

3. God's Ministering Spirits

The presentation here of the Totality of Things as a Hierarchy of Being would be incomplete without the inclusion of a word regarding angels. Although, as Strong puts it,

the scholastic subtleties which encumbered this doctrine in the Middle Ages, and the exaggerated representations of the power of evil spirits which then prevailed, have led, by a natural reaction, to an undue depreciation of it in more recent times,¹

the fact remains nevertheless, that the activity of angels plays a very important role in the Bible record of God's dealings with men. Indeed, angels figure prominently in the unfolding of the Plan of Redemption from beginning to end. Reason, moreover, supports this Biblical presentation in pointing to the need of an order of creatures intermediate between God, who is pure Spirit, and man, who in his present state is a body-spirit unity, a living soul. Without such an intermediate order, there would be a very noticeable gap in the Creation. Now, according to Scripture, it is the angelic order—an order of beings possessed of superhuman, yet finite, intelligence and power—which fills this gap, in the total structure of Reality. Thus with the angels the hierarchical picture of the universe becomes complete.

Scripture teaching regarding the angelic order and their function may be summarized briefly as follows:

1. *Angels are created beings.*

Psa. 148:2, 5: Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his host. . . . For he commanded, and they were created. Col. 1:16—for in him [Christ] were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him and unto him." 1 Pet. 3:22—Jesus Christ, who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

God alone is The I AM, HE WHO IS, the uncreated and eternal One.

2. *Angels are older than, and distinct from, man.*

1 Cor. 6:3—Know ye not that we shall judge angels? [that is, we, the saints of God]. Heb. 1:14—Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation? Heb. 2:16—For verily not to angels doth he [Christ] give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham. [Authorized Version]—For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. [*Angels are not glorified human spirits, i.e., spirits of the righteous dead.* Heb. 12:22-23—here the *innumerable hosts of angels* are distinguished clearly from *the general assembly*

1. A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, One-Volume Edition, 443.

and church of the firstborn, and also from the spirits of just men made perfect. That angels existed prior to man is evident from the various passages which clearly imply that the fall of Lucifer took place before the fall of man, *Vide* Gen. 3:1, John 8:44, 1 Tim. 3:6, 2 Cor. 11:3].

3. *Angels are personal (i.e., intelligent and voluntary) beings.* Being personal, and hence possessed of the power of self-determination, they were capable of disobeying God, and indeed some of them did rebel against the Divine government, under the leadership of Satan, and did in this manner fall from their original estate.

(1) [Angels have intelligence and will.] 2 Sam. 14:20—my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth. Luke 4:34—[here an evil spirit—fallen angel—is represented as saying], What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. James 2:19—Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe and shudder [cf. Matt. 8:29-31; Mark 1:24, 5:7; Acts 16:16-18, 19:15, etc.]. 2 Tim. 2:26—and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will. Rev. 12:12—Woe for the earth and for the sea; because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

(2) [Angelic power and intelligence, however, though superhuman, have fixed limits.] Matt. 24:36—But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven. 1 Pet. 1:12—these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven: which things angels desire to look into. Eph. 3:9-10: to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God. [Here the phrase], the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places, [evidently alludes to the angelic host, whose natural habitat is heaven, the presence of God.]

(3) [Power seems to be the outstanding attribute of the angelic nature, rather than intelligence or beauty.] Psa. 103:20—Bless Jehovah, ye his angels, that are mighty in strength, that fulfill his word, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 2 Thess. 1:7-8: at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire,, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 2 Pet. 2:11—whereas angels, though greater [than men] in might and power, etc. [Power is the attribute ascribed in Scripture to evil spirits especially, as evident from such characteristic phrases as “the prince of this world” (John 12:31), “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), “the prince of the powers of the air” (Eph. 2:2), “the power of darkness” (Cor. 1:13), “the great dragon” (Rev. 12:9), etc.] Cf. Eph. 6:12—For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 1 Pet. 5:8—Be sober, be watchful: your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. [Satan, we are told, in trying to seduce Jesus] taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them;

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and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me (Matt. 4:8-9). [And Jesus Himself teaches His disciples to pray]: Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (Matt. 6:13). [Even Satanic power, however, is definitely limited by the Will of God, and its exercise will be completely thwarted by the power of God in Christ.] [Thus, in the Prologue to the book of *Job*, Satan, always the "accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10), is represented as appearing in the presence of God to make accusation that the patriarch Job was a man who served God solely for the material benefits which he received in return for such service; in a word, said Satan, Job was simply "feathering his own nest." This was a direct—and most impudent—challenge of the veracity of the Almighty, who had just spoken in praise of Job saying,] There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and turneth away from evil (Job 1:8). [God perforce accepted the challenge]: And Jehovah said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand; only spare his life (Job 2:6). [That is to say, the devil was permitted to destroy Job's material possessions, to bring about the death of Job's children, and even to afflict the patriarch himself with a sore disease, but that was the limit to which he was allowed to go; the exercise of his diabolical power was circumscribed by the Will of God. So it has always been, and in the end Satan will suffer complete and ignominious defeat—nothing short of eternal segregation in hell with all his rebel host—at the hands of the Son of God, Lord and Christ, who now has "all authority in heaven and on earth" Matt. 28:18]. Heb. 2:14-15; Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Eph. 1:19-22: according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Phil. 2:9-11: Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name that is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 1 Cor. 15:25-26: For he [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. Rev. 20:10—And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

(4) [Angels being personal, hence voluntary beings, we have in Scripture the doctrine of both good and evil angels. The good angels, we are told, are confirmed in goodness; the evil angels are equally confirmed in evil; that is, Satan and his rebel host, *not* the descendants of Adam, are totally depraved.] Luke 10:18—[the words of Jesus], I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. John 8:44. [again the words of Jesus]: Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. 2 Pet. 2:4—For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of

darkness, to be reserved unto judgment, etc. Jude 6—And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Matt. 25:41—Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." [Satan is invariably designated "the evil one" in Scripture (Matt. 5:37; 6:13, 13:19; 1 John 2:13, 5:18, 19, etc.): that is, he and his rebel host are wholly confirmed in evil; hence, for them there can be but one end—"the lake of fire and brimstone," Rev. 20:10]. [The good angels, on the other hand, are equally confirmed in good.] 2 Cor. 11:14—Even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light, [thus implying that there are angels of light] Psa. 89:7—the council of the holy ones. Mark 8:38—For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Matt. 18:10: [here Jesus says, concerning little children]: I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. [And so Jesus teaches His disciples to pray]: Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth (Matt. 6:10).

