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Creation: The Triune God at Work for the Praise of His Glory

Monday, 4 September 1559

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (Gen. 1:1–2).

EVEN THOUGH MEN maliciously try to obscure God's glory, it is certain they cannot open their eyes and look in any direction without seeing evidence that leads to knowledge of him, knowledge which they flee and would like to bury completely if they could. God shows himself everywhere and provides indications of his majesty, of his power, of his righteousness, of his goodness, and everything which can lead us to him. That is also why Paul in the fourteenth chapter of Acts says that God cannot leave himself without witness (*Acts 14:17*), for all things created do not have their source in themselves. It is as if God were enlightening us to draw us to himself and make us aware that he is the fountain and origin of all things, that everything depends on him, and that everything is founded on and sustained by his power. Hence, the world, from its heights to its depths, is like a mirror to compel us to contemplate God, who is by nature and in essence invisible. Paul says the same thing in the first chapter of

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Romans, that the things we perceive with our eyes show us that there is one God (*Rom. 1:20*), although he is in himself incomprehensible unless we understand him in his works. At least we are responsible, and we will be inexcusable if we remain locked in our ignorance.

It is true we have been blind and brutish since Adam's sin. However, we will surely find that our inclination to evil prevents us from acknowledging God and that, of our own will, we try to confine the light when it appears and seek out the darkness to plunge ourselves into it intentionally. It is true we think we are greatly wronged and offended when people say we lack knowledge. Yet we want it to be so and even long for it to be true. For what is true wisdom but the knowledge of God? And it is with the knowledge of God we needed to begin. But we would prefer never to have heard of him.

So it is as if we had two contradictory dispositions within us, for we possess a much greater desire to know than is permissible for us. Our desires are insatiable, but we forget the main one and have no wish to pursue it. That is why God, beyond manifesting himself in his works, also wanted to give us the story of the creation of the world, such as we have it here. Now it is true that Moses did not belong to that time, but we know the people of Israel knew about their origin. Each generation of the holy fathers always taught the succeeding generation what was necessary for their salvation. We have Abraham, who has the testimony that he will instruct his family in every true teaching. It is true that after the death of Abraham, the Jews, except for Isaac and Jacob and the holy patriarchs, were not always as diligent as they should have been. But they always held to certain principles and did not go completely astray. Abraham, as his father before him, was indeed an idolater, but the fact remains that what Noah had declared was not forgotten. So what Noah knew about God had also been passed on. As

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is said concerning Seth's lineage, the worship of God was restored and the people began to invoke him. Consequently, the memory of what Adam and Abel had known was not lost (cf. *Gen. 4:26*). Although Cain's lineage infected the world with many errors, God preserves some seed so that he will be known in the world. In a word, we understand that the creation of the world was handed down from father to son until God determined that it be recorded in the law and entrusted to the charge of his servant Moses.

In addition, when it is said that what is invisible with respect to God has been made manifest by the things he has created (*Rom. 1:20*), it does not mean that that can be sufficient for us, unless we have better assistance. It is not enough for us to know God is our Creator, for we have fallen from the estate in which he placed us. We know to what high estate our father Adam was raised until he, by his own fault, fell and alienated himself from his God. Consequently, inasmuch as we do not maintain our nature but are unworthy of being counted among God's creatures, we must have, apart from the story of the creation of the world, a grander and loftier role, namely, that of being the object of God's redemption and merciful deliverance from the pit of hell.

However, we still need to know that he created the world, and that he did not display his power all at once, but that still today he maintains all things and is their only foundation, as Psalm 104 says: 'If he withdraws his spirit, everything will be tumult and chaos, and in the end we will become nothing' (*Psa. 104:29*). We are strengthened and the face of the earth is renewed when God pours out his Spirit, that is, his power, on all things. We need that, for by contemplating the heaven and the earth, we may be drawn to God, who is the workman, and thereby conclude that everything depends on him and that our lives likewise reside in and consist in his pure grace, as Paul says in another passage, in the seventeenth chapter of Acts, that it is in him that we live and move and have

our being (*Acts 17:27*). He uses three verbs here. He uses the word 'to be' because, as I said, we will become nothing if our hope in God is not assured. He also uses the verb 'to live' at the same time, and then the verb 'to move'. None of those things is found in man unless God leads and governs him. We now see what God's intention was when he said to Moses what we now hear touching the creation of the world.

