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Christ Our Life (1964)

by T. Austin-Sparks

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One of the main objects of the Holy Spirit with the children of God is to get them spiritually and experimentally into Christ as risen and exalted, and into the risen and exalted life of Christ.

The present phase of things is particularly marked by a cutting off from things, men, and movements, with a view to utter attachment to the Lord Jesus Himself. Antichrist will soon be made manifest, and will probably come along the line of a great united world-movement of human improvement and moral and social uplift under the name of "Christianity", but without regeneration; a great thrust of 'humanism'; a full development of the principal sin—*independence of, and superiority to, God—the true God.*

Multitudes will be drawn away after him, and to refuse to be included in *such* a movement will bring a stigma and ostracism upon those who so refuse. The Lord is preparing for Antichrist by seeking to make the Lord Jesus more completely the life of His own than has been their experience.

Work, enterprises, activities, movements, churches, societies, teachings, people, etc., have been and are the life of many. They must have the stimulus of a programme, a scheme, a place to occupy.

Teaching—as such—may bring to confusion and provide no living way through. Work may lead to exhaustion and disappointment. Movements may become marked by merely human features and be spheres of dissension.

Things—all of them—will disappoint sooner or later, but the Lord abideth and never fails. The measure of attachment to the Lord can often be the measure of attachment to some interest, either

a person, or persons, or place, or movement, or piece of work, and when these break down, faith in the Lord is shaken, and a dark period of eclipse of faith is passed through.

What we *must* learn supremely is to attach everything to the Lord Himself, and to come to a full appreciation of Him. The Lord must be life for the spirit to make it strong; not interests and merely objective concerns. Otherwise we shall only stand up strongly when there is the appeal of some outward occasion, crisis or emergency.

The Lord must be life for our minds so that truth is not for us either abstract or merely true things, but life and power.

The Lord must be the life of our bodies. Natural weakness or strength is not the criterion. Healing as a 'truth' or as something in itself can become legal bondage and a 'bugbear'. It is the Lord Himself our life, whether to remain cumbered about with infirmities or to be set free—whichever will serve most His glory. It is not so much the natural condition as the transcendence and accomplishment of the Lord.

In the days of terrific pressure which are now upon the Lord's people everywhere; days when the enemy takes less 'off-time' than ever; days when it is more perilous for believers to take 'off-time', there is only one thing adequate—it is that the Lord should be known in absoluteness as our life—our very life.

The exhortation of Barnabas to the converts at Antioch may be a very timely and salutary word for us at this time: "He exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23).