

# His Place - by the Love of the Father

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*Christ's greatness is rooted in His appointment and position by the love of the Father, which is the foundation of His spiritual and moral excellence.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 16:10, Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:24, John 5:20, John 17:24, Romans 5:14, Colossians 1:13, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 1:2

**Topics:** "Divine Love", "Christ's Greatness"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks delves into the greatness of Christ in the Scriptures, emphasizing His place by the love of the Father as the infinite divine love that motivates and empowers His appointment. This love is evident in various Scriptures and Old Testament figures like Isaac, Joseph, and Israel, all pointing to a love relationship between God and man. The preacher highlights that Christ's greatness is both spiritual, in His union with the Father, and moral, in His perfect separation from fallen nature, as seen throughout the Old Testament in the quest for a holy and righteous One.

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## Transcript

Having, in our last meditation, covered the ground of the greatness of Christ in the Scriptures as the meaning of all things, the idea and nature of all things, and the final test of all things, we now go on to consider

### 2. His Place - By the Love of the Father

Infinite Divine Love the Motive and Power

His place is by the love of the Father. Infinite Divine love is the motive and the power which lies back of His appointment to the position which has been given to Him.

This is revealed in several ways. It is revealed

(a) In All the Scriptures

Many of these Scriptures will immediately spring to mind. Let me give you a small selection.

"Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24)

"Through whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2).

"Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands" (Heb. 1:10).

But before He laid the foundation of the world, before the world was, the declaration is that He was the Beloved of the Father.

"The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth" (John 5:20).

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35).

"Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again" (John 10:17).

"Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you" (John 15:9).

"A voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son" (Matt. 3:17).

"That we should be... to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6).

"Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:13).

And so we could go on and on, but we have quoted sufficient to shew very fully that the Scriptures reveal that Christ has His place by the love of the Father.

But not only is this so in direct and definite statements, but everything points to it. Every Old Testament figure of Christ brings out the idea of love with fullness and inheritance in view. I think we often overlook what seems to be the all-too-fleeting and transient glorious morn before Adam fell, but it is a picture of Divine love for the man whom God had created. Love - yes; love planning, love giving, love companionship, love desiring. It is a picture of love, and all with fullness, a great inheritance, in view. And did we but realize it, the rebellion and disobedience were a blow at the heart of God more than anything else, the God who so loved the world. Adam, we are told, was a figure of Christ (Rom. 5:14) before the Fall, only a figure, but there is enough there to show the love-relationship between God and man, with desire for man's fullest inheritance. We will just glance at these outstanding personal representations or figures of Christ.

Isaac - it is impossible to be blind to the love element surrounding Isaac. He is the love of the father, a particular and peculiar love, and it was said that "in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12). The inheritance is along the line of the son of his love.

Joseph - there is perhaps no greater figure of Christ in the Old Testament than Joseph, but what a son of the father's love! And how did he come to glory, to fullness? By the jealous love of One greater than his earthly father, because he was a figure of Him that was to come. There is no mistaking the prefiguring of Christ in Joseph. Sold for twenty pieces of silver, to all intents dead and out of sight, cast into the deepest dungeon, tasting the bitterest travail of soul, and raised to glory and power to bring life to his brethren. Well, it is patent that here is a figure of Christ, but the governing feature is love unto fullness.

Or take Israel. Surely, if there is a mystery in history, it is the mystery of God's love for Israel, when viewed in the light of all they proved to be. God spoke of Israel as "My son," "My firstborn," "I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals" (Jer. 2:2). God is there speaking like a lover concerning Israel. Amazing love, all with the inheritance in view. Is it not strange that the nation which has

drawn out the love of God by way of example so utterly, should become the nation to exhibit so utterly the opposite of love for God, and for the Son of God? I could add much more as from the Old Testament to this story of figures of Christ in terms of love with fullness in view.

There is another whole series of symbols and types of Christ which carry the thought of preciousness and glory, preciousness, that is, in the eyes of God. There is a subject for you to study. Glory is according to heaven's standard, and it is all Christ implicit. We leave it there. Is it not revealed in Scripture that He holds His place by the love of the Father, both by direct statements and by numerous figures and symbols and types?

