

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 17 & 10.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #17. *How did God create man?*

A. After God had made all other creatures, he created man male and female;¹ formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground,² and the woman of the rib of the man,³ endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls;⁴ made them after his own image,⁵ in knowledge,⁶ righteousness, and holiness;⁷ having the law of God written in their hearts,⁸ and power to fulfill it,⁹ and dominion over the creatures;¹⁰ yet subject to fall.¹¹

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #10. *How did God create man?*

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.¹²

Question 1—*When and after what manner did God create man?*

Answer—The time of man's creation was reserved for the time after that God had created all other things, visible and invisible, Gen. 1:27. Although the invisible things, being in themselves most excellent, were first created, Job 38:4-7; those things visible were created with reference to a relative importance, beginning with the lowest matter itself, whether celestial or terrestrial, *cf.* Ps. 19:1 *with* Gen. 1:1; and proceeding to the highest, as capable of glorifying God in and of itself, *cf.* Gen. 1:26 *with* Ps. 148:11-13. Thus, the creation of man was reserved for last, being a climax in that work, wherein the wisdom of God might appear in the movement from things less perfect to those more perfect, Col. 1:16. Man, who is the most excellent of the lower creation of the earth, is a specimen of the power, wisdom and goodness of him who formed man to glorify him, Eccl. 3:11.

There are several considerations of the manner in which God made man:

First, he made man with a difference of sex, Gen. 1:27. In the distinction of sex, they were two, but in their common humanity, they were one, whereby God called them by a single name, Gen. 5:2. Additionally, once distinguished, they were returned to this unity

¹ Gen. 1:27.

² Gen. 2:7.

³ Gen. 2:22.

⁴ Gen. 2:7 *compared with* Job 35:11; *and* Eccl. 12:7; *and* Matt. 10:28; *and* Luke 23:43.

⁵ Gen. 1:27.

⁶ Col. 3:10.

⁷ Eph. 4:24.

⁸ Rom. 2:14, 15.

⁹ Eccl. 7:29.

¹⁰ Gen. 2:22.

¹¹ Gen. 1:28.

¹² Gen. 3:6; Eccl. 7:29.

through marriage, Gen. 2:24. Adam was the male, and Eve the female, Gen. 4:1. There was no man before Adam, 1 Cor. 15:45. And, together with Eve, they were the first parents of all men, Gen. 3:20. Hence, it is said that all men are descend from a common stock, or kind, Acts 17:26.

Second, the constituent parts of man, being the constitution or frame of the human nature, consist in soul and body, Ps. 139:14, 15; with respect to the first, he is created a little lower than the angels, Ps. 8:5; with regard to the other part, he is of the earth, earthy, and on a level with the lower creation, 1 Cor. 15:47.

As to the body, it was formed of the dust of the ground, Gen. 2:7. From that, God called him by the name *Adam*, which signifies *red earth*, Gen. 5:1, 2; the “dust” connoting a combination of water and earth to make clay, *cf.* John 9:6. Of this humble origin, man is reminded after the Fall, Gen. 3:19. This is a remembrance that befits all men coming before the Lord, Gen. 18:27; for it is a character which belongs to all men, Eccl. 12:7.

Again, when considering the woman, the reason for her formation is assigned with relation to the man, Gen. 2:18. The woman is formed, or built, from the rib of the man, Gen. 2:22. This closeness of the sexes, the woman being formed from the man, argues a nearness of relation and unalienable affection which ought to be between a man and his wife, Gen. 2:23, 24; which is confirmed by Christ, Matt. 19:5. The distinction of sex and the secondary formation of the woman argue that there is a pre-eminence in sex, though not in nature, 1 Tim. 2:11-13; 1 Cor. 11:7-9.

As to the soul, it is of a far loftier origin than the body, Gen. 2:7. It is an incorporeal or spiritual substance, different from the body, Zech. 12:1; whereby God is distinguished from men (or, what is earthy) as the source of spirit being, Heb. 12:9. This soul, as the seat of animal life, consists in the ability to impart this same life, Gen. 4:1; 5:3; which men share with lower animals, brute beasts, Gen. 7:15. Yet, the soul of man is different in origin and end than that of other animals, Eccl. 3:21. Because it is not simply living but oriented, in its very creation, by God, it is his peculiar gift and possession, Eccl. 12:7. Therefore, stemming from the breath of God, man's soul is created reasonable, capable of receiving that knowledge which is necessary for communion with God, Job 35:11. Furthermore, it is made immortal, not subject to death, as to the dissolution of its substance, Matt. 10:28; whereby it is created to live forever in that communion of the paradise of God, Luke 23:43.

