

Seeking the Glory of Christ as Son of God

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the glory of Christ as the Son of God, emphasizing His unique prerogatives in life, light, and lordship and their implications for believers.

Scripture: Hebrews 1:1

Topics: "Lordship Of Christ", "The Glory of Christ"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the significance of seeking the glory of Christ as the Son of God, highlighting that all divine prerogatives of life, light, and lordship are vested in Him. He explains that true spiritual life and understanding can only be found through Christ, who reveals the Father and grants eternal life to believers. Sparks warns against the distractions of other 'lords' that may govern our lives, urging the congregation to recognize and submit to Christ's lordship for true freedom and fulfillment. The sermon calls for a deeper understanding of Christ's role in the divine economy and the necessity of His glory in our lives.

Transcript

God... hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His son, Whom He appointed Heir of all things (Heb. 1:1-2; A.R.V.).

... the kingdom of His Son... Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist (Col. 1:13-17).

...the glory of Christ... we preach... Christ Jesus as Lord (2 Cor. 4:4-5).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made through Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1:1, 3-4).

For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and greater works than these will He show Him, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom He will... For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself: and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is a Son of

man (John 5:20-21, 26-27).

...the glory which I had with Thee before the world was (John 17:5).

There are three main directions in which spiritual sight is necessary; firstly, with regard to the place and significance of Christ in the Divine scheme of things; then, with regard to the place and significance of man in that scheme; and thirdly, concerning the reality, ways, and objective of the evil spiritual powers in this universe. These three things very largely comprehend the Scriptures. Here, we shall be mainly occupied with the first of these.

The Place And Significance Of Christ

There are two sides to Christ's person and work. (1) Christ as the Son of God. (2) Christ as the Son of Man. When we have gathered up all that is said and intimated in the Scriptures about Jesus as the Son of God we are led to one comprehensive conclusion. It is this, that God's sole rights and prerogatives have been vested by Him in His Son, and God has bound Himself to be personally and definitely known only Sonwise. There is neither access nor knowledge of a personal nature, nor fellowship, apart from the Son. "No man cometh to the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). "No one knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27). That revelation is in the Son alone. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Then we have to ask, What are those unique and sole rights of God which are vested in the Son?

The First is:

The Prerogative Of Life

When we really come to deal with life, we come to deal with God. While there is something of life present man may have a place. He may help, stimulate, feed, and co-operate with it; but when life has departed, man has no more place and it is God's matter alone. Only God can deal with that situation. The question of life from the dead is God's matter alone. For a whole generation this question raged as a battle, and very largely it raged around one man - Louis Pasteur. During the whole of his life-time the question of spontaneous generation flamed and fumed and divided men into schools of fierce antagonism. But before he died the question was settled and to-day no knowledgeable person believes otherwise than that life only comes from life, and never from death - that is, in the realm of nature. Thus the field is left clear for the supernatural, and life out of death is God's unique sphere. What is true in the natural is also true in the spiritual. The life which we all have in common as the life of soul and body is one thing, and the above law holds good with regard to it. But there is another life; it is uncreated life, Divine life, what we call spiritual life. That is another thing altogether. A hundred or more people may be here together, all of them alive in the first sense, but only a few may be alive in the second sense. The majority, while very active in the life of soul and body, may be quite dead with regard to uncreated, Divine life. Thus are people divided, and in this way they are two entirely different orders of creation, species of beings.

Much has been said and written about the immortality of the soul. The Bible does not teach this. Continuity and immortality are two distinct things. Immortality is a Divine prerogative and feature. "Who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16). Immortality is that Divine nature which is characteristic of Divine life. It is something altogether higher than just survival of physical disintegration and the grave. This latter without immortality or immortal life must be a very horrible thing. It is what the Bible means - metaphorically - by being "naked" and "ashamed". So the apostle speaks of immortality as being "clothed upon", that

"mortality may be swallowed up of life."

Thus the giving of that life is with God alone, and those who have it are thereby different in an inward reality from all others. They possess the basis of a complete transformation, which is the meaning of being "glorified".

