

God's Higher Order of Man (1 Corinthians 15:45-49)

by T. Austin-Sparks

God's objective in redemption is to conform us to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, who is of a higher order than unfallen Adam.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:45

Topics: "New Creation", "Transformation"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes that God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ is not merely to restore humanity to the state of Adam before the fall, but to elevate us to a higher order of being. He explains that while the first Adam was a living soul, the last Adam, Jesus, is a Life-giving spirit, representing a heavenly order that transcends the earthly. The goal of God's work is to conform us to the image of His Son, making Christ the focal point of His creation. Sparks encourages believers to embrace this new identity and purpose, recognizing that God is actively working to reproduce His Son in us. Ultimately, the sermon highlights the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in achieving this divine objective.

Transcript

I think there are a lot of Christian people who have the idea that what God is seeking to do through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus in atonement for sin - in the salvation and recovery of man from his lost state - is to get him back to the place where Adam was before the fall. Now do you have that idea? Is that your idea of redemption - that you just undo everything that went wrong in and through Adam and restore things to that unfallen state in which Adam was before he fell?

If that is so, you are entirely wrong. God is not seeking to do any such thing. He is not conforming to the first Adam at all, not even to an unfallen first Adam. He has gone immeasurably beyond an unfallen first Adam. He has left him behind altogether... and has One who is an entirely different order of being from the unfallen Adam. The first Adam was a living soul; the last Adam was a Life-giving spirit. The first man was of the earth, earthy; the last is of heaven, heavenly.

Therefore, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." This heavenly Man, this last Adam, this Life-giving spirit is of an entirely different order from unfallen Adam - of a higher order altogether. God has something transcendentally greater than unfallen first Adam. His last Adam, His second Man, is of a heavenly order - a spiritual order; and blessed be God, an order which

cannot know death. So do not let us drop down on to the poor level of an unfallen first Adam.

It might be a great deal better than our present natural condition, but it is not good enough for God; and it should not be good enough for us. Therefore, let us "bear the image of the heavenly." That brings clearly into view what God's objective is. Having made the Lord Jesus the Head of His new creation - His new race - His objective is to conform the race to the likeness of its Head. Christ then becomes the one object in the eye of God concerning which and unto which He is doing all His works.

And the Lord is now working in the new creation - in you and me - to conform us to the image of His Son. We may take it that God has no other work on hand. God has only one work on hand, and that is His work. That is to be taken account of when we realize the Lord is trying to do something. The Lord is at work. We may not be able to see what He is doing at this time; but if we ask the one general, all governing question, "What is it that the Lord is seeking to do?" The answer is one... and comprehends everything - every method of God, every means of God, every interest of God.

It is reduced to one single, comprehensive thing... He is seeking to reproduce His Son in us - to conform us to the image of His Son. From eternity God has been governed by a desire to express Himself... and all creation is God's way of seeking to express Himself. Now, when we look at the Lord Jesus, we see God's realizing His desire; and then, when we look at His activity with us, we see God's seeking in this yet more fully extended way - beyond the individual Person of the Lord Jesus - to reproduce Himself in the Church, which is Christ's Body; that is, to make it Christ in expression.

That is very simple and very elementary; but this heavenly order of which Christ is the Head is what God is seeking to bring about in a new race. Then the next thing is this: the last Adam is a Life-giving spirit. Thank God for that! You see, Adam could only produce after his kind, and his kind was an earthly order - a soul order of man. He could not produce after the full, complete, and final thought of God. It was not in him to reproduce himself in an order above his own level.

Even as unfallen, he could not do that. The Lord Jesus is bound by the same law, but the difference is that as a Life-giving spirit, producing after His own kind, He has power to accomplish the Divine purpose by bringing in the heavenly - this spiritual - order. You have, then, a new race in view, set forth in its Head and, in union with Him - as one with Him - the Spirit with the Son, a Life-giving spirit, becoming the energy by which the end shall be reached. The Lord Jesus in us - the Holy Spirit in us - is the energy and power to produce, or reproduce, after His own kind. That makes a heavenly order possible.

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