

Articles and Sermons :: Ravenhill presents Sparks**Ravenhill presents Sparks - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/9/25 4:39**

Ravenhill presenting Theodore Austin-Sparks

Ask any minister "Where's a good place to eat around here?" and he will quickly list off a plethora of options—from his favorite steak house or Chinese buffet to the best Italian or Mexican restaurant in town.

My late father, Leonard Ravenhill, was not a connoisseur of fine cuisine. He did however have a keen nose for finding the "finest of the wheat" from which to satisfy his spiritual hunger for solid revelation and insight into God's word. When I was a young man on the mission field, my father would send me boxes of books that included a variety of writings from T. Austin Sparks. These are now a cherished part of my own personal library.

After 35 years of ministry, I too can recommend to the next generation, that these writings are a "must" if they are going to effectively "serve the purpose of God in their generation."

Several years ago, my wife and I gazed in awe at one of the greatest art works in history, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. This incredible fresco by Michelangelo had just been painstakingly restored by a process that had taken many years. Prior to this restoration, art historians had declared Michelangelo to be one of the greatest sculptors of all time, but said that he was an artist who "painted with a dark palette." Following its completion in 1509, this incredible masterpiece had suffered the devastating effects of carbon soot that had ascended from the numerous candles and lamps used to light this magnificent chapel. The November 1991 issue of Life magazine carried this headline on its cover: "First pictures of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel as it hasn't been seen in five hundred years - A CLEAR VIEW OF HEAVEN." The restoration, finally completed, revealed for the first time in centuries the blaze of brilliant and vivid colors. Suddenly, this once drab fresco now confounded and embarrassed the experts who had concocted their own theories of its dark look.

Likewise, the writings of T. Austin Sparks strip away the centuries of misunderstanding that have caused us to accept the Church in her present condition. In these spiritual masterpieces, the writer seeks to recover God's original intention for His Church. This, says Sparks, is the true essence of prophetic ministry. What we have in his writings is an insightful look at the true nature of the prophetic— that of "recovering the Lord's testimony in fulness."

How I long for this day of restoration, when once again God reveals His workmanship in all her radiant glory, as the world watches in embarrassment and awe. I pray that the eyes of your understanding will be opened afresh and you will never again be satisfied to make the excuse that God painted "with a dark palette." Reserve for yourself a quiet corner in the "restaurant of the Spirit" and feast at this succulent table of wisdom and revelation. Allow the strength of this meat to sustain, strengthen, and enliven you as you seek to co-labor with Christ in "recovering His testimony in fulness." David Ravenhill

BIOGRAPHY

T. Austin Sparks, 1888-1971

THEODORE AUSTIN SPARKS was a native of south London, educated there and in Scotland. His father moved in the musical world and had little time for God, but from his mother's side he inherited a long tradition of evangelical Christian faith handed down among Baptists of a Suffolk farming community. He himself however remained unmoved by the Spirit of God until one night, at the age of 17, he was suddenly arrested by the earnest preaching of the gospel in the cold open air of a Glasgow street. That night he went back to his room and gave his life to the Lord. It was a committal from which he never withdrew.

Started in business in Glasgow he engaged also in children's missions and slum work, and gathered a group of friends for Bible study in his home. Soon also he felt the call of God to proclaim the good news of redemption in several small mission halls, there and in and around London. Sensing that he might have a gift from God in this field, but lacking the means to secure a formal training for the ministry, he did the next best thing; he began to read widely, and used his free time

to go and hear some of the last of the great turn-of-the-century preachers and Bible expositors. Notable among these were Dr. G. Campbell Morgan of Westminster Chapel, London, and F.B. Meyer, who was to become a firm friend and counsellor.

His devotion to God had begun to be recognised and at the age of 25 he was unanimously called to serve a congregational church in Stoke Newington, north of the Thames. He accepted the pastorate at a time when the church was at a low ebb, and was to leave them nine years later, "well-instructed and firmly founded on the ever-enduring truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ." While there, in 1915, he married Florence Rowland, daughter of godly parents, who from then was to prove his life-long support and spiritual companion.

