

in universal chaos; a truth which must be defended by the sword, if necessary, against the doctrine of tyranny in every form—the doctrine that Might alone makes Right. In the words of Kipling's *Recessional*:

*The tumult and the shouting dies;  
The captains and the kings depart:  
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice  
An humble and a contrite heart.  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!*

### 3. The Work of the Spirit in the Creation of the Physical Universe

According to Scripture, the old or natural Creation consists of "the heavens and the earth" and "all the host of them."

Gen. 2:1—"And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." Psa. 33:6—"By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

The phrase, "the heavens and the earth," alludes of course to the Cosmos as a whole. The "host of heaven" takes in (1) the sun, moon, and stars, and (2) the angels.

[Deut. 4:19]: lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, thou be drawn away and worship them, etc. [Deut. 17:3]: and hath gone and served other gods, and worshiped them, or the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, etc. [Gen. 32:1-2]: And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place, Mahanaim. [I Kings 22:19]: And Micaiah said, Therefore hear thou the word of Jehovah: I saw Jehovah sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. [Psa. 103:21]: Bless Jehovah, all ye his hosts, Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. [Heb. 1:14]: Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation? [Dan. 7:10, the prophet's vision of the Ancient of Days]: A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousands of thousands ministered unto him; and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. [Luke 2:13]: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, etc. [Heb. 12:22]: But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels. [Rev. 5:11]: And I saw, and I 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.

The "host" of earth, of course, takes in all living creatures upon the earth.

[Gen. 7:21-23]: And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was on the dry land, died. And every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens: and they were destroyed from the earth.

[Cf. Rom. 8:20-22]: For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

"The whole creation" of this Pauline text would seem to include all living things upon the earth — all of which are regarded in Scripture as being under the curse, and therefore suffering the consequences, of sin — and hence is equivalent to the "host" of earth. We have here a picture of the "struggle for existence" more graphic than any portrayal by Darwin, Huxley, Bergson, or any of our modern evolutionists.

In the Hebrew cosmogony, as given in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, *the Spirit of God is presented as the effectuating or realizing Agent of the Godhead in the Creation of the physical universe and its creatures.*

[Gen. 1:1]: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

In attempting to explain the Totality of Things *that are* and *as they are*, it is necessary, as has been made clear already, to begin with Something — with an uncreated and unoriginated First Principle. As A. J. Cronin, the novelist, writes:

Reject if you will as pure imagery the Biblical presentation of God, shaping the world with His own hands in six days. Accept evolution with its fossils and elementary species, its scientific doctrine of natural causes. And still you are confronted with the same mystery, primary and profound. Nothing can come of nothing.<sup>1</sup>

It would be utterly foolish for any man to deny that even philosophers and scientists, in attempting to account for the Cosmos, must begin with something. Says Lincoln Barnett:

1. Art., "Why I Believe in God," in *Woman's Home Companion*, July, 1950. Reprinted in condensed form in *Reader's Digest*, September, 1950.

## THE SPIRIT AND THE COSMOS

Even if one acquiesces to the idea of an immortal pulsating universe, within which the sun and earth and supergiant red stars are comparative newcomers, the problem of initial origin remains. It merely pushes the time of Creation into the infinite past. For while theorists have adduced mathematically impeccable accounts of the fabrication of galaxies, stars, star dust, atoms, and even of the atom's components, every theory rests ultimately on the a priori assumption that *something* was already in existence—whether free neutrons, energy quanta, or simply the blank inscrutable “world stuff,” the cosmic essence, of which the multifarious universe was subsequently wrought.<sup>2</sup>

There is simply no getting around the fact that the *Something-That-Is* derives from *Something-That-Has-Always-Been*; that is to say, from *Something-That-Is-Eternally-Existent*. There must be a First Principle of the Unity and Generation of all things.

Two general types of “hypotheses” of the origin of our solar system (now recognized to be only one of many such systems) have prevailed generally among scientists in modern times. The first type, that is, first in order of origin, is best represented by what is known as the *monoparental* or Laplacian hypothesis (from Laplace and his “nebular hypothesis”). This has been superseded in recent years by the so-called *biparental* or *planetesimal* hypothesis (sometimes called the Chamberlin-Moulton hypothesis, from the names of its originators, Thomas C. Chamberlin, geologist, and F. R. Moulton, astronomer, both of the University of Chicago). Even this, however, has been subjected to certain criticisms and modifications in recent years. On this subject, the author of a standard up-to-date geology textbook summarizes as follows:

Evidence concerning the origin of the earth rests primarily in its inheritances of (1) chemical and physical constitution, (2) dynamic properties, comprising its motions of revolution and rotation, and (3) relation to other bodies in the solar system and the stellar galaxy. Many considerations lead to the conclusion that the conditions and events that produced the earth are responsible equally for making the other planets and the satellites.

Two types of hypotheses to account for the birth of the solar system may be recognized, one in which a single star or nebula is concerned, and the other which requires interaction of two stellar bodies. The Laplacian hypothesis, which best represents the first type, assumes an evolution of successive rings that condense to form planetary masses, and a secondary development of rings from these to make the satellites. Difficulties from both astronomic and geologic quarters require abandonment of this hypothesis.