4. *Angels are ethereal beings*, that is, neither, on the one hand, completely bodiless, nor on the other hand, clothed in physical bodies such as human beings have. They are clothed, rather, in bodies of a very rarefied form of matter, of a texture perhaps approximating radiant energy or light, which may best be described as ethereal. Here again we encounter the limitations of human language: the term "ethereal" is used perforce in lieu of a more precise designation.

Though described as "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14), there is no evidence in Scripture that angels are completely bodiless. Indeed, the notion of an "immaterial soul" or "disembodied spirit," in the case of created beings, is foreign to the Bible; it is a Platonic concept pure and simple. According to Scripture, as we have already seen, even the redeemed saints themselves will be clothed in "spiritual" (ethereal?) bodies, bodies of a finer texture of matter, in the next world.¹ As Professor Albert C. Knudson writes:

Spirit, as we find it in the Scriptures, was a rarefied form of matter. But this fact, while interesting from the philosophical point of view, did not seriously affect the distinction made between the material and the spiritual. Matter in its sublimated or spiritual form was so different from matter in its ordinary manifestations that there was felt to be a virtual antithesis between them.²

An ethereal form of this kind is not localized of course; hence, in certain Scripture passages the idea is implicit that evil spirits—the fallen angels—are possessed of an instinct or long-

1. *Vide* again 1 Cor. 15:35-58.

2. *The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament*, 94.

ing to incarcerate themselves in a physical body, even in the body of an animal, in order to secure a certain measure of respite from their ceaseless wanderings "to and fro in the earth . . . and up and down in it."

Job 1:7—And Jehovah said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered Jehovah, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. [Paul describes Satan as "the god of this world" who has "blinded the minds of the unbelieving," 2 Cor. 4:4; that is to say, Satan is the "god" of the kingdom of this world, as by way of contrast with the Kingdom of Christ.] Matt. 8:31—And the demons besought him [Jesus] saying, If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine [cf. Mark 5:1-17, Luke 8:26-37]. Matt. 12:43 [the words of Jesus]: But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not.

Only God Himself may properly be designated Pure Spirit. As Jesus Himself stated expressly: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). (Cf. Heb. 9:14—"the eternal Spirit.")

Angels are represented in Scripture as completely lacking the attributes or propensities that characterize a physical body such as human beings have in their present environment. Paul states explicitly that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:50). That is, (1) fleshly or natural birth cannot give one entrance into the Kingdom of Grace, for one must be born anew, born of water and the Spirit, to enter into that kingdom (John 3:3-6); (2) and neither can flesh and blood literally, nor flesh and blood relationships, in the very nature of the case enter into the Kingdom of Glory. All such natures and relationships are of the earth, earthy; they are left behind by the saints in the putting on of immortality. Jesus Himself made it clear that His resurrected body was one of "flesh and bones"; that is, the blood—the seat of animal life—was gone. "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having" (Luke 24:39). This means too that He was not a mere ghost or phantasm; He was there in the presence of His disciples in a substantial form. If this be true of the saints, that they will not possess the qualities of physical life in the celestial world, how much more so of angels, whose natural habitat is that world. Jesus makes this crystal clear in one of His controversies with the Sadducees, the materialists among the Jews of His day.

Matt. 22:23-30: On that day there came to him Sadducees, they that say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Teacher,

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Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first married and deceased, and having no seed left his wife unto his brother; in like manner the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And after them all, the woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven.

That is to say, the immortalized saints shall be, like the angels of God, without sex distinctions, and hence without flesh and blood relationships, in the spiritual world, the difference being of course that whereas angels are *by nature* without these fleshly attributes and powers, the saints will have laid them aside on the exchange of their physical for spiritual bodies; they will be simply "sons and daughters of the Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18). In a word, angels, not having physical bodies, know nothing of birth, growth, sex, age, or death.

Being without powers of physical reproduction, angels therefore constitute a company rather than a race.

Luke 20:34-36: And Jesus said unto them, The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

As Dr. A. H. Strong puts it:

We are called "sons of men," but angels are never called "sons of angels," but only "sons of God." They are not developed from one original stock, and no such common nature binds them together as binds the race of men. They have no common character and history. Each was created separately, and each apostate angel fell by himself. Humanity fell all at once in its first father. Cut down a tree, and you cut down its branches. But angels were so many separate trees. Some lapsed into sin, but some remained holy.¹

"Sons of God" is a term used in Scripture sometimes to designate angels (Job 1:6—"Now it came to pass on the day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, that Satan also came among them"), sometimes to designate righteous men (Gen. 6:2—"the sons of God [pious Sethites] saw the daughters of men [the irreligious Cainites] that they were very fair, and they took them wives of all that they chose"). "Sons of God" is a common designation for the members of God's household, whether they be angels or righteous

1. *Systematic Theology*, One-Volume Edition, 447-448.

men (Eph. 3:15). However, because angels are a company, as distinguished from a race, we never read of "sons of angels" in Scripture.

5. *As to their number, angels are of the great multitude.*

Heb. 12:22—to innumerable hosts of angels. Deut. 33:2—Jehovah came . . . from the ten thousands of holy ones. Psa. 68:17—The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands upon thousands. Dan. 7:10—thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. Matt. 26:53—Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? Jude 14—Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones. Rev. 5:11—And I saw, and heard a voice of many angels round about the throne . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. 1 Sam. 1:11—Jehovah of hosts. Gen. 32:2—God's host. 2 Chron. 18:18—all the host of heaven. Luke 2:13—And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host. Rev. 19:14—the armies which are in heaven.

Angels, moreover, are presented in Scripture as having an organization.