Still, let us realize that we will be reproached for our lack of gratitude and reprov'd for our incivility, and so we will have to be admonished for something which is quite evident, as I have just said. For we cannot open our eyes without God's showing himself to us, whether we like it or not. And we do not have to go far to look for him, as Paul says in a passage I have already cited (*Acts 17:27*). Let us examine ourselves, and even if we were blind, we would still be able to grope around and sense God as if he were there and could be touched with our hands. True. He is of a spiritual nature or essence, but in that passage Paul condemns men for closing their eyes and shutting down all their senses so as not to look upon the things that are designed to show God's majesty and give a definite witness to his being the Creator.

But whatever the situation, God extends to us a wondrous kindness, greatly pleased to help us in our ignorance, in our reluctance, indeed in our wickedness, by adding his word to what we can see and perceive by experience. Consequently, we can call God's word our eyeglasses. Those who are near-sighted or whose eyesight is dim see some light, but if they wish to see at a distance, everything will be blurred and they will not be able to tell the difference between one letter and another. But if they have glasses, their eyesight is so strengthened as to be restored, whereas it was previously useless to them. The same is true when we try to judge the works of God with our own senses. We move toward irrationality. We will lack circumspection and discrimination, but when our Lord pro-

vides his word, we are able to see distinctly and to be instructed in what is necessary for worshipping and serving him and attributing to him the glory which is his.

Therefore, although we rightly endure much ridicule and are forced to admit to deserving it whenever someone talks to us about the creation of the world, the fact is that God always shows us how kind and gentle he is toward us when he is pleased to reach down to us and give us the help he knows we need.

However, what David says in Psalm 19 is found to be true: the sun, the moon, and the stars do not have a language (*Psa.* 19:2-4), nor do the other creatures. What is more, they are without knowledge, but even in their silence, they do not fail to speak. The way we see them, the usage and utility which God gives them for our sakes, all that is as if they had a spoken language and as if all creatures were crying aloud, 'Know that we are not of ourselves and that the one who has ordained us to serve you wants to be honoured and wants you to pay him homage when you enjoy the many good things he has prepared for you.' That is how heaven and earth are to instruct us. In fact, God's goodness, righteousness, and power are engraved in large letters, so to speak, both on high and below, and when we do not profit from that instruction, it is also certain that there is neither heaven nor earth, nor anything that exists that does not cry for vengeance against us because we have wickedly misused them. God's creatures are dedicated for our use on condition that he who is their author be honoured. So we hallow God's creatures, in a manner of speaking, when we are led to confess that it is from his goodness that we possess all things and that it is by his power that we exist. But because we do the very opposite, we defile everything God gives us.

Now, even if heaven and earth are thus infected with our evil and all creatures stink before God because they have been fouled by our filth, there can be none, as I have said, which is not armed

against us to blame us, and there will be no way for us to escape that judgment.

Therefore, because God has put us in this world as in a theatre to contemplate his glory, let us acknowledge him to be such as he declares himself to us, and because he gives us the second instruction which is even more familiar in his word, let us be more confident and stirred with a burning zeal to aspire unto him until we reach that goal, and let us be aware that this world was created for that purpose and that our Lord has placed us here and has favoured us with living here and enjoying all the things he has created.

Now, the sun was not made for itself and is even a creature without feeling. The trees, the earth, which produces food for us – all of that works for man. The animals, although they move and have some feeling, do not for all that have this high capacity to understand what belongs to God, for they do not discriminate between good and evil. We also see that their life and death are for men's use and service.

For our part, our Lord has given us both eyes and senses to perceive more than we see, namely, that the things which are apparent did not create themselves, but that they proceed from another source, that there is a sovereign workman to whom all praise must be attributed. God, I say, has elevated our senses for that reason. For if we contemplate the heaven and the earth for any other reason than to glorify God, it is sure, as I said, that our eyesight warps everything, unless we offer ourselves to our God.

Now, because we cannot do that using our natural senses, we must come to him humbly. Even though the heaven and the earth are to provide sufficient instruction to lead us to God, we will, in fact, only make ourselves inexcusable, as Paul says. After telling us that the visible things lead us to God and his deity and incomprehensible power, he adds that it is done in such a way that we are made inexcusable (cf. *Rom.* 1:20). He does not say that we can

be satisfied with that, for, as I said, we are totally corrupt and will never know that it is of God until we have better insight.