2. *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, p. 104.

The planetesimal hypothesis postulates the beginning of the earth and other bodies of the solar system in the disturbing effects of a passing star upon our sun, causing the sun to eject a small part of its mass and giving to the ejected materials an orbital motion about the sun. Development of the earth is assigned to condensation on a part of the sun-derived matter to form a core, and slow increase of size by accretion of other, probably small, masses of similar matter (planetesimals) through collisions in the course of orbital motion. The earth may thus have been a solid body ever since the condensation of the core. Circularity of the present earth orbit and the direction of rotation may be explained as effects, in part, of planetesimal accretion. Various anomalies of the solar system are satisfactorily accounted for by this hypothesis. The passing of another star near our sun is entirely possible, given sufficient time, but it is an extremely rare possibility.<sup>1</sup>

But — it will be noted — these and all similar speculations begin with something — with some sort of nebular mass or masses in motion. Back of that they do not presume to go. It is obvious that all such “hypotheses” are — as indeed the term “hypothesis” implies — little more than guesses. They may be, and probably are, good guesses; still they are guesses. The plain truth of the matter is that scientists have no definite knowledge as to how the universe and the earth originated; indeed such knowledge is not empirically obtainable.

Now the Biblical cosmogony begins not with nebular masses, nor even with “free neutrons, energy quanta, or simply the blank inscrutable ‘world stuff’.” The Bible goes back of all such primal “cosmic essence,” back to the personal Creator-God. The Bible begins with God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God. The Bible tells us that what we call the whole physical universe or Cosmos was — “in the beginning,” that is, when time began — planned by the Father, decreed by the Logos, and effectuated or actualized by the Spirit. “In the beginning” it was the triune God who “created the heavens and the earth.”

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Gen. 1:1—“*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” This could be simply a general introductory statement, designed to epitomize, so to speak, all that follows in the remainder of the account. However, I am inclined to believe that this initial statement has a reference as well to the creation of matter in its first form, or perhaps it would be nearer to the truth to say, to the first production of “physical” or “cosmic” energy—the energy and the matter (which derived by trans-

1. Raymond C. Moore, *Historical Geology*, 13-14.

mutation therefrom) out of which the whole Cosmos was subsequently fashioned and arranged. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; that is to say, When time began, God first created or projected the energy and subsequent matter out of which He then proceeded to fashion the heavens and the earth. As such, this first statement introduces the description of what may properly be called, in the process of Creation as a whole, the Era of Matter. It emphasizes the fact that God created the physical (inanimate) universe *first*, that is, prior to His creation of living beings to inhabit it; hence the customary coordinate phrase, "and all the host of them," is lacking. The description of the creation of the "host" of earth follows in the accounts which are given, respectively, of the Era of Life (v.11 ff.) and the Era of Personality (v. 26ff.). However, the significant truth revealed in this first verse of Genesis is that *it was God who did the creating*. It is also significant that, as pointed out heretofore, the name used in this text for the Deity is the plural form, *Elohim*, and that this plural form is used with the singular verb: thus indicating at the same time the *Oneness* of the Godhead as to essence and His *Threeness* as to activity. This is a clear intimation that all three Persons of the Godhead participated in the work of Creation.

Obviously, this verse could be intended to serve as a general introduction to the entire Cosmogony that follows, beginning with v. 2—as a summary of the whole creative process narrated in the section ending with Gen. 2:3. The fundamental truth designed to be impressed upon our minds in this "sententiously sublime" introductory affirmation is that it was God (*Elohim*) who did the creating. Cf. Isa. 42:5, 45:18; Job 38:4; Psa. 24:1-2, 104:5; Acts 14:15, 17:24-28.

2. One of the most impressive facts about this Cosmogony is its general agreement (1) not with the early creation mythologies, such as, for example, the Babylonian in particular; (2) not with medieval or early modern science, (3) but especially with the science which has developed, and is in process of further development, *in our own time*. Its amenability to interpretation in the light of present-day science especially, is so obvious that I choose deliberately to emphasize this aspect of it here. Whereas the mythological interpretation raises all kinds of questions and apparent discrepancies with science, exegesis in the light of present-day scientific thinking about the world and its origin eliminates them. This interpretation, moreover, does not require

any wresting of the Scripture text out of its context, much less does it require any fantastic distortion of the Scripture text. It seems to me that the acceptance of any account of the Creation as divinely inspired would need to be justified by its correspondence with progressively developing human science. As stated previously, God has written two books—the Book of Nature and the Book of Redemption. Now science and theology, which are the products of man's efforts to interpret these two Books, respectively, may produce apparent discrepancies, because man is fallible, ever liable to error. But the Books themselves cannot be in conflict, for the simple reason that both embody Truth, and Truth does not contradict itself.