1 Kings 22:19—And Micaiah said . . . I saw Jehovah sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. 1 Thess. 4:16—the voice of the archangel. Jude 9—Michael the archangel. Col. 1:16—thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. Matt. 25:41—the devil and his angels. Eph. 2:2—the prince of the powers of the air. Rev. 19:13-14: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linene, white and pure.

6. *As to function, angels are minister's of God's providence.*

Psa. 103:20-21: Bless Jehovah, ye his angels, that are mighty in strength, that fulfill his word, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless Jehovah, all ye his hosts, Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Heb. 1:14—Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?

In the presence of God, the good angels worship Him without cessation:

Psa. 29:1, 2—Ascribe unto Jehovah, O ye sons of the mighty, Ascribe unto Jehovah glory and strength. Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name; Worship Jehovah in holy array. Psa. 89:6, 7—Who among the sons of the mighty is like unto Jehovah? A God very terrible in the council of the holy ones. Rev. 5:11—And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne . . . saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

The good angels rejoice in God's works:

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Job 38:7—When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy [that is, at the Creation of the world.] Luke 2:13, 14—And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased [on the night of the Christ-Child's birth]. [Luke 15:10—There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.]

Good angels execute God's will, in nature and in history:

Psa. 104:4—Who maketh his angels winds, His ministers a flaming fire. [Matt. 28:2—the descent of an angel caused the earthquake on the morning of Christ's resurrection.] [Acts 12:7—an angel struck the chains from Peter's limbs and delivered him from prison.] Dan. 12:1—And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people, etc. [2 Thess. 1:7-8: at the end of our age or dispensation, the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven] with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Good angels minister God's providence in a special sense to individual believers:

[1 Kings 19:5—an angel ministered to Elijah under the juniper tree]: Behold, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. Psa. 91:11 [a Messianic prophecy] He will give his angels charge over thee, To keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. [cf. Matt. 4:6]. Dan. 6:22—My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me. Matt. 4:11: [here we read that following the Temptation of Jesus] angels came and ministered unto him. Matt. 18:10: [the words of Jesus concerning little children]: See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. Luke 16:22—And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

Good angels minister God's providence also by punishing His enemies:

2 Kings 19:35—And it came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand. [As in several instances in the Old Testament, the "angel of Jehovah" here may have been the Logos in one of His pre-incarnate manifestations.] Acts 12:23—And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him [the wicked Herod], because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

These are but a few of the many instances in Scripture of angelic ministration of Divine Providence.

The doctrine of fallen angels is linked up in Scripture with the inspired account of the primary origin of evil (in Satan's pre-mundane rebellion against the Divine government), a subject which does not come within the scope of the present treatise. To me it seems too obvious even to be questioned that

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our moral universe is essentially a struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil for the spirit of man. Let it not be forgotten, either, that the New Testament promises the ultimate and complete triumph of the good. I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain. Heb. 2:14-15: Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

[Cf. Job. 1:6-12, 2:1-7] Zech. 3:1—And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary; Matt. 13:39—and the enemy that sowed them [tares] is the devil [John 8:44-45] 1 Pet. 5:8—your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; Rev. 12:10—the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night; Matt. 17:15-18; Mark 3:7-12; Mark 5:5-20; Luke 8:26-39; Luke 10:17-20; Luke 13:10-17; Acts 10:38—Jesus of Nazareth . . . who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; Acts 16:16-18; 2 Cor. 12:7—there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch; Eph. 6:11-12, Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers . . . in the heavenly places; 1 Thess. 2:18—we fain would have come unto you . . . and Satan hindered us. 1 Thess. 3:5—For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain. Heb. 2:14-15: Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

The Scriptures teach that evil angels, being totally depraved, that is, wholly confirmed in evil (Matt. 25:41, 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6, Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10), strive constantly to defeat the will of God, and to hinder man's temporal and eternal welfare. Yet in these nefarious activities, evil angels—in spite of themselves, and perhaps unwittingly, for angels are limited both in knowledge and in power—minister God's providence by illustrating His unflinching justice; either directly or indirectly they execute His plan of chastening the good and punishing the ungodly; and they illustrate also the nature and destiny of evil. A God who is all love would be a God unjust. This age certainly

needs to learn that righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne (Psa. 89:14).

The role of angels in the Drama of Human Redemption that is disclosed to mortal view on the pages of Scripture is indeed a paramount role. To remove it from the Bible would denude the drama, and the Biblical record as well, of a major portion of its mystery and power. According to the teaching of the Scriptures, at every important advance in the unfolding of the Plan of Redemption, the activity of angels rose to a high point. Hence, we read of their presence and activity at the completion of the Creation (Job 38:7); at the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19, Heb. 2:2); at the birth of the Anointed (Luke 2:8-15); at the Temptation of Christ, in the Wilderness and again in Gethsemane (Matt. 4:11 Luke 22:43); at the empty tomb, on the morning of the Resurrection (Matt. 28:1-7); at the Ascension (Acts 1:9-11); and at the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:31, 2 Thess. 1:7-10).

The angels, as has already been stated, occupy the position in the Hierarchy of Being intermediate between God and man. Psa. 8:3-6: "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? For thou hast made him but little lower than God (Hebrew *Elohim*; A.V. rendering, "the angels"), And crownest him with glory and honor. Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands." In this passage, writes Knudson,

Elohim is commonly rendered "angels," and it is quite possible that the term was used in this sense; for in several instances it has the general meaning of "a godlike being."¹ But in this particular passage *Elohim* probably means neither "angels" nor "God" exclusively, but both. It is divine beings generally, than whom man has been made but a little lower.²

In a word, man lives and moves and has his being on the highest level of existence possible to a creature of earth. Though in his present state clothed in a physical body, he is himself, in his essential and imperishable nature, the image of God, and he has inherently the capacity to become, by means of the knowledge of Christ and the life of the Spirit, a partaker of the divine nature.

2 Pet. 1:2-4: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowl-

1. *E.g.*, 1 Sam. 28:13, Exo. 4:16, 7:1.
2. *Op. cit.*, 193.

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edge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust.

