

# A Protestant Reformed World and Life View (11)

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God is sovereign over all.

God's sovereignty is revealed and realized through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord over His people to save them by the blood of His cross and to take them into His own everlasting kingdom.

All these things we notice last time.

But just as the sovereignty of Christ is over His people who kneel in worship before Him, so also is Jesus Christ the only Lord over the wicked men and hosts of devils and demons who oppose Him.

## MAN IN PARADISE

But first of all we must inquire into the question of the place of the wicked in the creation, of their efforts to subdue the creation, of the impossibility of establishing here below a kingdom.

When God first formed the heavens and the earth and all that they contain, He placed man as king supreme under God over all the works of His hands. Man stood before His God in uprightness of heart in a position of authority over the earth which was his dominion. He was called to represent his sovereign Lord in the creation about him, and rule over it in such a way that all things were brought to the altar of service to God so that the creation might be used to proclaim the praises of its Maker. For this reason the so called "cultural mandate" came to Adam in Paradise. "Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Gen. 1:28.

If, therefore, Adam had remained standing in a state of rectitude in the Garden of Eden and in the whole creation, he would have been in a position to uncover the powers of the creation and discover its hidden treasures. He would have been preeminently endowed with the necessary strength and ability to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. He would have been the most capable "scientist" this world has ever known-and his posterity with him. Not only this, however, but he would have been spiritually capable of using all these powers and treasures in the creation in the service of God; he would have subdued the earth to make use of the glorious universe in which he lived to praise and magnify his Maker.

## SIN AND IT'S TERRIBLE EFFECTS

But this Adam did not do. Nor was this the purpose of God.

Sin came into the world. Sin arose first of all I heaven in the world of the angels. And Satan, after he fell, decided to oppose God upon the earth since he could no longer do this in heaven. To do this, however, he had to enlist the aid of man. Without man as his ally, he could not hope to accomplish his purpose. He had determined to set up his own kingdom in opposition to God so that God would be cast out of His creation and universe, and the devil could reign supreme. But if man would not become a partner in his nefarious purpose, he could not possible

hope to succeed. And so he made the trip to Paradise and used all the powers of his devilish skill to persuade man ally himself with the devil in accomplishing his evil determination. How successful he was is known to us from the record of Holy Writ.

But the consequences of this deed were universal and terrible. God could not and did not allow this terrible sin of man to go unpunished. Man, as an ally of the devil could certainly not be allowed to remain in the creation as the representative of God. As God cast him out. God cast him out of Paradise and cast him out the creation by killing him and sending him to hell. "From dust thou art taken and unto dust shalt thou return" are the awful words which ring down the centuries of world history.

## A TOTALLY DEPRAVED MAN

But man did not die immediately at the foot of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Yet Scripture does not give us the right to ascribe this in any sense of the word to Common Grace as Dr. A. Kuyper would have us believe. It is simply indicative of the fact that God had a higher purpose with man and man's sin that could only be accomplished through a prolonged life even though eventually it would end in the grave; a purpose which was to be achieved in Jesus Christ for which man had to live for a time. Yet even while man was living in the creation, from his point of view alone this was perhaps more terrible than if he had died immediately. The heavy hand of God's wrath completely eclipsed the light that shone in him of the image which he bore. He lost all his excellent gifts. The light of the knowledge of God was darkened into the black night of the lie. The righteousness and holiness with which man had been endowed fade away into terrible unrighteousness and corruption of every sort. He no longer could serve His God and use anything in the world to seek Him. He became instead, as his evil heart had purposed, an ally of the devil and the host of Hell's demons. He set his heart upon unrighteousness and lost all that was good and holy becoming a helpless slave to the purpose of the prince of darkness.

## A SIN-CURSED CREATION

And yet God's wrath did not even stop here. The curse settled also upon the creation. The speech of God's righteous revelation which had sounded so loudly in the Garden of Eden was silenced by the terrible speech of the curse. The ground was cursed for man's sake. The creature also is held in the chains of the bondage of corruption. Just exactly what was the result of this upon the creation is perhaps somewhat difficult to determine for us, for we no longer have a conception of the true character of the creation before the fall and before the curse came; we have no means of contrasting the world as we know it now with the creation as it was then. But this is evident enough: the creation is thrown into turmoil and confusion. Death reigns supreme also over the brute creature. The whole creation wars against itself hurting itself and destroying itself. And in this man eagerly participates.

To quote from the "The Christian and Culture": "Then, too, we must not overlook the important fact that the curse of God is in the world and that man is subject to corruption and death. In discussing the subject of modern culture this is too often ignored. The possibility of "culture" is frequently deduced from paradise and the original state of righteousness and perfection, as if the terrible fact of the curse upon creation and of death, even in the natural, physical sense of the word, need not enter into the discussion. This, however, is a fundamental

error. The ground is cursed, and the creature is in the bondage of corruption and made subject to vanity. The result is that the creation gets nowhere. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, saith the preacher. The creature is like a horse in a treadmill. It labors and toils all the day long, without accomplishing anything. It is the "vicious circle". There is never anything new under the sun. And man himself is not only spiritually and ethically corrupt, but he is also subject to corruption and death. Death is in all his life. From every side he is limited. The work he performs he does as in a death cell. He only awaits the moment of his execution." Pp. 9, 10.

## TRUE CULTURE IMPOSSIBLE

What effect does this have upon man's life in the world? This is the primary question that needs our attention. Is the so called "cultural mandate" still effective? Can man accomplish anything at all in the creation? Must we, considering these circumstances, retreat from our position to acknowledge the force of the argument of evolutionism which boldly and braggingly states that we are on an upward hill climbing ever forward and onward and coming ever nearer to the sublime goal of peace on earth, good will to men by our own efforts? Must we admit the power of the postmillennialist's eager hope of a kingdom of Christ here upon earth? Can we no longer combat the cherished dream of Common Grace that there are all kinds of good to be found in the world and in the efforts of men?

Taking all these views in the light of the stark reality of the fall and its grievous consequences we can only conclude that these opinions are but vain dreams, absurd and befuddled, smashed to pieces against the hard rock of the truth of Scripture.

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