



knowing God & man

Herman
Hoeksema



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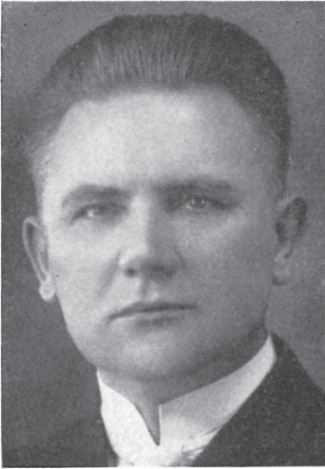
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“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens...When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

Psalm 8:1, 3, 4

Announcing. . .

The Protestant Reformed Hour



Featuring. . .

- *Herman Hoeksema, V.D.M.
Speaker*
- *Mixed Choir*

Beginning

Sunday, October 12, 1941 at 4:15 O'clock

- W - L - A - V -

1340 ON YOUR DIAL

Sponsored by the Young Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church

Original Broadcast Dates/Titles for the Radio Lectures in This Book

(live broadcasts over WLAV,
Grand Rapids, Michigan)

1941

Six Radio Lectures on God

October 12	“God Is God” (inaugural program)
October 19	“God Is the Creator”
October 26	“God Is the Lord
November 2	“God Is Good”
November 9	“God Is the Living God”
November 23	“God Is Love”

1942

Seven Radio Lectures on Man

January 4	“Man Is a Living Soul”
January 11	“Man, the Image of God”
January 18	“Man, the Friend of God”
January 25	“The Freedom of Man”
February 1	“Man Is a Fallen Creature”
February 8	“The Universality of Sin”
February 15	“The Totality of Depravity”

Facing page is an advertisement for the new radio series.
This appeared in the *Beacon Lights* of October 1941, page 30.

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Foreword

The Reformed Witness Hour, a ministry of the Protestant Reformed Churches, began in October 1941 as *The Protestant Reformed Hour*. In response to the request of the Young Men's Society of First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Rev. Herman Hoeksema agreed to be the radio minister of this fledgling program, choosing for his first message the theme "God is God." In so doing, Hoeksema set the distinctive course he believed the radio program should follow. His messages, printed here in book form, express what believers of the Reformed faith consider to be the most basic message the church must boldly declare to the world: that God is everything and man trails in the dust; that man is never more than an unworthy sinner before God, by grace now overwhelmed in wonder and praise.

These chapters contain vital lessons for evangelism. Prepared for a broader audience than the instituted congregation, the messages contain necessary lessons for converts to the Christian faith. True evangelism, according to Hoeksema, brings men to an understanding of the glory of God. These messages were intended for the ear of those unacquainted with the Reformed faith, teaching us that the goal of evangelism must be to call men to worship and adore the absolutely sovereign and glorious God. This is refreshing. Listening to evangelistic appeals uttered today, one gets the impression that God must prove his relevance to the creature in order to gain man's consideration. Hoeksema's messages see it the other way. God is not at a man's disposal to do with the Sovereign as he thinks best. Instead, man exists for the pleasure of God and can only find his happiness in bowing in complete submission to the one true and adorable God.

These expositions are unique in their devotional value. The reader will find them truly uplifting. Each chapter explains the fundamental truth of God and man as revealed in all of the Scriptures. The word of God speaks in these sermons from beginning to end as the living truth abiding in the hearts of believers. It is our prayer that as you read, you will be humbled, thrilled, amazed, satisfied, and stirred in your soul as God is revealed to you in all his matchless magnificence, and as you are pointed to the living God as the only haven of comfort.

May this volume serve to promote the spread of the one fundamental and crucial message of the church to the world: “God is God!”

REV. CARL HAAK

Radio Pastor of the Reformed Witness Hour

◆ Part 1 ◆

Knowing God



God Is God

*Ye are my witnesses,
saith the LORD,
that I am God.*
Isaiah 43:12

God is God. You say, perhaps, this is a truism. But if it is, it is one that may well be emphatically repeated and loudly proclaimed by the church of Jesus Christ in the world, especially in the world of today.

