

Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER 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.

Scripture References: Gen. 1:27. Col. 3:10. Eph. 4:24. Gen. 1:28.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between the creation of other creatures and the creation of man?

God simply commanded the other creatures into existence; but when man was created the Trinity decided that man should be made in the image of God.

2. Why is this difference important?

It is important as man is God's only self-conscious creature that He has created. God made man in his mental and moral image. Dr. Albertus Pieters says, "It involves self-conscious reasoning power, the capacity for self-determination, and moral sense. In other words, to be a being that can say, 'I am, I ought, I will,' — this it is to be made in the image of God."

3. Why did God create man?

Man was created by God that man should serve his Creator. God does not exist for man's sake but man exists for God's sake, to serve and to glorify Him forever.

4. What kind of knowledge, righteousness and holiness did man have at his creation?

Man's knowledge was a perfect knowledge of God, of his duty and of many other things for which we probably strive today. Man's righteousness was an inherent righteousness which enabled God to declare him as "very good." Man's holiness was the hidden root of his righteousness that was shining forth in his heart.

5. What sort of dominion did man have over the creatures?

God made man head of the world. He was given the right to reign over the creatures and name them. He was to rule them for God's glory and his own good.

6. In so many of our schools today the theory of Theistic evolution is being taught. Is this consistent with the teaching of Scripture?

No. Theistic Evolution (Evolution as God's method of Creation) is not consistent with the Scripture.

The position of the Bible could be outlined in this way:

1. The Bible says God created out of nothing and this creation included every thing which has or will or can exist. It all owes its being and substance as well as its form to God. Though this is bewildering to man, it is absolutely necessary if we are to hold to the Christian faith.

2. The Bible says that God is eternal, not that matter is eternal as would be necessary for any theory of evolution.

3. The Bible says man came into existence by a special creative act of a free, self-determined will.

4. Recognizing that we must reject both evolution in its atheistic connotation, and the philosophical overtones of evolution as a way of leaving God out of the universe, we must recognize that there is possible such a thing as variation and such would not contradict Scripture. There is much we do not understand about the ways and means God has used to bring man and the world to their present state. But that variation is within the limitations of the norm set up by God, as presented in the Scriptures, and is not to be confused with evolution.

BACK TO GENESIS!

In his unparalleled book, "A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards", Dr. James Benjamin Green states, "The best knowledge is the knowledge of God. The next best is the knowledge of man. The Jew came saying, Know thy God. The Greek came saying, Know thyself. The Christian comes saying, Know thy God and thyself in Jesus Christ."

When we are faced with the problem of the origin of man, we would point all to the divinely inspired words, "In the beginning God. . ." The call we have to all is: Back to Genesis and be thankful for this remarkable and incredible truth of God's Word!

There are too many today who want to substitute their view of the origin of things for the doctrine taught in Scripture. It seems that the devil himself, in his most conniving manner, is saying, "If I can just get that young person wrapped up in the theory that man evolved from the simplest forms of matter and life and developed by a perfectly natural process, then the Bible will not mean much to him." And so it has been proven time and time again. When a person accepts evolution rather than the creation doctrine of the Scripture, and refuses to believe that man was the result of a special Creative Act of God, then the God of the Bible is no longer the Creator and Sustainer.

The time has come today for all Christians to recognize the dangers of this false doctrine and especially the important part it plays in the theory of those who deny the inspiration of the Bible. Nothing less than a full committal to the creation doctrine of the Bible will keep us from the apostasy that breaks down the church of the living God.

We should remember that the Creator is supreme. He is the absolute cause of all that happens, the eternal and all-blessed Being that chose to create the world through His will.

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