade, He is taken up with a point of view I know nothing about, and I am amazed at Him. At first I was confident that I understood Him, but now I am not so sure. I begin to realize there is a distance between Jesus Christ and me; I can no longer be familiar with Him. He is ahead of me and He never turns round; I have no idea where He is going, and the goal has become strangely far off.

Jesus Christ had to fathom every sin and every sorrow man could experience, and that is what makes Him seem strange. When we see Him in this aspect we do not know Him, we do not recognize one feature of His life, and we do not know how to begin to follow Him. He is on in front, a Leader Who is very strange, and we have no comradeship with Him.

The discipline of dismay is essential in the life of discipleship. The danger is to get back to a little fire of our own and kindle enthusiasm at it (cf. Isaiah 1:10-11). When the darkness of dismay comes, endure until it is over, because out of it will come that following of Jesus which is an unspeakable joy.