The world speaks a good deal about man: of man's power and ingenuity, of his mighty achievements in practically every department of life, of his development and progress in subjecting the world to himself, and of his evident success in making this world a proper and pleasant place in which to live. It speaks of man's inherent goodness and lauds his humanitarianism and philanthropy. The world also speaks of man's salvation, but even then it is emphatically *man's* salvation that is the subject of discussion: a salvation after his own heart, conceived by his own imagination. It speaks of Christ, but this is *man's* Christ, not the Christ of God and of the Scriptures. Finally, the world frequently speaks of God, for man is indeed religious; yet it is of *man's* God, a god who is the product of man's invention, a god who really has a place in the world by the grace of man, and a god upon whom man occasionally bestows the privilege of calling upon him, especially when he is in trouble. But this

is a god who is not God at all. As the well-known theologian Karl Barth expressed it, man imagines that he can say “God” by loudly shouting “Man!” All the more urgent, then, becomes the calling of the church to proclaim that God is *God*.

The supreme and, in a sense, the only task of the church in the world is to preach the word of God. If there is a word of God to be proclaimed by the church, however, it needs to be a word that God himself speaks, and that he speaks concerning himself. If God speaks concerning himself, the basic and all-pervading note of that speech must inevitably be, “I am God.”

God is God. Unless the church proclaims this truth in all its implications, in all its purity, and without compromise, she cannot preach; she has nothing to say. Unless she proclaims this truth, not as *one* of the tenets of her faith but as the truth of all truths, not occasionally but always, she forfeits the right and lacks the power to say anything at all about man, the world, Christ, salvation, life and death, and sin and grace. It is to this supreme calling of the church that the Lord himself calls the attention of his people and enjoins upon them in Isaiah 43:12: “Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.”

The Lord willing, we will make this theme—that God is God—the keynote, whatever is the particular subject of our discussion: God, man, Christ, salvation, the church, the world, sin, grace, life, or death. Do not object that we express a mere truism or that we make ourselves guilty of uttering a tautology, a vain repetition, when we say that God is God, as if a man were asked to give a definition of a horse and he would say, “A horse is a horse,” or as if he were asked to describe a tree and he would answer, “A tree is a tree,” or as if he were asked, “What is a triangle?” and he would reply, “A triangle is a triangle.” In these cases you would rightly judge that the man had said nothing, that he had made himself guilty of vain repetition, because he did not give any further knowledge of the horse, of the tree, or of the triangle. He utterly failed to give definitions.

As long as you inquire after any created or man-made object, you may rightly expect a definition. But this cannot be applied to God. He cannot be defined. The creature belongs to our world. God does not belong to our world. He is God. The creature is the object of our perception and investigation. God is not such an object. He is the invisible, the infinite, the eternal, who dwells in an inaccessible light. The creature is one of many; God is *one*. The creature may be compared, classified, and defined; God is the incomparable one who can never be defined.

Man can either affirm or deny that the creature exists. We can describe the creature and say what it is. We can trace its origin, perhaps, and say from whence it comes, but about God, who shall say anything at all? Man—mere man—cannot affirm that God is or deny God's existence. Whatever man says of himself about God is surely a lie. Only when we hear God's word as he speaks concerning himself can we know him and talk about him. It is this truth that we try to express in the proposition *God is God*. By it we not only admit, but also emphatically express, that we cannot define him, that of ourselves we can neither know nor say anything about him, that we cannot even say *God* unless he first speaks to us concerning himself. God is God!

The church is witness: she testifies that God is God. That is her calling. For this very purpose she was chosen and called out of the world. The fact that she is witness implies that she hears and believes the word of God. She is the recipient of revelation. When she proclaims that God is God, she does not speak of herself, but through revelation.

A so-called church that denies God's revelation cannot be God's witness. A church that puts reason, philosophy, experience, or anything else in place of revelation has no message. It cannot preach that God is God.

The true church does not pretend to know anything about God of herself. She lives and draws all her knowledge of God from

his revelation. By this she understands that God has spoken to her in times past, and that in these last days he has spoken to her through the Son, “whom he [God] hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds,” who is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:2, 3). By the word of God the church lives, for she possesses this word in the holy Scriptures, and through these Scriptures God still speaks to his church by the Holy Spirit whom he has given to her. The church, therefore, does indeed hear the word of God.

By means of this word, God clearly announces that he is God: infinitely different from and transcendent above all that is called creature; wonderful in power and wisdom; out of whom, through whom, and unto whom are all things. He is not like the creature. He is God, for he reveals himself as the creator of all things. He calls the things that are not as if they were (Rom. 4:17). Only God who is God is able to create. No idol has this power. Man can only call forth the things that are; God calls the things that are not. “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Ps. 33:6). When God said, “Let there be light,” there was light (Gen. 1:3). “For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Ps. 33:9). Therefore, by faith the church knows and insists “that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3).

