

In the Christian understanding of creation, God gives human beings their being as creatures by making their existence both possible and significant and demands only that they accept this gift in unreserved trust and unqualified loyalty, thereby honoring God as God and giving thanks to God. Implied by this demand is that they also accept God's gift of anyone and anything that explicitly re-presents God's original gift and demand.

But to be a creature is not merely to be a creature in general, but to be just this or that particular creature, having just this or that particular heritage from the past, just these or those particular relations to others, and just this or that particular range of possibilities for the future. Consequently, the gift of being a creature, although one, is also many; and, correspondingly, the demand to accept one's being as a creature in unreserved trust and unqualified loyalty, while singular, is also plural, comprising many particular demands that must be met if God's one demand is to be met.

This explains why the law through which God's demand is explicitly re-presented is likewise plural as well as singular, comprising many particular commandments as well as the first commandment that demands radical obedience to God.

17 December 1997