

Under New Management

By

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“Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5). **“If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation”** (2 Corinthians 5:17).

From the viewpoint of an ideal, whether Christian or humanist, this world is practically in a shambles. Like Humpty-Dumpty, it is in such a state that all the king’s horses and all the king’s men try in vain to get it together again.

So they are saying that Christianity has failed and has got to go. They say that the church is a failure, that Christ has failed and that we Christians might as well give it up, and forget it. If there were anything to this “Good News” wouldn’t things in the world be in better condition by now? And a lot of Christians listen and give up.

But just the opposite is true. The breakdown in human relations, the rise of crime and the determined assault upon the Christian faith is just exactly what Christ predicted.

Jesus said that before the end comes the gospel would be preached “as a witness” to the whole world, but He did not say that it would be received by the whole world. In fact He said, “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find the faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8)

The world we live in is doomed. Not because of the stockpiles of atomic weapons held poised, nation against nation, but because of the stockpile of plans held in the mind of Almighty God. From the very moment of sin by Adam and Eve the earth fell under the pall of catastrophe. The earth was under the dominion of Adam, and when he fell from his perfect state, that which was under his control fell too. Paul writes, “For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now” (Romans 8:20-22). The archeologists have unearthed plenty of proof that there is a vast difference between the world before the flood and the world since.

Peter writes that the earth is now stored with the very fire which will destroy it in the Day of Judgment, “But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:7).

Man, who was created out of the earth to live on the earth and to have dominion over the earth, by his destruction of the “image” of God, brings the earth down to destruction. Such is the great potential of man, both for evil and for good.

Out of this seemingly pessimistic view, stand two great truths as the Christian's anchor in this day.

A HOPE THAT IS REAL

First, this world is not the Christians hope. The social-evolutionist keeps pounding away on the theme that somehow, someday, we will transform this world into a Utopia. As these plans fail, Christians are accused of failure. The Christian gets a guilt-complex because he hasn't been able to create a heaven on earth.

The "heaven on earth" is what God has promised to create. Peter writes that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." But Peter is quick to add, "But according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10, 13). Indeed, the Christian will enjoy "heaven on earth," but it will be that **NEW EARTH**, not this one.

Note that Peter speaks of a new "earth" wherein righteousness dwells. Nowhere does he talk about Christians going to Heaven. Heaven, to most people, is a mixture of fairy tale and imagination, where disembodied spirits float around in space. The idea is pagan, not Christian. In God's word there is no promise of people living in heaven. While the Scriptures speak of the saved being "caught up together...in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air," they also speak of these saints "coming down out of heaven from God," for their final eternal home (1 Thess. 4:16, Rev. 21:2).

Obviously the "new earth" will exist for the purpose of inhabitation by the people of God. Jesus promised, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. 5:5) Paul wrote that "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the Promise," and the promise to Abraham was that his seed should "be heir of the world" (Gal. 3:29, Romans 4:13).

Just as man, through his sin and fall from God brought the whole earth into corruption, so when man is perfected and brought to immortality, the new earth will again be provided in all its glory for man's eternal home. Thus we read in Romans that "the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19).

Therefore the shambles which this world is becoming does not signify failure of God and His people, but rather proves the prophecy of Christ and the apostles, along with Old Testament prophets. The Christian has nothing to fear in the loss of this earth, for he looks for a new one "where dwells righteousness."

THE NEW BEGINS NOW

Second, the conflict which rages between Christians and anti-Christians is largely due to just this fact that God's new creation has already begun wherever there is a true Christian. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17).

“The whole world lies in the evil one,” said John (1 John 5:19). But the Christian has broken out of the evil one’s grasp. The old life of sin is renounced. With desperate fierceness, Satan tries to hold on to his victim. But each sin is torn away, sometimes not without a bit of tearing of the believer himself. Dying to sin is not always easy; nor is it done over night. One keeps discovering little pet sins here and there, cringing in some hidden corner, begging to be left in their old home. One’s life is touched on many points by many people, and there are complicated roots to untangle. He doesn’t have the answers ready at hand, so the transition from Satan’s world to the Kingdom of Christ becomes a long and hard struggle.

