

## ➤ Other Voices ➤

To believe in God the Creator means to believe that he created me along with all other created beings. Few have progressed so far as to believe this in the fullest sense.

MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)

We have forgotten that the Apostle's Creed begins with an affirmation of God as Maker of heaven and earth. We have forgotten that Genesis begins with creation, not redemption, and that Revelation ends with a redeemed, renewed creation. We have forgotten that, in the words of St. Paul, all things were created and hang together in Christ. While reading the book of Scripture, we have forgotten to read the book of nature.

STEVEN BOUMA - PREDIGER , *For the Beauty of the Earth*

[Genesis 1:2] provides us with an image we rarely think of when regarding the natural world: Hovering over the creation, brooding over this world now as surely as at the dawn of time, is the Spirit of God, hands upraised in a divine benediction. What a loaded image to keep before us when we are out and about in the world! After all, anything God blesses should be treated with utter respect and holy awe, with preserving care and joyful delight.

SCOTT HOEZE E , *Remember Creation: God's World of Wonder and Delight*

GRANDEUR OF GOD

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge & shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast & with ah! bright wings.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844-1889)

“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it,” wrote the psalmist (Psalm 24:1). But the cedars of Lebanon, which were a part of the earth the psalmist knew, are gone.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1). But today in many parts of the world what the sky proclaims is dimmed and muted by a yellow-brown haze, and scars on the earth testify to its own erosion.

For too long many people in their sacred assemblies have acknowledged God as Creator but failed to care for the creation he made. Others have erred in worshiping the creation rather than the Creator, replacing God with something less.

FRED VAN DYKE, DAVID C. MAHAN, JOSEPH K. SHELDON, and RAYMOND H. BRAND, *Redeeming Creation*

... C. S. Lewis once said, we Christians need always to be fighting on two fronts. On the one front are the pantheists who think that everything is divine. When you are dealing with them, you need to emphasize that God and creation are distinct. On the other front are those who make the chasm between God and creation so deep and wide that in their service to God they care not a fig for the environment. When dealing with these folks, Lewis says, you need to emphasize how close God is to his creation, pointing out that in a sense God really is in my dog, my cabbage patch, my oak tree. It is a delicate balancing act between identifying God too closely with the world and not keeping God close enough.

SCOTT HOEZEEL, *Remember Creation: God’s World of Wonder and Delight*

When we turn the attention of the church to a definition of the Christian relationship with the natural world, we are not stepping away from grave and proper theological ideas; we are stepping right into the middle of them. There is a deeply rooted, genuinely Christian motivation for attention to God’s creation, despite the fact that many church people consider ecology to be a secular concern. “What does environmental preservation have to do with Jesus Christ and his church?” they ask. They could not be more shallow or more wrong.

JOSEPH SITTLER, *Gravity and Grace*

Contempt for the earth is not ancient but modern, not biblical but secular. The revolution in human thinking and action that was introduced by the age of the so-called Enlightenment is, more than anything else, responsible for it. In that intellectual-spiritual movement the human took charge of all things, the self and the world. Worldviews were secularized so that there was no longer a God of love and justice to answer to, only a humanity of ambition and self-interest to give commands. “Glory to man in the highest and on earth a higher standard of living for all” was the theme

hymn. Earth is here for our *use*, not for our *care*. Technological developments provide increasingly powerful means to impose human will on the environment at the same time that spiritual understandings, which restrain pride and cultivate humility, diminish.

As the “image of God” as the controlling metaphor for understanding our place in the universe fades and the myth of self-sufficiency replaces it, fewer and fewer people ask the question, “What is the purpose of God in creation?” They ask instead, “How can I use creation to fulfill my purposes?” Purposes are not evaluated against God’s purposes. It is simply assumed that what is good for the human is good for everything.

EUGENE H. PETERSON, *Where Your Treasure Is: Psalms That Summon You from Self to Community*

Now this double worship of God—for his mighty works in creation and salvation, for his glory revealed in creation and his grace revealed in Scripture—is only a stammering anticipation of the full-throated chorus in heaven, in which angels, animals, and humans will join in unison and sing:

You are worthy, our Lord and God,  
to receive glory and honor and power,  
*for you created* all things,  
and by your will they were created  
and have their being.

—Revelation 4:11

And again,

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength,  
and honor and glory and praise!

—Revelation 5:12

Thus the worship of heaven also recognizes the double nature of the works of the Lord, as Creator and Redeemer.

JOHN R. W. STOTT, “The Works of the Lord,” in *The Best Preaching on Earth*, ed. by Stan L. LeQuire