In knowledge and power, angels are *superhuman* beings of course. But—are they “supernatural” beings? Obviously, the answer to this question depends entirely on one’s definition of the word “nature.” I am reminded here of the words of Stuart Chase:

When one says—as I have often said—“We must plan with nature for the protection of our natural resources”—one must be conscious that there is no entity “nature,” an old mother with whom one has interviews, but the word is only a useful tag for summing up a great variety of natural processes: the hydrologic cycle, soil formation, wind and storm, plant life, animal life, and so on.¹

In this statement, however, Mr. Chase, as he frequently does, indulges in a practice which he himself severely condemns, namely, that of talking in circles: there is no old mother “nature,” but only an aggregate of “natural” processes which account for our “natural” resources. But what are “natural” processes and “natural” resources? And what does Mr. Chase mean by the phrase, “and so on”? That is, what does the “and so on” take in? We understand, of course, that Mr. Chase is writing here of the resources of “nature,” as the term is commonly used, namely, to include the resources of the subhuman world—mineral, vegetable, and animal resources. Is man himself, then, not a part of “nature”? Is thought not a “natural” process? One thing is sure—that without human thought the resources of the subhuman world would be of little utility. The word “nature” is, in itself just a tag, of course. But, to speak in Mr. Chase’s own semantic terms, it must have a “referent.” What is that referent?

The question I raise is this: Where does the “natural” leave off and the “supernatural” begin? Or, is the “supernatural” but the rest of the “natural,” the not-yet-understood or even apprehended “natural”? Who can answer these questions with any degree of certainty? Does “nature” include only the sensible, the tangible, the palpable? If so, it cannot include thinking, for the simple reason that no one has ever yet apprehended a thought through the media of his physical senses; and if “nature” does not include all those higher thought processes

1. *The Tyranny of Words*, 82-83.

which are characteristic of man, that is to say, if thinking is a "supernatural" process, then man himself belongs to a "supernatural" order. Again, should someone object that the activity of angels is contrary to human experience, I should reply by asking, Contrary to *whose* experience? Contrary perhaps to the experience of men and women of the present day, or indeed men and women of several immediately past centuries, although there are some of these, no doubt, who would affirm the contrary. But does this fact necessarily prove that the presence of angels is contrary to the experience of all men who have lived upon the earth since the beginning of human history, or, to be specific, contrary to the experiences of those men, those great servants of God, whom God used so mightily in unfolding His Plan of Salvation for man? However we approach these problems, we merely beg the question. The fact remains that no one can successfully refute the proposition that angels may be, after all, just as truly a part of the order of Nature as a whole, as man is. Under this view, Nature embraces all creatures, and angels, let us remember, are created beings. We may therefore properly say that they are *superhuman* beings, but no man has any right dogmatically to assert that they are "supernatural" beings. This business of asserting unproved hypotheses is another prolific source of the confusion that exists in present-day thinking.

Let us suppose, rather, that "Nature" is the proper designation for the total Hierarchy of Being. Then let us believe—and it is undoubtedly the most rational belief possible, far more so indeed than the creed of the materialist—that God, the Eternal Spirit, is all-embracing, in some manner inscrutable to us, and that He evolves everything out of Himself by a timeless process of Thought, at the same time remaining Himself the great, infinite, eternal Other. In Tennyson's memorable words:

Only That which made us meant us to be mightier by and by,
 Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens within the
 human eye,
 Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, through the
 human soul;
 Boundless inward in the atom, boundless outward in the
 Whole.

Under such a view, our world is indeed One World—the World of the Spirit. That is what I prefer to believe that it is.

Again, on the other hand, if the Totality of Being should

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be, in fact, not a hierarchy, but a continuum, without any definite breaks—or ledges, let us say—between the inorganic and the organic, between the plant and the animal, between the animal and man, and between man and the angelic order,—well, what of it? After all, such words as “inorganic” and “organic,” “material” and “spiritual,” “physical” and “mental,” “natural” and “supernatural,” and the like, may turn out to be dualistic impositions upon Reality—mere verbalizations and no more—by the human intellect itself, prone as it is to categorize and to classify. Indeed, such distinctions may not exist at all in the total structure of Being. Even so, that is, should this prove to be the case, would our world be any less the One World, any less the World of the Spirit? We firmly believe, however, that the overwhelming testimony of the scholarship of the ages is that Being is a hierarchy, not a continuum, of existents.

Indeed, it must be the World of the Spirit and the spirits, for the simple reason that to anything less than Person it is meaningless. As far as we know, persons and persons alone are capable of experiencing and evaluating, in the fullest sense of these terms, the world in which they have their being. Persons and persons only are capable of seeking the meaning of it all, of pursuing the ageless quest for the Holy Grail of Truth. As Lotze argues, in the ninth book of his great work, *Mikrokosmos*, the universal is everywhere inferior to the particular, the species to the individual, and the contents of the realm of true reality are restricted to the living, personal Spirit of God and the world of personal spirits, which He has created.¹

We are now ready to enter upon the second phase of our study—that of Spirit in God.

ADDENDA: COSMOLOGICAL THEORIES

(Theories of the Origin and Organization of the Cosmos)

EMANATIONISM: Unity is prior to plurality. Creation is conceived as a process of the “watering down” of perfection, as, for example, light, in moving away from its source and thus becoming diffused, is finally lost in darkness. Darkness is non-being, and non-being is usually identified with gross matter. The most thoroughgoing emanation cults were those of the

1. *Vide* Dr. F. Ueberweg, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. II, 321. Translated from the Fourth German Edition by George S. Morris.

Gnostics and especially that of Plotinus, which is known as Neoplatonism.

PLOTINUS (A.D. 205-270).

