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Email: info@austin-sparks.net

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A New Creation

by T. Austin-Sparks

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The all-inclusive rule of the new creation is that "all things are of (out from) God." Concerning this fact the Apostle Paul uses the word "but" - "*But* all things are of God" - as though he would anticipate, intercept, or arrest an impulse to rush away and attempt life or service upon an old creation basis, or with old creation resource.

The great question then is: What does it mean that all things in this new creation are out from God? What kind of a life will such a life be? To answer that question adequately would be a very comprehensive task and the most revolutionary thing conceivable.

To begin with, we should have to be settled regarding the *difference* between the old and the new creations, and then as to how far-reaching that difference is. In addition, we should need to see that God has put these two creations asunder, utterly and forever, and however gracious and forbearing He may be with us in our ignorance and slowness of apprehension, He never accepts the overlapping or intertwining of the two. Then there would be the further need of an inward, intelligent judgment and power by which we are made aware of the Divine veto upon the one and energy toward the other.

There are a few things which, precisely stated, sum up this matter.

1. All things out from God means that all things, in the first place, are in God. A truism though it be, that fact is one of great significance. Whatever man may have, or think that he has, or knows, or can do in the realm of the old creation, nothing of the knowledge, ability, or power of the new creation originates with man. He has to begin as a helpless, ignorant, innocent infant. Everything for him is in God, he has nothing in himself.

2. Whatever God may impart, of wisdom, knowledge, or ability in the new creation, He never does so outright. That is to say, He never gives the resource to be held apart from Himself. He never constitutes men gods, with independent Divine resources. He never allows man to become a possessor in himself, in such a way that man of himself is something. Everything must be held in abiding dependence upon God, both for receiving and using, and nothing can be absolute. It was the violation of this law or the attempt to have it set aside, that brought ruin in the first instance. Man had all by dependence, faith, obedience, and humility. He yielded to the suggestion to have it in himself, with freedom from this law - to "be as God." God is not leaving that door open in the new creation, and nothing that savours of man will ever get through at last. Here is the importance for life and service of a life wholly in God.

3. The larger the measure of what is of God the more utter will be the application by God of the law of dependence. This means that God will have no plenipotentiaries-at-large. The life and instrument related to God's fullest thought will be kept on a basis of step-by-step guidance and strength. There will be no making over of plans, schemes, schedules; no seeing of the way from beginning to end; no resources to draw upon without Divine witness, or to endanger exactness as to the Divine intention; no making of men into authorities and courts-of-appeal by reason of *their* being a fountain of wisdom and knowledge: in a word, nothing that would infringe the law that for all things, at all times, and in all ways, "all things are out from God."

The only certainty is God. An apostle may be led to move in a particular direction, and then by reason of need and opportunity he may conclude that certain regions are the objective, but when he reaches a point he will be met by a double, Divine "No" to those thoughts, and be shown something unthought of. (Acts 16:6-10.)

To the old creation such a life is most unsatisfactory and irregular. Yes, and in a thousand other things this life is utterly different from what man naturally wants and likes. But that does not mean that God is not more honoured, glorified, and satisfied. Let us read the New Testament with this one thought in mind, the Gospels as well as the rest, and see if it was not true in the case of Christ, the Apostles, and the teaching.

4. If this is all true, then it is its own reflection upon those other major questions. The difference between the two creations, their extent, and the Divine attitude toward them, is clearly and forcefully revealed by such issues as we have pointed out. The difference is irreconcilable and cannot be bridged. The extent reaches to mind, heart, and will. It is a matter of mentality, capacity, and the very springs of life. We are not only confronted with the fact of limitation when we come to probe the question of the old creation, but with a state with which God can have nothing to do. Even though it appear in religious form, and that in the red-hot devoutness of Saul of Tarsus, its deeper nature will be proved inimical to God.

5. There remains one thing to be referred to. In the divide between the two creations there is planted the Cross of Christ. The Cross has a death side and a life side; death to the old, life to the

new. The recognition and acceptance of the Cross in this twofold meaning is God's only way to the new creation. To the believer who receives Him by faith the Holy Spirit is given as the inward intelligent power for witnessing to the Cross against the one and for the other. Hence the immeasurably great importance of a life governed by the Holy Spirit at all points and in all things. Only that which, by the Spirit, is immediately out from God will survive or get through. All else must perish with the creation which God has placed under condemnation.

It is not what is done for God that will last, but what is done by God.

The measure of spiritual value is determined by the measure in which God promotes it, not the measure of human activities according to human judgments and energies in the name of God.