And that is also why the apostle says two things in the Epistle to the Hebrews. On the one hand, he says that the world is like a mirror¹ of what we do not see, and that image conforms to the one already cited by Paul. He also adds immediately that by faith we know that the worlds were created (*Heb.* 11:3). Now at first glance that does not seem plausible. If what is presented to our eyes is like a mirror to lead us to God, there is no need for faith. But the apostle does not consider what hinders us. It is the devil who keeps our eyes bandaged, so to speak, by Adam's sin because we are deprived of the understanding which we had been given in the beginning. Rather, he considers what the creatures must do and what particular responsibility God gave them. Now because we fail in our role, the second remedy must come to the fore, which is that by faith we recognize what would otherwise be hidden from us. That is why our Lord gives us his word. Even so, he must work in us by his Holy Spirit in such a way that we understand what we are taught.

There we have God, who, on the one hand, fills our ears with the instruction he knows is expedient for us. Afterwards, he gives us so many objects that we cannot, as I have said many times, open our eyes without his being there, and we can even touch them with our hands, although we are blind, as we quoted in the passage by Paul (cf. *Rom.* 1:20). Now that that is our situation, we must humble ourselves in order to understand by faith what would never otherwise enter our hearts. That is the true preparation we need in order to take advantage of both the world and the word of God, when

¹ The image of the world as a mirror of what we do not see is found neither in the Epistle to the Hebrews nor elsewhere in the Bible. In Hebrews 11:1, it is faith which is 'the evidence of things not seen'. On the other hand, this image is found in Calvin's commentary on Genesis.—*M.E.* [In the footnotes which follow, the annotation *M.E.* indicates Max Engammare, the Editor of the French text].

we allow ourselves to be taught patiently by God after we have quelled all pride and presumptuousness. Now, in the first place, if men wish to cling to their knowledge and judgment, it will be incredible to them that the world was created six thousand years ago. For what was God doing from all eternity? In fact, shallow and imaginative people will never understand what the Holy Spirit gives witness to because they will always have their own answers. It is quite appropriate that God had always been at rest, not only for ten thousand or a hundred thousand years, but throughout all ages, and that he then reconsidered and created the world, which has lasted such a short time and must come to an end, and that we are waiting for its end because we have been in the last days since Jesus Christ's coming. That is how it is that those who wish to exult in their senses will never understand what is shown here to bring them into subjection.

Now, as for us, let us fear that our Lord will avenge himself on our boldness whenever we engage in those kinds of disputes, and let us patiently yield to his counsel. We are not permitted to seek a reason or a cause that is above his will. If the devil arouses our imagination or if our temerity induces us to ask why God did not create the world sooner, we must keep ourselves on a short leash. Why? If we do not allow God the honour of leaving his will alone and letting his counsel be our only wisdom, it is certain that we are depriving him of his right. For who are we, poor worms which crawl on the earth while still wanting to place ourselves above God's wonderful counsel, which we are to reverence? For it is sometimes said that – and this is a memorable dictum for those vain people who take the licence to mock God – God was not idle before creating the world, for he created hell at the same time for those who are so rash in their curiosity.

So let us learn to be humble and modest so that we may know God in his creation and remember what Paul said when speaking

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of the gospel, that because the world did not know God by its wisdom, another way had to be introduced, namely, through folly (cf. *1 Cor. 1:21*). Paul realizes God's wisdom is an excellent and admirable system that we must contemplate deeply. For if we possessed any semblance of reason, it is certain we would be sufficiently instructed when getting a glimpse of such an excellent system. And if we but looked at the end of our fingernail, what artistry we would find there! If a man had the mind to consider how one of his fingers is formed and how well proportioned and perfect it is, he would have already learned sufficiently well that there is a God who has been at work here and that it did not happen by chance. And if we compared our feet and our joints and then considered our hands and how we are made, and then if we examined everything around us, it is certain that our learning would be complete.