(The Egyptian Neoplatonist, who derived his system largely from his teacher, Ammonius Saccas. His writings were published by Porphyry in six books, each consisting of nine sections, hence entitled the *Enneads*.) Origen and Augustine both were greatly influenced by Neoplatonism. The following should be read downward:

The One

Nous	one: world unity, prior to the possibility of plurality many: "ideas" or "forms" of all possible existents: (1) universals, (2) particulars
Soul	one: world soul, undivided many: individual souls, (1) unconscious, (2) conscious of ideas
Body	one: world body, as a whole many: particular bodies (1) as wholes (2) decomposed

The Void

Gross matter: non-being

Gnosticism, in its various cults, postulated a series of emanations from the Absolute Being or Unity in the forms of psychic intermediaries, known as *aeons*. According to this early Christian heresy, Christ Himself was just such an emanation or aeon. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the Deists of a later age were prone to regard the "laws of nature" as emanations, hence as having a kind of independent existence.

PHILOSOPHICAL HINDUISM

(or Hindu Mysticism. Very old, as set forth in the *Upanishads*)

Again, read downward:

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Brahman (perfect unity)

Atman (unity that pervades plurality)

Souls (plurality that is really unity)

Illusion (*Maya*) Bodies (plurality that is mistaken for reality)

Castes (levels of social classes)

Animals (levels of animal life)

Plants (levels of plant life)

Matter (levels of decomposition)

It will be noted that emanationist systems all tend toward pantheism, the doctrine that identifies God with what we commonly call His Creation. The fallacies of pantheism are clearly pointed out in the following terse statements by C. H. Toy, *Introduction to the History of Religions*, p. 476: "Pantheism has never commended itself to the masses of men . . . The demand for a deity with whom one may enter into personal relations—the simple concept of a God who dwells apart satisfies the religious instincts of the majority of men. The ethical questions arising from pantheism seem to them perplexing: how can man be morally responsible when it is the deity who thinks and acts in him? and how can he have any sense of loyalty to a deity whom he cannot distinguish from himself? . . . Man demands a method of worship, and pantheism does not permit organized worship." Moreover, pantheism, by distributing the Divine essence through all cosmic existents, inanimate or animate, amoral or moral, makes God to be the author of evil as well as of good; to this fact the only alternative would be *that evil is illusion*, and this is the corner in which Absolutists are uniformly forced to take refuge. May I remind the student that an illusion is necessarily an illusion of something: an illusion of nothing or nothingness is inconceivable.

PLATO'S COSMOLOGY

(Plato lived 427-347 B.C. See his "likely story" of the Creation, in the *Timaeus*.)

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Being: The Forms (Ideas): The Form of the Good,
Unity

Forms of all classes of existents

The Demiourgos (Craftsman, Architect)

The World: World-Soul

Becoming: Rational Souls

Irrational Souls

Inanimate Bodies

Non-being: Indeterminate matter

Plato can hardly be classified as an emanationist: in fact it is difficult to put his cosmology in any definite category. In the *Timaeus*, he pictures the Creation as having been actualized by the Demiourgos (Master Craftsman, Great Architect), as the World-Soul, according to the archetypal Forms, out of what he calls the Receptacle. This last term seems to have been the word he used to designate the Void (empty space). It will be recalled that the Greek word *chaos* denoted, not disorder, but empty space; hence this was the Greek term generally used for non-being which was conceived to be what we call "matter." (Cf. Plotinus, above). The Forms, in Plato's thought, were the Principles of classification, e.g., the "mustardness" of a mustard seed, the "horseness" of a horse; that is, that which specifies the individuals of each particular kind of things. Had he put these Forms in the Mind of "The Divine"—The Form of the Good, that is, Unity—his system would have to be regarded as theistic; however, there seems to be no evidence in his writings that he took this step; he apparently gave the Forms an eternally separate existence in themselves. Hence, we must conclude that on the whole Plato favored a view of the Deity as immanent, and that his system was weighted in the direction of a "higher pantheism." This is evident from the fact that the World-Soul (as the "Prime Mover") is presented as spreading out throughout the cosmos and as directing its processes and changes from within. As a matter of fact, Plato obviously belonged to the Greek philosophical tradition (Aristotelianism alone excepted) in which the Divine Principle ("God") is conceived pantheistically as That Which Is, in striking contrast to the Hebrew voluntarism in which God is revealed as He Who Is (Exo. 3:14), in a word, as pure personality.

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ARISTOTLE'S HIERARCHY OF BEING

God

(defined as Pure Thought Thinking Itself: cf. John 4:24)

rational psyche ("soul")

(physiochemical processes, cellular processes, sensitivity, locomotion, *plus* reason)

animal psyche

(physiochemical processes and cellular processes *plus* sensitivity and locomotion)

vegetable psyche

(physiochemical processes, *plus* the cellular processes)

matter-in-motion

(or in modern terms, the physiochemical processes of the inanimate world)

Aristotle, in his *De Anima* ("On the Soul"), pictures the totality of being as a hierarchy, that is, as organized on different levels in an ascending scale of complexity of powers, in which each higher order subsumes the powers of those below it. Analysis of the nature of "movement" (change) convinced Aristotle that in order to account for the complex of contingent causes-and-effects which is the cosmos, there must be a First Cause, a First or Prime Mover, who is self-existent (*sui generis*), that is, non-contingent and without beginning or end, the only alternative being that somewhere, at some time, nothing must have originated the first something—a notion utterly absurd, of course; or, as someone has put it, the "first mover" must himself be unmoved, except from within, and different from the "first moved." This Prime Mover, otherwise described as Pure Thought Thinking Itself, is Aristotle's God, who is presented as affecting the universe without being a part of it. Hence, it will be seen that Aristotle's God is transcendent, and that his system more nearly approximates theism than that of any other Greek philosopher. (Aristotle lived 384-322 B.C., and was a student at Plato's school, the Academy, for some twenty years.)

Why does our world exist instead of any other kind of world? asked the German philosopher, Leibniz (1646-1716).

Simply because (Leibniz concluded) God has chosen, not to create any kind of world at random, but to create the best of all possible worlds, that is, the best He found it possible to create for achieving His ends, the actualization of the greatest possible good and the least possible evil. (Evil, Leibniz held, is of three kinds, namely, physical evil (suffering), moral evil (sin), and metaphysical evil: this he defined in terms of the necessary imperfection of finite beings.) Therefore, because our world is the handiwork of this Perfect Being (The Absolute Monad), it must be the actualization of the fulness of created being. In such a world (reasoning *a priori*, of course), all possible beings must be actualized, all possible levels (grades) filled therein: there must be *unbroken continuity in the form of progressive gradation of organisms* from the very lowest living being up to the very highest, God Himself. Thus arose the doctrine of the Great Chain of Being, a doctrine which flourished in early modern times, and which, obviously, is largely in accord with present-day evolutionism. (For a thoroughgoing presentation of this view, see the excellent book by Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, published by the Harvard University Press, 1950. The concept is also clearly set forth in the poem by Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Man.")