But our particular message is that God has vested this life in His Son Jesus Christ, and that it cannot be had apart from Him. "As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself" (John 5:26). "As the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son... giveth life to whom He will" (John 5:21). The gospel of the glory of Christ is that God has given Him the glory of being able to give eternal life, incorruptible, immortal life to those who believe on Him. "This life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life" (1 John 5:11-12). Once that life has been imparted all the glorious thoughts and purposes of God for men have been started on their way to realisation. So what comes in with Christ is the life of a new creation, a new universe. Everything is to be realised on the biological principle, but it is a life which is different in nature, capacity, and consciousness from all other life. Being peculiarly God's own Divine life it is the basis and link of true inward fellowship with Him. In this way we are able to see something of the immense and vital significance of Christ.

To accept Christ in a living and positive way is to receive a life which means an inward and secret difference in our very constitution, and to be in the way of possibilities which are denied all others.

To reject or neglect Christ is to lose or miss all that God ever intended when He created man and put him on a probation of faith. Herein lies the immense peril of prevarication or procrastination. It is not in man's power to say when that life shall be offered to him. When Christ is presented, that is the time when life and death are in the balances of our acceptance or rejection, and the very greatest eternal values and issues are bound up with that decision. To all this the great enemy of men's eternal glory would blind them and keep them blind. One of the blinding lies of the Devil is the lie of evolution. While we all believe in a certain development and progress, the doctrine which declares that man started with the amoeba and in the course of many thousands - perhaps millions - of years passes through numerous stages - e.g. of ape, primitive man, civilised man, angelic being, and so on - and finally becomes a god, having attained deity! - this is a lie and a deception, and is intended by its Satanic inventor to keep men from accepting Christ. For all this progress (?) is said to be made altogether without any outside intervention. Someone writing on this matter has put it in this way: We have heard of a wonderful machine which, with claws, takes hold of so much leather at one end and draws it in and, without any outside intervention, takes it through stage after stage, and pours it forth as shoes at the other end: without any outside intervention! And, says the writer, that is evolution; the claws take hold on the amoeba and draw it in, and then evolution is supposed to take it through various stages and at last turn it out as angels and gods. But, says he, unfortunately the amoeba at a certain point gets caught in the mesh and in the end beasts come out, tearing one another to pieces! Are men really nearer angels and gods to-day after these thousands of years? Is the moral life of the race so much higher after all? Only the very blind will say it is.

Ah, it is just in that little clause "outside intervention" that everything is found. There will never really be any true conformity to God's likeness without outside intervention. It will not work like a machine. This outside intervention is set forth in the words of Christ: "I am come that they might have life" (John 10:10). There is no hope of man reaching God by himself, but God has intervened in the person of His Son and with Him offered the life which has in it the power to bring us into oneness with Him in likeness and fellowship.

God's Prerogative Of Light Vested In The Son

The second prerogative of God is light. It was God Who said, Let there be light, light shall be! Light is with God. Of course, there are many intimations in the Scriptures of that in the natural realm. God makes darkness and light, and God, when He chooses, can break into the ordinary course of things in that matter and turn light to darkness or darkness to light. He can divide in the same territory between light and darkness; when all Egypt is in darkness, gross darkness, with the plague resting upon it, the children of Israel have light in their dwellings. Right within the same land, light and darkness simultaneously existed by a Divine intervention from the outside. Yes, light can be preserved and maintained by God beyond the due course, and darkness can be brought in prematurely when it ought to be light.

There is much in the Old Testament about that, and it is carried over into the New Testament. When the Son of God was crucified, darkness was over the face of the land until the ninth hour. Put out God's Son and you put out God's light. That is the point. Light is God's prerogative.

What is illustrated by God's dealings in nature is the great truth of spiritual light; that spiritual light is God's prerogative, that He can bring light into darkness at any given moment, He does not have to wait for a course of things: and He can shut out the light at any given moment. It is in His power to do that.

Thus this second prerogative of God, namely, that of light, is also vested in Jesus Christ, His Son, and bound up with Him. "I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In Him was life; and the life was the light of men". "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him", "He hath revealed Him" (John 1:18). It is the glory of Christ to be able, at any given moment, to break in upon our darkness, and has it not just been that which has brought His glory into our hearts and brought glory out from our hearts to Him, when by that blessed touch of His finger (the Spirit of God) we have been able to say suddenly, I see! I never saw it like that! What is then the spontaneous desire of our hearts? It is to worship Him.

