

Zion: The Embodiment of the Spiritual Values of Jesus Christ

by T. Austin-Sparks

God's speaking in His Son is the embodiment of the fulness of Christ, leading to sonship and adoption as mature sons of God.

Scripture: Hebrews 1:1

Topics: "Sonship", "Spiritual Values"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes that Zion represents the embodiment of the spiritual values of Jesus Christ, highlighting that God speaks through His Son, who is the fullness of God's message. He urges believers to recognize their true needs and to understand that God's speaking is not merely about doctrine but is found in the person of Christ. The sermon stresses the importance of sonship and the discipline that comes with it, as God is focused on developing mature sons for His purpose. Sparks calls for a shift from pragmatism to valuing eternal spiritual significance in ministry, reminding that God's jealousy is for the true spiritual values represented in Zion.

Transcript

Lord, we are subjects of Thy pity, of Thy compassion; and this morning we do not even know what to ask of Thee, for we perhaps do not really know our truest need. We think we know sometimes. There are things which are very real to us as needs; but, Lord, it is true Thou knowest all the truest need of our hearts, and only Thou knowest. According to Thy knowledge, speak Lord--make it personal--make it individual--as well as collective, that while Eli did not hear the voice of the Lord, even in the tabernacle, there was one who did. Pick us out for speaking this morning. As Thou didst call, "Samuel, Samuel," may we be called by name. May we know the Lord is speaking to us. Do not allow our minds and thoughts to be diverted onto other people or we shall say that is something for them. But do keep it directly, where afterward, we can truly say, "The Lord has spoken to me." Now for all that is needed, Lord, in us and for us--for this, do that by the wisdom and the power and the grace of Thy Holy Spirit. We ask it, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, Amen.

By now I think you know that there is a book in the New Testament which is called the Letter to the Hebrews, and I am going to read again from this book this morning. We are getting very near to the end of this time of gathering, of ministry, and I feel that it is very necessary for things to become very definite and

concrete and that we should at this time expect the Lord to be focusing things on very clearly defined issues.

But once again, let us read at the beginning of this letter, chapter one: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by diverse portions and in diverse manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, Whom He appointed Heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the Word of His Power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." And again at chapter twelve, verse 18: "Ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched"; verse 22, "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."

I could almost wish that we forget that word Zion, as such, if it represents a subject. We must look through Zion because, you see, what we have in the beginning of this letter is "God hath spoken." In Zion? No! God hath spoken through Zion. God hath spoken in His Son. If we have used the Old Testament name, which is always a type and a symbol, we have used it to help us by gathering up all the historic associations of that name in the Old; but let us remember, it still belongs to the "not." As to a name and as to a place and as to a thing, a mountain and so forth, it belongs to the "not." What belongs to the "but" is what lies behind that name Zion, its spiritual value, its spiritual meaning, its spiritual lesson. And if we were asked, "What is that, what is its spiritual value, its spiritual meaning?"--we have got to come back and answer: "God has spoken in His Son, ...He has spoken in His Son, Whom He appointed Heir of all things, through Whom He made the worlds."

God has spoken. Now, how has He at the end of those times spoken? The speaking of God from a certain point in history on to the end is "in His Son." Is it necessary to clarify that and say His speaking is not "about" His Son?--not the teaching, the doctrine, of Christ, but the Person--in the Person! He hath spoken in a Person. Do try to get hold of that, dear ones. It is in Him, in Christ, that God speaks! Now let us try to break that up for a few moments.

Zion, if you are going to use the name, is in representation the fulness of Christ. That is what this letter is about, fulness and finality in Christ. And Zion, as a name, represents that. The fulness of God's Son--that is Zion; and that fulness is God's speech for and in this dispensation. God's speech is the fulness that is in His Son.