EMERGENTISM

(This is the view that unity is in the process of emerging out of plurality. The process is, and probably will always be, an unfinished process. The following tables are to be read upward.)

	God	
Mind	Mind	Society
	Life	Mind
Life	Matter	Life
	Space-Time	Matter
Matter		
C. Lloyd Morgan, in his book, <i>Emergent Evolution</i> , 1923.	Samuel Alexander, in his book, <i>Time and Deity</i> , 1920.	Roy Wood Sellers, in his book, <i>Evolutionary Naturalism</i> , 1922.

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Emergentism, though at times paying lip service to a "God," is strictly pantheistic in character. In all cases, it rejects the theistic doctrine of God's transcendence. It ignores uniformly the necessity of Efficient Causality in all cosmic processes.

I have presented the foregoing concepts (and diagrams) for the purpose of demonstrating the futility of all efforts to obtain complete knowledge of the origin and organization of the cosmos through unaided human reason. The ultimate mysteries are inscrutable. These various philosophical theories surely prove this to be true; that is, they prove the inherent incapacity of the human mind to explain (as Chesterton has put it) how nothing could turn into something or how something could turn into something else. How refreshing to turn away from the best that human wisdom can afford us, and to accept by faith the Biblical teaching, on these subjects! (Cf. *Job* 11:7; *Isa.* 55:6-11; *1 Cor.* 1:18-25, 3:18-20; *Rom.* 11:33-36; *Heb.* 11:3).

The following tables will serve to point up the correspondences between the empirical (commonsense) and the Biblical accounts of the origin and organization of the created world:

self-consciousness (the person)	God (Pure Spirit: <i>John</i> 4:24)
consciousness (the brute)	Angels (ethereal beings, "ministering spirits": <i>Heb.</i> 1:14)
life (the cell)	Souls (<i>Gen.</i> 2:7)
energy-matter (non-living)	Bodies
	Matter
The EMPIRICAL ACCOUNT of the Dimensions of Being, based on observation and experience.	The BIBLICAL ACCOUNT of Being.
(Read upward)	(Read upward)

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Day 7—rest

Day 6—man and woman, *bara*, v. 28; Gen. 2:7
land animals

Day 5—water and air species,
bara, v. 21

Day 4—chronology (measurement
of time)

GOD

Day 3—plants,
lands and seas

Day 2—atmosphere (“expanse”)

Day 1—energy, light, matter:
bara, v. 1

THE HEBREW COSMOGONY (Gen. 1:1—2:3)
(read upward)

Some hold that God, the Eternal Spirit, created without the use of pre-existing materials, inserting new increments of power into the Creative Process at successively higher levels. Some hold that God put into Prime (First) Matter all potentialities (Forms) later actualized by His Efficient Causality.

N.B.—For the diagrams presented above as illustrative of the Emanation and Emergent Evolution theories of the origin and organization of the cosmos, I am indebted to Dr. Archie J. Bahm, Professor of Philosophy, University of New Mexico. These diagrams appear in his well-known book, *Philosophy: An Introduction*, published by Wiley and Sons, 1953. It is by his permission that I reproduce them here, and for this privilege I am deeply grateful.—C.C.C.

Dr. A. H. Strong, in his *Systematic Theology*, suggests that the content of the Biblical teaching falls under the category of what is philosophically designated Ethical Monism.

It is my conviction, however, that Dr. Bahm, in the work cited above, presents a philosophical view which approximates rather closely the essence of the Genesis Cosmogony. Dr. Bahm has named his theory Organicism. Should the student wish to pursue the subject further, he can do so by familiarizing himself with the argument presented in Chapter 20 of Bahm's book.

The late Martin Buber, the Jewish theistic existentialist, in his book entitled *The Eclipse of God* develops the thesis that

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whereas philosophy holds fast to an image of God, or even to a faith in God, religion holds fast to God Himself. This is a true contrast.

Now may I close this volume with a personal confession, namely: I could never substitute for faith in the Biblical Heavenly Father who has revealed Himself to us in His Son Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-4, 11:6; John 15:1), any coldly intellectual philosophical theory of the origin and nature of the Mystery of Being. I recall here the striking forcefulness of the questions which Zophar the Naamathite addressed to Job in olden times: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job 11:7). There is but one answer to these questions—an unequivocal negative. Or, as the Apostle Paul puts it: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3:19). Again: "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). Through the foolishness of the preaching of what? The preaching of "Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23-24).

THE TEILHARDIAN HIERARCHY OF BEING

It will be recalled that Spinoza, the Jewish philosopher (1632-1677), set out in his *Ethica* to deal with the problems of how an immaterial Being (God) could create a material universe, only to "explain away" the problem at the end, simply by identifying God with the world, nature, the universe, etc. (the totality of being). His system was a rigid pantheism which "explained" little or nothing *in re* the basic problem with which he was trying to deal. In like manner, in recent years, the late French priest-scientist-philosopher, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, in his principal works, *The Divine Milieu* and *The Phenomenon of Man*, created a stir of some proportions in the academic world by undertaking to explain the *modus operandi* of evolution (as did Bergson earlier in his work entitled *Creative Evolution*). Teilhard envisions evolution through a gradation of forms, from atomic particles up to human beings, in ever increasing complexity of structure, and along with it, the development of consciousness (Bergson uses the term "Spirit"). The result is a kind of *pan-psychism*. Man is the focal point in whom all

