Worldview Apologetics: Faith Impacting Culture

Lecture 5: The Christian Doctrine of the Fall: Corruption, Noetic Distortion, & Reification

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Subtitle: Corruption, Noetic Distortion, & Reification

Summary statement

- The Christian doctrine of the Fall of humanity tells us about the condition in which we find ourselves: as alienated from God and addicted to sin. Our guilt has separated, estranged, alienated us from our own good, our Creator; our corruption we are perverted in our minds, polluted in our hearts, and prone to choose what is wrong, i.e., what is bad for us.
The Christian doctrine of the Fall

(A) Three important effects of humanity’s Fall
– Perversion (a business mind)
– Pollution (pre-marital sex)
– Punishment in the form of addiction (Lewis)

(B) The specifically intellectual effect of the Fall

The Doctrine of the Transcendentals
– Exs: a good dog; a true theorem; a beautiful rose
– Gradations
– In our postlapsarian state, we misperceive what is good, true, and beautiful, and therefore also misrepresent instances of goodness, truth, and beauty in and to the world around us and to ourselves.

The Doctrine of the Transcendentals

Goodness
Truth
Beauty

The Christian doctrine of the Fall

• So: As a new creation in Christ, part of our fundamental calling is to redeem and reconcile all things according to the way in which God saw as good (2 Co. 5.17-21; cf. Gen. 1.31).
[Doctrine of Transcendentals + Doctrine of Fall]

• The Doctrine of the Total Depravity
– Augustine: the city of God and the city of man “are entangled together in this world [saeculum]” until the final judgment at the eschaton.
– Jesus: there are both wheat and tares, and until the “harvest [at] the end of the age” (Mt. 13.39), we will not know which is which.
The Christian doctrine of the Fall

The Doctrine of the Total Depravity

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn:
“If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”

“The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either, but right through every human heart.”

The sociological notion of reification

To reify (Ltn. rēs = thing) an object means to present a given human construction or cultural phenomenon as a bare fact or non-negotiable aspect of reality; and in turn to perceive and to re-present it as such.

The sociological notion of reification

The doctrine of the Fall certain media reflect perceived values and views reinforce the reify these perceptions as reality