God's Speech Is the Fulness That Is in His Son

Now you remember when you go back to the beginning of the Old Testament and God has intervened in the history of this earth in what is called "the creation," it all begins with that word "God"--"In the beginning, God." In the beginning, God. And then what? God spake. God said, "Let there be light" and so on. God spoke and out of His speaking everything came. You come over to your New Testament and although the Gospel of John is not arranged first, that is, chronologically (and for quite a good heavenly reason, the Holy Spirit's wisdom), the Gospel of John really does stand at the beginning because the other three gospels begin on this earth in history, they begin at Bethlehem in Matthew and Luke or, as in the case of Mark, at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. But John overleaps all time and goes right back to the dateless beginning, and he opens with this: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh." Here in this new beginning of a New Creation, of a new order, the "but" era, God speaks the Word.

We have heard something this week about "the Logos." I am not trying to add, and certainly not to improve, but I am going to say a little more about that. As you know, "the Logos" is "the Word" there in John, "In the beginning was the Logos, the Logos was with God, the Logos was God... and the Logos became flesh, tabernacled among us." In the beginning was the Logos. Of course, John has taken that word from the Greek, which in the Greek world had its own particular meaning.

[1] THE WORD, THE LOGOS, WAS DIVINE THOUGHT:--THE MIND AND THOUGHT OF GOD BEHIND EVERYTHING ELSE.

First of all, in the Greek mind, the word "logos" meant "a thought, something in the mind": that is where it begins, "the thought" or, if you like to make it general, "thoughts." Logos is, first of all, thoughts or a thought. Then, keeping to the Greek, "logos" is "the expression of the thought," the thought put into expression. It may be words, but it is what is in the mind expressed, given expression. That is the content of "logos." It may or may not go beyond that in the Greek, but in the Bible it certainly does.

It is true that "Logos, the Word," was Divine thought, something in the mind of God first before ever there was expression or utterance. Something that was the mind of God. "In the beginning, in the beginning was the mind, the thought, of God." What a large world that door opens up. You have got the whole of our New Testament there, the mind and thought of God behind everything else. But then, that mind and thought of God was expressed, was given expression. "God said." Out of His thought, out of His mind--God said. As Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians: "God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts." God said, by expression. And what happened? Ah, that is the point. That is "the Word, the Logos."

[2] THE WORD, THE LOGOS, OF THE LORD IS A DIVINE ACT:--WHEN GOD EXPRESSES HIS MIND SOMETHING HAPPENS, IT IS A FIAT.

You see (and follow me closely now for I am going to perhaps be exacting on you for concentration for a little while), when God expresses His mind, it is not something just in language, in verbiage, in diction, but something happens. Whenever God spoke, and whenever God speaks, something happens. God's speaking according to the Bible is always an act. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." The Word of the Lord is an act. In Hebrews, you come to chapter four: "The Word of God is quick, powerful, sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow," and so on. God's Word is an act. It is a Fiat, something happens. God's thought put into expression resolves itself into something that was not before. You can never be the same after God has spoken. Even if you were to refuse it, resist it, that has been a crisis. So Jesus will say, "The word which I spoke, that will judge him in the last day." They shall judge you, and me, in the last day. If you do not believe in Me, the words that I speak, you will have to meet those in the last day--because this is something not just said but something put into the universe which is a crisis. The Word of God is a crisis. The Word of God is an act: "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

[3] THE WORD, THE LOGOS, IS A PERSON:--THE MIND, THE EXPRESSION, THE ACT OF GOD BECOMES INCARNATE, IT IS IN A PERSON.

But that does not exhaust the word "Logos" as used by John and as "the Word of God" in the Bible. There is a third aspect to the Word. True, it is the thought, the mind or the mindedness of God. True, the Logos is the expression of God by which something happens. It is the act of God, but then the third aspect of Logos is Its Person. It takes up its residence in a Person, it becomes personal; in other words, it becomes Incarnate. The mind of God, the expression of God is Incarnate. It is in a Person. Any encounter with

Jesus Christ is a crisis. Any encounter with Jesus Christ is meeting God. God was in Christ. It is an encounter with God. It is not just what Jesus says, although that is an expression of the mind of God in words, but, it is a personal encounter that has to be. In the first place, it is not an encounter with what is written, not an encounter with words--it is an encounter with a Person. "The Word became flesh,"--Incarnate.