facets of the evolutionary process converge, and in man reflective thought finally emerges. The unique feature of Teilhard's system is his concept that the ultimate reality of this cosmic development is the Incarnate Christ (not the "Superman" of Nietzsche, nor that of Samuel Butler, nor that of Shaw's *Man and Superman* or his *Back to Methuselah*), but the God-Man, who ultimately gathers all things up into Himself and truly becomes *all in all*. "The only universe," says Teilhard, "capable of containing the human person is an irrevocably 'personalizing' universe." Again: "In one manner or the other, it still remains true that, even in the view of the mere biologist, the human epic resembles nothing so much as a way of the Cross" (PM, 290, 311). Like that of Bergson, Teilhard's system was an honest effort to describe the *modus operandi* of the evolutionary process. However, we are safe in saying that both Bergson and Teilhard have failed to explain how a new species emerges—indeed how novelty of any kind enters into the process—just as Spinoza failed to explain how an immaterial God could have created this material world. *Obviously, these are mysteries which lie beyond the scope of human comprehension* (Job 11:7, Isa. 55:8-9). Nevertheless Teilhard's presentation is sufficiently intriguing to merit an analysis of it, in its main outlines, for whatever it may be worth to the student. One thing can be said in its favor: it has received little but scorn, and even sneers, from the materialistic evolutionists. The following diagram and explanatory matter will suffice, perhaps, to place the Teilhardian view before readers of the present text.

OMEGA: Creation and Creator Become One
Through Christ

Plerome

Socialization

Homo sapiens

NOOGENESIS

(from *nous*, "reason," "mind")

Hominisation

Threshold of Reflection

Primates

ANTHROPOGENESIS

(from *anthropos*, "man")

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Mammals, etc.
(Consciousness)
Animals
Plants
Cellular Processes
Monocellulars
Bacteria

BIOGENESIS (from *bios*, "life")

Threshold of Life

Minerals
Molecules
Crystals
Atoms

Granules of Energy

COSMOGENESIS
(from *cosmos*, "order"—of the non-living world)

ALPHA

(Read upward, according to what Teilhard calls the Axis of Ascending Complexity and Consciousness)

EXPLANATORY: Evolution, according to Teilhard, moves along a kind of vertical line which he calls "the axis of ascending complexity and consciousness," each cosmic particle (monad) being composed of a "within" (of psychic or radial energy, also called psychism, which is not amenable to physical sense), and a "without" (physical or "tangential" which is measurable): both form an indivisible "spirit-matter" entity. (Hence this must not be thought of as a dualism.) 1. *Period of "Cosmogogenesis."* The more complex the matter becomes, the more consciousness (psyche) it gains. Evolution is simply the continuous intensification of the psychical or radial energy. Cosmogogenesis is the process of *becoming*, on an evolutionary line between a past and a future. The point of departure from the axis is designated ALPHA, or the Alpha Point. Through "granulation" of energy the first elementary particles took form, and over an unimaginable stretch of time assumed the status of what present-day science calls atomic nuclei, atoms, or molecules (these are simply tools of explanation in physics). The birth of our planet probably occurred about five million years ago. 2. *Period of "Biogenesis."* When the "corpuscular number" in a particle reached a certain level matter "came alive." This "vitalisation" occurred when matter crossed the threshold of life and marked the beginning of the age of biogenesis. As physical matter became more and more complex, the psychism of the individual monad increased proportionately. 3. *Period of "Anthropogenesis."* At the point when the brain reaches the necessary degree of complexity, the threshold of reflection was crossed and man was born. This power of thought made man a being distinct from all other species. This was "not a matter of change of degree, but of a change of nature, resulting from a change of state" (PM, 166). The hominisation of the species introduced the age of anthropogenesis. This occurred probably at some point within the last million years: Concern-

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ing *instinct* in animals, Teilhard writes: "We realize better in our minds the fact and the reason for the *diversity* of animal behavior. From the moment we regard evolution as primarily psychical transformation, we see there is not *one* instinct in nature, but a multitude of forms of instincts each corresponding to a particular solution of the problem of life. The 'psychical' make-up of an insect is not and cannot be that of a vertebrate; nor can the instinct of a squirrel be that of a cat or an elephant: this is in virtue of the position of each on the tree of life" (PM, 167). "The individual and instantaneous leap from instinct to thought" marked the beginning of "hominisation," which then advanced by means of "the progressive phyletic spiritualisation in human civilisation of all the forces contained in the animal world" (PM, 180). As Julian Huxley puts it, in his Introduction: "The intensification of mind, the raising of mental potential" is regarded "as being the necessary consequence of complexification" (PM, 11-16). 4. *The Period of Noogenesis.* (From the Greek *noesis*, from *noein*, "to perceive," from *nous*, "mind"; hence, *noesis* in English, which, in philosophy, means purely intellectual apprehension.) This phase began as a result of the gradual evolution of mental powers, with the appearance of the first *homo sapiens*. (There are different races, Teilhard emphasizes, but only *one homo sapiens*.) Evolution has now reached the stage at which major physical development has lost significance. Science holds that man is unique in nature because of his brain processes, not because his brain is the biggest in capacity but because it is more complex. According to Teilhard, "the noosphere (and more generally the world) represents a whole that is not only closed but also *centred*. Because it contains and engenders consciousness, space-time is necessarily of a *convergent nature*. Accordingly, its enormous layers, followed in the right direction, must somewhere ahead become involuted to a point which we might call *Omega*, which fuses and consumes them integrally in itself" (PM, 259). At the present time we are in the period of socialisation in which, according to Teilhard, mankind becomes more and more united and integrated. This will come about as a consensus of mankind will gradually replace the growing capacity of the individual intellect because the human brain will cease to grow. This common consciousness will lift humanity to a higher level. Man inevitably continues to socialize: it is his nature to do so; hence all things will converge at one center, Omega, the point where humanity and the universe is bound to converge in the cosmic Christ.

