

Christ in You

by T. Austin-Sparks



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"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare for me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), then hath he said, 'Lo, I am come to do thy will.' He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:5-10).

"To whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ" (Colossians 1:27-28).

"I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20).

A New Covenant

That portion in Jeremiah has its fulfilment now in Christ. It concerns the new covenant which the Lord said was to be altogether different; not according to the covenant which He made with Israel when He brought them out of Egypt, but something within them, written in

their hearts. We know that the Lord Jesus Himself is the embodiment of all the terms of the covenant, and that covenant is sealed with His own blood. "Christ in you" means that all that that covenant contains becomes an inward thing, an inward power, an inward revelation of God. "Christ liveth in you", said the Apostle, and the mystery which God has been pleased to reveal is: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

There is one comprehensive and all-embodying truth which, if it really gained the complete mastery of our hearts and dominated our whole consciousness, capturing our will, our hearts, and our minds, would really revolutionize everything, just as the new covenant represents a revolution from the old covenant. The great truth which embodies everything is this: that God has determined that nothing which is not Christ shall remain, and He is working toward that end, on the one hand to rid this universe of everything that is not Christ; on the other hand to fill this universe with that which is Christ. That means that God does not accept or recognize anything whatever that is not Christ. Then again, it means that God puts His seal upon what is Christ, and it is all a matter of the measure of Christ. It is a tremendous thing when that really does come to our hearts with the force and the power which it really does represent. It explains everything of God's dealings with us. It gives us the key to our problems. It sets us at once upon the highway of God's own purpose.

If it should be felt that the world is really becoming more and more full of evil, and not of Christ, we will explain that seeming contradiction later.

Christ *IN YOU*

But we begin here, and we notice the significant setting of this in the letter to the Colossians. The first thing in the Colossian letter is the matchless presentation of the Lord Jesus. There is nothing in all the Word of God to compare with the first chapter of this letter as an unveiling of the Lord Jesus, that is, in any one part. From eternity Christ is seen in and through creation, all things unto Him, by Him, through Him, Christ in sovereignty governing all things, controlling all things. Gather it all up into one fragment, a universal fragment: "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence." There is the universal and eternal Son of God! And then, all that, as in a Divine secret, is brought right down and it is said: "Christ *IN YOU*, the hope of glory". All that in you - the Church. It is *THAT* Christ that is in you. He who created all things is in you *IN YOUR RELATEDNESS TO THE CHURCH*. He for whom all things were created is in you *THUS*, He who upholds all things is in you *THUS*. He in whom all things consist, hold together, is in you corporately, as in His Body.

The second thing is this: that the letter goes on, "seeing that ye have put off the old man... and have put on the new man" (3:9-10). What does that mean? That all that is not Christ is put aside, is repudiated, and all that is Christ is put on, is brought in. So that God's intention concerning His Son as universally pre-eminent is going to be realized by His being put on on the part of believers, who, as the third chapter says, have been "raised together with Him". This, the Apostle says, is the meaning of baptism (Colossians 2:12).

Christ Shall Be All

Christ is not a second personality or power, to come along to reinforce *US*, to vivify *US*, to strengthen *US*, for us to use in life and in service, and that He should make *US* something. That is not the thought, and that is not the angle of Scripture at all. And yet, how almost universally, perhaps largely unconsciously, that is what is happening. Christians are wanting to be made something, even as Christians; and Christian workers and the Lord's servants are, though perhaps unwittingly, wanting to be made something as workers; and they want Christ to reinforce *THEM*, come behind *THEM*, and make *THEM* something as His servants and in His service. That whole system of things is diametrically opposed to the truth. The

truth is that Christ shall be all, and that we decrease that He may increase; that He should be the primary Personality, and that the impact and registration of any life and any service should not be: 'What a good man he was!' or 'What a good woman she is!' or 'What a fine worker!' but: 'What a presence of Christ! What a testimony to Christ! What an expression of Christ! What a sense of Christ! What a reality of Christ!'

