

# THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

## WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

### QUESTIONS # 15 & 9.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #15. *What is the work of creation?*

A. The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.<sup>1</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #9. *What is the work of creation?*

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.<sup>2</sup>

---

Question 1—*What is meant by creation?*

*Answer*—The work of creation is not to be taken in the larger sense, as it is sometimes used in Scripture, to describe the production of things through any combination of secondary causation, *cf.* Ps. 104:30. This creation is to be taken strictly for the production of things out of nothing, or the giving of being to things which had none before, Heb. 1:2. This creation is to be understood to be twofold: 1.) An immediate creation, when things are brought forth out of nothing, where there was no pre-existent matter to work upon, Heb. 1:3. So, the heavens, the earth, the waters and all the materials of inferior bodies (that which is corporeal), were made of nothing, Ps. 33:6. Thus, also, the spirit, or life, of the individual man, being the agent of activity of man, is the immediate creation of God, Eccl. 12:7. 2.) A secondary or mediate creation, which is the making of things of pre-existing matter, but of such which is naturally unfit and altogether indisposed for such productions, and which could never by any power of secondary causation be brought to such form, Rom. 4:17. Thus, all beasts, cattle, and creeping things, as well as the body of man, were at first made of the earth and dust of the ground, Gen. 2:7; so, too, the body of the first woman was made of a rib taken out of the man, Gen. 2:21, 22.

That this world was made, that it had a beginning and was not eternal, is testified in the opening of the Scriptures, Gen. 1:1.

Question 2—*Who made the world?*

*Answer*—This answer, too, is contained in the very first verse of the Bible, Gen. 1:1. Wherein appears several inferences: 1.) The world could not make itself, which would imply the irrational contradiction that the world existed before it actually did exist, Ps. 100:3. That which is not in being, can have no production, for nothing can act before it exists, Eph. 2:10. 2.) The production of the world could not be by mere chance, the result of so many fortuitous circumstances, because nothing cannot produce something, Ps. 33:9. 3.) God, therefore, created all things, the world and all creatures that belong to it, for he attributes all this work to himself, Isa. 44:24. It is one of the peculiar glories and excellencies of God that he alone, exclusive of all creatures, gives being to those things

---

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 1; Heb. 11:3; Prov. 16:4.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 1; Heb. 11:3.

which have had no being before, Isa. 45:12. It is one of the limitations of the creature to be unable to contribute to this grand work of creation, Isa. 40:12, 13. The creative power of God far exceeds any real or imagined powers amongst the creatures of heaven or earth, Job 9:8. By this operation of creation, the true God is distinguished from all false gods and the fictitious deities which blinded nations adore, Jer. 10:11, 12.

Question 3—*What things did God make and of what did he make them?*

*Answer*—*First*, God made all things whatsoever they be that have being, Rev. 4:11. There is nothing that exists but that he made it creating in it its very being whereby it is made to subsist in the creation, Col. 1:16. It is notable that sin, being a defect in act, state or habit, 1 John 3:4; has no positive being and is not, therefore, attributable to God, Jas. 1:13-15; though he gives actual being to creatures, as creatures, and actions, as actions, yet not the defect of either, which is wholly attributable to those from which the sin proceeds, Ezek. 18:20. Those things that were made in the beginning were most properly created by God, Gen. 2:1. Also, whatsoever is or will be produced in the world, is still made by God, not only with respect that the matter whereof they are made was created by him, but because he is the first cause of all things, without whom second causes could produce nothing, so that, for example, whatever power one creature has of producing another, is from God, Job 33:4. The creature is impotent to produce anything according to nature, when God denies his concurrence, Ps. 139:13-16. God is the first cause and acts the same part in all the operations wherein all of the creatures are concerned, Hos. 2:21, 22. Indeed everything in the creation that has actual being is attributable ultimately to God who fails not in his creating, Isa. 40:26.

*Second*, all of these things, having their very being of God, were made of nothing, Heb. 11:3. They had no being until he gave it, and they had no form until he bestowed it, Col. 1:16; Rom. 11:36. All of this was accomplished not from some pre-existent matter, for there was none, nor by reason of any necessity of nature, for there was none, but only by the word of his power, Gen. 1:3. This powerful word is the first cause of the creation, John 1:1-3; and the only means by and through which the worlds were made, 2 Pet. 3:5.

Question 4—*In what space of time did God make all things?*

*Answer*—Speaking of the creation proper, it is clear from Moses' narrative that God made the world in the space of six days, Gen. 1. Although the decree of God, his eternal purpose, conceived of this world as a single intuitive production, yet God did not create this world *in* time but *with* time, *cf.* Gen. 1:1 *with* Rev. 10:6; whereby he carried out this creative work over the space of six days, Ex. 20:11.

Question 5—*Why and how were all things made?*

*Answer*—The end for which God has created all things is his own glory, Prov. 16:4. God, being the original and only self sufficient cause of all being, is that to which all things must necessarily be oriented, so that even natural things tend toward him: 1.) Declaring his glory in an objective way, Ps. 19:1. 2.) Stirring us up to seek him, and behold him as our chief good and portion, Acts 17:26, 27. 3.) Sustaining our life, and serving man, that he might serve God, 1 Cor. 10:31.

Since they were made for this purpose, God made everything very good, Gen. 1:31. In this, the wisdom of God and his great glory appear, Ps. 104:24, 31. Because of this, Christians are called upon to reject the notion that the creation is somehow inherently bad or evil, being material, so long as all is made subject to this eternal glory, 1 Tim. 4:4.