

Christ, Our Life

by T. Austin-Sparks

"When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested..." Colossians 3:4

One of the main objects of the Holy Spirit is to get believers really identified with Christ as the risen and exalted Lord, and to make His risen life real in their experience. As the age moves towards its consummation--the manifestation of Christ--two features will become increasingly evident. On the one hand things, men, movements, institutions, organizations, etc., will predominate and draw multitudes after them, and will attach the crowds to themselves. On the other hand, with a growing disappointment and disillusionment over these, a minority will turn to the Lord Himself to find Him alone as their life.

Three elements will inhere in all this. One is the unmistakable development of the principle of Antichrist; that which will definitely supplant Christ, or intend to do so. The second is the alternative to the whole Christ in man-made Christianity, an imitation life born and carried on by its own momentum. The third, a deep and genuine quest for reality, truth, and inward knowledge of the Lord Himself. In the first case, (the principle of Antichrist) it will be the naked worship of man in human power: a tremendous overflow of humanism, the wonder and glory of man. The third (an inward knowledge of the Lord Himself) will be Christ altogether as the life. (Cf. (1) 1 John 4:2; (2) Rev. 3:14-22; (3) John 15:5-8)

If the Christian is attached to some thing, such as a teaching, a tradition, an institution, a movement, or person, the end will certainly be a limitation of life and eventually confusion and

disappointment, perhaps worse. The New Testament makes it unmistakably clear and emphatic that the destiny of all is to be "Christ all and in all (Col. 3:11)" We must learn that a true work of the Spirit of God is to attach everything to Christ Himself. He, Christ, must be the life of our spirit, the "inner man", so that we are strong in the Lord: not in ourselves, nor in others, nor in things. We shall have to survive adversity by His strength within alone. Christ will have to be the life of our mind. Perplexity will find us without the power to explain and understand, but the Spirit will teach and lead (Cf. 2 Cor. 4:4-6).

Christ will need to be life for our bodies. There is such a thing as Divine life for the physical body. Not always does the Lord choose to heal the body, but He does always want to be its life, even in suffering to fulfill His purpose (Cf. 1 Cor. 6:13).

It is the Lord himself, and for this to be so, it has to be against a background of natural inability. The power of His resurrection is the law of union with Christ from beginning to end. Days of terrific pressure are upon the Lord's people. Their enemy is taking very little off-time. The only sufficiency is in the Lord Himself as our life (Cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-10).

Barnabas exhorted the believers at the beginning that "with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23). There is an utterness (intensity) about this that will be pressed upon us until the time "when Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested" (Col 3:4).