Through this revelation of himself as creator, God gives testimony to the church that he is, and that he is God. He calls to the church through his word and Spirit:

To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal?
 . . . Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath
 created these things, that bringeth out their host by
 number: he calleth them all by names by the great-

ness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth (Isa. 40:25, 26).

It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in (Isa. 40:22).

It is for this reason, above all, that the church cannot possibly accept the theory of evolution or even make a compromise with it. The church hears the word of God through the creation's clear witness to her that God is God.

Another element in revelation still more clearly and gloriously proclaims that God is God. He not only calls the things that are not as if they were, but he also quickens the dead. He is not only creator, but he is also redeemer. Man fell, and we lie in the midst of death. The wrath of God kills us, and there is no way out. Not all the ingenuity and wisdom and power of man can show us the way out of death. But God is God. In the fullness of time he sent his only begotten Son into the world. His name is "Wonderful," indeed (Isa. 9:6). The Word of God that is with God and is God—by whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made that is made—*that* Word "was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 3, 14). And he entered into our death, into the deepest darkness of our woe, for he was delivered for our transgressions. By his death he redeemed his own whom God had given him before the foundation of the world, and he obtained for them righteousness and eternal life and glory. God raised him from the dead. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God revealed himself as the one who quickens the dead. God thereby spoke to the church that he is God, for the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, gives to his church the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of himself and enlightens the eyes of her understanding so that she may know "what is the ex-

ceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:19, 20). Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, God tells the church that he is God.

For the church to be witness of this implies not only that the church hears and believes the word of God and professes to know nothing about God of herself, but it also means that the church speaks and that her speech is strictly a testimony. The church is called to speak. She is under authority to speak. She has no choice in the matter, for God has chosen and ordained her for this very purpose. She has neither the alternative whether to speak or not to speak, nor the choice of what shall be the content of her speech. Always she must say, “God is God.” The church cannot refrain from speaking, because the divine calling she has is irresistible. When God directs his omnipotent word to the church, saying, “Ye are my witnesses,” the word becomes a fire in her bones, an overwhelming power that impels the church to speak. This is the reason the church institutes the ministry of the word wherever she comes to manifestation in the world. She must proclaim that God is God. The character and form of her speech is that of a testimony, for she witnesses of the word of God that she hears.

The church does not philosophize about God. She does not pretend to prove that God *is*, or that he is *God*. Often the church is tempted by the powers of opposition to forsake her character as witness. Over against those who deny that God is and that he is God, she attempts to demonstrate the existence of God rationally. She argues that the world must have a cause and that this cause is God. Or she points out that a being must exist who corresponds to the universal idea of God among men. Or the church points to the design undeniably manifested in all things and attempts to draw the conclusion that

there must be a designer, and that this designer is God. However well intended all these attempts may be, they are quite devoid of power to prove that God is God. By making these attempts, the church forsakes her character as witness and steps over into the domain of philosophy. But philosophy can never find the God who is God. Human reason can never find him who lies beyond the scope of reason. The finite cannot prove the existence of the infinite.

Therefore, when the church speaks, her speech must always assume the form of a testimony. She must preach, and to preach is to witness. This does not mean that the testimony of the church is irrational, but it does mean that the church speaks only through revelation. It is irrational, indeed, to say that God does not exist or to deny that he is God. It is even irrational to pretend that we, of ourselves, can say anything about God. What God says concerning himself, which is the word of God that the church hears, is rational in the highest sense. The church speaks only through revelation. She testifies of what she has heard of the word of God. She is witness. Only as a witness can she possibly proclaim that God is God.

This testimony of the church to the most fundamental of all truths—that God is God—is and must be opposed by the world, by natural man. The world's contradiction of this testimony is not to be explained as a mere intellectual error or fallacy of reason. Rather, its cause must be found in sin. The contradiction is ethical. One, speaking out of himself, spoke the lie. His lie was, "Ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3:5). This was tantamount to saying, "God is *not* God." This lie of Satan Adam preferred to the word of God. And man still prefers it, because he is in darkness. The carnal mind is enmity against God. Therefore, the fundamental truth that God is God, the sinner, the carnal man, always contradicts.