Murphy writes:

This great introductory sentence of the book of God is equal in weight to the whole of its subsequent communications concerning the kingdom of nature. It assumes the existence of God; for it is he who in the beginning creates. It assumes his eternity; for he is before all things: and as nothing comes from nothing, he himself must have always been. It implies his omnipotence; for he creates the universe of things. It implies his absolute freedom; for he begins a new course of action. It implies his infinite wisdom; for a *kosmos*, an order of matter and mind, can only come from a being of absolute intelligence. It implies his essential goodness; for the Sole, Eternal, Almighty, All-wise, and All-sufficient Being has no reason, no motive, no capacity for evil. It presumes him to be beyond all limit of time and place; as he is before all time and place. It asserts the creation of the heavens and the earth; that is, of the universe of mind and matter. This creating is the omnipotent act of giving existence to things which before had no existence. This is the first great mystery of things; as the end is the second. Natural science observes things as they are, when they have already laid hold of existence. It ascends into the past as far as observation will reach, and penetrates into the future as far as experience will guide. But it does not touch the beginning or the end . . . This sentence assumes the being of God, and asserts the beginning of things. Hence it intimates that the existence of God is more immediately patent to the reason of man than the creation of the universe. And this is agreeable to the philosophy of things; for the existence of God is a necessary and eternal truth, more and more self-evident to the intellect as it rises to maturity. But the beginning of things is, by its very nature, a contingent event, which once was not and then came to be contingent on the free will of the Eternal, and therefore, not evident to reason itself, but made known to the understanding by testimony and the reality of things. This sentence is the testimony, and the actual world in us and around us is the reality. Faith takes account of the one, observation of the other.<sup>1</sup>

Gen. 1:1 [Murphy goes on to say] bears on the very face of it the indication that it was written by man, and for man; for it divides all things into the heavens and the earth. Such a division evidently suits those only who are inhabitants of the earth . . . With no less clearness, however, does it show that it was dictated by superhuman knowledge.

1. *Murphy on Genesis*, 28-30.

## THE SPIRIT AND THE COSMOS

For it records the beginning of things of which natural science can take no cognizance . . . This simple sentence denies atheism; for it assumes the being of God. It denies polytheism, and, among its various forms, the doctrine of two eternal principles, the one good and the other evil; for it confesses the one Eternal Creator. It denies materialism; for it asserts the creation of matter. It denies pantheism; for it assumes the existence of God before all things, and apart from them. It denies fatalism; for it involves the freedom of the Eternal Being. It indicates the relative superiority, in point of magnitude, of the heavens to the earth, by giving the former the first place in the order of words. It is thus in accordance with the first elements of astronomical science. It is therefore pregnant with physical and metaphysical, with ethical and theological instruction for the first man, for the predecessors and contemporaries of Moses, and for all the succeeding generations of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

*In the beginning:* There is some question here about the use of the definite article: probably it should read, "in beginning." Some authorities would render it, "In the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth," etc. However, this rendering does not materially affect the meaning of the statement. (1) In the beginning—of what? Evidently, of the space-time continuum in all its aspects, thereafter designated in Scripture "the creation" (Rom. 1:20, 8:20-22; Mark 10:6, 13:19; 2 Pet. 3:4). Hence, Rotherham: "At first." That is to say, *When time began*, or, *When God began creating*, etc. Time, said Plato, is "The moving image of eternity"; that is, the changing (phenomenal) aspects of our world of Becoming simply reflect the eternal Ideas (Forms) in the mind of the Creator which go to make up the world of being. (Cf. 2 Cor. 4:18, 5:7). Time has also been described aptly as "the narrow vale between the mountain peaks of two eternities." Samuel M. Thompson: "Time . . . is the measure of change. Without change, existence has no temporal aspect. Without change there is no way in which we can distinguish between *before* and *after*; without change a thing has no *before* and *after*." Timelessness, on the other hand, is the eternal *now*. (Cf. Exo. 3:14, 2 Cor. 6:2.) (2) We are prone to think of eternity as a kind of stretched-out time; it must be, rather, *timelessness*, a state characterized essentially by illumination; for the saints of God, it is the knowledge and love that constitutes their ultimate *union with God* (1 Cor. 13:9-13, 1 John 3:2). This, to be sure, is a concept which the human mind, imprisoned as it is now in the world of sense-perception, is utterly unable to comprehend. (3) One must distinguish between *mathematical* time

1. Samuel M. Thompson, *A Modern Philosophy of Religion*, 310.

1. *Op. cit.*, 30.

(that which is *measured* by the movements of the heavenly bodies) and *real* time (that which is experienced in terms of sheer intensity of living, as, for example, the experience of the soldier on coming out of battle, who says, "I feel as if I had lived a lifetime in the last few hours"). In either case, time presupposes intelligences so constituted as to be able to do the *measuring* and the *experiencing*. (4) Surely the beginning of the Creation was the beginning of time. As Erich Frank writes:

Creation is, as it were, that moment in which eternity touched upon time. In a similar way Christ's advent in the world means that eternity again invaded time and thus a "new creation" came about. Both Creation and Redemption are absolutely unprecedented; they are unique events which are fixed in time. "Christ died and rose from the dead only once; he will not die again." His death was an event which will never recur. It belonged to a definite moment in time which, through its lasting importance, gave the merely natural course of time a new content, a meaning. Thus it became history; that is, time filled with meaning."

