

Religion Without Christ

What is religion without a living faith in, and a living love to the Lord Jesus Christ? How dull and dragging, how dry and heavy, what a burden to the mind, and a weariness to the flesh, is a round of forms, where the heart is not engaged and the affections not drawn forth! Reading, hearing, praying, meditation, conversation with the people of God, what cold, what heartless work where Jesus is not! But let Him appear, let His presence and grace be felt, and His blessed Spirit move upon the heart, then there is a holy sweetness, a sacred blessedness in the worship of God and in communion with the Lord Jesus that makes, while it lasts, a little heaven on earth.

Means are to be attended to, ordinances to be prized, the Bible to be read, preaching to be heard, the throne of grace to be resorted to, the company of Christian friends to be sought. But what are all these unless we find Christ in them? It is He who puts life and blessedness into all means and ordinances, into all prayer, preaching, hearing, reading, conversing, and everything that bears the name of religion. Without Him all is dark and dead, cold and dreary, barren and bare! Wandering thoughts at the throne, unbelief at the ordinance, deadness under the word, formality and lip service in family worship, carelessness over the open Bible, carnality in conversation, and a general coldness and stupidity over the whole frame—such is the state of the soul when Jesus does not appear, and when He leaves us to prove what we are, and what we can do without Him!

-J.C Philpot