#### (b) By the Opposite of Love to All Divine Activities

But then this same fact is revealed by the opposite of love to all Divine activities. We always get something confirmatory from the opposite side. One of the strongest confirmations of this very thing comes from the intense antagonism of the adversary to this appointment and position which Christ holds by the love of the Father. Oh, what that has provoked through history, and does still provoke, in an opposite way! All the jealousy that you can see associated with those very figures that we have mentioned, suspicion, hatred, malice, prejudice, pride, murder, is but an expression of it. All these and much more have broken out against the Son of His love. How do you explain it? We sometimes sing,

Why, what hath my Lord done?

What makes this rage and spite?

He made the lame to run.

He gave the blind their sight.

Even a gross man of this world could say, "I find no crime in him" (John 18:38), "I wash my hands of the blood of this innocent man," Why this rage and spite? The answer is that it comes from hell below. It is because of this love of the Father and the position in which that love has placed Him. Do not think that this is just a statement of some facts. This lies at the very heart of our union with Christ. "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you." You see to what union with Christ leads us. Well, that in passing, lest you might think I am just passing on so much data and matter. No, hell has given its own mind on this matter. It is very significant. Anything, no matter what it is, which has the advancement of the interests of Christ in view immediately becomes the object of sinister jealousy, suspicion, hatred, prejudice, and, if possible, murder. This opposition springs up without reason so far as men are concerned, without investigation, without enquiry. It simply, spontaneously comes into being, and, is encircled by the most unreasoning and unreasonable of attitudes, many of which collapse on honest enquiry. But there it is. The question still remains as to how men are caught in this kind of thing. But we know full well where it comes from, and it is the opposite of love to all Divine activities in relation to the Son.

#### (c) By the Father's Demand that the Son Be Honored

This is revealed, thirdly, by the Father's demand that the Son shall be honored. "This is my beloved Son," came the announcement from heaven, "hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). Here we see the Father's jealousy for the position of the Son. He will not bypass Him, He will not allow even an ardent apostle to step in front of His Son. We see Jesus "crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2:9). Peter, referring to the transfiguration, said many years afterward, "He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there was borne

such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (2 Peter 1:17). He received from the Father honor.

In the book of the Revelation this is taken up in the great concourse. "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12). The Father honors the Son. I have not quoted from John's Gospel because there it is what the Son Himself says about the Father's honoring of Him. We accept that, but there is much more that confirms it. His place is by the love of the Father, therefore the Father demands that the Son be honored.

Now that is a very practical thing. Do you think that you will ever bypass Jesus Christ and get to God? The Father's appointments are all with His Son. Now, that is comprehensive and covers the whole creation. In Him, through Him, unto Him, were all things created, therefore God's appointment was with His Son in the whole creation. That is to say, God would meet everything created on the ground of His Son. Now when the creation through its first overlord, Adam, made a breach with the crown rights of God's Son and handed them to the rival, Satan, what did God do? According to Paul's marvelous statement, God acted at once and right at the heart of the whole creation He wrote "dis-appointment." His jealousy for His Son's inheritance meant that He would not look outside of His Son to rival or rebellion. Paul says that "the creation was subjected to vanity" (Rom. 8:20), and from that moment the creation has at its very heart disappointment. That is true about man. Whatever his attainments, his successes, his achievements, his inventions, the last word is disappointment. Whatever there is that is fair and beautiful in creation around us, it goes so far and then fades and dies; everything is subjected to death and corruption. That is disappointment. The appointment is broken. The appointment for glory, for fullness, for consummation, is made with His Son, and outside of His Son there is no such appointment, but all is disappointment. Is that true? Why do not men see that? We Christians know it, if no one else knows it; but, blessed be God, we have come back to God's appointment and the disappointment has been wiped out. God has come back to us, to appointment in His Son, to union with Christ.