From Stoke Newington he moved on in 1921 to the charge of Honor Oak Baptist Church in an undistinguished south-east London suburb. It was while here that he began to be more widely known as a gifted and original minister of the Word. His health was never good, but backed by a faithful praying group in his own church he began to travel more widely in Britain.

In 1925 he paid a first visit to the United States as speaker at a Victorious Life Conference in Keswick Grove, New Jersey. He had begun to see, perhaps more clearly than many of his contemporaries, that the cross of Christ is central, not only to world history but also to human experience. To "lose his life" is the disciple's safe but costly way of entry to a service that is marked by eternal gain, and the discovery of this fact explains and gives meaning to so much in life that the Christian otherwise finds difficult. One day in his study, while waiting on God for the needs of His flock, the truth that "it is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me" dawned freshly upon him with compelling power. Afterwards he often spoke of the "open heaven" beneath which, from that day on, he ministered.

The Baptist congregation grew, but, with his emphasis on the Christian's walk of faith, so too did dissatisfaction with what his deacons began to see as materialist methods of fund-raising favoured at that time by the British Baptist Union who held the church property. Thus it came about that in 1926 they, together with almost the whole congregation, supported a move to a vacant rented property – a school hall and residence – in the same general locality of Honor Oak. His lately redesigned church magazine *A Witness* and a *Testimony* continued from the new address to be issued bi-monthly, free of subscription, with a modest but increasingly worldwide circulation through until his death in 1971.

The New Christian Fellowship Centre, with its thriving local church and regular week-end conferences and its occasional longer training sessions for young men, became a place of pilgrimage for many. In 1931 this was supplemented by a Scottish summer Conference Centre on the Firth of Clyde at the well-situated house of Heathfield, Kilcreggan. Meanwhile others of like vision had joined him in the ministry. He had dropped the title "The Reverend," and they shared an ideal of ministers and elders working "together in unity"; though always his unquestioned gift of preaching set him a little apart. A small press was started for publication of the magazine and of collections of his largely unedited spoken messages.

Down the years there were developments in emphasis in the ministry of the Word, "as," in his words, "there should ever be where there is life and growth, provided that the essential foundation remains true and unchanging." So the gospel was faithfully preached, but with it there was a strong emphasis for believers on the life in the Spirit, the eternal purpose of God in His Son, the Christian's spiritual warfare, and the heavenly nature, vocation and destiny of the Church, the Body of Christ.

This last emphasis on a Church-based witness worldwide meant effectually that the missionary vision of the local church at Honor Oak found strong encouragement from, and sympathy with, the rising indigenous movements of the Spirit of God overseas that, for a while during the thirties and forties, seemed a problem to leaders of the old-established missionary societies.

As a consequence church prayer meetings, always a mainspring of the local testimony at Honor Oak, now ranged in vision over a wide area of the work of God in the earth. Missionaries went forth to work in fellowship alongside such movements, and Mr. Austin-Sparks himself was privileged to travel widely in ministry, not only in Europe and North America but also further afield in India and the Far East. Such opportunities for fellowship with those in whom the Spirit of God was doing His own original work were to afford him lifelong joy.

From his early years he had believed in the power and significance of the spoken Word of God, and that all developments of its exposition and application should be vitally related to the actual and growing needs of the spiritual life of representative bodies of God's people. Through His Word God would meet His own, but His way of giving to His servants was not merely through bookish, cloistered or studied matter. Rather it was made necessary, drawn out and given meaning by the call and answer of living conditions. Its value – if it was to be anything more than words – lay in its being able to touch the Lord's people at the point of experience and need which had been the occasion of its original calling forth.

Such was the special calling of T. Austin-Sparks, a man ploughing a furrow perhaps a little apart from his contemporaries, but always true to Christ Jesus his Saviour and Lord, and committed to a vision of spiritually fruitful harvests throughout the whole field that is God's world.