So, let us go over again the third aspect of the Logos: the incarnation of the Divine thought in a practical issue in history, in an act, in a Fiat; it was an act of the Incarnate and Glorified Word of God. Ask Saul of Tarsus whether his encounter with Jesus on the Damascus Road was a Fiat. The whole dispensation answers that very loudly. This is the Logos. "God hath spoken in His Son" --Who is the embodiment of His Mind, Who is the expression of That Mind, Who is the incarnation of That Mind. And this whole Letter to the Hebrews is just an analyzing of that or a summing up of that: God speaking, God speaking In His Son! God speaking in His Son; and all which follows that, from chapter one at its beginning right through to the end, is just the exposition of God speaking in His Son. You must read the Hebrew Letter in the light of that. God is speaking.

So when you come to Hebrews in chapter twelve, at this section from verse twenty-two onward, what have you?--You have the gathering up of that speaking of God in His Son and concentrating it. And if you break up the section, you will see it is a concentration of what is true about the Person of the Lord Jesus; and you must look at Zion like that. It begins there. "Ye are come to..." well, we say "Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem..."?--No! that is symbolic language. We are come to the Son of God in all His meaning. God speaking in His Son: the thought of God expressed, the thought of God Incarnate, Personified, so that "Zion," as a typical word or name, is the embodiment of all that.

God speaks, or in the Old Testament God spoke in Zion. He spoke out of Zion. You go through the Psalms and you go through Isaiah's prophecies, especially the last chapters of those prophecies, and refer to them again. You go through them presently and see how God is speaking out of Zion. It even comes to this: "The Lord... shall roar out of Zion" (Joel 3:16). God speaks out of Zion; in other words, out of His Son, hath spoken in His Son. Now, having stated that, what is the heart of all this, according to the statement at the beginning? "God, hath at the end of these days, in these times, in this time, hath spoken in Son." How? How?--Sonwise--"In Son." The absence of the definite article "His" before the word "Son," the absence of "His" in the original text, does not make any difference, because the very next statement is: "Whom He appointed Heir of all things." So this Son is His Son. We note that and pass on.

The Governing Law of God's Speaking Is Sonship

The governing law of God's speaking is sonship,-- sonship. That is the thing which governs God in all His speaking. Sonship. And as has already been said, sonship is not a beginning thing. It is a final thing, it is an ultimate thing. Here is Romans eight again: "waiting for our adoption," the manifestation of the sons. The end which governs all God's speaking in Christ is sonship. If you would like to change the word, it is "adoption." It is put at the end. Sonship--adoption, is an end, an object, toward which God is moving by the speaking in His Son.

By birth, we are children: by adoption, we are sons. And it is just here that we must remember there is a difference between the spiritual conception of adoption and the secular. Someone holding a little baby yesterday, not of the family or even of the same race, said, "You see, I have adopted her." Oh, no, that will not do here. That is not the scriptural conception of adoption. As you have been told, the scriptural

meaning of adoption is someone already in the family by birth who has grown to maturity and then comes the day of maturity, the coming of age, the celebration, the festivity, the coming of age day, when the father takes his own child, now mature, puts the toga on him, invests him with the symbols and insignia of authority to be as the father in this world. Everyone meeting that adopted son has to reckon with the father. He is, in effect, the father. He has been adopted or, the word really in Hebrews is, placed. Placed in this position of responsibility because of maturity. Now we will have to come back to that from another standpoint as we go on.

What I am saying is that this is the end to which God is working. His beginning is begetting. His beginning is birth from above, bringing in a family. But, mark you, even in the born child there is the spirit of adoption. The adoption has not come yet, but there is the spirit of adoption. That is what Paul says, in essence, in Romans and Galatians: "because we have the spirit of adoption we cry, Abba, Father."