Therefore, it is not without reason that Paul says that if we had had the good sense and judgment to contemplate the works of God, we would have profited from wisdom. But what happened? The world failed to profit from it, he says. The only thing left was for God, who wanted to abase all human wisdom and confound it, to send his only Son to be crucified for us. Now we do not see the rationale behind that. 'Which God are we to worship?' 'The one who has been manifested in the flesh, namely, our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'How can that be? He was hung on the cross. He suffered an ignominious death before men and, cursed by the mouth of God, was condemned as a malefactor in shame.' Now that is not the way to know God in wisdom but in folly, that is, in an outlandish way. And when we would like to use our imagination and discuss the path by which we must come to God and how we are to reach him, the means for doing so will be thoroughly condemned. In other words, it is as if we were worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all the fullness of divinity resides, and yet were not ashamed of the death that he suffered even though it was full of shame and

reproach, although that is where our joy and glory lie. That, I say, is against all human reason, but that is still the only way to attain salvation. For, as I have already said, knowing God as our Redeemer does not keep us from first knowing him as our Creator. In fact, Moses leads us to that conclusion. For after giving us the story of creation, he will tell us about Adam's fall. And after the fall, he will also give us some taste of his mercy, in which we must hope and by which we are called to our God, by whom we were reproached in former times and who had banished us and disavowed us as his creation. All that will be pointed out in order.

However, we need to note here that we are more than cursed and abominable if we, being masters and possessors of all the good things God has bestowed upon us, do not at least show gratitude as we worship him and confess that everything comes from him. That is why Moses says God created the heaven and the earth. Now, when he uses the word 'create', he indicates there is no being unless it exists in God alone. And the word he uses for God indicates a plural number, as if it meant 'gods'. That is just a way that that language expresses the divers powers God has in himself and also the way he keeps us in unity with his being.

We have two things to consider when we talk about God and make a declaration about him. One is that his being is simple and that we must not divide him into parts or imagine any division within him. When doing that, all poor unbelievers have been mistaken. They have always believed in the existence of some sovereign divinity, but they have created as many gods as there are forces that they have observed here on earth. That is the reason they gave in their books when speaking of the plurality of gods: as many powers as there are in nature, there are that many different divinities. Now, Scripture teaches the opposite, for it teaches the variety of attributes that God possesses in himself so that we may recognize them separately, and then it leads us back to a simple and unique

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essence, namely, that we have one and only one God and that we are not adrift in imagining him to be of one kind or another.

Therefore, this word from God indeed declares that he is not an illusion and that he is not an inanimate object, but that he is the source of all powers in their completion, and indeed there is an infinite variety of them. This word 'create' tells us that existence resides only in him. For everything which had a beginning is not of itself, that is, it has nothing proper to itself but derives its being from something else. In this we see men's enormous disposition to evil, for those who are called philosophers, that is, those who think of themselves as wise enough to teach everybody else, have tried, insofar as they can, to destroy the article of our faith that says God is the Creator. The wisest and cleverest person who has ever existed thought the world was eternal, for he could come to no other conclusion.² And why not? Pride blinded him, and a much more grievous condemnation befell him and all those who learned at his school, for after knowing the very high and exalted secrets of God, they spurn the thought and awareness of them and refuse to acknowledge God.

In fact, all profane people have always tried, at the devil's leading, to erase the certainty we have to have concerning the creation of the world. They ask which came first, the egg or the chicken, and do so in jest so that everything will be called in question and people will stop agonizing over whether God is the cause of all things and whether we subsist by his power. The devil has used that ploy from the beginning. Others have indeed said that the world has not always existed. But so what? They have conjured up the most obtuse and absurd things a human could utter to resist God's majesty, and they are unable to contemplate his glory, which ought to be evident as it displays itself so plainly before us. That is why they prefer – I am not joking – to say that the world came to-

² The reference is to Aristotle. See *Metaphysics*, VIII, 1-5, 1069a-1077a. —M.E.

gether by chance and that there were tiny objects tumbling around that the sun used for building the moon and the stars, the earth, the trees, and even men. Could anyone think up a scenario more stupid than that? The wind will blow as it may and make us tumble around and cause little things to heap together which cannot be separated, before our entrails could be enclosed within.³ Who is it that changes the bread and the wine and other foods into blood and provides nourishment for man? And then if, as I said, we but look at a single fingernail and a hair of our head, is that not enough to convince these contemptible people who are thus blinded and willingly become like dumb animals? In short, if we possessed a trace of discrimination and reason, Moses would not have had to be God's witness, testifying that everything was created by him, for our capacity to reason and the order of nature show us that.