Question 2—How did God create man?

Answer—God created man, both male and female, after his own image, Gen. 1:27; which is Christ, the eternal Son of God made flesh, Col. 1:15. Both, as to nature, are created after this same image, though only the man, as to person, reflects his glory directly, 1 Cor. 11:7. This subordination of sex is a matter of order (the man was formed first), but not a natural distinction, since both are created in the same image, which in Christ, expresses the image of God as well as reflects his glory, Heb. 1:3.

This image consists in three things: 1.) Knowledge, wherein believers are recreated in that which was lost by the Fall, Col. 3:10. Knowledge is necessary to that eternal life whereunto man was created, John 17:3. It is the light by which communion with God is made possible, especially since the Fall, 2 Cor. 4:6. 2.) Righteousness, which is that rectitude wherein man stood prior to the Fall and is now restored in Christ, Eph. 4:24. Righteousness is a perfect conformity of the will of man to the will of God, Ps. 45:6, 7. It consists in neither turning to the right hand nor to the left so as to stray from the will and

command of God, Prov. 4:27. 3.) Holiness, without which no man can see the Lord, Heb. 12:14. Holiness is the pure and orderly affection toward all that is right and good according to the will and command of God, Ps. 94:15; 1 Thess. 4:7; which is also restored in Christ, Eph. 4:24.

Question 3—*Wherein does it appear that God created man in his own image?*

Answer—First, God created man with an innate knowledge of what was required by writing the law upon his heart, Rom. 2:14, 15. This law, being the foundation of conscience, is that which bears witness to a knowledge of right and wrong in all matters of natural morality, Acts 23:1. It consists of all that might be known of God naturally, or by nature, Rom. 1:18, 19; but it could not consist in that knowledge which could not be discerned in and from nature, e.g., Gen. 2:16, 17. Nevertheless, even that knowledge of the natural moral law is suppressed due to sin, 1 Tim. 4:2; because the entrance of sin did not only overturn the positive command of God's law, whereby man was instructed in the proper worship and service of God, but it also defiled the conscience, whereby man knows the content of natural morality, Tit. 1:15.

Second, man was not created in pure naturals, or bare faculties, which were neither good nor evil, but was created good with a disposition and power to fulfil that law, Eccl. 7:29. This disposition and power constituted part of the original goodness of the creation, Gen. 1:31. There was no combat between the flesh and spirit prior to the Fall; for, as Paul explains, even a corrupt will or inclination, which might be supposed if man was not created upright, is sin, Rom. 7:7. Yet, another apostle assures us that the notion that man, being made of such matter as he is, would be accompanied with any flaw in will or inclination is false and of another origin, 1 John 2:16. Though this disposition was not of bare nature, yet it was natural to the creation of the man being made in the likeness of God, Gen. 5:1.

Third, God created man with a dominion over the inferior creatures, whereby he had a right to dispose of them according to his pleasure, Gen. 1:28. This dominion was not absolute and unlimited but always dependent upon God, Deut. 25:4. Thus, it is the mark of a righteous man to consider the interests of his beast in mercy, since by man sin entered into this world, Prov. 12:10; Gen. 33:13, 14.

Question 4—*Was man, by reason of his creation, still mutable and subject to fall?*

Answer—Yes, notwithstanding the advantageous circumstances in which the man was created, he was subject to fall, Rom. 5:12. This was not by any force or compulsion of nature, because he was fitted to a perfect obedience by nature, but by an unwarranted act arising from the liberty of his own will, he fell, Eccl. 7:29. Furthermore, the devil had no power to force his will, nor could he lay a snare to entangle and destroy man, but the man had enough wisdom, had he improved his faculties, to avoid it, 1 Tim. 2:14. Yet, it is evident from the event that he was subject to fall, Gen. 3:6.