This union is not something official, something legal or formal. It is affectional. It is not obligation that governs here. Love never stops at obligations, but always goes on to the utmost possibilities. Union with Christ is of that character because it is the center of God's love. You will have, of course, to do quite a lot of quiet meditation on all this and relate all that we are saying about Christ to the Christian life. "Translated... into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:13). That aspect alone is amazingly wonderful and full - "the Son of his love." Union with Christ brings us on to that ground, into that realm. Oh, do not have comparative ideas of this love, as though the love of God were graded according to the degrees of goodness or of badness which He may find. His love for you and me is the love which He bears for His Son. That is the revelation. To be united with Christ is to be enfolded in all the dimensions of His relationship with the Father as the Son of His love. I have not said "in all the dimensions of His relationship with the Father as very God," but as Man, as His Son Jesus Christ.

### 3. The Greatness of Christ is Spiritual and Moral

You may not like that word "moral," but I am using it in a particular and limited sense. "Spiritual" looks in a Godward direction, and speaks of His union with the Father. "Moral" is a word which comes in after the Fall, and relates to a whole system of things which originates with fallen humanity - morals; so that when we speak of moral, we mean that which touches downward, not upward, that which links with evil and not with God. Christ's greatness therefore is spiritual by reason of His life with the Father. His greatness is moral by reason of His perfect separation from that which is from beneath, the realm of the fallen nature

with all that it means. That is all I mean at the moment in the use of those words - spiritual and moral, and as you read your Gospels that is what you find to be the background of everything. It is these two things all the time that are the ground of the challenge. Perhaps we shall see more of that as we go on.

But I want to remind you that the whole of the Old Testament is constituted upon the idea of a coming Holy One, or Righteous One, or Righteous Servant. "Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption" (Ps. 16:10). That is in a Psalm, and is quoted, as you know, by Peter on the day of Pentecost concerning Christ. "Thy holy one." That One, by that title, was recognized in the spiritual realm.

Demons knew Him altogether apart from incarnation. "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). That takes you a long way back in the Old Testament. From a prophet we get Paul's quotation - "My righteous one." There was from the beginning, when sin entered through what we call the Fall, a quest for a holy one, for a righteous one. Heaven was in quest and all the activities of God in the earth bear on this quest for a righteous one. Where shall a righteous man be found? If he can be found, he is the solution to the whole problem. Countless figures of the righteous One are given us. Abel had witness borne that he was righteous. Because of his faith, Abraham was called righteous. Noah was a preacher of righteousness. You who know the Bible do not need me to follow that further. The figures of the righteous One are there in great numbers. But with all the figures there was failure, leaving the quest for the fully righteous One still unanswered and unmet, and the Old Testament closes still with the cry and sigh for this righteous and this holy One. The creation is left in suspense. Men were still awaiting the realization of a glorious intention, and destiny was hanging upon an essential state, and that an inward state in man; not a ceremonial state, but an inward state, that is, a state of inward righteousness and holiness. Everything was in suspense until that state was found in man. All this great and glorious intention and destiny was impossible of realization without a state. I want you to focus upon that and think much about it. God did His best to help men on, to encourage men on, to get them there, but may I say it reverently, there is a sense in which God's intentions broke down. The situation did not allow of His just getting a people through to glory by a sovereign act. God could not do that. Everything depended upon an inward state. There could be no realization, no answer to God's intention, no possibility of reaching the intended end without an inward state. He got them as far as He could by ceremonial conditions, but we know how that failed. The contrary inward state was far too much for the ceremonial. No, sacraments do not achieve it, there must be an INWARD condition of righteousness.

Ah, well, blessed be God, the inward state of Christ was the state that made everything possible. Yes, the excellence of Christ was His inward state, not His legal status or His official position. Always remember that. He has gone far beyond all ceremonies, all sacraments, all rites, all ordinances, all that system which broke down. He surpassed it all because of what He was inwardly. That is His excellence.