*Who, or what, existed prior to the beginning of time?* For the answer to this question we must appeal to the Scripture as a whole. On doing so, we learn that *God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God*, all existed from eternity and participated in the Creation: in the light of New Testament teaching these are fully revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14, 1 Pet. 1:2). (*Logos, Verbum, Word—or Wisdom*, 1 Cor. 1:24—was the name which designates the co-eternal relationship between the Father and His Only Begotten Son, the One who became flesh in the Bethlehem manger, and whom we confess as Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16). Cf. John 1:1-3, 1:18, 8:58, 17:4-5, 17:24; 1 Cor. 1:24, 8-6; Phil. 2:5-6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:2, 1:10; Rev. 3:14; Gen. 1:2, Psa. 139:7, John 4:24, Heb. 9:14). Moreover, *God's Eternal Purpose* existed from before the foundation of the world. Obviously, an *eternal* purpose is one that begins and ends beyond time, that is, in the realm of the timeless. Cf. Isa. 46:9-10; Matt. 25-34; Neh. 9:6; Psa. 102:25; Rom. 8:28-30, 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:3-4, 3:9-11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8, 17:8. All these Scriptures clearly point back to pre-temporal, pre-mundane intelligent Being and Purpose. *Absolutely no being existed, however, before the triune personal God and His Eternal Purpose*, who is from everlasting to everlasting (Psa. 90:1-2, Isa. 9:6, Heb. 9:14), that is, *sui generis* or self-existent,

2. Frank, *Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth*, 69.

without beginning or end. *Let us not forget that either there is a Power who originated and who preserves the Totality of Being, who is without beginning or end; or the only alternative is that an "Almighty Nothing" is responsible for it all.* This, of course, is utterly inconceivable and utterly illogical, and equally non-empirical.

As J. P. Montgomery writes:

What was before the "beginning"? God was; he created all (Psa. 90:2); and if it surpass our power to conceive an eternal self-existent Being, still less can we realize life, power, law coming into existence without a cause. And "in the beginning was the Word"; and the Holy Ghost, through whom Christ offered himself (Heb. 9:14). But, further, before the beginning the Lamb was slain (Rev. 18:8), *i.e.*, the necessity for redemption was foreseen and the plan provided—and we were chosen (Eph. 1:4), and a kingdom prepared for us (Matt. 25:34). Thus, redemption was no afterthought, no repairing of failure; but God's purpose from eternity, and therefore that which is best.<sup>1</sup>

*In the beginning, God:* that is, *El* (the general Semitic name for deity) but here, *Elohim*, the plural form, and yet used with a sigular verb. This is the most frequent designation of God (occurring more than two thousand times) in the Old Testament, and the only designation occurring in the Genesis Cosmogony. Why the plural subject with a singular verb? Neither that *Elohim* (1) suggests a remnant of polytheism, nor (2) indicates a plurality of being through whom God reveals Himself, as, *e.g.*, angels (angels are creatures, not creators: cf. Gen. 32:1-2; Dan. 7:10; Psa. 148:1-8; Luke 2:13; Heb. 1:13-14, 12:22; Rev. 5:11), but (3) designates a "plural of quality" equal to the term *Godhead*, a "plural of majesty," a "plural of intensity" that expresses the fulness of the Divine nature, or (4) includes all of these as indicating excellence, perfection, etc., *plus*—in the light of Scripture teaching as a whole—a foreshadowing of the triune personality of the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9) as fully revealed in the New Testament (hence, to be correlated with the "us" passages in the Old Testament, as Gen. 1:26, 11:7, and Isa. 6:8). Indeed, throughout Scripture *Elohim* designates God as Creator and Preserver (Isa. 57:15—"the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"), as distinguished from *Yahweh*, the Name which designates God as Redeemer. The former Name designates our God the Creator-God, the latter designates Him the Covenant-God. It seems perfectly reasonable that from the very beginning of the Old Testament the Name of the Deity should be revelatory of all aspects

of the Godhead; hence, says Delitzsch, "The *Trinitas* is the plurality of Elohim which becomes manifest in the New Testament." Perhaps this diversity of the essential unity (tri-unity) within the Godhead was not disclosed in the early ages of the world, lest God's ancient people should drift into tritheism (the worship of three Gods), but was held concealed in the eternal "mystery" (Eph. 1:9, 3:4, 3:11; 1 Pet. 1:10-12) until the fulness of God's Eternal Purpose was disclosed in the Last Will and Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (Cf. Deut. 6:4, Mark 12:29—"Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.") It seems obvious that "one" here has no numerical connotation, but expresses, rather, *uniqueness*: that is to say, the God of the Bible is the *only* living and true God: cf. Isa. 45:6, 46:9.) Cf. also Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14, 1 Pet. 1:1-2. (Note the linguistic kinship between the Hebrew *Elohim* and the Arabic *Allah*.)