Now, the noblest creation is mankind. We now see within ourselves two sides. One is the dignity God placed within us when he raised our heads to behold, as in a theatre, all the creatures brought before us in this world so that we might glorify him. He gives us the ability to discriminate between good and evil. He gave us mastery and superiority over all the beasts and all other things, as we shall see shortly. But let us consider the extent of our weakness. We scarcely begin to exist before death lays hands on us or sets upon us. How many children die in their mother's womb before ever seeing the sun? We also see that we are like a wind, like grass which soon withers, and that our lives are so fragile that our strength is but smoke (cf. *Psa.* 103:15-16). When we understand that, are we not constrained to acknowledge that whatever dignity we see in ourselves cannot exist apart from inimitable and wondrous workmanship? Then our weakness makes it clear that

³ The editor of the French text says, 'If the manuscript reading is clear, the meaning of these words is not. One imagines that words or lines have been skipped.' *Translator.*

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everything we have depends on something outside ourselves. So if we do not come to God willingly (cf. *Luke 14:23*), we must be drawn forcibly or dragged to him by the hair, as they say. So let us pay close attention to this word 'create' and be armed against all diabolical illusions, and let us be steadfast in resisting them and steadfast in the knowledge that everything was made from nothing because there is no existence except in God alone, and that we have from him all that we have and are.

In addition, when heaven and earth are spoken of, and Moses makes no mention of the angels, we understand that God wanted to give plain and simple instruction for the most unlearned among us. It is true that it is useful to know the secrets of nature, and more intricately than Moses speaks of them, and we will deal with that more fully. But the fact is that God wanted to give broad instruction to all his people and to the entire church, instruction which is not only collected by sages and learned people, but which is also assembled as much by learned people as by the poor uneducated. In any case, all knowledge must be reduced to a scope by which we all profit from it commonly and that the wisest and the cleverest and the sharpest are associates with the poor artisans and workers who have never been to school. And woe to us if we refuse to be taught in accordance with that kind of simplistic instruction. When we are brought to humility and simplicity, God is testing the humility of our faith.

That is why Moses did not speak of angels when he dealt with the creation of the world. Why not? They are invisible spirits. But he will talk about them later at the appropriate time and place (cf. *Gen. 16:7; 21:17; 28:12*). But now he wants to show us that we are much too wicked and depraved because we are living in this world and enjoy so many good things from God's hand but yet cannot be raised up to him. Why not? Because we make a concerted effort to speculate whether there is a God, a thing we should not

do! The heaven and the earth speak of him loudly and clearly (as I have already mentioned David's witness), and nature displays it. So when Moses speaks to us about the heaven and the earth, it is as if he were saying, 'Open your eyes and God will declare himself to you and be near you so that you will not have to range widely to draw near to him, for there is nothing which does not bear witness to him.' That is a brief account of what we must remember.

Now we see even more clearly that we have no excuse if we do not accept what is declared plainly here. Neither a wise man nor an ignorant can find refuge or take cover behind what he has not understood, for the most unlearned can chip away at it. And as for the scholars, if they are a lot more accomplished, why will they not understand what they must have already learned from their natural senses, even though God has already spoken to them through his prophet?

In addition, when Moses adds that the earth was void and chaotic, that it was an abyss, that it was like a mass of water, that there was no form or order, he points out that God did not intend to bring the world to completion in a moment of time, just as we do not accomplish our work in a moment but have to continue working at our task. So God was not delayed in accomplishing what he wanted to accomplish. He went about it the way he did for our sakes and for our instruction, as we shall see more fully shortly. Afterwards, since he took six days to create the things we now see and laid them out and directed them in an orderly fashion, he did not do so, I say, out of any necessity laid upon him, but to hold us back and cause us to consider more attentively his power, his goodness, his righteousness, and his infinite wisdom in the whole of his creation. Although our minds are always hungry to know, the fact is it is only because of vanity that we seek knowledge. If it comes to seeking knowledge by considering the works of God – which, Scripture tells us, is a wise course and deserves

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all our effort (cf. *Psa. 107:43; Eccles. 7:11-14*) – oh, we are immediately displeased! And as we pass by quickly, the things he has created escape our notice because we do not honour him by stopping before this panorama to which he invites us and giving it the close attention it deserves. And he rightly takes vengeance on us by causing his creatures to slip away and be scattered, so to speak.

So God created the heaven and the earth in a state of chaos in the beginning, and wanted it to be a formless and shapeless mass so that we might have the right attitude and control all our senses when it comes to knowing him as Creator of the world and paying him homage and yielding ourselves to him. And he created it in that manner so that we might condemn and hence restrain our tendency to hurry along, thinking we are wasting our time using it in the pursuit of knowledge. That, in short, is especially why God wanted to create that chaotic mass before laying out the heaven and the earth and directing things toward their completion.