(As submitted by David Ravenhill, from the library of his late father, Leonard Ravenhill)

Re: Ravenhill presents Sparks - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/10/1 3:17

David Wilkerson's introduction to
The School of Christ
By T. Austin-Sparks

It was during a time of intense spiritual hunger that the ministry and writings of Austin Sparks came to my attention. My dear friend Leonard Ravenhill asked me to read one of his most prized books. It was an out-of-print copy of SCHOOL OF CHRIST.

I was deeply moved by its liberating, refreshing, and spiritual message. I was so blessed I wanted to share it with all my minister friends. After discovering the book was no longer being published, I located Mrs. Austin Sparks, in London, England. This dear 91-year-old saint of God gave me her permission and blessing to publish it once again.

I believe the message and spirit of this book will profoundly affect any God-hungry servant of the Lord. Though Austin Sparks is now with the heavenly Father, his dynamic messages are still changing the hearts of those who seek the deeper truths of the Spirit.

I agree with Brother Sparks that no man is of any use to God, in eternal values, if he has no settled assurance that he is accepted in the Beloved. Also, the true man of God must fully accept the fundamental principle that **OF HIMSELF HE CAN DO NOTHING, AND ALL THINGS ARE OF AND OUT OF GOD.**

This is a book you will want to read many times. It was during my third reading that its truth fully dawned on me. It has affected my preaching, my outlook on life, and intensified my hunger for the glorious liberty of the Cross. We believe this book is destined by God to bless and edify numerous spiritually hungry ministers and laymen.

David Wilkerson

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/10/1 8:16

Quote:
-----After 35 years of ministry, I too can recommend to the next generation, that these writings are a "must" if they are going to effectively "serve the purpose of God in their generation."

Thank you brother Lars for sharing these pieces! T. Austin Sparks must be read by any serious minded Christian who is really seeking to sense how God is working and bring the church out of declension and restoring her back to true apostolic ministry. Sparks writings are an epoch in church history what a wonderful blessing that the man is very little known but the message is prominent.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/10/1 8:49

This may not be news to some, but there is an online copy here:

(http://www.austin-sparks.net/english/books/the_school_of_christ.html) http://www.austin-sparks.net/english/books/the_school_of_christ.html

Thanks Lars, seem to recall a mention of this awhile back...Can't think of a better school to be enrolled in.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/10/2 11:20

On further investigation...

This has come up a number of times here, in various forms...

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id2843&forum31&post_id&refreshGo) THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST

by T. Austin-Sparks

Question.

From the preface on the T.A. Sparks site it states the following:

"Firstly, try to remember all through that the spoken form is retained. The messages were given in conference, and the reader must try to get into the spirit and mind of listening, and not only reading."

Did some research but is anyone aware of which messages this was derived from, or if they are even available?

My guess is that they may be listed under different titles perhaps?

Would love to be able to pull these together somehow in audio format, this is a remarkable teaching.

Re: - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/10/2 11:39

The School of Christ does not seem to be listed as audio files anywhere.

There is much research to be done if one wants to map Mr. Sparks appearances throughout the globe through the many years of conference speaking.

A valuable work if anyone wants to take on even a small part.

Lars W.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/10/2 11:52

Thanks Lars,

Have begun to attempt to try and see if I could unravel this. Being that the scriptures are listed in the written version, hoping to try and sync them up with the audio extant and see what develops.

Regardless, this is highly recommended reading and am taking the advice of digesting it in small portions, why I passed on it before is beyond me...

Re: - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/10/2 12:05

Dear Mike,

It is as if the Lord leads a ready heart into pondering in what He considers to be appropriate time.

I found a copy of The School some ten or fifteen years ago – I was not able to read it...

Two years, or so, later a second reading made me curious.

Nowadays I cannot but read a small part every day in a Sparks piece – there are quite a few items.

