

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF
FAITH
IV. OF CREATION

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC

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I. GOD THE CREATOR

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.

I. GOD THE CREATOR

Issues:

- For the praise of his glory, i.e. the display of his perfect attributes.
 - “May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works” (Ps. 104:31)
- Creation *ex nihilo*.
 - Creation via *fiat*: “*Let there be... and there was...*”
 - Variety of Hebrew terms: *bara* – create; *‘asah* – make; *yatsar* – form; *banah* – fashion.
- Original *goodness*.
 - We do not live in a dualistic world, but a good world that has gone bad.

I. GOD THE CREATOR

The theology of Genesis 1:1

- Creation emphasizes the *transcendence* of God
 - Creator / creature distinction
- Creation teaches the *eternality* of God
- Creation reminds us of the *complete freedom and sovereignty* of God.
- Creation proves the *omnipotence* of God.
- Creation shows the *beauty* of God
 - “God stands toward it not as a gardener who lets a plant or flower grow, but as the artists who forms an image according to his own vision.” (G.Vos).
- Creation argues for a *revealing* God.

I. GOD THE CREATOR

Days of Creation: “in the *space* of six days.”

- Was *space* intended to be vague? Yet every single divine held the literal view.
- Internal arguments for a *literal six days*:
 - Genre of Genesis 1
 - From verse 14 onward, the days are unquestionably 24-hours in length.
 - *Yom* = day, especially when numbered (“the first day. . .)
 - “And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.”
 - The problem that the sun was made on the 4th day (Gen. 1:14).
 - “The fact that the sun and moon, as measurs of time, were not present does not mean that there was no time.” (G. Vos).
 - Comparing with Scripture elsewhere
 - Ex. 20:11 – “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.”
 - What about science?
 - “That science has discovered this or that, or thinks to have discovered it, is not enough to cause us to discover it in Genesis.” (G. Vos).

I. GOD THE CREATOR

Issues, cont.

- The Creator as Lord

“I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself” (Isa. 44:24).

- Biblical Worldview:
 - I live in a world made by God, for God, to glorify and obey God.
 - It is this key conviction that secularism has unhinged via evolution.

2. MAN CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it: and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

2. MAN CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Issues:

- Man was specially created for a covenantal relationship with God, for intimacy, and for communion via the Holy Spirit
 - “Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Gen. 2:7).
- As God’s “image,” Adam & Eve were to represent the Creator and his lordship in the world.
 - “Male and Female” to bear God’s image.
 - Since “God is love,” creation is only completed in the first marriage (Gen. 2:18).
- The Bible and the Confession do not emphasize man’s *rationality* or *erect stature*, but “knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness,” together with worship and dominion.
 - The “image” did not consist of participation in the divine essence, nor of God’s external form (which he does not have), but “consisted partly in the spirituality of the soul of man. . . . Likewise in the dominion assigned to him over the creatures.” (R. Shaw).
 - “But the image of God in man principally consisted in his conformity to the moral perfections of God, or in the complete rectitude of his nature.” (R. Shaw). Thus Paul writes that we were taught in Christ “to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness”(Eph. 4:23-24).

2. MAN CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Issues, cont:

- The liberty of man in his created state
 - God's law written on heart, with power to fulfill it, yet mutably.
- Man's liberty was under God's authority
 - The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil forbidden" (Gen. 2:17).
 - God as the epistemic center.
- Since God is the Creator, man in his image is a *maker* who shows *creativity*.
 - Every human being ought to be a maker and it is incumbent upon educators and politicians to create environments within which people can express this divinely implanted impulse. (D. Macleod).