

At the Fall of mankind, God could have destroyed the world and everything in it. But although He would have been perfectly justified in doing so, He did not destroy it. And although the earth is cursed and characterized by decay and corruption as a result of mankind's sin, nevertheless God has preserved it for man's habitation, and has given it to mankind to rule over and subdue for His glory.

God has given man dominion over all celestial animals, all aquatic animals, and all terrestrial animals; all creatures that move through the air, through the waters, and upon the ground. God has given mankind the oceans and lakes and rivers and streams, the mountains and valleys and forests and plains, the rich resources buried in the ground, and the spacious skies and atmosphere and breathable air and drinkable water and the weather systems.

Instead of destroying all of this, as fallen mankind fully deserved, God graciously preserved the world for man's benefit, and for the accomplishment of His own purposes. But this grace could have been extended only on the basis of Christ's atonement; and for this benevolence mankind should be truly grateful!

How wonderful that God has graciously preserved His beautiful creation! When we see the deep greens of the grasses and trees, the deep blues of the sky, the brilliant whiteness of soft fleecy clouds, the rich colors and shades and textures of flowers, the pinks and reds and yellows and golds of autumn leaves, the grand vistas and vast distances of the great plains, the magnificence of snow-capped mountains and glaciers, the rolling waves and foams of the great oceans, the aqua and turquoise waters and pinkish-yellow beaches of tropical islands whose sand is as soft as talcum powder, the breathtaking pinks and oranges and purples of glorious sunsets, and the startling intricacy and velvet softness of a butterfly's wing, we are overwhelmed by God's great skill and sense of beauty in creating this world, and by His great benevolence and grace in preserving it!

- b. A second important way in which God's general benevolence tends to promote happiness instead of suffering is by His bestowal of temporal blessings upon sinners.

What are some of these earthly blessings that God gives human beings in this life?

In Matthew 5:45 Jesus says that the Father "causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

In Luke 6:36 our Lord says that God "is kind to ungrateful and evil men."

And in Acts 14:17 Paul says that God "did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."