The sinner's contradiction assumes different forms and expresses itself in various ways. The heathen, even those of the

Greco-Roman world, celebrated for its culture, expressed this contradiction by representing God as an image of man or beast. Paul writes of this horror in Romans 1:21–23:

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

One does not have to make an image of silver or gold or stone or wood in order to express this fundamental contradiction. All philosophy that refuses to live by revelation commits the same corruption. Sometimes it directly denies that God *is*, proudly calling itself atheism and thus making the most irrational statement in the name of reason. “There is no God,” the fool says in his heart (Ps. 14:1).

At other times philosophy identifies God with the world. Pantheism denies the transcendence of God and thereby contradicts the truth that God is God. If God is the world and the world is God, he belongs to the world in time and space and cannot be God, the infinite, the eternal, the immutable and incomprehensible one.

Philosophy also calls its god “the first cause,” the cause of all causes. But even so, this god is not God, for the cause belongs to the effect. If God is the first cause of the world, he belongs to the world and is not God at all.

Man who refuses to hear the word of God, who stands in enmity against God, and who speaks of himself about God, always contradicts the testimony of the church that God is God.

This contradiction is not a harmless error. No one can deny that God is God with impunity, because God will have his

honor, and he will be glorified as God. He is filled with holy wrath against all who trample his glory and honor in the dust. His wrath is revealed in this: denying that God is God, the world is led to, and actually seeks, its own destruction.

The apostle Paul speaks of this in that memorable first chapter of his epistle to the Romans. His words may be hard for us to hear, but the truth of them one can see realized in every department of life in the modern world wherever it is denied that God is God. The apostle writes that because men “glorified him not as God, neither were thankful” (Rom. 1:21); because they “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things” (v. 23); and because they “changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever” (v. 25)—because they did these things, God “gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves” (v. 24); to “vile affections” (v. 26); and to “a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (v. 28). Thus men were revealed as “being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful” (vv. 29–31).

Perhaps you say, as did the people of Capernaum to Jesus, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” (John 6:60). Do not imagine, however, that these terrible indictments are brought against uncivilized hordes or tribes in the wilds of Africa, for the apostle wrote them about the Greco-Roman world, proud of its progress in art and science and culture of all kinds, boasting of its power and knowledge of human justice. Remember, too, that all these corruptions are due not to any lack of culture, but to the denial of the fundamental truth that God

is God. The contradiction of the testimony of the church is lived out and realized in man's whole life: the life of his body, the life of his soul, the life of his mind, and the life of his will. In every domain of life, his contradiction bears its fruit: in the home and in society, in national and international relationships. The result is destruction. Therefore, the testimony that God is God the church must proclaim emphatically over against all who oppose the truth and change it into a lie.

Blessed, indeed, are the people who know this God who is God blessed forever. It is true that God is God, and therefore he cannot be comprehended. The finite cannot comprehend the infinite; time cannot compass eternity. But there is a difference between knowledge and comprehension, and comprehension is not necessary for knowledge. Although in the very testimony that God is God the church confesses that God cannot be comprehended, she also proclaims that he is knowable, and that he is known. He is known because he has revealed himself. He has revealed himself not merely as God, but also as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loves his church with an eternal and unfathomable love; who reconciles his people to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; who delivers them from the power of sin and death; and who gives them life eternal in the knowledge of himself.

We know God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and not merely with our head, intellectually, as theology knows him; we also know him with our heart, spiritually, so that we taste that he is good and the overflowing fountain of all good. We know him and have fellowship with him, and we hear him tell us that we are his friends, his sons and daughters. We know him, and in this knowledge we have eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Let the church of Jesus Christ in the world clearly understand her calling and emphatically proclaim—always and everywhere—that God is God!

God Is the Creator

*Happy is he that hath
the God of Jacob for his help,
whose hope is in the LORD his God:
Which made heaven, and earth,
the sea, and all that therein is.*

Psalm 146:5, 6

Much emphasis is placed throughout the holy Scriptures on the truth that God is the creator of the world, of the heavens and the earth and all their manifold fullness. With the revelation of this truth, the Scriptures open. The first verse of the Bible makes the amazing statement, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). I say *amazing*, for by this declaration we are at once carried far beyond all that eye can see or that ear can hear or that can arise in the heart of man. It transcends mere human comprehension.