It is quite clear to us that many pass by what Mr. Sparks has to offer simply because it takes a mind and a heart prepared and opened by the Lord to follow what is given in those texts – it is a very perplexing and humbling experience to wor

k with his legacy.
Lars

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/10/2 19:54

Quote:
-----It is quite clear to us that many pass by what Mr. Sparks has to offer simply because it takes a mind and a heart prepared and open
ed by the Lord to follow what is given in those texts Å– it is a very perplexing and humbling experience to work with his legacy.

Yes perhaps the reason why many stumble over this site and the materials is that they don't dig and search through the
m to find truth. Christ has always given the picture of continuance and struggle to enter into the kingdom of God and the
truths layed up therein. Mr Sparks materials will be of the same value and require much meditative thought and comtem
plation. Things will weigh heavy such acquiring of knoweldge might be a more diffucult experience then what most would
expect. Be forewarned but also encouraged that the revelation aquired will have its weight much more valuable then gol
d.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/10/3 11:33

Dear Lars,

Thanks for your candor.

Quote:
-----It is as if the Lord leads a ready heart into pondering in what He considers to be appropriate time.

Time and time again have found that to be true. Am slowly learning to learn slowly ...

Quote:
-----Nowadays I cannot but read a small part every day in a Sparks piece Å– there are quite a few items.

Indeed.
A small part:

*"Oh, God is very jealous for His Son. His Son has gone right through the fires over this matter, having accepted manfor
m and a life of dependence, having voluntarily emptied Himself of that which meant that at any moment He could of Him
self work by Deity for His own deliverance, salvation, provision, preservation; having emptied Himself of that right and sa
id, I let go all My rights and prerogatives and powers of Deity for the time being and I accept man's position of utter depe
ndence upon God as My Father; I meet all that man ever has to meet on man's level! * He met it in every realm in its con
centrated form and force and went through without a flaw as man for man, and went back to the throne on the merit of a
complete triumph over every force that ever man has to encounter in satisfying God.*

** FOOTNOTE: This does not mean that He emptied Himself of Deity, but of its rights for the time being."*

T.A. Sparks

Re: - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/10/3 11:40

This is the issue of the Cross at its very core.

“His Son has gone right through the fires over this matter.”

What a testimony we would be able to produce, if we would give ourselves to, even collectively giving ourselves over to the formation unto the fullness of Christ through the Cross.

Some preaching!!

Lars

Re: Excerpt: Living By The Truth - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/10/5 8:02

LIVING BY THE TRUTH

I am going to get right down inside this thing. What is a Christian? A Christian is one who was not a very good tempered person, but is now good-tempered; not a very genial person, but is now very much more genial; a person who was not very zealous, but is now very zealous; a person who is different in disposition from what he was formerly. Is that a true definition of a Christian? Give me a homeopathic cabinet. Bring along to me a very irritable person. Give him a dose of, what shall I say?—*nux vomica*; in two or three hours he will be a very good-tempered man. Is he a Christian? Give him something else; turn him back to what he was before. Was he saved, and has he backslidden? Drugs can change a man's temper in a few hours. From being a lethargic, careless, indifferent person, you become alive, energetic, active; from being miserable, discontented, morose, melancholic, disagreeable, irritable, you become amiable, pleasant, relieved from all that nervous strain which was making you like that, and all that disordered digestion which was making you such a bother to live with. For a little while, you have made a Christian with drugs! You see the point.

Where is the truth? If the truth about my salvation lies in the realm of my feelings, my digestive system, my nervous organism, I am going to be a poor Christian; because that will be changing from day to day according to the weather or to something else. Oh no! Truth; where is the truth? "Not what I am, but what Thou art." That is where the truth is, "Ye shall know now the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Free from what? Bondage! What bondage? Satan clapping his chains of condemnation upon you because today you are not feeling up to scratch. You are feeling bad in your constitution, and you are feeling depressed, you are feeling death all around, you are feeling irritable, and Satan comes along and says, You are not a Christian! a fine Christian you are! and you go down under it. Is that the truth? It is a lie! The only answer for deliverance and

emancipation is, 'It is not what I am, it is what He is; Christ abides the same.' He is not as I am, varying here in this human life from hour to hour and day to day: He is other.