I think once when I was here before I told you what that really means. What does "Abba" mean? Why put the two things together, is it just two words of different languages?--"Abba" in one language, "Father" in another. What is it? "Abba" is the quality, not the relationship, it is the quality of a child, a little child. And when a little child turns to its Father and says, "dear Father"--you have got "Abba." It is a heart relationship. Abba--dear Father. There is something very close, very intimate. It is a mark of spiritual infancy. Of course, that is the first thing we lisp, is it not? When we are really born from above, we do not say when we go to pray: "Almighty Most Terrible and Fearful God. . . ." Our first lisp is, "Our Father." That is the beginning of the Christian life. We have the Spirit of adoption, although we have not come to the adoption yet. That is coming if we allow the Spirit of adoption to develop us for adoption. That is the whole course of the spiritual life.

ALL THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD IS GOVERNED BY THIS ONE OBJECT: SONSHIP.

Well, that is all here, and I am saying that the final object toward which God the Holy Spirit is working is what is called adoption, sonship. It is governing everything, it is governing everything. It is the end which is brought to bear upon the whole course. What is God doing? Well, Hebrews will tell you. All the discipline, all the discipline of the child of God, of the children of God, is governed by this one object--sonship. So you have: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, for whom the Lord loveth (His children) He chasteneth, He disciplines. He scourges every son to be set by Him, to be placed." That is the discipline of the Christian life. "And what child, or what potential son, is he who has no discipline, whom the Father chasteneth not?" As you know, the writer uses a very strong word about such. They are not true sons, they are illegitimate children who have come into a false position, if they be without discipline.

There is a tremendous revolt against discipline in this world, throwing off of authority and all control, all government, all discipline. There is a revolt against it everywhere, especially in youth. The Word says that is how it is going to be at the end: "disobedient to parents" and so on. This does not at all go well for God's final purpose of a family, not of infants but of grown sons, chastened for eternal responsibility. God's final purpose, grown sons chastened for eternal responsibility--governmental position in the Kingdom in the ages to come. There is so much about that in the New Testament. That is Ephesians. Discipline, for that. Dealings of God with us in this way for that!

Oh, look again at this illustrated. If you want, look again to the history of Zion. What a disciplined thing Zion was. God was having no nonsense with Zion. God was tolerating nothing less than His full thought in Zion. When Zion deprived Him of what He had brought Zion into being for, He then set Zion aside, showed that

He had no longer interest in that as a thing. He disciplined Zion. Read again your Psalms. Read again the prophets. They are all concerned, as we shall show, with Zion. What discipline! What discipline! Through the years, and finally the seventy years of exile while in captivity, what discipline of the people of Zion.

Shall we just look for a moment at Isaiah. I did say a little while ago that as you look at the last chapters of Isaiah, you will find these final chapters are all concerned with Zion. Let us look, shall we, at chapter sixty-one, for we are very near the end of Isaiah when we come to sixty-one. Or you can go to sixty, if you like, where it reads, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." But go on to sixty-one: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me... the Lord hath anointed Me..." And here again it is the twofold interpretation. Zion is here pointing on to the other One Who used these very words and applied them to Himself.

Now to chapter sixty-two. (Cut out the numbers sixty-one and sixty-two, the chapter divisions being artificial.) "For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness [yes, remember your Amplified, until her right standing with God, until her right standing with God] go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth... nations shall see thy righteousness (thy right standing with God), and all the kings thy glory."--"I will not hold My peace" until that happens. This is the cry of the prophet, and you can go on in these last chapters of Isaiah and find it is there; and what I am going to come to in that very connection is this, that Zion was the burden, the concern, the heartbreak, of the prophets.

Prophetic ministry always focuses upon Zion. The work of true prophetic ministry (whether in the Old or New Testament) relates to this Divine thought that is enshrined in this word "Zion," as we have it in the Letter to the Hebrews, to have this amongst the nations, this expression of the fulness of Christ in sonship in a corporate body. That is the end toward which God is working and carrying out all His work of discipline.