No historian can possibly take his starting point in this “beginning.” He may go back to very ancient times; he may carry his historical research into the remote past; but never will he be able to approach this beginning—the beginning in the absolute sense. He cannot because he is a child of time, limited by time in all his conceptions. One who imagines or pretends that his mind has reached out into this beginning of which the first verse of the Bible speaks would nevertheless be forced in his own thinking to extend the mysterious line of time to

before this beginning and give the lie to his own statement by the question, “And what was *before* this beginning?” A beginning before which there is no time, with respect to which it is even absurd to speak of a “before,” no human mind can possibly apprehend.

Nor can mere philosophy ever approach this beginning. It may explain or pretend to explain the origin of all things from the elements of water or fire or air or earth, as did the ancient Greeks, or it may prefer with modern philosophy to speak of a fiery mist or of an original protoplasm or cell as the origin of the world. Still, it will be evident to all who refuse to be deceived by mere high-sounding phrases that this mist or cell is just as far distant from the beginning as is the world that is supposed to have developed from it.

Scripture is neither history nor human philosophy. It is revelation. In Scripture the eternal and infinite God speaks—not some child of time or a finite human intellect. And so Scripture carries us, in its very first verse, to the very edge of time, the beginning, and there it calls us to lift up our eyes to the eternal one and say, “In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). Faith, and emphatically faith alone—that faith which is an evidence of things unseen and the substance of things hoped for—responds, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3).

The first chapter of the Bible continues to speak of the orderly formation of the heavens and the earth, of the entire universe. It describes the wonderful work of God as from the original chaotic waters he caused the several creatures to arise, one after the other, in an ascending scale, all distinct from one another, hemmed in by the boundaries of their own laws that they might not transgress, yet all intimately related and interdependent, so that together they constituted one whole: the light and the firmament, that “molten looking glass” (Job

37:18); the dry land with its hills and valleys, its rivers and lakes and streams, its herbs and grass and trees and flowers; the heavenly luminaries, fixed in their orbs to rule the day and the night and to give light upon the earth; the fish of the sea and the fowls of the air; cattle and beasts of the forest and creeping things; and, last of all, at the very pinnacle of all earthly things, made after the image of God, was man, in whose heart the whole creation converged, unto whom all creatures were subjected in order that they might serve man, and that man might then serve his God. An endless variety of creatures was formed, yet one harmonious whole; for God is one, and all the works of his hands are one.

This emphasis upon the truth that God is creator is continued throughout the holy Scriptures. The church inspired by the Spirit of Christ, the church redeemed yet still in the midst of death and looking for her full redemption, loves to sing of God her creator and the creator of all things. He founded the earth and its fullness upon the seas and established it upon the waters (Ps. 24:2). “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (33:6). Especially in times of great stress, when the cause of God’s Son and his covenant seem to suffer defeat in the world, the church appeals for her deliverance to the God who made the heavens and the earth, because creation and redemption are inseparably connected. You cannot deny the one and hold on to the other. The philosophy of evolution is not only a denial of God the creator, but it also lacks salvation. It is the philosophy of despair.

But the church looks up to her creator for redemption and deliverance. And thus she appeals to him: “The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter” (Ps. 74:16, 17). Or in the words of that covenant song, Psalm 89, that sings of the everlasting mercies of David, “The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for

the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them” (v. 11). “The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land” (95:5). Of old he laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands (102:25).

The church’s help, therefore, comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth (Ps. 121:2; Ps. 124:8). “Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is” (146:5, 6). He settled the mountains and brought forth the hills; he made the earth and prepared the heavens; “he set a compass upon the face of the depth; . . . he established the clouds above” and “strengthened the fountains of the deep; . . . he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment”; and “he appointed the foundations of the earth” (Prov. 8:25–29).

The Lord himself calls the attention of his people to the greatness of his power as the creator when he asks, “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?” (Isa. 40:12, 13).

The Lord calls to his people, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth” (v. 26).

