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## Christ in Heaven and Christ Within (1934)

*by T. Austin-Sparks*

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### **The Objective and the Subjective**

#### **The Need For Balance**

Eph. 1:20; Col. 1:27; Rom. 6:1-6; Rom. 8:1-2, 33-34.

We feel the importance of saying a further word with regard to Christ in heaven and Christ within the believer. That is, what is objective and what is subjective. It is tremendously important that we should keep a proper balance of truth. A very great deal of our trouble is because of there being an unbalanced emphasis upon some aspect of truth. It is good to know the truth, and it is good to rejoice in it, but it is just possible that even truth should get us into trouble. There are many perils lying in the direction of truth, even spiritual truth; and there are not a few of the Lord's people who have fallen into those perils. It is not that they suffer from want of light, but they are suffering very much because they have not got their light properly adjusted and balanced. Thus it becomes very necessary for us to get things in their right perspective and in their right proportion. Preponderance on any one side will always lead to injury, and very often it will lead to disaster spiritually. The history of many instrumentalities which have been raised up and used by the Lord is eventually the sad story of a loss of power and effectiveness, because of the going off on to an unbalanced emphasis, of putting some side of truth in a place out of proportion to that which corresponds to it.

#### **Corresponding Truths**

It is not just a matter of being all-round, that is, of having everything and being in everything, but in the constitution of a body we find that one law is balanced by another. All the laws, of course, are

necessary, and it is important to give due place to every function in our bodies, but there run parallel laws and functions. One balances the other. There is that which corresponds to something else. These two things are, as it were, twins, they just run together, and to over-emphasise or over-develop one means to throw the whole order out, and to bring about quite serious limitation and weakness, and to make things far less effective than they should be.

So it is in spiritual matters. There are always corresponding truths. There is one thing, but there is something which goes with it, and which keeps it in its right measure, and causes it to fulfil its purpose and to serve its end most effectively. There is this order in the Divine creation, that one thing is necessary to another to make that other fulfil its purpose to the full. That is where balance has to be observed and maintained.

### **The Adversary Using God's Work Against Him**

Then we must remember that the enemy, the adversary, is always wanting to use God's own work and God's own truth against God Himself. That is the thing which is made very clear in the Scriptures, and a thing which we may observe in experience and in spiritual history, that the adversary is always seeking to take hold of God's work and God's truth and use that against God. This is a more successful line of action than perhaps any other, because the result is that he immediately prejudices God's own work and God's own truth. He closes the door to the acceptance of what is of God simply by using it against God, and one of his most successful methods is that of securing an over-emphasis or an unbalanced apprehension of Divine truth. You will see what I mean as we go on.

### **A Peril With Every Blessing**

So that with every Divine blessing there is a peril. There are perils related to every Divine blessing. Wherever there is something which is really good from the Lord, that has linked with it its own peculiar peril.

Now these are merely general observations, as leading up to this brief meditation along the specific line of what is objective and what is subjective as to the work of the Lord Jesus for and in the believer. We will look at both of these separately very briefly, seeing what the blessing is and seeing what the perils are.

### **The Objective Side**

We take the objective side first, the Lord Jesus as presented to us as in heaven. We know that He is there, and we know that a very great deal is said in the Word about His being there; but why is He there? In the first place: How did He get there? Now you will notice if you look into the Word that whenever the heavenly side of the ascension of the Lord Jesus is presented, that is, whenever the matter is looked at from above, it does not speak about His going up or His ascension, but it speaks about His being received up. In the first chapter of the book of the Acts you have two angels appearing when the Lord Jesus was taken up from amongst them, and they (the disciples) were looking up into heaven, and these two angels said to them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, which was *received up*..." The Authorised Version is "taken up". That is an angelic, or a heavenly, standpoint, and the word "received" represents something more than the fact that He just ascended to heaven. It carries with it this fact, that it would be impossible for the Lord Jesus to be received in heaven if He had not perfectly accomplished the work which He came from heaven to do. In effect, heaven would have been closed to Him; heaven would have had to say to

Him, 'But You have not done the work; there can be no reception until You have'. But it was because He had perfected the work which He came to do, and there was nothing more to be added to it, that heaven received Him, and it was a great reception!