I do want to apply this in a practical way. You see, we, rightly so, perhaps, are concerned with the work, what we call the Lord's work, concerned with evangelism, getting souls saved. Nothing wrong with that! That is all right! Do not think I am undervaluing that. The work of preaching and teaching, and having meetings and conferences and all that which we can compass by this word or phrase, "the work of the Lord," we are concerned about that. Very much concerned about it. Perhaps you ministers are very much concerned about your ministry, that is, the next address that you are going to give, and you are filling up your notebooks now. You have got a congregation in view. The work of ministry, of evangelism, or whatever else may come within that term, "the work of the Lord," perhaps you are very much more than anything else concerned with that. Perhaps in your concern you say: "We must be in the work, we must be given to the work."

Here my brother is going to forgive me because as I have said, I am trying to focus this thing right down. We have been having something in the evening meetings that I consider to be the very essence of the Lord's interests. It is the same thing that I am talking about only in other language: "the overcomer," the essence of the Divine thought and intention in Zion. Our brother has been laid on his back for many weeks, and we should not have got that if he had not been; and some of us know that the Lord sometimes sees that it is far more economical to take us out of "the work" than to keep us in it, to lay us aside from all our busyness for Him to get the essence of things. He is after the essential, the intrinsic. Men are after the big. Pragmatism governs so much of Christian work. I venture you do not know what I mean by that word, "pragmatism." It means if a thing is successful, then it is right. That is shallow thinking. The devil has got a

lot of success, is he right?! Many things are apparently very successful, growing, increasing, and everybody says, "My, that is the thing." Is it? That is pragmatism. If a thing is successful and popular and everybody is flocking to it, it must be right.

All right, then. What of Jesus of Nazareth? How they flocked, they followed. He told why. Why? He said, "...because you did eat of the loaves and fishes, because you saw the signs and wonders, and a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after signs," and they flock for that. But, but--this is short-lived. Short-lived. Presently they are all forsaking. They are being sifted out. He is being left alone. All the marks of success are being withdrawn from this world's standpoint, and, at last, is this a successful movement with Him hanging on the Cross? Is that pragmatic? Well, we know today!--No, no, a thing is not necessarily right because people are flocking here or there, crowding, rushing; not because a thing seems to be gaining much ground and becoming big, not necessarily. Wait for that. Wait through the tribulation and then you will get "great multitudes, which no man can number." But that is not pragmatic in this earthly sense.

You see what I mean! There is the discipline, the discipline of being sifted down from the husks to the kernel, from the chaff to the wheat. And "wheat corn is bruised," says the Prophet Isaiah. Wheat corn is bruised, it is bruised. He is after the true genuine bread, and the constitution of that is something that has been ground to powder, has been bruised. Does this explain something to you, your own history?--It is very true, it is the Word, you see.

Therefore there is this section in Hebrews about sonship, "the chastening of the Lord," chastening of the Lord, and chastening for every one of us may mean something different. What would be chastening to you would not be to me, but what would be chastening to me would not be to you. You can get away with lots of things, but the Lord knows where to find you out, where you cannot get away. I might be able to force myself through something on sheer natural soul force. I do not know whether that is true now, but it might be. Perhaps in the past it has been true, but the Lord knows just how to chasten me, and He knows the thing that is chastening for me and, perhaps, for no one else. Oh, do not just bring that word "chastening" into a narrow definition. It is the thing that "gets" us individually, finds us out. It is the thing, which to me, is real discipline.

There are some nice, very patient, forbearing, longsuffering temperaments, and, you know, they can be spoken to and treated ill and they do not ruffle a bit, they just go on. But with someone else, the Lord brings a rather awkward person into their home and, my word, that person is disciplined. See what I mean? Chastening, discipline, is what it means to us individually. But whatever that is, and you may say, "Well, why does the Lord do this with me? Look, He does not do that with all these other people. They are getting away with it"-- "until I went into the sanctuary of God" and saw things from His standpoint. "The Lord is dealing with me and letting off all these other people in that way, but He has got me." Do I revolt and say, "It is not fair. The Lord is not fair, He does not do this with other people." Oh, no, this attitude will not do. He is focusing upon this end, this sonship matter, for adoption for eternal responsibility. Get hold of that, and we will go on.

TRUE SONSHIP: WITHIN A SENSE OF DESTINY--"THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE."

