

# The Otherness of Christ

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon emphasizes the profound difference between Christ and humanity, highlighting the necessity of brokenness and yieldedness for true spiritual transformation.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 55:8

**Topics:** "Dependence On God", "The Otherness of Christ"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the 'otherness' of Christ, illustrating how God's ways often confound human understanding and lead us to a place of utter dependence on Him. He explains that true spiritual progress requires a complete surrender of our own will and understanding, recognizing that we cannot achieve perfection on our own. The sermon highlights the danger of humanism, which falsely claims that man can be his own savior, and contrasts this with the truth that our strength and wisdom come solely from God. Sparks encourages believers to embrace their brokenness and yield to God's transformative work, which ultimately leads to a deeper relationship with Christ. He calls for a renewed mentality that acknowledges the vast difference between our natural selves and the divine nature of Christ.

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## Transcript

Dear friends, what is the Lord doing with us? That is what we want to know. What is He doing with you and me, and with those who are really in His hands? Is He not doing with us that which He has done with all who have come completely under His hands; that is, leading in a way and realm where human understanding and ability are completely confounded and exhausted, where it is totally impossible to cope mentally with His ways, or to explain Him? We cannot see, we cannot understand; neither is it in us to do, to achieve. We are learning that all our resources are of no avail and that everything depends upon the Lord Himself - His wisdom, His strength, His grace.

Well now, if it is your experience so far and at this time, understand that it is quite right, it is not all a mistake. True, it is very painful, it is testing. It is testing up to that point where your feet have to touch the very brink before you prove God. You have to come to an utter end of one way and to a beginning that is a beginning even to the point of lifting your feet to take a step to prove God, for God to come in. You say that is very utter. Yes, but it is this utterness of the difference between the Lord and ourselves that we have to learn, and that is going to set us over against the colossus of false doctrine, of the iniquitous lie which is being built upon this earth up to heaven, the lie of humanism.

That is the greatest lie that has been brought into this universe, that it is in man to be his own savior, that it is in man to rise to perfection, it is in man to be God; it is all in man, the roots are in himself. I say that is Satan's colossus of iniquitous untruth, and God is working out the contradiction of that in a company, in His Church. It is being wrought, worked out, in the unseen; and while it is so difficult to accept it in the day of suffering, weakness, and darkness and inability to understand, if we knew the truth the probability is that it is just this: God is doing with Satan in and through the Church what He did with Satan in and through Job, answering his challenge and his lie. Here is a broken, shattered, helpless little vessel of saints, bewildered, stripped, thrown back upon their God, unable to do or to understand, clinging to Him and seeking to prove Him, and through that the greatest iniquity in this universe is being assailed by God and answered.

The lie! There never was a time when that lie has reached greater proportion than it has today. But in you and in me, poor broken ones, God has His answer, and it does mean something to the Lord that we have been emptied out to the last drop, thrown back upon Him where He is our wisdom, He is our strength, He is our life, He is our very breath. That means something to Him.

Karl Barth has coined for us a phrase which has gained a great deal of strength and place, and it is a very useful one - "the altogether other-ness of Christ." Oh, that goes much further than we realize, certainly much further than most people are prepared to believe. Even yet in evangelical Christianity there is a clinging to the idea that we transfer everything to Christ and to Christianity when we are born again. We transfer all our faculties and our powers over to the interests of Christ and then, instead of using them for ourselves and for the world, we use them for Christ. That is the meaning of consecration, of surrender, as the terms are used so largely today in evangelical Christianity - the consecration of ourselves, our gifts, our faculties, our everything, to the Lord and to His service. But that falls short of something. It is not the transference and the consecration of everything that we are to the Lord to be used straightway as it is over on His side - for His interests instead of in the world. Christ is other yet, Christ is still different yet from consecrated natural life; oh, so other! Something has to happen, our entire mentality has to be changed, transformed. The mind has to be renewed; we have to have an altogether different kind of outlook, even about the things of God. It is a constitutional matter, not merely a directional one.

This is the meaning of the Lord's dealings with us; namely, to get a new mentality, a new conception; another, not our old one transferred, but another; and the distance is not the distance of time or geography necessarily, it is the distance of difference; and we make faster or slower progress spiritually according to how we learn this lesson. What is the secret of spiritual progress? It is the letting go of our own will and mind to the fact, to the truth, that after all, though Christians at our best, wanting to be a hundred per cent for the Lord, it is not in us either to be or do. Our will can never do it, our reason can never accomplish it, our impulses and desires can never get us there. We have to come to a brokenness and yieldedness where nature is laid low in the dust and all our treasure is with the stones of the brook and the Almighty becomes our treasure (Job 22:24-25); the Lord alone our wisdom, our strength and vision, our desire. Until you and I have learned the lesson of that utter brokenness and yieldedness and letting go to the Lord, spiritual progress is delayed.

May the Lord show us the great distance that lies between ourselves as Christians and Christ, and give us a heart that yields to the Spirit's work in teaching that lesson and making it good and bringing us more and more to the measure of His Son.

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