What roles are played by God and Christ in the Teilhardian system? He puts the totality of being in the hands of the omnipresent God. He places man in the Divine Milieu, yet in such a way that man is not depersonalized in spite of ever increasing socialization. On the contrary, it is this personal link which connects each of us to God, who is the center, and the motor, so to speak, of the evolutionary process. We become God's partner in leading the world forward to the Omega point. For some persons, man is the center, the only point of adoration in the totality of being; for others, man is little or nothing in this grandiose universe—he is lost in it. Neither position is right. Referring to Paul's sermon on the Areopagus, Teilhard writes (DM, 25): "God who has made man in order that he may find him—God whom we try to grasp through the experiment of our lives—this God is as tangible and present as the atmosphere in which we are submerged. He surrounds us from all sides like the world itself." Man cannot escape the Divine Milieu. Each right action brings him into closer communion with Christ. "Whatsoever ye do," writes the Apostle, "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). This means we should always act in close fellowship with our Lord. The totality of man's life, even in its most "natural" aspects, is sanctifiable. From this point of beginning, the Christian life receives

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its content and direction, how and where to go. How does man enter upon this path? By purifying his intentions and acting according to the Will of God. As man adheres to the creative power of God, he becomes its instrument, or even more, its living extension. Man is thus united with God and in God on this earth in a common love to create. And in spite of the individual's failures and sins the world as a whole will achieve victory over evil, because God is on man's side. Mankind is assured that the universe, all creation, will rejoin the One when all evolution shall have converged in the point Omega. This will be the mysterious Plerome, where Creator and Creation will be one totality, without, however, adding anything essential to God. The active center of the Plerome in which everything is united, the creative Soul in whom everything is consummated, is Jesus Christ, "Religion and science are the two conjugated faces or phases of one and the same act of complete knowledge—the only one which can embrace the past and the future of evolution so as to contemplate, measure, and fulfill them" (DM, 284, 285). Note well the following concluding statements (PM, 293, 294): "Is the Kingdom of God a big family? Yes, in a sense it is. But in another sense it is a prodigious biological operation—that of the Redeeming Incarnation. As early as in St. Paul and St. John, we read that to create, to fulfill and to purify the world is, for God, to unify it by uniting it organically with himself. How does He unify it? By partially immersing himself in things, by becoming 'element,' and then, from this point of vantage in the heart of the matter, assuming the control and leadership of what we now call evolution. Christ, principle of universal vitality because sprung up as man among men, put himself in the position (maintained ever since) to subdue under himself, to purify, to direct, and superanimate the general ascent of consciousness into which he inserted himself. By a perennial act of communion and sublimation, he aggregates to himself the total psychism of the earth. And when he has gathered everything together and transformed everything, he will close in upon himself and his conquests, thereby rejoicing, in a final gesture, the divine focus he has never left. Then, as St. Paul tells us, *God shall be all in all*. . . . The universe fulfilling itself in a synthesis of centres in perfect conformity with the laws of union. God, the Centre of centres. In that final vision the Christian dogma culminates." (Cf. Eph. 1:5-12, I Cor. 15:20-28, Col. 1:9-23, Rev. 1:8, 1:17-18).

It will thus be seen that Teilhard's God is essentially *theistic* rather than *pantheistic*: He is presented as the Eternal Being, in Himself separate from the creation, and as immersing Himself into all created being as the "center" and "motor" of the evolutionary process. His portrayal of the Omega Point as the ultimate fusion of Creation and Redemption in the Beatific Vision (Union with God) is hardly a variation from the Apostle Peter's description of the "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13; cf. Matt. 5:8, 1 Cor. 13:12, 1 John 3:2; Rev. 21:1-8, 22:1-5). It strikes this writer that the most obvious weakness in the Teilhardian exposition is his failure to recognize the juridical aspect of the totality of being, and his consequent failure to deal adequately with the fact of evil and its consequences, including the Scripture doctrines of judgment, rewards, and punishments. (See Psa. 89:14, John 5:28-29, Matt. 25:31-46, Rom. 2:1-16, 2 Thess. 1:7-10, Acts 17:30-31, Rev. 20:11-15, etc.) This, of course, is a tragic lacuna in all the branches of human knowledge in our day.

In summary: It will thus be seen that in all these conceptions the creation is pictured in the form of an ascending sequence of levels of being; that is, as essentially hierarchical in character. The notion of an ascending continuum comprehending

all kinds of being certainly lies beyond all possibility (or even probability) of credible acceptance. As previously stated, to assume that matter is to be regarded as the sole reality is to attribute to atoms all the facets and powers that theologians attribute to God, including supreme intelligence, creative power, autonomous eternal (timeless) existence. Those who leave God out of their philosophy are under the necessity of showing how (or even that) mindless, non-living matter has been capable of organizing itself, of becoming alive, and of endowing itself with consciousness, reason, and self-consciousness (personality). On these conclusions we rest our intelligent faith upon the fact of the self-existent living and true God of the Bible. *Being is a hierarchy, not a continuum of existents.*

[However, see my essay on "Evolution and Evolutionism" at the end of this volume.]

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF PART THREE

1. How do we know that man is a creature? What is the significance of this fact?
2. What are the ultimate intrinsic and extrinsic ends of man? What is our basis for these beliefs?
3. What is the necessary means to man's attainment of Perfect Happiness?
4. In what does the life with the Holy Spirit begin?
5. What are the prerequisites, according to Scripture, of betrothal to Christ?
6. What are the essential facts of the Gospel? What is the fundamental truth of the Gospel message?
7. State the three commands and the three great promises of the Gospel.
8. What is the meaning of the title *Messias* or *Christ*?
9. When does the actual marriage of Christ and His Bride take place? Give Scripture proofs.
10. Explain what is meant by the *Hierarchy* of Being. How does this differ from a continuum?
11. Explain Lotze's theory of the breaks in the continuity of Being?
12. What are the obvious gaps in the ascending Continuity of Being?
13. Is *any* theory of Creation possible that would ignore the necessity of a Creative Power?
14. Can Creation ever be accounted for if Efficient Causality is rejected?
15. State LeConte's definition of evolution.
16. Why do we reason that a Creation did take place, whatever may have been the method?
17. Explain the philosophy of Holism, as related to the Hierarchy of Being. Explain "This is a universe of whole-making."
18. State the substance of Montague's discussion of the chances of surviving death.
19. According to Montague's argument what are the four "fields of existence" which make up the Hierarchy of Being.
20. "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." What are the reasons for this affirmation?