But the new has begun. The person who really wants to live in the new creation God offers is one who wants righteousness. He is sick of the way Satan runs his establishment, and doesn’t want to share in its doom. So HE PUTS HIMSELF UNDER A NEW MANAGEMENT, and from then on there is conflict. We Christians might be called “invaders” or “aggressors,” because we are citizens of another Kingdom, occupying enemy territory. (Only it was God’s first, and Satan is the usurper.) If there were no conflict, it would indicate that we were collaborators with the enemy, and unfit for an inheritance in the homeland.

The conflict is from without and within. For the first time in history there is a world-wide organized opposition to God. Humanists and Communists openly attack Christian faith and are dedicated to the purpose of blotting it out of existence, using every possible means including murder. The outward conflict grows in intensity every day and according to prophecy will continue to do so until Christ returns.

However, it is the inward conflict that is hardest to handle, and causes the most harm. Evangelists may give the impression that it is easy and simple to “Accept Christ,” but it isn’t so. The expression “accept Christ” is not even used in Scripture. The apostles talked more about repentance. Of course Peter and Paul were under no compulsion to report “additions” by which to prove their success, they made no attempt to soft peddle the issues and hide the fact of conflict.

REMODELING

In one sense Christian faith is simple. There are no hidden gimmicks, no tricks up Christ’s sleeve. He does just what He promises, removes the guilt, blots out the sin, supplies the needs and ultimately will give immortality to the believer. The scheme is simple; the wages of sin is death. Jesus, with no sin of His own, and taking man’s place in judgment, dies man’s death. Therefore man is free from judgment and death.

The difficulty is in living up to what Christ has made us! It sounds easy, being under the new management of Christ. What a chance! To be rid of the old sin, to be free from every evil thought, every lust, every sickening little greedy element and mean little thing in one’s life. We just let the New Management take over and all problems are solved!

Then a terrible discovery is made. The light of God’s word which revealed the Gospel only shone upon the surface of life. As the light is taken into our system it begins to

reveal things we didn't realize were there. We find that Christ not only intends to be the New Manager, but that before He can run things, He intends a complete remodeling job. He tears out a petition here and a door there. Down comes the wall behind which we have hidden some secret sin. He rips up the floor where we have buried some rotten thought that we hadn't smelled before. He blocks up the window through which we viewed and coveted some of Satan's attractive temptations. Out goes the furniture which we acquired when our tastes were fashioned after the world.

The more one learns of the Word, the more that penetrating light reveals to him his sin. Instead of smug security, one feels like saying with Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am undone" (Isa. 6:5). The remodeling job is painful, like surgery without an anesthetic. If the believer is not really serious about the whole thing he will shun the Word, flee the light and reject the Management. "For every one that does evil hates the light, and comes not to the light, lest his works should be reproved." But if he really wants LIFE in the New Creation, he will accept the New Management now. He will seek the light more and more, even though its blinding rays may be painful to his sin-conditioned eyes. "But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God" (John 3:20-21).

The conflict we suffer in the world, then, is not an indication of our failure or cause for fear and anxiety. Instead it is proof that the work of the Creator is still going on, that we are a part of it, and that it is nearing completion, for the intensity of the battle is naturally greater at the climax.

We are plainly told, therefore, to no longer walk as do the unbelievers, in the vanity of their minds, who are darkened in their understanding because of their alienation from God (Eph. 4:17-18), but to put away the old man, corrupted by the lust of deceit, and to have our minds remodeled, and act like new men. It is God's purpose to create us as righteous and holy people, according to His truth (Eph. 4:22-24).

The Creator is still at work. The final glory of His finished product we cannot yet see nor enjoy, but already we participate with Him in it, for we Christians are the recruits for the new earth, and already under the NEW MANAGEMENT. "For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

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