The Psalm gives us some idea of what that reception was: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory will come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." You see, it is the work that He has done by His Cross, in overthrowing all His and our enemies, meeting all the demand of human need in the matter of salvation, perfecting our salvation. And so He is *received up*, and He is at the right hand of God; and the right hand is always in Scripture the place of honour. Remember that! Strength and honour is what is represented by the right hand. And He is at the right hand of God, the place of power and the place of honour, because the work which He came to do was finished. That is, your salvation and my salvation have been perfected by and in the Lord Jesus. There is nothing whatever for Him to add to it. That is the most elementary thing to say, and yet it is so foundational. So many of the Lord's people have not come to enter into the joyful appreciation of that, that the Lord Jesus really has added the last stroke and the last touch to our salvation. That when heaven received Him, heaven set its seal to the perfected work of His Cross, and He is there in possession - not of a salvation which has yet to be accomplished - but in possession of a salvation which is final, full, complete, utter.

### **Perfect Salvation When We Believe**

Our salvation rests upon our that, not upon anything subsequent to that. It rests upon our faith-acceptance of that. In the day in which we believe in the Lord Jesus on the ground of the perfection of the work of His Cross, we receive perfection of salvation, and in the day that we believe we receive all that salvation which is in Christ, we enter into all that salvation to its very last degree. We shall never - though we lived for centuries on this earth - we shall never *in Christ* be one little bit more perfect than we are in Him in the very moment that we believe. All that is made good to us in the day that we believe. There are no questions, no hazards, no risks, the thing is settled, it is ours; full and complete *in Christ*. The Blood of the Lord Jesus has dealt with the whole sin question, root and branch, once and for all, for us. The question of condemnation has been for ever settled. You cannot have anything more utter than this - NO condemnation! "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." It does not say: 'There is no condemnation to those who have faithfully been going on with the Lord for years'. It says: "IN CHRIST." And when are you in Christ? You are in Christ the day that you believe in relation to His work on the Cross for your salvation, and in that day, or in that very moment, when you so believe you enter into the place of NO CONDEMNATION, and there is nothing left to be said about condemnation than that.

The tremendously important thing is for us to have that settled in our own hearts. We are saved, we are forgiven, we are delivered from condemnation. *In Christ* we ARE perfect. He is our perfection, and that perfection of His is ours through faith. The people who have the purest, clearest, fullest heart-grasp of that are the happiest people, are the people who know joy. The people who have not grasped that are disturbed people, they have not the fullness of joy, they are always afraid, anxious, worrying about their salvation, doubting; and the enemy plays many tricks with people who have not got that settled once and for all.

Now that is the blessed truth of what is objective for the believer as in Christ in salvation. I am so glad that He is in heaven with this matter, and that He is "far above all" holding this matter. If He were here in this world I might think that anything could happen, but He is not, and He is not in any realm where anything can happen, He is beyond all happenings in the matter of salvation. That

salvation of ours in its perfection has been put beyond the reach of anything that can throw a doubt upon it, or raise a question as to it, beyond the touch of anything that can bring it into uncertainty.

### **The Perils Of The Objective Apprehension**

But there are perils associated even with that blessed truth, because it is only one side of the truth. It is the first side; it is the thing which *must* come first, but it is only one side, and therefore, being one side, it is just possible to make salvation one-sided by putting all the emphasis upon that and not giving due place to the corresponding side.

#### *1. The Peril Of Shallowness*

What are some of the perils? Well, we begin with the simplest form of peril, and that is the peril of superficiality, of shallowness. It may be a matter of very great joy and rejoicing and satisfaction, but contentment in that realm and with that side alone may just prevent that deep work which is necessary, which comes by the corresponding side of the truth of Christ's work, the subjective. Thus it is found to be that many people, who are rejoicing to the full in the finality of their salvation in Christ, are living very much upon the surface, and not learning a very great deal about the deeper realities of Christ, the fuller meaning of Christ, and coming to a place of spiritual growth. That is the first peril, and perhaps the simplest form of the peril.