1. *The Pulpit Commentary: Genesis, 7.*

[Whitelaw]: Unless where it refers to the angels (Psa. 8:5) or to heathen deities (Gen. 31:32, Exo. 20:3, Jer. 16:20) or to earthly rulers, *Elohim* is joined with verbs and adjectives in the singular, an anomaly in language which has been explained as suggesting the unity of the Godhead. [G. Ernest Wright]: The whole of this universe was God's creation, and its stability was due to his continuing and sustaining power. Life was possible because God created and preserved a space for it in the midst of the primeval waters, a space which could be done away at any moment were it not for His graacious Will to preserve it (cf. Gen. 6-9). The utter dependence of all life upon the creative will and energy of God was thus the Hebrew emphasis.<sup>2</sup> [For God's continuous sustaining Power, cf. Psa. 33:6, 9; Psa. 148:1-6; Psa. 102:25-27; Acts 17:24-27; Heb. 1:1-4; Col. 1:17, etc.] [Joseph Parker]: I conclude, therefore, by saying—finishing thus the first part of my discourse—that given the universe, given human life, given the whole scheme of things as now known to us, to account for them, no other solution so fully satisfies my intelligence and my heart as the solution—God. Given this solution, God, no interpretation of that term, pantheistic as including the great sum total, deistic as including a general but not special providence, can satisfy my heart. I find the only interpretation of God I can rely upon and rest in is the interpretation given by Jesus Christ. With that I will fight my fight in time; with that I will face the great unknown.<sup>3</sup>

Christlieb on Biblical Theism:

The teaching of Scripture concerning God is based on the theistic conception, that, namely, which holds fast at once His supramundane and His intramundane character; the one in virtue of His nature and essence, the other of His will and power. For while Theism on the one hand, regards the *Theos* (God) as a personal Being, and so as essentially distinct from the whole created universe and from man, it is no less

1. *Pulpit Commentary: Genesis, 2.*

2. *The Interpreter's Bible: Genesis, 365.*

3. *The People's Bible: Genesis.*

## THE SPIRIT AND THE COSMOS

careful, on the other hand, to present Him as the ever living and working One in His immediate personal relationship to man and the universe by the doctrine of a universal Divine Providence. This view of the divine nature is virtually expressed in the first verse of the Bible. [This writer then goes on to show how Gen. 1:1 and many other Scriptures exclude all that is false in other conceptions of God.] First, against *atheism*, which we need scarcely mention, Scripture here, as everywhere, teaches an eternally existing unbeginning God, from whose creative activity heaven and earth and time itself took their beginning—an absolute self-existing One, who saith, I AM THAT I AM, having in Himself the ground of His own being. [Exo. 3:14, John 5:26, Rev. 1:4,8.] Against *materialism* we find a protest in the first sentence of the Bible. *Matter is not eternal*. It had a beginning along with time, heaven and earth were created in that beginning. Matter, therefore, cannot itself be God, but came into existence through an act of His will. And he is distinguished from it not only by priority of existence, but difference of nature. [Psa. 92:5, 147:5; John 4:24]. In like manner we find in those first words of Scripture a protest against *pantheism*, with its confusion of God and world, and its assumption of the identity of essence in both. God is both antemundane and supramundane, and as to His essence distinct and separate from the world, and existing independently of it: 'In the beginning God created—heaven and earth.' God IS—is absolutely and without beginning; the world is brought into existence, and is dependent on its Creator, not He on it. Moreover, it came into existence *through* Him, not *from* Him. Every theory of emanation which would make the world, in whatever form, Old Indian or modern pantheistic, an efflux from the Divine Essence, is from the first excluded by the word "created," which simply expresses the fact that the world's origin is not derived from the essence, but from the will, of the Creator: that its production was not a necessity, but a free act on God's part, who is therefore to be distinguished and separated from the world as a living, willing and *personal* Being. Throughout Scripture God speaks as a person—I—who does not, as Hegel thought, attain to self-consciousness in the human spirit, but has possessed it independently from the beginning. So little, according to Scripture, is God from us, that we are rather from Him. He is not a mere Idea, but Personality itself. Absolute Freedom, and the highest Self-consciousness—the prototype of all other Self-consciousness, all other Personality—that which alone and eternally IS, which we are always becoming; who is before and above all, and from whom our own personality is derived (Gen. 2:7, Eph. 4:6). [Isa. 45:8; Psa. 139, Jer. 29:11, Acts 15:18]. Finally, against the false *deistic* and *rationalistic* separation between God and the world, Holy Scripture makes like protest in that same opening sentence, which declares the dependence of the world in both its parts (heaven and earth) on the will of Him who called it into being. The same is also indicated in the divine names most commonly used in Scripture, expressive of divine power and might (*Elohim, El, Eloah*), as well as of lordship and dominion (*Adon, Adonai*), and indicating at once the essential unity of God in opposition to polytheism (Deut. 6:4) and His fulness of living energies . . . He is, therefore, in the highest sense the living One and the living Agency, which not only created the world, but also continuously upholds and maintains it. [Heb. 1:3, Acts 17:25, Psa. 104:29; Acts 17:27,28; Phil. 2:13; Psa. 33:13,15]. All these attributes follow still more clearly from the name 'Jehovah.' Just as the general activity of God in the world is referred to *Elohim*, so almost every divine action which relates to the theocratic revelation is ascribed to Jehovah.<sup>1</sup>

*Deism* is the notion which arose in the Newtonian era, according to which God as the lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, came out of that eternity long enough to establish the cosmos and to actualize all the "laws of nature," and then withdraw from all further intercourse with what He had created, much in the same manner as a man would wind a clock and then expect it to keep on running on its own power. Deism is the denial of any kind of special providence; the "light of nature," that is, reason, is held by deists to be man's only reliance. In a word, *deism* emphasizes the transcendence of God exclusively, while denying His immanence. *Pantheism*, on the other hand, which would identify God with the world, nature, the universe, etc., emphasizes the immanence of God exclusively, while denying His transcendence. *Theism*, however, is the doctrine that God is both transcendent and immanent, transcendent in His being (prior to, separate from, and sovereign over, His creation), but always immanent (throughout His creation) in His will and power (Psa. 139:7-10). The God of the Bible is uniquely *theistic*.