With Zion again in the background of our thought, let us pick out one more thing about Zion. I expect you well know that in the blood and constitution of a true Israelite, a true Hebrew, a true Jew, in the very constitution and blood, there is a consciousness or sense of destiny. Their thought is: "We are the chosen

people, and we are chosen for God's purpose and intention. It is not something that we have taken on as an ideology, as a philosophy, of our existence, it is in our blood." They cannot get away from it. It is themselves. It is like that. A true Jew, citizen, and child of Zion has this inwrought sense and consciousness of destiny. It is the reason, the ground, of why they have been able to suffer so much, why they could go through their persecutions and survive, why they could endure so much. It is not because they make up their minds, not just the strength of their will, it is something born in them, part of their very being, it is elemental to them that they are a people of destiny. They hold on to it, they cling to it, they are still at the wailing wall. It was born out of this; however, that belongs to the "not."

Here we are with the "but,"--"we have come to Zion." And we have come to Zion in this sense: there is by right, if it is a true citizenship in heaven, "this one was born there"; if it is a true child of God, there is something about such a true child of God that although they may not define it, they may not know even the Scriptures about it, within them they have this sense of destiny that--there is some purpose governing our salvation, there is some meaning beyond our present comprehension for which we have been called, there is something in us in our very constitution that says, "called according to His purpose." A sense of destiny, this is essential to Zion. This is what the New Testament is all about, and this is what this Letter to the Hebrews is all about. This is true sonship.

Now, we do not like these ideas, we do not like this language, but with the Jews, the true Jews, there was this element in them of "selectiveness." You do not like that language, do you? Selective, something separate, something different, something other, something not general but particular. The inwrought consciousness of being called and chosen for something, which we call destiny. And only that will keep us going through the discipline, only that will keep us going through the suffering, the adversity, the perplexity.

Have you not been as I have, more than once and more than twice, at the point where you would have despaired. Been left to yourself, you would have given up, and gone out, and taken another way, and even washed your hands of Christianity. Have you never been pressed? Well, if you have not, all right, thank the Lord; but there is such pressure. Even Paul, with all his wonderful experience and knowledge of the Lord, came to a point where he said: "I was pressed out of measure, ...I despaired of life." Paul? You despaired?! And you are always telling people not to despair. You were writing about the God of hope, and you tell me you despaired? And you told people to be in the ascendant, on top, and you say: "I was pressed beyond my measure." Yes, all right, perhaps you do not know all that, perhaps you know a little of it, but the children of Zion are kept by something. They are held by something. It is this indefinable something which we call "destiny." There is a hold on us that will not let us go. There is a grip upon us that even when we say we are going, we cannot go. Even when we come to the depths of despondency, we do not go out after all. We do not. We decided to, but we do not. No, it is not something to analyze and put into a system of teaching, doctrine, but it is some deep reality that is holding us. We are children of destiny, "the called according to His Purpose." Oh, if you want a little Bible study, I would like you to go through and underline that word "according, according as, according to." A marvelous word that is with Paul. It is all according to something. Zion was elect, chosen, separated, made distinct, because of destiny--its great purpose: and there was that in its very constitution, in the very blood, in the very blood, a sense that "There is something beyond, unto which we have been called."

Now I am coming back to the prophets. The prophets were supremely concerned with Zion, just because of Zion's destiny. Oh, how burdened they were about Zion, and, of course, in their case, their burden and their concern for Zion was the recovery of Zion. Zion had lost out. Zion had ceased to be what it was called

to be, what God intended. It had lost out, and so the prophets are all concerned with the recovery of Zion and Zion's testimony. That is prophetic ministry.

Oh, prophetic ministry. What do you mean?--foretelling? foretelling events? All right, if you like to have that, you can. But the real essence of prophetic ministry is the recovery of the fulness of Jesus Christ which has been lost. It is a recovery and a reinstating of the testimony of Jesus in the Church. That is true prophetic ministry, and do not bring prophetic ministry down to this and that and something else. The gift of prophecy. What is the gift of prophecy? Only foretelling? It may be that, or it may never be that at all and still be the gift of prophecy. The gift, the function, the anointing, of prophecy is the recovery of the full testimony of Jesus, the recovery ministry that does not have that as its objective, clear and strong and definite, is not prophetic ministry. The prophets were thus burdened. Read Isaiah 43 again in the light of that.