#### *2. The Peril Of Delayed Maturity*

Then there is this peril which is found to exist in that realm, that is, making the Christian life static, settled, where it has just reached that point of accepting all that by faith and staying there, and not going on beyond that in spiritual experience. Everything now is there, objective, outside. There is great joy, great assurance, but the Christian life has stopped with that, it has become settled, it has settled down with that. That is a very real peril, and you find it marking a great many of the Lord's people. Their attitude is, "Well, I am saved, nothing has to be added, can be added, to my salvation; I need have no more doubt for my salvation, it is all perfected, I am accepted in Christ, and I am perfect in Him; what more need I? I just rest upon that and enjoy that day by day." Well, that is very good, but you see it can just bring a check, so that you live on one side of things, and the whole of the Christian life just stops there.

#### *3. The Peril Of Contradiction*

There are other perils. We find that with many who have very truly and blessedly apprehended the greatness of the salvation which Christ has accomplished as theirs, because they know that the question of salvation is eternally settled, and there is no room whatever for any doubts or fears, and that they are saved and nothing can ever alter that, and their salvation does not rest for a moment upon anything that they do, but it rests upon what He has done, it does not rest upon what they are, it rests upon what He is - and that is all true - but because they take that position, very often you find that life becomes hard. They are perfectly sure, they have no doubts whatever, therefore very often the question of sympathy does not arise, and they become hard, they become cold, and they become legal. Sometimes they become cruel, and too often inconsistencies arise in the life; that is, "I am saved, it does not matter what I do, I shall never be lost." They would not say that, the last thing that ever they would think of would be that; and yet very often it works out that way, that their very certainty of salvation opens the door for inconsistencies and contradictions in their lives which never reach their conscience. Simply because they say they have no more conscience of sin, that the conscience has been once purged, and so one should never be troubled with conscience again;

salvation is absolute, nothing can touch salvation. You see, subtly, imperceptibly, without their reasoning or thinking, that does creep in and you find that to be a result and effect with some, so that if you were to bring home to them certain things in their lives which you saw were glaring inconsistencies, they would hardly believe it, they would possibly repudiate it, or they would simply say, "Well, nothing alters the fact of my salvation." Life is thus thrown into an unbalanced state, and the peril comes right in with the very fact of the fulness and finality of salvation.

#### *4. The Peril Of Truth Taking The Place Of Life*

There is another peril; it is of making progress rather a matter of truth than of life. Progress, of course, is recognised as necessary. No true believer would sit down and say, "Well, now there is no more progress to be made." But for many who have so strongly taken up the position upon the objective work of the Lord Jesus in its perfection, the matter of progress is not a matter of life, it is rather a matter of truth; that is, to know more rather than becoming more. Thus you find that a very great many who are in that position have advanced tremendously in their knowledge of truth, but somehow or other their own spiritual growth in Christlikeness has not kept pace by any means or in any proper proportion to their progress in the knowledge of things about Christ, and that is a danger which comes in with this very thing of which we are speaking.

#### *5. The Peril Of Missing The Prize*

Then this further peril. The peril of giving less importance to the prize than should be given to it. Salvation is not the prize. Salvation never was a prize. You can never win salvation, you can never earn salvation. Salvation is a free gift. But to settle down with salvation in its fulness and its finality means for a great many a failure to recognise that there is a prize. That of which the apostle Paul spoke when he said: "I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the upward calling". There is something more than salvation, something related to the Lord's full purpose in glory, something related to the ultimate full manifestation of the Lord in His people; and that is not just that they are saved people, but that they have *attained* (and Paul uses that word) unto something. Paul was never in fear of losing his salvation. When he said: "Lest having preached to others, I myself should be cast away", he was not thinking of losing his salvation, but he was aware that there was something that he could miss; he could fall short of something, that which he called "the prize"; and he related with its attainment a growth in his spiritual life: "Neither am I already *perfect*." To settle down with this: "Well, my salvation is perfect, complete, final in Christ, nothing can be added to it, I rejoice in that" - may be that we give less importance to the prize than we ought to give.

So you see there are perils which come in with - perhaps the greatest of - the blessings.