The theocracy of Israel was the first corporate witness of the living and true God. The greatest spiritual struggle that the Children of Israel had throughout their national existence was the struggle to hold fast to the monotheistic self-revelation of God delivered to them through Moses, and thus to resist the temptation to drift into the idolatrous polytheisms of their pagan neighbors, all of whom were devoted to the orgiastic and licentious rites that characterized the Cult of Fertility. The pure conceptions of the Old Testament of the nature and attributes of God render absurd the notion that Jehovah was merely a "tribal deity," that is, a creation and development of the "inner consciousness" of the Hebrew patriarchs, kings, and prophets. The Old Testament presentation of God can be explained satisfactorily only on the ground that its details were divinely revealed to holy men of old who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21, 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

*Created.* (1) The Hebrew *bara*, translated "create" occurs three times in this chapter (vv. 1, 21, 26): in v. 1, as descriptive of the beginning in an absolute sense (either of the Creation considered as a whole, or of first energy and matter to be subsequently fashioned into an ordered cosmos); in v. 21, as describing the beginning of animal life; and in v. 26, as describing

1. Theodore Christlieb, *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, 210ff.

the beginning of man. Here, and throughout Scripture, this verb is used uniformly of Divine activity only, and surely designates a *primary* beginning. It is thus to be distinguished from the verbs *yatzar*, translated "form" or "fashion," as in Gen. 2:7,8,19, etc., and *asah*, translated "make," as used in Gen. 1:7,16,25,26,31, and Gen. 2:2,3,4, etc. Throughout Scripture these verbs are predicated equally of both God and man, and designate a fashioning or shaping out of pre-existing materials, that is, *secondary* beginnings. Whitelaw: "Thus, according to the teaching of this venerable document, the visible universe neither existed from eternity, nor was fashioned out of pre-existing matter, nor proceeded forth as an emanation from the Absolute, but was summoned into existence by an express creative fiat."<sup>1</sup> So, in vv. 21 and 26, the same verb, *bara*, is used to affirm the primary beginning of what previously had not existed *per se*, namely, animal life and the human (spirit, respectively). In the sense of introducing absolute novelty into the Creative Process, it occurs frequently in Scripture (cf. Isa. 65:18). (2) Now a *fiat* is an *authorizing order* or *decree*. So it was in the Creation: God spoke, commanding it, and whatever He thus commanded, was done (Psa. 33:6,9; Psa. 148:1-6; John 1:1-3; Rom. 4:17; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:2). *However, it strikes me that failure to recognize the fact that God's having decreed ("said") a thing to be done, does not indicate in itself when and how it was done, points up a certain measure of obtuseness on the part of all who fail (or refuse) to recognize this distinction. The fact is that the Genesis narrative is designed to impress upon our minds one sublime truth above all others, namely, that the Will of God is the constitution of the whole Creation, both physical and moral.*

(3) [Current Jewish thought on this subject is expressed clearly as follows]: "The first chapter of Genesis begins with God existing as a transcendent deity outside of the world, to create it. He was when nothing else existed. [Again, p.3]: A governing idea is expressed in the statement that God used merely his creating word: God said . . . and creation came into existence. Contrary to other ancient myths about the origin of the world . . . there is no wrestling with the primeval abyss, no struggle against other divine beings. Furthermore, since God is all-powerful, all that He creates is well made . . . but the text does not go further: it does not deal, for example, with the philosophical question of whether anything existed before God began to create.<sup>1</sup> [I must protest the indirect allusion, in this excerpt, to the Genesis narrative as a "myth." See *supra*, under "the mythological view."]

(4) [Skinner]: "The central doctrine is that the world is *created*—

1. *Op. cit.*, 3.

1. *From Adam to Daniel*, 8, 3. Gaalyahu Cornfeld (Editor).

that it originates in the will of God, a personal Being transcending the universe and existing independently of it. The pagan notion of a Theogony—a generation of the gods from the elementary world-matter—is entirely banished. It is, indeed, doubtful if the representation goes so far as a *creatio ex nihilo*, or whether a pre-existent chaotic material is postulated; it is certain at least that the *kosmos*, the ordered world with which alone man has to do, is wholly the product of divine intelligence and volition. The spirituality of the First Cause of all things, and His absolute sovereignty over the material He employs, are further emphasized in the idea of the *word* of God—the effortless expression of His thought and purpose—as the agency through which each successive effect is produced; and also in the recurrent refrain which affirms that the original creation in each of its parts was “good,” and as a whole “very good” (v.31), *i.e.*, that it perfectly reflected the divine thought which called it into existence.<sup>2</sup>