We revert to that man born blind, to whom the Lord gave sight and eventually interrogated him with the inquiry, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and He it is that speaketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him. Why did he worship? Because the Son of God for him was one thing with having his sight. The two things went together. Having his sight was bound up with this One Who could be none other than the Son of God to give thee sight. That is what the Lord meant by having that incident included in that gospel, the whole purpose of which is to give evidence that Jesus is the Son of God. You know how John concludes his gospel - If everything was written that could be written, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written; but these things are written, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God' and that believing ye may have life in His name" (John 20:30). And this is written in the book which has that as its object. When the disciples say, Lord, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?, the Lord Jesus dismissed that superstition by saying, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him". And the Son is the instrument of the works of God. The Lord Jesus had already said that the Father works, and the works that the Father does, the Son also does, and greater works than these will He show Him. The works of God - giving sight, through the Son, to those born blind, leading to worship; and God does not mind you worshipping His Son, He will not be jealous of His Son, because He has bound Himself up with His Son and put His Son on an equality with Himself, and vested

His own rights and prerogatives in His Son. To worship the Son is to worship the Father, because the Father and the Son are one.

Well, that Jesus is the Son of God is evidenced by people getting spiritual sight, and that is the glory of Christ, to be able to do that, leading, as we were saying, to worship. It is a great thing to recognise even a little of this. It is a great thing to have our eyes opened. It is a great thing to have our eyes opened initially and foundationally; it is a great thing as we go along to have our eyes opened again and again to see what no one has been able to show us, what we have struggled to see and understand; and then God sovereignly, by intervention from outside, touches our spiritual eyes and we see. Is it not a great day when we see like that?

Some of us know what it is to have something in the Word of God. We sense there is something in that passage that we have not got; there is the Divine meaning, but we cannot get it; and we have walked round it, we have looked to see if anybody could help us. We have gone to all the authorities on that particular passage, but we have not got it. There are a lot of good things being said, but somehow we are not getting what we sense is there. We put it back to the Lord and say, Now, Lord, if you want us to have that, you show us at the right time when it is necessary, not just for the sake of information but when it is going to serve a purpose. And we have gone on and left it with the Lord, and going on quietly, perhaps occupied with something else, the whole thing has just come up and been broken upon us, and we have seen it, and our faces have become wreathed with smiles. We can put our finger upon many things like that in the course of our life. They have just come and we have received them. You cannot take that away from us.

Now my point here is simply to illustrate what a tremendous thing this breaking in of light upon us is, how it lifts us out, how it fills us with glory, how it changes the outlook when there breaks in spiritual light, light which never was on land or sea, light from above. And the Lord Jesus is the sum of that Divine light. He is the light. If only our eyes were opened to see the significance of the Lord Jesus, what a tremendous difference it would make, how we should be emancipated. The need is that, to see the Son of God as having vested in Him the prerogative of Divine light-giving, because He is the light. It is with Him to come right into our scene of darkness and drive the darkness out. That is His glory, and you can know the glory of the Son of God, you can worship Him, because your eyes are opened.

He is here. Just as He, being the resurrection and the life, means resurrection at any moment, and not merely at the last day - you remember Martha said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day", and the Lord, in effect, said, Stop, I am the resurrection and the life, and I being here, the last day may be here so far, as the resurrection is concerned; it is no time matter when I am present, it can be now! - So He, being here, there may be a new creation now with a new creation light: not, I shall get light later on, but now; by this glorious intervention from without.

The glory of Jesus Christ which He had with the Father before the world was, the glory of the Son is that; that He has this sole Divine prerogative, right, power and ability to bring light. No one else can give it; it is not possible to attain unto that light. It is His gift, it is His act. That is His glory.

God's Prerogative Of Lordship Vested In The Son

One final word with reference to the glory of Jesus Christ as God's Son. The Divine prerogative of government is vested in Him. The third prerogative of God is government. In the last issue, the decision is with God in all matters. Over and above all things, God is: He rules, and He rules in the kingdoms of men

and among the armies of heaven. He governs, but He has now vested that government in His Son. "Neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). This Divine prerogative of government, therefore, is vested in Christ.