He, the Holy One of Israel who called his servant Cyrus to liberate the people of God, is the same who made the earth and created man upon it. His hands stretched out the heavens and commanded all their host (Isa. 45:1, 12). He created all things by and for Jesus Christ, the firstborn of every creature and the first begotten of the dead (Col. 1:15, 16; Rev. 1:5). He calls the things that are not as if they were and raises the dead (Rom. 4:17). And he is “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom

the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. 3:14, 15). The four and twenty elders in the apocalyptic vision fall down and worship him who sits upon the throne, offering him this adoration: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

Being instructed by the Spirit of Christ through the Scriptures, the church still witnesses and has the high calling to proclaim, “God is the creator.” She cannot afford to change this testimony and substitute something else in its stead if she will be faithful to her calling to be a witness of God in the world. The truth that God created the heavens and the earth is of first importance, not primarily because it concerns the origin of the world, but because it is basic for the knowledge of God. Creation is revelation. When God made all things by the Word of his mouth and all the host of heaven by his Spirit, he revealed himself. He spoke. And he spoke concerning himself. He spoke to *us*. The infinite Word of God proceeded out of his mouth in a manifold variety of concrete, finite words. The eternal Word went out into time. God called the things that are not as if they were. He framed the worlds by his Word, for “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (v. 3). Of *nothing*, that is, only of and through and by himself, God made the heavens and the earth. Creation was purely and absolutely an act of God. Nothing determined God. Nothing limited him. Nothing counseled or aided him. He used no means, for there were none. There was no material from which the world could be formed; there was no space in which the world could be fixed; there was no time in which the world could develop. “In the beginning God.” Nothing more can be said. Nothing more can be added. God is the creator!

Therefore, creation was an act of self-revelation on the part of God. By it he made himself known as God who is God indeed, the one who is infinite in power and wisdom, glorious in all

his perfections. Through the act of creation, God revealed himself as the Lord who, although he is also immanent in the world, is transcendent above the world and stands to that world in a relation of free sovereignty, or sovereign freedom. He does whatever he pleases. The creator is the creation's Lord. By the act of creation, God revealed himself as the all-wise master-artificer who knows the end from the beginning and adapts the beginning to the end, creation to redemption. The creator is also the redeemer, and as the redeemer he creates. Through the act of creation, God made himself known as the Almighty who has all the power. Only by an act of his omnipotent will were the worlds called into existence. God is the creator!

Yes, the church must witness that God is the creator. She must preach it. She must teach it to her children. She may not tolerate the teaching of anything else to her children, her sons and her daughters, in schools and colleges and universities. The church must not exchange this testimony for the language of the wisdom of man. She must not speak of an eternal material or matter from which the world was made. Some ancient pagan philosophers tried to explain the origin of the world from the action of a good god upon some already existing evil material. To this evil material they traced the present world's sin and suffering, which would ultimately be overcome by the good god. Even modern philosophers speak of an eternal matter, but the church's confession that God is the creator postulates nothing between God and the origin of the universe. It makes her look up from "the beginning" directly and immediately at the eternal God alone. "In the beginning God." God is the creator!

The church must not change the testimony that God is the creator into the language of philosophy that says he is the "source" of all things, for a source does not create. If God is the source of the world, creation merely emanates from him, even as the light issues forth from the sun. Then creation does

not have its origin in an intelligent will, but in the necessarily evolving being of God. Then God himself develops into the world. He is not distinct from the world, not transcendent above it. In this case the world is only a part of God, a form of his existence. Following up the line of this proud philosophy, one loses God and Christ, for according to its ideas, man is but an emanation of God, part of the divine Spirit, and his redemption really consists in his attaining to a clear consciousness of his own divinity. Then the supposed great significance of Christ is that in him this God-consciousness broke through in all its fullness and clarity. In such a philosophy, Christ is the Son of God indeed, but so are all men sons of God in the same sense that Christ is. This view says that the supreme significance of Christ is that he taught the worth and importance of *man*, and that through Christ's teaching all men can come to the realization of the great truth that they are sons of God. Thus the philosophy that God is the "source" of the world wrecks the very foundations of the Christian faith. But the church witnesses that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, that all things were called into existence by God's omnipotent will. God is the creator!

Nor may the church adopt the language of philosophy that substitutes a "first cause" for God the creator. Unbelieving man thinks and reasons according to the law of cause and effect. When a stone is thrown up into the air and falls to earth, we say that gravitation is the cause of the stone's falling. When the tides rise and recede in the ocean at regular intervals, we explain that the tides are the effect of the moon's gravity upon the mighty deep. Day and night, heat and cold, summer and winter, the flashing lightning and the roaring thunder, health and sickness, life and death—all would then be subject to the law of cause and effect. Philosophers argue that the whole universe must also have a cause, a final or first cause, and that this first cause is God. However, if the church adopts this line of reasoning, she also loses her God, because

a first cause is not sovereign. It is subject to law. It must produce the effect. It is not free. It does not take counsel and intelligently determine. Its operation is not the expression of omnipotent will. It is not transcendent above the world; it belongs to the world. But God is not the first cause; he is the creator of the heavens and the earth and of all they contain, including their causes and effects. By his omnipotent and intelligent will alone, they were called into existence. The church must speak the language of revelation: God is creator!