(5) [Adam Clarke] Genesis 1:1 should read: God in the beginning created the *substance* of the heavens, and the *substance* of the earth, *i.e.*, the *prima materia*, or first elements, out of which the heavens and the earth were successively formed. [This passage] argues a wonderful philosophic accuracy in the statement of Moses, which brings before us not a *finished* heavens and earth, as every other transaction appears to do, though afterward the process of their formation is given in detail, but merely the *materials* out of which God built the whole system in the six following days. [Again]: The supposition that God formed all things out of a pre-existing eternal nature is certainly absurd; for, if there was an eternal nature besides an eternal God, there must have been two self-existing, independent, and eternal beings, which is a most palpable contradiction<sup>1</sup> [I may add that this kind of *dualism* is wholly unphilosophical in that it postulates two First Principles, when only one—the Eternal God who is Spirit—is necessary. Mind alone, not matter, can account for *all* the phenomena of human experience, such as thought, meaning, values, etc.] [Lange]: That in this creating there is not meant, at all, any demiurgical forming out of pre-existing material, appears from the fact that the kind of material, as something then just created, is strongly signified in the first condition of the earth (v.2) and in the creation of light.<sup>2</sup>

(6) What does present-day science have to say about the Creation? As we have noted previously, Bertrand Russell has stated frequently that there is no necessity for assuming that the cosmos ever had a beginning. But one thing is certain, namely, that the cosmos has not existed always *as we know it today*. All branches of science—physics, chemistry, geology, biology, etc.—are dogmatically, and to a great degree arbitrarily—treating the whole cosmos as the product of a long-drawn-out developmental (“evolutionary”) process. Surely, the only possible alternative to an absolute beginning would be an infinite regress,

2. John Skinner, *The International Critical Commentary: Genesis*, 7.

1. *Clarke's Commentary: Genesis*, 27.

2. *Op. cit.*, 162.

and infinite regress is logically inconceivable. The notion of the eternity of matter necessarily embraces the cosmic cycle theory of successive cataclysms and reconstructions, with the last reconstruction paving the way for what is known in the geology of our time as uniformitarianism. Moreover, in whatever form cosmic energy may once have existed, it would have required Efficient Causality to have actualized all its potencies, for the simple reason that the power to actualize itself lies beyond the power of *any* potency. The fact is that our scientists, almost without exception, in explaining the universe, find that they have to begin with something. Lemaitre began with the explosion of a primordial atom; Gamow begins with "an inferno of homogeneous primordial vapor seething at unimaginable temperatures," such heat that no elements, no molecules, not atoms, but only "free neutrons in a state of chaotic agitation," existed; Hoyle *et al* begin with a hydrogen fog, Whipple, with a "rarefied cosmic dust cloud," etc. No one begins with nothing, for *ex nihilo, nihil fit*. As Lincoln Barnett writes:

Even if one acquiesces to the idea of an immortal pulsating universe, within which the sun and earth and supergiant red stars are comparative newcomers, the problem of initial origin remains. It merely pushes the time of Creation into the infinite past. For while theorists have adduced mathematically impeccable accounts of the fabrication of galaxies, stars, star dust, atoms, and even of the atom's components, every theory rests ultimately on the *a priori* assumption that *something* was already in existence—whether free neutrons, energy quanta, or simply the blank inscrutable 'world stuff,' the cosmic essence, of which the multifarious universe was subsequently wrought."<sup>1</sup>

It is generally conceded, I think, by modern physicists that the problem of Creation cannot be avoided even from the scientific point of view. *Even evolutionism is a theory of Creation although evolutionists generally refuse to recognize the fact.*

*Let it be understood here clearly that the two common "sins" of present-day science are these: (1) The apparent assumption that naming a thing is equivalent to explaining it; and (2) the tendency to disregard, or to reject outright, the fact of Efficient Casuality. Scientists of our day are surely in great need of the disciplines of logic and metaphysics. In the first instance, take the word "protoplasm." This is a name, of course. But just what is the thing that is named. No one knows. Etymologically, it means first-formed substance or material. But what is this first-*

1. *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, 104.

formed material? No one knows: it has never been clearly analyzed. An instance of the second case in point is the view of Russell *et al.* On this view, namely, that the cosmos has always existed, there must be an Efficient Causality operating to preserve it in its motions and functions. If it be held that *matter* is this ultimate, this Causality, then we must attribute to matter all the characteristics and powers that are commonly attributed to God. But just what is *matter*? What is *energy*? Perhaps the best definition, after all, is that of John Locke: matter, said he, is *Something-I-know-not-what*. Both the men of science and the men of theology have always been too prone to conceal their basic ignorance behind the facade of big words. Incidentally, the so-called "laws" of science, nature, or what not, are nothing in themselves; they are simply descriptive of processes that men have found to be operating in the physical and moral worlds.