The next thing I am going to say may be difficult to accept, just as it is difficult to say, and yet faithfulness demands that things like this should be said. There is going to be a tremendous surprise one day over this matter. There is a tremendous amount of energy, and activity, and machinery, and zeal and devotion in the work of the Lord, in the service of the Lord, which seems to be producing something quite big, and carrying on something quite extensive. It is not for us to judge, but it is for us to lay down laws and recognize those laws, or, rather, recognize laws that are laid down by God. When eventually all work, all service, all activity, is weighed in the balances, which will determine what abides for ever or passes away for ever, all that which was *MERELY* human energy for God will go; all that which was merely man's enterprise for the Lord will go; all that which was in any way out from man himself, even though in devotion to God, will go. Only that which was the energy of Christ, the wisdom of Christ, the power of Christ, will remain. God is not using your energies and my energies. He is calling upon us to use the energies of Christ. God cannot set His seal upon anything that is of man. God's seal only rests upon that which is of His Son, and we must not say that because a thing is big, extensive, and *SEEMS* to be a great work for God, that it necessarily is such. What we have got to be quite sure about is that that thing is not being carried on by the momentum of man, or the momentum of organization, the momentum of machinery, the momentum of human zeal and energy for God nor by the momentum of a programme, but that it is being energized by the Holy Ghost, that it is Christ Himself who is the life and the power of that thing. In so far as human personalities, energies and all that kind of thing are the mainspring, we may be sure that in the end there is going to be a good deal that goes. That can be seen as you look back over the history of things which claimed to represent God.

God's Ultimate Purpose *IS* Christ

The object of saying this is not for one moment to cast a cloud of suspicion or doubt over anything, but it is to emphasize this truth, this basic truth. It is along the line of jealousy for Christ. Nothing will remain in this universe eventually but what is Christ, and we must recognize that everything for God's ultimate purpose is bound up with and in Christ, and it *IS* Christ. We shall only come to the end which God has fixed as we know how to draw upon Christ for everything. We shall be established as we live by Christ, the work will be established as it is out from Christ, as we do it out from Him.

We have often spoken of this same thing in the direction of the candlestick all of gold, as mentioned in the prophecies of Zechariah. We must remember that the wrought gold is the Lord Jesus. It is only a typical way of saying that He was made perfect through suffering. The gold is refined and perfected in its purity in the fire. That is what happened with Him. Perfect, yet perfected through suffering. The candlestick of pure gold is what Christ is, and inasmuch as it is a candlestick, it is the vessel and the instrument of the Testimony, the life, the revelation, the unveiling. The vessel of the Testimony, then, is what Christ is, and the Testimony can only be upheld and maintained in clearness by what Christ is. We in ourselves cannot maintain the Testimony. The Testimony of Jesus will be maintained in us just in so far as we conform to His image. To put that in another way: just in the measure in which Christ has supplanted ourselves - "no longer I, but Christ". God has a gold standard, and He never departs from it. God's gold standard is His Son, and He never deviates one little bit from His Son.

"No longer I" but Christ

This change from Christ in heaven to Christ in you is just with that object in view. It is that, Christ being in you, everything else shall be brought down under Christ, and that Christ should take the ascendancy in us just as He has taken universal ascendancy in heaven, and it is that taking of ascendancy which is the conforming to His image. "No longer I" is a very inclusive statement, for that "I" is many-sided. There is 'I like' and 'I will', 'I think' and 'I want'. And then the opposites, 'I don't like', 'I will not', 'I do not think', 'I do not want'. And 'I' is much more comprehensive than that. Conformity to His image simply means that that is ruled out, and oh! what a business that is! While we have all accepted the final and the full abolition of the 'I', by no means have we attained unto that. We are very often in some way or another up against that 'I', and the question again is whether it is going to be Christ or 'I'. But the very fact that the Holy Spirit makes a conflict of it shows that the thing is active, and that something is going on. We need to ask definitely that the Lord will keep that active, and that He will make these crises much more acute.

Sometimes we have to ask ourselves, as we see personal desires being followed out, likes being served, preferences being manipulated, and it becomes so patent that there is something which is quite natural ruling decisions and making the plans: Where is the Cross, and where is the Holy Spirit working by the Cross? Therefore, you and I need to ask the Lord more every day to make these crises acute, that we shall have no blind spots on this matter, thinking that it is for the Lord when it is really for ourselves. Any measure of that 'I' is countering God's end, and anything that is done, even though it be by a most devoted soul, for the Lord on that basis is bound to have in it that element which will limit its *ETERNAL* value.