The fact is, moreover, that his power had to be demonstrated in the creation, so Moses adds that the Spirit of God was moving upon the waters. There is no need at present to linger long over the word ‘waters’ or the word ‘deep’, for there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit wanted to make it clear that everything was gathered together, that there was a chaotic mass, that there was neither light nor plants, and that all of the abundance which God has placed in the world did not yet appear. Now, since this confusion of the waters and the deep had to be sustained and preserved by God’s power (otherwise everything would have soon perished), even now the same power must sustain and uphold all that he first created. Since that chaotic mass could not remain in its state if God had not preserved it, how does it happen that things are so well ordered in our day? How could a man live for a moment if God did not sustain him and give him strength? That is why Moses says the Spirit of God was moving upon the waters and the deep.

Now we have here a definite testimony to the eternity of the Spirit of God. And since he has existed from before the creation of the world and before we see his effect, we must conclude that wisdom, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, is also eternal, for the Holy Spirit is attributed equally to the Father and to the Son. It is true that our Lord Jesus Christ has in his human nature all that he possesses as a free gift, but as for his divine essence, it is certain that the Spirit belongs to him. So we see clearly how from all time God has been one, and yet there are three distinct Persons in him. The text says that God created, and it also says that the Spirit of God moved. Now the word Moses uses in this passage signifies 'to spread' and 'to move', and he uses it in Deuteronomy when speaking of the eagles and other birds which extend their wings over their young to nurture and protect them (*Deut.* 32:11).

Therefore, when it is said that the Spirit of God moves, Moses understands that that mass of which he spoke could not exist on its own but that God had to work with it. Now the Spirit, I say, was doing that. If the Spirit of God sustained all creatures from the beginning, indeed in their origin, before they were distinct and brought to completion, we see in that his eternity, and that there are three distinct Persons in one and the same essence of God. Now, that mystery is too exalted for us to understand, and we must revere it highly and receive what we are taught even though we do not understand it today. For we are obliged to see partially and obscurely until God transfigures us into his glory, and then we will see him face to face, as John says,⁴ but today we do not have a knowledge capable of understanding the mysteries which we must revere. Therefore, let us not consider as strange what we have quoted from Psalm 104, namely, that when God withdraws his Spirit, all will be turmoil, as if the world were shaken in all its parts and will come to nothing; and that, to the contrary, when he sends

⁴ In fact, *1 Cor.* 13:12 [but see also *1 John* 3:2]. *ME*

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out his Spirit, everything will resume its vigour and the face of the world will be renewed (cf. *Psa. 104:29-30*). When we see that the Spirit of God has thus sustained us in our first origin – for we were included in that mass because we were taken from the earth, as we shall see later – we see how God has shown us from the beginning that there is no existence apart from him, that everything depends on and proceeds from him, and also that what he has created must be preserved by him, for we shall return to our beginning, namely, to nothing, should our Lord not continue what he began in us, that is to say, maintaining us in this way in our present state. And consequently this continuous state which we observe in nature is no less the work of God than the first creation, when we get a picture of everything at once.

And when we hear the creation of the heaven and the earth spoken of, let us realize that, comprised therein, are all the things he has made, which he guides and governs, as our Lord Jesus Christ said: ‘My Father and I have worked and continue to work even now’ (cf. *John 5:17*). Consequently, there is an ongoing work of God, such that we must not restrict the creation of the world to six days, but must include the management of the creation we still see taking place today because God governs all things by his providence.

That, then, is what we need to remember about these words of Moses, and we must, in short, apply ourselves to this endeavour and become acquainted with God our Creator in such a way that we pay him homage with our lives, acknowledging him also as our Redeemer and confessing that we are doubly obligated to him, so that we may dedicate ourselves completely to his service in all holiness, righteousness, and integrity.

Now let us bow before the majesty of our gracious God in acknowledgment of our faults, praying that he will make us sense them to

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the extent that they will displease us, so that we will groan and sigh earnestly and be moved with such repentance that we will renounce all our wicked inclinations and carnal affections and make every effort to be strengthened in obedience to his righteousness, and all of it through our Lord Jesus Christ and the grace of his Holy Spirit. Let us also beseech him to support us in our weaknesses in such a way that we will not be rejected by him, although we are very far from the perfection toward which we must aspire, and in the meantime let us daily take advantage of considering his works so that we will be strengthened in his kindness and fortified in the faith of his gospel and practise the invocation of his holy name. May he grant that grace not only to us, but also to all the peoples and nations of the earth . . .