Forgive me being so strong in my emphasis, but I do feel this is the only way in which we are going to be saved really. Jesus, you see, says, "I am the truth." What is the truth? It is that which stands up to all arguments of Satan who is "a liar and the father of it". It is that which delivers us from this false self which we are; and we are a false self. We are a bundle of contradictions. We can never be sure that we are going to be of the same mind for long together, that our convictions are not going to do a right-about-turn. Oh no, it is not ourselves at all; it is Christ. You see what a false position we could be in if we were on that other level of nature. What a game the Devil could play with us.

I am using these illustrations to try to get to the heart of this. What is the truth? What is true? It is not found in us. We are not true in any part of our being. Christ alone is truth, and you and I have to learn how to live on Christ, and until we have done that the Holy Spirit cannot do the other thing. Perhaps you are saying, Is not a true Christian less ill-tempered? Is there no difference at all? Is a Christian right to be irritable and all that? I am not saying that, I am not letting you off on that; I am saying that in the school, until you and I have learned to hold on to Christ by faith, the Holy Spirit has not the ground upon which to work to bring us into conformity to Christ. If we are going to live upon the false basis of ourselves, the Holy Spirit leaves us alone. When we come to live by faith on Christ, then the Holy Spirit can come in and make Christ good in us, and teach us victory and teach us mastery, and teach us by deliverance how not to become a prey to good or bad feelings in ourselves, but to live on another level altogether. I mean this, that you cut the ground from under a great deal when you really get on to the ground of Christ.

Take irritability, for example. Some of you, of course, may never suffer in that way at all, but others do know what that battle is. Well, let us take such a case. Today we feel like that, all nervous, strained and short. What are we going to do about it? Are we going to make that our Christian life or the negation of our Christian life? If we come on to that ground, then S

Satan is always swift to make the most of it and bring us into terrible bondage and really to kill all spiritual life. But if you will take the position, 'Yes, that is how I feel today, that is my infirmity today, but Lord Jesus, You are other than I am, and I just rest on You, hold on to You, make You my life', you see what you have done. You have cut the ground from under the feet of the Devil altogether, and you will find that there is peace along that line, and rest, and although you may still be feeling bad in the outer part of you, in the inner part you are at rest. The enemy is shut out from the inner part of you, he has no place there. The peace of God stands sentinel over heart and mind through Christ Jesus; the citadel is safe. What Satan is always trying to do is to get into the spirit through the body or soul and to capture the stronghold, the spirit, and bring it into bondage. But we can remain free inwardly when we are feeling very bad outwardly. That is freedom by the truth. That is the truth! Not a thing, not an affirmation, but a Person. It is what Christ is, and He is altogether different from what we are. Well, the Holy Spirit would teach us, as the Spirit of Truth, that it is abiding in Christ that means everything. The alternatives are to get into ourselves, or into other people, or into the world, in a mental way. Abide in Christ and there is rest, there is peace, there is deliverance.

But do not forget that, if we mean business with the Holy Spirit, He is not going to allow us to be deceived. I mean that the Holy Spirit is going to expose our true selves. He is going to uncover us and show us thoroughly there is nothing sound in us, nothing to be relied upon in us, in order that He may make it equally clear that it is only in Christ, God's Son, that there is security, and safety, and life.

I have a sense of failure in trying to convey to you what I have in my heart. So many people think that the spiritual life, the life of a child of God, is a matter of things. It is a thing called 'the message of the Cross'. It is a thing called 'sanctification'. It is a thing called 'deliverance'. It is a thing called 'death with Christ'—some thing. They are trying to get hold of it, and there is no deliverance that way at all. It does not work. 'Its' do not work! It is all a matter of the Person, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will never save us by an 'it'. He will always bring us to the Person, and make Christ the basis of our life, of our deliverance, of our everything. So the word is "Christ Jesus . . . is made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30).

