

On Earth As It Is In Heaven, Pt. 5
Tim Bushong
(Based on Brian Mattson's series)
C Against C, Part 2

How does our heavenly citizenship relate to our earthly life?

Review: The “good”:

1. Rebuke to us all—words like 'radical' and uncompromising' can be used accurately for these folks. They seek to follow Christ at the expense of everything in their worldly lives.
2. There is a real sense in which Christ is against culture. The fall can twist almost anything. The self, the pursuit of power, pleasure, subjugation of others, the pursuit of unjust wealth—this model is suspicious of *any* cultural endeavor for these very reasons.
3. In the CAC model, there really is a sense of God's holiness—His “otherness” from the world, and a very real sense of our own call to holiness and “otherness”, too.

The “bad” theology, and the “ugly” fruit.

- 1) Jon Swerens got it right a couple of weeks ago—sin becomes associated with *stuff*—with the material world.

It's a type of pietism at best, or a type of gnosticism at worst.

The conflict is transferred from the grace of God vs. sin to the grace of God vs. the creation itself—stuff. The material world—creation—is then characterized by material properties, like medical treatment. Conversely, reliance on Christ is transferred to a reliance on the “spiritual”. It's a 'sliding scale'. Contrary to its own tenets, this system actually has a low view of God. How? God is unable to work with the material that He has made. More miraculous???

In this view there is a chasm between the Spirit and matter itself.

The 'antithesis' is drawn at the wrong place!

- 2) Now the distinction is made between the “secular” realm of people, places, and things, and the “spiritual” realm of faith and belief.

Sin now more more less attached to nouns rather than verbs.

- 3) John Mergy said it last time: It's not the phenomena or institution itself that is 'worldly'; rather, it's whether or not that institution is submitted to God's Law—to His way of thinking and doing things.

“Ugly” fruit:

- 4) For the C a C person, cultural withdrawal is a badge of honor. Now, part of this *may* be due to the encroachment of dispensationalism (interesting how a lot of that thinking is actually associated with Anabaptist-rooted Churches!)

F. W Newton declared that the imminent return of Christ "totally forbids all working for earthly objects distant in time"

In Geneva, 1840, Darby declared that restoration is impossible in this dispensation, that it is delusive to expect the earth to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord prior to His advent, and that we must expect a constant progression of evil.

Social and political endeavor was no longer seen as legitimate; note, for example, one dispy theologian's criticism of Calvin because "he (Calvin) considered it his task to make the secular authorities submissive to his interpretation of the Divine commandments."

What happens when Christians withdraw from culture? Nature abhors a vacuum.

Real evil in the world—real pain, real suffering, real death.

Refusing to vote—refusing to run for office—what about abortion?

5) The C a C model is not only not 'of' the world, they're not even 'in' the world.

2 Cor. 5:20: “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors...”

What better way of appropriating this than to be involved *in* the world while avoiding sin?!

6) By removing themselves from the world, they fail to honor part of the Great Commission. After all, nations are “of the world”, but are to be discipled.

1 Cor 5:9-11: “I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. 11 But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.”

That's not all—the “ABC” of rejecting material stuff *does* lead to the “XYZ” of mysticism.

Why do we think that Quakers reject both of the sacraments and sermons?

Why because sacraments and sermons are both versions of mediated spirituality!

7) For the Quaker, bread and wine are material things, and sermons are the mere words of men.

Many modern Christians are guilty of the same thinking.

8) Sacraments, creeds, liturgy—and yes—even the Bible itself—are viewed as sub-spiritual. Lots of 'promptings' and 'God told me's' come to mind.

When God's creation is devalued, it not only fails to satisfy, but it is impossible to carry out.

In the philosophy of mind, dualism is the theory that the mental and the physical—or mind and body or mind and brain—are, in some sense, radically different kinds of thing.

9) Christians cannot be dualists like this.

Jesus Himself was incarnate—He was an enculturated man.