### **The Subjective Side**

That does not cover all the ground, but it must be enough on that side for the moment. We turn just for a moment to the other side - Christ in us, or the subjective work of Christ. What is the subjective work of Christ? What does Christ in us mean? We know from the Word that it means conformity to the image of Christ. Paul uses the phrase: "Till Christ be fully formed in you". In salvation we have everything as to our own perfection in Him. We have that *potentially* within us when we receive Him. All that is in Christ as to His present character - not only His position but His character, mark you. It is not *where* He is, it is *what* He is. It is not now what He possesses, it is what He *is*. He possesses our salvation, but we know what He is, and "when we see Him we shall be like Him". So that all that He has given to us potentially when we believed is all there to be developed; and, as Paul says: Christ is to be fully formed in us, and we are to be conformed to the image of God's Son. That is a very

wonderful thing. It is: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ in us means that eventually we shall be like Him to the full. But this is not the *fact* of our being saved, this is the *object* of our being saved. This is not salvation in its fundamental and initial meaning; this is salvation in its outworking to its full meaning, the image of Christ, God's Son.

### **Identification With Christ**

How do we accept that? We accept that by recognising the other side of Calvary's work. The one side is our accepting of what Christ has done for us, apart from us in His own Person. We accept this other side of conformity to His image by accepting that Christ not only did that *for* us but *as* us, that is, representatively. We come to Romans 6 and recognise that when Christ died we died, when Christ was buried we were buried, when Christ was raised we were raised. That is His representative work. Now we accept that all at the beginning; but, mark you, that does not become operative in any full measure until the objective side has been settled. *There has got to be a settlement, definitely, positively, finally, that our salvation in Christ is perfect and complete, before there can be any full measure of the out-working of Christ in our hearts. The Lord must have that basis upon which to work.*

You see this is where the danger comes in with a great blessing. Oh! It is a great revelation, a wonderful unveiling, that God has chosen to make us like Christ, not only to save us with a perfect salvation, so that the question of sin and condemnation is done with, answered finally, but that God has chosen to conform us to the image of His Son. What a revelation, what a blessing! Yes, but God cannot do that second thing until the first thing is settled, because it is in that realm that there are unspeakable perils. What are the perils? The perils are these.

### **The Perils Of The Subjective Apprehension**

If the Lord were to get to work to empty you and to empty me of ourselves in order to make room for the Lord Jesus; to show us ourselves in order to show us the Lord Jesus; to make us to know what we are in ourselves in order to make us know what Christ is in us; make us know our weakness in order to make Christ's strength perfect in it; to make us to know our foolishness in order to make Christ as our wisdom, perfect in us; if He were to start to do that and the question of our salvation was not settled, the devil would jump in at once and use God's very work against us. And when the Lord is dealing with us to make room for His Son, the devil will begin to say: "You are under condemnation, God is against you, these very dealings of God with you are proofs that your salvation is not certain." And so it is with a great many in whom the Lord begins to work out things. They allow the enemy to jump in and take hold of the very work of God and turn it against God, by bringing up doubts in their hearts as to their salvation.

Do you see that? So often that is done, and the perils are there, running right alongside of the greatest blessing all the time. It is thus that the enemy tries to use God's truth against God.

Now the subjective side of God's work demands for its effective outworking that we are settled once and for all as to our salvation; that comes first! If you have the one side; the objective only, and all your emphasis is upon that, you may be shallow and you may not grow spiritually. If you have all the subjective, you become introspective and you begin to doubt your salvation, to get questions; your eyes are always turned in upon yourself, and the result is that you begin to look for something in yourself that could commend itself to God, trying to find some good, something pleasing to the Lord, and that is a denial of the perfect work of salvation accomplished by the Lord Jesus.

You see, it is an undermining and undercutting of the whole of the work of Calvary. These two things must go together. The one must have its place; fully and finally *in Christ* we are as perfect in the hour when we believe as ever we shall be. On the other hand, all that is in Christ is going to be made, not *theoretically* true, but *actually* true in us by the Holy Spirit. But the second demands the first, and we must keep the balance. We must rejoice always in the fact that our names are written in heaven, rejoice always in the fact that we are saved with a perfect salvation, but, on the other hand, we must remember that there is something that the Lord wants to do to - not make salvation true, but to make the image of Christ an inward thing. That is the outworking of salvation.

So that this balance is necessary, and we must give equal emphasis. If we over-emphasise the subjective we take something from the glory of Christ. If we over-emphasise the objective we take something away from God's purpose. It is a matter of *the work of God in Christ*, and *the purpose of God in Christ*; and these two things have got to have their place.

May the Lord just give us understanding, so that we come into a place of rest and are delivered from the perils which lurk in the vicinity of every Divine blessing.