From:

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id2843&forum31&post_id&refreshGo) THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST

T. Austin-Sparks

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/10/5 9:22

Ooops!

Actually wanted this excerpt included that came just prior to "Living By The Truth" with the emphasis in bold...

THE NEED FOR A TRUE FOUNDATION

But in order that this may be so, you and I, under the Holy Spirit's teaching, have to be dealt with very faithfully, and have to come to the place where we are perfectly adjustable before God, where there is all responsiveness to the Holy Spirit, and nothing in us that resists or refuses the Holy Spirit, but where we are perfectly open and ready for the biggest consequence of the Holy Spirit putting His finger upon anything in our lives needing to be dealt with and adjusted. He is here for that.

The alternative to such a work of the Holy Spirit being allowed to be done in us is that we shall find ourselves in a false position, and it is far, far too costly to find ourselves in a false position, even though it only be on certain points. **This is a false world we are living in, a world that is carried on upon lies. The whole constitution of this world is a lie, and it is in the very nature of man, though multitudes do not know it, but think they are true. They are trying to build the world on a false foundation. The Kingdom of God is altogether other. It is built upon Jesus Christ, the Truth.**

Well now, my emphasis at the moment is upon the need for a true position where we are concerned. Oh for men and women in whom the truth of Christ has been wrought and who will go on with God, no matter what it costs. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" "He that speaketh truth in his heart . . . he that sweareth to his own hurt"—that is, who take

s the position of verity though it cost him dear. We are influenced by all sorts of false considerations, influenced by what others will think and say, especially those in our religious circles, of our tradition; and they are false considerations and false influences. They bind and keep many men and women from going right on with God in the way of light. The issue is a false position at last.

Will you accept it when I say that there is no truth in us? This is one of the things we are going to find out under the Holy Spirit's dealings with us, that there is no truth in our minds naturally. We may be the most strongly convinced, and we may be prepared to lay down our lives for our convictions and to put everything into the crucible for what we believe with all our beings is right, is true, and in that very thing we may be utterly wrong. Such was the case with Saul of Tarsus—"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). Again, "The hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think he offereth God service" (John 16:2); so zealous for their conviction—"That is God's will! God's will! —convinced it is God's will; some to give their own lives on the strength of their conviction, and some to take other people's lives on the strength of their conviction. How far we will go on the strength of conviction and be wrong, utterly wrong, as utterly wrong as we are in earnest. A false conviction; and there is not one human mind incapable of getting into that state. The seeds of that are in human nature, in every one of us; in the mind as to conviction, the heart as to desire. We may think our desire is a perfectly pure and right one, and it may be utterly false; and so with our will, just the same. In us by nature there is no truth.

TAS

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/10/27 10:02

Progressing through this schooling with Lar's well heeded advice to ponder this slowly...

I just cannot recommend this more highly, it is foundational. An excerpt;

THE FIRST LESSON IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST

But when you are in, Lesson No. 1 begins here. It is but a reiteration of what has been strongly said in earlier meditations. The first lesson in the School of Christ which the Holy Spirit takes up to teach us is what we have called the altogether 'other-ness' of Christ from ourselves. This may be not only the first lesson but a continuous lesson throughout life. But this is the one thing with which the Holy Spirit begins, the altogether 'other-ness' of Christ from what we are. Will you take up the Gospel of John with that one thought in mind and read it again, quietly and steadily. How different Christ is from other people, even from His disciples. You can expand from John's Gospel to all the Gospels with that one thought. It will be an education to you if the Holy Spirit is with you as you read. How utterly different He is! That difference is again and again affirmed. "Ye are from beneath; I am from above" (John 8:23). That is a difference, and that difference becomes a clash all the way along; a clash of judgments, a clash of mentalities, a clash of minds, a clash of ideas, a clash of values; a clash in everything between Him and others, even with His disciples who are with Him in the School. His nature is different. He has a heavenly nature, a Divine nature. No one else has that. He has a heavenly mind, a heavenly mentality. They have an earthly mentality, and the two cannot meet, at any point. When the last word has been said, there is a big, big gap between the two. He is so utterly other.