The church also must not deny her faith and her character as witness of the living God by assuming an apologetic attitude toward the theory of evolution. Not infrequently she has been unduly impressed by the pretended results of science, falsely so called (1 Tim. 6:20), and she has been tempted by its unbelieving philosophy to abandon some of the most fundamental principles of her faith. We have no quarrel with science, but the proper domain of science is limited to the things that can be weighed and measured, analyzed and demonstrated. When science reaches beyond this limit and pretends to explain the origin of things, it steps over into the domain of mere philosophy. No theory of evolution can reach beyond the things that appear. But by faith the church understands that “the worlds were framed by the word of God,” so that things seen were not made from things that appear. This faith cannot compromise with, and need not apologize to, any philosophy of the evolutionists. Faith lives by revelation. Living by revelation, the church witnesses of the living God and proclaims, “God is the creator!”

The fact that it is paramount for the church of Christ in the world to maintain the truth that God is the creator—a matter of life and death for her—can be considered sufficiently evident from the emphasis that the Scriptures place on the element of revelation. It is also evident from the close relation that exists in Scripture between creation and redemption. The confession that God is the creator emphasizes that all things were

called into being by perfect, infinite, infallible wisdom. This implies that in the beginning all things were adapted to the end: they were made to serve the purpose of God's eternal good pleasure. Even when a human builder lays a foundation, he adapts its construction to the structure that is to be raised upon it. How much more this must be true of the work of infinite wisdom. When God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, he laid the foundation of his house. The house will not be finished until the tabernacle of God is with men in the new heavens and the new earth, when all things will be united in Christ Jesus, the Lord (Rev. 21:3). To that end, the beginning was adapted.

God the creator is also the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only as the eternal Son, but also as the incarnated Christ, the Lord, whom God appointed to be the head over all things in the world to come. What is more, as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, God is creator of the heavens and the earth; for the Christ, in whom his people have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature and the first begotten of the dead. By him and for him were all things created in heaven and in the earth, visible and invisible.

Christ is before all things, and by him all things consist (Col. 1:14–17). Christ is not an afterthought of God, and redemption is no repair work. On the contrary, to glorify himself in Christ and the church and to perfect all things on the higher, heavenly level of the new creation was the original design of the creator. When God created the first world, he had that final world in mind. When he planted the first paradise, he did so with a view to the ultimate and eternal paradise of God. The first man Adam was made an image of the last man Christ. The creator is also the redeemer, and he made all things with a view to redemption. Let the church of God in the world, then, understand and be faithful to her calling, and as she hopes for her final redemption, let her proclaim, "God is the creator!"

The truth that God is creator is the guarantee that he will surely realize his purpose, build his house, and finish his work of redemption. He will do this in spite of all the powers of darkness and opposition, so that all things serve him in the realization of his purpose. The creator is the Lord of hosts, and his act of creation reveals him to his church as the Almighty. Correctly and properly, the church has always perceived the connection between the confession that God is the creator and the truth that he is omnipotent. She made this the very first article of the confession of her faith: “I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth” (Apostles’ Creed). God’s omnipotence signifies not merely that he is very powerful or that he is supreme in power and therefore more powerful than any creature and than all creatures of the universe together; what his omnipotence signifies is that his is *all the power*—not just the power he has in himself, but also all the power there is and may be anywhere in the wide creation. There is no power besides or outside of God’s power.

God called the world into being by his omnipotent Word, and by the same almighty Word it continues to exist. Even all the powers of death and hell can operate only by God’s omnipotent will. They are perfectly in his control. He directs all the powers of the universe so that they must serve him in his purpose of redemption. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the creator omnipotent. He holds all creatures in the hollow of his hand, and they must serve his purpose. That purpose shall certainly be reached.

The revelation of Genesis 1:1 —“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”—is absolute truth from him who sits upon the throne, the Lord omnipotent. It says that from the beginning all things will surely proceed according to the infallible plan of him through whom and unto whom are all things. To him be the glory forever.