What does that mean for us now? "The gospel of the glory of Christ." "We preach Christ Jesus as Lord". That is in substance one statement - the glory of Christ, Christ Jesus as Lord. I think I must leave a great deal of the detail and leap right to the end of that. The glory of Christ is only recognised when He is Lord, but it is recognised when He is Lord. I mean that God is satisfied when His Son comes unto the appointed place, and God can never be satisfied in any one direction without the one affected being aware of it. There is always an echo here of something in the heart of God which affects us. I mean that if heaven rejoices over one sinner that repenteth, that sinner will never fail to have the echo of heaven's joy. The joy which comes to a repentant sinner is not just his own joy, it is the joy of heaven, it has come of what is going on above. When the Father is well-pleased, it will be witnessed in the one in whom He is well-pleased. "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). The Son knows in His own spirit, His own heart, the delight of the Father. "The Father loveth the Son": He can say that without any conceit or presumption: and when the place to which the Son has been assigned by the Father is given to the Son in any life, or in any company, or in any place on this earth, then you may take it that the heaven is opened there, and the Father's gratification will be registered there. You never get through a struggle and battle on some question of His Lordship without knowing a new Divine joy and peace and rest in your heart. A struggle has been going on over a matter of obedience to something in the will of God, something the Lord has said: there has been a battle over it for a long time and at last you get through - "My stubborn will at last hath yielded" - and you are through. The Lord's Lordship is established, and what is the result? Rest, peace, joy, satisfaction. You say, What a fool I was to keep that up for so long. What is it? It is not just a psychological relief, that you have got past a difficult place: it is the Spirit of God bearing witness within. It is the Holy Dove lighting upon your spirit. It is the Father's good pleasure witnessed to in your heart, the Lordship of God in Christ established. We can never in reality believe in the absolute Lordship of God and not give Christ His place. That is a contradiction. For the Lordship of God to be a reality, Christ has to be Lord in our hearts. We need to see that.

The Practical Issue

What I really want to leave with you in this last word is this: do pray for the Lord to open your eyes to the meaning of the Lordship of Christ. You know, beloved, all our troubles circle round that issue. Other lords have had dominion over us. What are those other lords? There are lords many. Our own souls may be having dominion, our own sentimentalities, our own likes and preferences and judgments, our own dislikes and antipathies, our own traditions, our own teachers: these may be governing us. Oh, the lords are so many, and they may just be governing. The Lord is desirous of bringing us into a larger and freer place, and a place of an opened heaven: something is still tyrannizing: we are in the centre, the natural self-life is on the throne, we have a horrible way of drawing everything to ourselves. Immediately anything is raised, we step into the centre of the arena, the self-life ruling on the throne: and what kind of life is it? Well, it is a life of shadows, to say the least of it; it is a life of limitation, of variableness, up and down, of weakness and uncertainty. If we want to come right out into the light, the full light, to go right on in the full light, in the glorious liberty of the children of God, all those other lords have to be deposed, and Christ has to be Lord.

Now, while I am saying that, you agree with me absolutely. You say, Yes, of course we want Christ to be Lord, we want nothing more than that Christ should be Lord, and we know He has to be Lord: we know that God has made Him both Lord and Christ! We assent. Beloved, that is all right, but what about it?

When we have assented, when we have agreed, are we still going to assert our own judgments, are we still going to meet others and things in our own strength? Are we still going to be in the picture, are we still going to allow those old dominations to influence us? This establishment of Christ as Lord is a thing which can only be done, not by assent, not by agreement, although that may be required: - it can only be done by our being broken down, and we have to say to the Lord, Lord, you break down everything that You find in the way: take in hand whatever there is that obstructs You absolute Lordship.

"The dearest idol I Have known,

Whate'er that idol be,

Help me to tear it from Thy Throne

And worship only Thee".

There may be something very dear, a part of our very being, and it is in the way: our very life, our very self. There is something to be done right in us, but oh, that we should see how much hangs upon the place and significance of Christ in the Divine economy of things, Christ as Lord. What hangs upon that? It is the glory of Christ.

Have you ever got through to a new position with the Lord where His Lordship has been established in some new way, in some new matter, in some new sphere? Have you ever got through and been miserable about it, felt you have lost everything? You know to the contrary. The experience may have been a very deep and terrible one, but when you are through, you glorify God. When the Lord is dealing with things that are in the way of His Lordship, it is a dark time, full of suffering, but you are going to come to the place where you thank God for every bit of it. How can that be? If the Lord should make windows in heavens, might this thing be? That is what we feel when we are in the process, but I am certain, and experience in some degree bears it out, that when we are on the other side of that and the Lord has a new place in our lives, we thank Him for the depths, and we say, You were right, faithful and true. You can say that as a bit of your faith, but it is a great thing to say it as a bit of your experience. Faithful and true!

The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, the glory of Christ, the gospel of the glory of Christ as son of God is all brought to us in terms of Life and Light and Lordship - the three L's of the glory of God's Son. The Lord lead us into that.

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