Now, you say, that being so, we are at a very great disadvantage. He is one thing and we are another. But that is just the nature and meaning of this School. How is that problem going to be resolved? Well, it is just resolved like this, that He is all the time speaking about a time when He will be in them and they will be in Him, and when that time comes, in the innermost and deepest reality of their being, they will be altogether other than what they are in every other part of their being. That is to say, there will be in them that which is Christ, that which is Christ in all that He is as the absolutely Other. **Sometimes they will think that the best thing to do is this, but that altogether Other inside will not let them do it. Sometimes they will think that the wise thing is not to do this, and that altogether Other inside keeps saying, in effect, Get on with it! The outer man says, It is madness! I am only courting disaster! The inner Man says, You are to do it! These two cannot be reconciled. He is within and He is altogether other, and our education is to learn to follow Him, to go His way.** "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself . . . and follow me." Deny himself: your arguments, your judgments, your common sense sometimes. Follow Me!—and Christ is vindicated every time. Men have done the maddest things from this world's standpoint and have been vindicated. This is no suggestion that you should go and begin to do mad things. I am talking about the authority of Christ within, the difference of Christ from ourselves, and this is the first lesson the Holy Spirit would teach anyone coming into the School of Christ, that there is this great difference, this great cleavage, that He is one thing and we are quite another; and we can never be sure that we are on the right line save as we submit everything to Him.

This is why prayer has to have such a large place in the life of a child of God, and this is why prayer had such a large place in His life when He was here. The prayer life of the Lord Jesus is, in a certain realm and sense, the biggest problem that you can face. He is Christ, He is the Son of God, He is under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and He is without sin in His person, and yet, and yet, He must spend all the night in prayer after a heavy and long day's work. Again and again you come upon Him in prayer. Why must He pray? Because there are other influences at work, there are other things which are seeking to call for consideration and response and obedience, and He must keep all the time in line with the anointing, in harmony with the Spirit under whose government He has placed Himself, because He can decide nothing out from Himself. If He must do that, what of us? We are not even on His sinless level. We have all that in our very natures which works violently against God, God's mind, God's will. How much the more necessary then is it for us to have a prayer life, by which the Spirit is given an opportunity of keeping us straight, keeping us on the line of Divine purpose, keeping us in the ways of the Lord, and in the times of the Lord.

Beloved, if there is one thing that a child of God will learn under the Holy Spirit's lordship, it is this thing, namely, how different He is from us, how different we are from Him, how altogether other. But, blessed be God, now in this dispensation, if we are truly children of God, the altogether Other is not merely objective but within. That is the second phase of this matter of the 'other-ness'. The first phase is the fact of the difference. Will you accept this? Will you now, at this very point, this moment, just settle this? The Lord Jesus is altogether other than I am: even when I think I am most perfectly right, He may still be altogether other, and I can never, never rely upon my own sense of rightness until I have submitted my rightness to Him! That is very utter, but it is very necessary. Many of us have learned these lessons. We are not talking out of a book, we are talking out of our own experience. We have been quite sure at times that we were right and we have gone forward to follow out our rightness in that judgment, and we have come to grief, and we have got into an awful fog of perplexity and bewilderment. We were quite sure we were right, but look where we have been landed! And when we come to think about it, and put it before the Lord, we have to ask ourselves, how much did I wait on the Lord and wait for the Lord about that thing. Were we not a bit precipitate with our own sense of rightness? And that is David and the ark all over again. David's motive was all right and David's sense of God's purpose was all right. That God wanted the ark in Jerusalem was right enough, but David got the thing into his soul as an idea, and it worked itself up as a great enthusiasm within him, and so he made the cart. The motive, the good motive, the good idea, the devout spirit, got him into most awful trouble. The Lord smote Uzzah, and he died before the Lord, and the ark went into the house of Obededom, and tarried there, all because man had a good and right idea, but had not waited on the Lord. You know the sequel. Later on, David said to the heads of the Levites, "Sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord, the God of Israel, unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye bare it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not according to the ordinance." The instruction was there all the time, but he had not waited on the Lord. If David had brought his devout enthusiasm quietly before the Lord, He would have directed him to the instruction He had given to Moses, and said, in effect, 'Yes, all right, but, remember, this is how it is to be carried.' There would have been no death, no delay, things would have gone right through.