(a) Heaven Knows It

Heaven knows it, and that is why He was anointed of the Holy Ghost; for, while you have anointings in the Old Testament, they are partial and transient, there is no fullness and there is no permanence about them. They were for the fulfillment of a temporary purpose. He was anointed of God in fullness and finality. He evermore is the Anointed, and God gave to Him the Spirit without measure. To anoint, as we have often said, is simply a symbol of God committing Himself. Do you think God would commit Himself like that to any state that did not answer to His requirements? Heaven attested Him: "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

He triumphed through testing. His inward state was subjected to every form and kind of testing at the defiled hands of the Evil One himself, and He triumphed over every attempt at spiritual defilement, that is, to get something in between Himself and God to spoil that relationship and fellowship and walk with God in purity, in holiness, in truth. He triumphed upward, and He triumphed over every effort to get Him to make a contact with the cursed earth, and so make a link with that which was outside of the blessing of God. That is His excellence. It is inward. Heaven knows it

(b) Man Senses It

Man senses it, and, having said that, everybody knows what that means. There is an instinctive rising up in man when mention is made of Jesus Christ in any way. It varies from ridicule and the charge of being "goody-goody" to open hostility, and it is because the conscience of man is touched, and he feels uncomfortable and out of place in the presence of this One; he feels there is something wrong with his being. You know it. Without so much as a word, you are marked, if Christ is in you. Man senses this spiritual and moral excellence, and he resents it. He senses the greatness of Christ and feels poor and mean and despicable and uncomfortable in His presence.

(c) Hell Attests it by Attempted Corruption

Hell attests it. We have said as much - Hell attests it by attempted corruption. Because Christ is the object in view, the heir of all things, and because this inheritance is to be holy and incorruptible as conformed to the image of God's Son, the only way to cheat Him of His inheritance and defeat this Divine purpose, to circumvent the course of the Son of God, is somehow to introduce corruption. That is the history all the way through. Much springs into mind.

His Greatness is Implicit in

(a) His Satisfaction to God

His greatness is implicit in His satisfaction to God. That goes without saying. God, being what He is, infinitely holy, in attesting His Son as well-pleasing to Him and as offering a sacrifice well-pleasing to Him, thereby expresses His utter satisfaction regarding Him. In figures, in types, in symbols, the verdict on all that is of Christ is that God is satisfied. His greatness is implicit in His satisfaction to God.

(b) His Redemptive Work

It is implicit in His redemptive work, for no sinner can save a sinner. You can profit no one beyond the level of your own life and experience. For Christ to achieve an uttermost, final, consummate redemption and salvation, He must be utterly and consummately sinless. His redemption is based upon that.

(c) The Spirit's Operations

Again, it is implicit in the Spirit's operations, which means, firstly, that the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, and secondly, that He is the Holy Spirit. This makes everything subject to experiment, so to speak. The greatness of Christ is not a doctrine, not a declaration of some fact. It is open to practical proof along all lines. Now then, try to get away with known sin in the presence of the Holy Ghost, and see how you get on. Try to grow in the spiritual life without dealing with something upon which the Holy Spirit has put His finger, and see how far you get. There is your proof. The crown of all God's intentions is found in the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell within, and all His operations are upon the ground of the absolute greatness and

glory of Jesus Christ. He is working to the most minute point. Is that according to Christ? Is that glorifying to Christ? Does that reflect Christ? We are at once arrested in our spiritual life, and we will make no further progress, even were we to live for the next half a century, if the Holy Spirit has said, "That is contrary to Christ," and we have shut our eyes to it and ignored it and have been rebellious. The Holy Spirit is jealous for Christ. What is the Christian life after all? It is not to conform to a set of doctrines, to obey a set of regulations. Christianity is Christ, and there is nothing else to it, and the Holy Spirit keeps us to that. Everything, therefore, is subject to testing. All that we have said is brought up as a practical issue by the Holy Spirit.

There we must leave it for the time being, but are you just glimpsing now something of what union with Christ means? Oh, blessed be God, union with Christ means that God is utterly satisfied with Him, and therefore with me and you as in Him. Have you got hold of that yet? That is one of the fundamentals of the Christian faith, but how long we take to get hold of it. We are so afraid that we shall not be coming up to standard. You just get a firm faith-hold on Jesus Christ as your answer to God for all your needs, and the Holy Ghost has got His ground. It is Christ, not what I am, but what He is, and that covers all questions. God is satisfied in Him, and that has glory as the issue. "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). You see, you can go on. He is the answer, and this is all of the grace of God, marvelous grace, boundless and free. Union with Christ answers every question, satisfies God and brings us to glory.

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