

## HARTS STUDENT'S CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

### CHAPTER IX

#### FIRST ARTICLE OF THE CREED (Continued)

##### Creator of Heaven and Earth

###### God's design in Creation

"God" we are told in the Catechism, "*is called Creator heaven and earth, because He made heaven and earth, and all things out of nothing, by His word.*" Catholic doctrine tells us that God, the Supreme Spirit, who alone exists of Himself, and to whom nothing is impossible or difficult, is the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all things, visible and invisible. Not because He needed it did God create the world, but because, being infinitely good, He would impart of His goodness to other beings; and, though He created the world for His own greater honour and glory, and stood in no need of creatures, yet, for the good and happiness of all rational creatures, He chose to manifest His power and magnificence in the creation of the world.

###### God the Creator

Now as by *Creator* we mean one who gives being to what before was not; one who causes to exist what before did not exist; one who makes a thing out of nothing; and by *creature* that which is produced out of nothing; it follows that an all-powerful, necessary, self-existing Being, God alone, can create, and that all things, except God, are creatures: "*In the beginning God created heaven and earth*" (Gen. i. 1). And in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel: "*All things were made by Him; and without Him was made nothing that was made.*" Yet again, in the Psalms. "*He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created*" (Ps. cxlviii. 5).

###### The world created in time

It is in the first Book of Genesis that we find recorded the history of the Creation. Faith, then, teaches us that the world did not always exist but was created in time, or in the beginning of time: "*In the beginning God created heaven and earth.*" God had only to will it, and all that exists out of Himself—the beautiful earth which we inhabit, all the visible universe, the stars of heaven, all living things, plants, animals, and men, and those invisible pure spirits, the Angels—all sprang into being: "*He spoke, and they were made.*"

But Man, the last of God's creatures in time, was after the Angels, the most perfect of God's works, since he, like them, was endowed with intelligence and free-will.

### **God's Providence**

When the work of Creation was ended, God did not leave it to chance, but, by the same power of His will with which he had created it, He continued to preserve and to govern it. By His Divine Providence, He has care of all things, and in His wisdom and goodness directs all things to the end for which he created them: "*God made the little and the great, and He hath equally care of all*" (Wis. vi. 8). "*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father*" (Matt. x. 29).

### **God forbids but permits sin**

If, then, God orders and directs all things, how comes it that there is so much sin and misery in the world? Now as regards sin, God wills it not; He forbids it, yet permits it. He gives us grace and abundant help to avoid it; He uses threats to deter us from it, but He will not constrain us, since, having created man with a free will, He leaves him to follow it. Yet He knows how to avail Himself of this evil of sin in order to carry out His eternal decrees; "*You thought evil against me; but God turned it into good*" (Gen. I. 20).

### **Sufferings permitted and ordained**

But as for sufferings, persecutions, afflictions, and misfortunes, these God not only permits, but Himself ordains for our good: "*Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God*" (Ecclus. xi. 14). "*If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?*" (Job ii. 10). Even if our afflictions arise from the perversity of men, it is equally the will of God as far as our sufferings and our personal merit are concerned. He would have the *sinner* acknowledge the chastisement and mend his ways, that he may not perish everlastingly; the *just* man He would wean from the world, and purify more and more, that he may abound in merit and receive in heaven the priceless reward of his patient suffering: "*Not by your counsel was I sent hither, but by the will of God*" (Gen. xlv. 8). "*Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you. . . . Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven*" (Matt. v. 11, 12).