Yes, we may get a very good idea for the Lord, but we have to submit it to the Lord, to be quite sure it is not our idea for the Lord, but the Lord's mind being born in us. It is very important to learn Christ; He is so other.

You see, this divides Christians very largely into two classes. Christians can be, in the main, divided into these two classes. There is that very large class of Christians whose Christianity is objective, is outward. It is a matter of having adopted a Christian life, that now they do a lot of things which they once would not do. They go to meetings, they go to church, they read the Bible, lots of things that they used not to do; and they now do not do quite a lot of things they once did. That is what holds good more or less in that class. It is now a matter of not doing and doing, not going and going, being a good Christian outwardly. That is a big class with its various degrees of light and shade, a very big class of Christians indeed.

There are others who are in this School of Christ, for whom the Christian life is an inward thing of walking with the Lord and knowing the Lord in the heart, in greater or lesser degree. That is the nature of it, a real inward walk with a living Lord in their own heart. There is a great deal of difference between those two classes.

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id2843&forum31&post_id&refreshGo) THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST By T. Austin Sparks

Alternately: (http://www.austin-sparks.net/english/books/the_school_of_christ.html) http://www.austin-sparks.net/english/books/the_school_of_christ.html

Re: Ravenhill presents Sparks - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/9/9 11:24

From the earlier days of SermonIndex (circa 2004)

Re: - posted by Tears_of_joy, on: 2007/9/9 14:37

Thank you for bringing up this, brother.

Re: IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/9/9 17:55

"Will you now, at this very point, this moment, just settle this? The Lord Jesus is altogether other than I am: even when I think I am most perfectly right, He may still be altogether other, and I can never, never rely upon my own sense of rightness until I have submitted my rightness to Him! That is very utter, but it is very necessary. Many of us have learned these lessons. We are not talking out of a book, we are talking out of our own experience. We have been quite sure at times that we were right and we have gone forward to follow out our rightness in that judgment, and we have come to grief, and we have got into an awful fog of perplexity and bewilderment. We were quite sure we were right, but look where we have been landed! And when we come to think about it, and put it before the Lord, we have to ask ourselves, how much did I wait on the Lord and wait for the Lord about that thing. Were we not a bit precipitate with our own sense of rightness? And that is David and the ark all over again. David's motive was all right and David's sense of God's purpose was all right. That God wanted the ark in Jerusalem was right enough, but David got the thing into his soul as an idea, and it worked itself up as a great enthusiasm within him, and so he made the cart. The motive, the good motive, the good idea, the devout spirit, got him into most awful trouble. The Lord smote Uzzah, and he died before the Lord, and the ark went into the house of Obbedom, and tarried there, all because man had a good and right idea, but had not waited on the Lord. You know the sequel. Later on, David said to the heads of the Levites, "Sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord, the God of Israel, unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye bare it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not according to the ordinance." The instruction was there all the time, but he had not waited on the Lord. If David had brought his devout enthusiasm quietly before the Lord, He would have directed him to the instruction He had given to Moses, and said, in effect, 'Yes, all right, but, remember, this is how it is to be carried.' There would have been no death, no delay, things would have gone right through."