

Colossians 1:15-17 – Belgic Article 12 – “Especially the Angels”

Introduction: **God in Christ is the beginning and end of all things, the ruler over all other powers.**

The Firstborn Over All Creation

- One of the struggles of God’s people is to accept the fact that God is invisible (see John 1:18). Yet, God does not allow his people to make him visible (Deut. 4). Israel has not always obeyed this command, as we see with the Golden Calf in Exodus 32. However, we see that we have been given an image of God: Christ.
- Christ is described as the “firstborn of all creation.” This does not mean that he was born, but, to describing his primacy, Paul is using the ancient priority of the firstborn son to describe Christ (see Ex. 4:22; Ps. 89:27). The reason that he is the firstborn is that all things were created through him.
- The Apostles Creed attributes the work of creation to the Father. This is a Biblical way of speaking. However, this does not exclude the other persons of the Trinity from being involved. Every person of the Godhead is involved in every action of God, even when one person comes to the fore. This is the case here. Both the Son and the Spirit are involved in creation (see Gen. 1:2; John 1). The Son is also at work in the providence of God.

The Ruler Over All Powers

- The Manichees didn’t believe that everything was created good. Rather, evil spirits were eternal and self-existent just like God. This belief was being revived by some of the Anabaptists around the time of the Reformation. In response, this article of the Belgic Confession answers the question of where demons came from with an answer that even Catholics could agree with.
- The angels were created good, and were given power in order that they might do God’s will and serve his people (Heb. 1:14). Because they are creatures, they are subservient to the God who created them. Some, however rebelled and were cast out of heaven (see Rev.12:7-8; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) There is no grace for them, either _____ grace or _____ grace.
- These spiritual forces are at work against us on earth, both directly and indirectly. Yet, they are merely creatures. They cannot encroach on his kingdom, nor can they steal his people from him.
- We must not forget Christ’s rule over these powers. We are surrounded by the forces of the demonic realm: secularism, evolutionary theory, New Age spirituality. And we may come into direct conflict with those under demonic influence: hostile authorities and false churches. But they are condemned to judgement.

Conclusion: We are not Sadducees, denying the spiritual forces at work in the world, but we are also not Manichees, who see them as competition for God. Rather, because our Saviour is

the ruler over all, we do not fear them, but fight them with confidence that we will be victorious.