Test Everything By Its Eternal, Spiritual Value

Well, now, we come near the end of this morning. Again then, Zion is the embodiment of the spiritual values of Jesus Christ. Underline that word "spiritual values." Test everything, test everything by the spiritual values. Test everything not from the standpoint of pragmatism at all but from the standpoint of its spiritual, which means, its eternal value. The ministry of anyone, my own or anyone else's, is not going to be judged by the number of conventions or meetings at which we speak and the amount of Bible teaching that we give--it is never going to be judged by that. Understand that. You may have your diaries full of engagements, preaching engagements; you may be on the way of a very, very busy Bible teacher; you may be very busy, and you may have no time for anything else; and yet, with all the sum total, it is not going to be judged, dear friends, by how much you have done in that way. It is going to be judged by its eternal, spiritual value; what the essential spiritual value is when this life is gone, when I am gone, when you are gone, when all the teachers are gone, and we arrive in heaven and discover what was taken up then in our lifetime and is there. "The things which are seen are temporal," in the preachers and the teachers and the conferences. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." And that is the standpoint of Zion, the essential spiritual value of everything.

Are you, dear preachers, teachers, really burdened in heart that every bit of your ministry shall have a spiritual, eternal value? Not the address, not the address! No, it is not whether my address is successful, accepted, or not. It is what is the spiritual, lasting value from eternity's and heaven's standpoint of anything. Surely our ambition ought to be that when it is all over here, when it is all over, when there are no more conferences down here, no more ministries and addresses down here, and we all gather above, our ambition is to find there people who say: "Look here, I would not be here but for what the Lord did in me through your ministry." That is it, is it not? Oh, focus upon that, for Zion is, let me repeat, the embodiment of spiritual values. Not a place, not a sect, not anything temporal. That is not Zion. Now it is the concentrated and intrinsic values of Jesus Christ. That is Zion.

God's Jealousy For Zion

Upon what note shall I finish this morning? Well, with all that in view, of course, the right note would be God's jealousy for Zion. Prophets shared the jealousy of God for Zion. The Lord said: "I am jealous for Zion, with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem." Where is God's heart set? Not on any temporal expression of the old Zion. That is the "not." But God's jealousy, God's concern, God's wrath, relates to the true, intrinsic, spiritual

values of His Son Jesus Christ. He is focused upon that. He will look after those spiritual values. He will look after the spiritual values. That ought to comfort us in the ministry, especially. See, people may repudiate, may discredit, and may go away and leave us. All right, that discipline is pretty hard. But wait awhile, perhaps in their own lifetime, they will come back or they will confess: "Look here, I got something from you which has been my real salvation. I did not recognize it at the time, but I know now that what you were saying, what you were doing, was the thing which has become my deliverance, my salvation, in the time of trouble."

Well, it is like that. God will look after the spiritual values if you are concerned more with spiritual values than building up something big down here. That is where His jealousy is. Sooner or later His wrath will be shown from Zion. In that sense, the enemies will have to bow, they will have to surrender. As in the eternity, "every knee shall bow, and tongue confess." All the enemies of Christ are going to be very much humbled. God is going to roar out of Zion. Well, let us be quite sure that it is Zion in this sense: "Ye are come to that, to Zion." Let us leave it there for now. The Lord interpret. We pray:

We do pray that, Lord, this very hour may be used by Thee to produce those essential eternal values. Not just be an hour with ministry, more or less appreciated, but that there may be something wrought, something planted, something put inside us constitutionally, that shall appear in heaven and in glory as the Divine fiat, the Word, the Word of God, which did something. So help us. Seal this time then, in that way; forgiving all mistakes and errors and faults in the human, and take charge of Thine Own Interests, for Thy Name's Sake, Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/zion-the-embodiment-of-the-spiritual-values-of-jesus-christ/>

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