

A Different Understanding

~Other Speakers S-Z: James Stalker:

"...and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"
(Esther 4:14).

We all, I suppose, begin like Esther. We are the center of all things to ourselves; our happiness is the supreme end for which all other persons and things ought to be conspiring. We are proud of our abilities, and eager to shine and command admiration. Perhaps, like Esther, we are brought by circumstances into competition with others, and the verdict of our superiors and our equals confirms the estimate of our powers which we have secretly formed ourselves. The prizes of life glitter ahead of us; we feel confident that we can win them; and we are hungry to taste as many pleasures as we can.

But it is a transfiguring moment when the thought first penetrates a man that perhaps this is not the purpose for which he has received his gifts at all--when the image of humanity rises up before him, in its helplessness and misery, appealing to him, as the weak appeal to the strong; when his country rises before him, as an august and lovable mother, and demands the services of her child; when the image of Christ rises before him and, pointing to His cause struggling with the forces of evil yet heading towards a glorious and not uncertain goal, asks him to lend it his strength--when a man ceases to be the most important object in the world to himself, and sees, outside, an object which makes him forget himself and irresistibly draws him on.