Utterly Christ

The thing which is going to be wholly, utterly abiding, eternal, must be utterly Christ. It may, therefore, be necessary for a course of reduction to be followed by the Lord. The thing may seem small and it may seem to be very limited according to the world's standards. What is going on can hardly be seen on the surface, but God is working right down at the bottom to build from the foundation, slowly, steadily, surely, and every fresh fragment that God adds to that work is sifted, purged, tested. It is as though God puts in something and then, before He adds to it, He tests it, proves it, tries it, sifts it, until the thing is, in its absolute purity, all of Christ and is established.

That seems to be God's way with something that is going to be wholly of Christ. You can have, if you *MUST*, to gratify the old human desires to *SEE*, to *POSSESS*, to *KNOW*, to *DO*, to be active, something bigger. But when you look on toward the end, it will just be tested as to what is of Christ. All the other is waste. You have plenty of Scripture to bear that out. I am only putting my finger upon a central law. Is it not true that God has determined to have nothing in this universe eventually but what is Christ, and all else will be removed for ever?

There is another way of looking at it. It is a glorious prospect to know that the universe will be filled with Christ, and God is going to have His end. When the Lord gets hold of a life utterly, and when the Cross has really entered into that life, so that that life can say: "I have been crucified with Christ", nothing passes, nothing gets through that is not Christ. God keeps intensely short accounts with that life. God is alive to everything concerning the first Adam. That is the meaning of: "He that hath the seven spirits of God". That phrase means the perfection of spiritual vision. Go back to the prophecies of Zechariah and you remember it speaks of "seven eyes". That means that the Lord Jesus, who has the seven spirits of God, is alive to everything, takes in everything, comprehends everything. Nothing

escapes Him. Especially is that perfection of perception related to the things that would be a menace to His ultimate purpose, and in all that we do He knows exactly where the point is which marks the end of what is of Himself and the beginning of us. We do not know, but He does, just where these things overlap, and He is letting nothing pass.

That represents a challenge to us! We have been seeing that God, for His own satisfaction in relation to His own ultimate purpose, must have a candlestick all of gold, a vessel which represents what Christ is in an utter sense, That means a deep cost, a great measure of suffering. That is the challenge which comes to us. Until the Lord reveals it with a heavenly light we do not see how big the difference is between self and Christ. When the Lord does a thing it is eternal.

Are our hearts set upon God having that which is wholly of Himself? That means 'I' crucified! No longer I, but Christ! And that means that Christ in us is the basis of our conformity to His image, until we partake with Him of His own nature - pure gold. It is something to face seriously before Him. It brings to us a challenge, but surely it also brings to us a glorious possibility! What Christ is can be made good in us!

This is what God is doing in the groaning creation. It does not appear to be so, for, to all appearances the 'fullness' seems to be evil. Do you remember a very illuminating phrase in Genesis 15:16: "The iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full"? The context shows that Israel's exodus and occupation of the Promised Land waited upon the Amorite's full cup of iniquity. "Amorite" is a representative name for all the nations then occupying the land. When that cup of iniquity was full God emancipated Israel. The exodus synchronized with a condition in the world. The filling of the land with what was of God required the enemy's extension of his evil nature to its limit; then God acted.

We need say no more. The end time will be marked by 'iniquity abounding'. The rapture of the Church will take place - as its exodus - when "the man of sin is revealed", when the cup of iniquity is full. We are living at a time when there is a positive landslide of moral iniquity. It is called 'the new morality', but it is not morality at all, it is 'non morality'. Look at your map of the world and note how minute is the area of the United Kingdom. It is almost lost in the great areas of the world countries. And yet, in this so small country, four hundred millions of pounds are spent annually on gambling. There is a corresponding expenditure on alcoholic drink, to say nothing of the iniquitous drug business. No wonder that the nation is fighting for economic survival, and has lost its place of honour in the world. Perhaps the worst feature is that governments legislate for these things, and thereby largely condone or recognize them.

If this is true of such a fragment of the world, what of the whole world situation? God is taking account of this. He is causing the simple facts of His salvation to be made known on a scale unprecedented in the world's history, and when the whole world has had its opportunity "then shall the end come". Two things are *UNMISTAKABLY* evident: the world-encircling by the simple gospel of salvation as never before, and the headlong rush of iniquity to 'fill up the cup'. There is a third feature: it is the ripening of saints by suffering unto the grape-harvest. These three things are the "work in the groaning creation".