(7) At the risk of being thought repetitious, I should like to note here that in the science of our day there are two chief rival theories of the origin of the universe. First, there is what is known as the "big bang" theory, that of Lemaitre, that the universe began billions of years ago in the explosion of a primordial atom and has been expanding ever since. This, of course, is a theory of the Creation, in a general sense; however, it does not account for the existence of this super-atom. Hence we may ask, Did this primordial atom ever have a beginning, or was it without beginning? Second, there is the "steady state" theory, or that of "continuous creation" (a la Hoyle), with new hydrogen being somehow created spontaneously in inter-galactic space, to fill the voids left by cosmic expansion or by the "death" of galaxies. As noted heretofore, Hoyle declares that the question of Creation cannot be avoided because the matter of the universe cannot be infinitely old (else the cosmic supply of hydrogen would have been exhausted long ago, by conversion into helium). The only solution, therefore, writes Hoyle, must be that of continuous creation by which new hydrogen is thrown into the hopper. He writes: "Where does the created material come from? It does not come from anywhere. Matter simply appears—it is created. At one time the various atoms composing the material do not exist, and at a later time they do."<sup>1</sup> Gamow and his school present a somewhat different theory, namely, "that the present state of the universe resulted from a continuous

1. Fred Hoyle, *The Nature of the Universe*, 112-114.

evolutionary process, which started in a highly compressed homogeneous material a few billion years ago—the hypothesis of ‘beginning.’” Gamow writes, in *The Scientific American*, March, 1954:

During the first few minutes of the Universe’s existence matter must have consisted only of protons, neutrons and electrons, for any group of particles that combined momentarily into a composite nucleus would immediately have dissociated into its components at the extremely high temperature. One can call the mixture of particles *ylem* [pronounced *eelem*].—the name that Aristotle gave to primordial matter. As the Universe went on expanding and the temperature of *ylem* dropped, protons and neutrons began to stick together, forming deuterons (nuclei of heavy hydrogen), tritons (still heavier hydrogen), helium and heavier elements.

Dr. Tolman of the California Institute of Technology suggests another hypothesis, that of a pulsating universe, of alternating “periods” of expansion and contraction, the cycles being governed by changes in the totality of matter. This presupposes, of course, that, as in Hoyle’s theory, somewhere in the universe new material is being formed. However, as a matter of fact, even though it appears to be true that the totality of matter in the cosmos is constantly changing, *the change appears to be in one direction only*, toward what is called a “heat-death,” technically defined as a condition of “maximum entropy.”

The problem before us, therefore, resolves itself basically into this: Whence the primordial atom of Lemaitre? Whence the new matter continually being poured into the cosmic process, according to Hoyle? Whence Gamow’s *ylem*? Whence Tolman’s constantly changing supply of matter? Whence Dr. Whipple’s “dust cloud”? Did all these—or any one of them—*simply exist without a beginning, that is, unbegun*? Or, *did whatever the scientist may start from, or start with, in accounting for the existence of the cosmos, have a beginning*? The answer of Genesis is unequivocally in the affirmative: *the cosmos did have a beginning: before anything of the nature of “physical” energy began, there was God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God: only the God of the Bible, the triune God, is without beginning or end.* Psa. 90:2—“even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” Exo. 3:14—“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.” Cf. Psa. 102:24,27; Jer. 10:10; John 4:24; Acts 17:24-28.

(8) The consensus is, generally, that Genesis does not teach Creation *ex nihilo*, that it teaches, rather, Creation without the use of pre-existing material; that is, Creation by the

power of the Divine Thought and Will, as expressed by the Word of God, and effectuated by the Spirit of God (Psa. 33:6, 9). (It seems that in all activities of the Godhead, the Father is the originating Power, the Son (Logos) the executive Power, and the Spirit the realizing Power, that is, according to Biblical teaching.) For the God of the Bible to think a thing, is for Him to create it. An interesting, albeit greatly inferior, analogy may be cited in the phenomena of *psychokinesis*, now a subject of research in various colleges and universities. Psychokinesis is defined as the power of human thought (thought energy) to effect the movements of ponderable objects. Included in this category are such phenomena as levitation, automatic writing, ectoplasms, etc. Phantasms, we are told by investigators in this field, may be called "embodied thoughts" (that is, ethereal reconstructions of matter by the power of thought), even as a man may rightly be called an embodied thought of God. All such phenomena serve to support the view of the primacy of mind or thought in the totality of being. In the possessing and functioning of these powers of thought energy, thought projection, and thought materialization, man, it is contended, again reveals the spark of the Infinite that is in him, and thus himself gives evidence of having been created "in the image" of God. (By virtue of the fact that man is the "image" of God, does it not follow reasonably that he should manifest in some slight measure the powers belonging to the Divine Mind and Will?) Is not the cosmos itself, according to Biblical teaching, a constitution of the Divine Will, a projection of the Divine Spirit, an embodiment of the Divine Thought as expressed by the Divine Word?

(9) Heb. 11:3—"By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear." Obviously, Creation out of visible materials is clearly denied in this Scripture (cf. 2 Pet. 3:5, Rom. 4:17, 2 Cor. 4:18). This is in harmony with the view held generally, that Gen. 1:1 teaches Creation by the power of Divine Thought and Will without the use of pre-existing matter. Still and all, can not the present-day nuclear physicist make the same affirmation, in the light of his knowledge of atomic and sub-atomic forces—the affirmation that what is seen has not been made out of things which appear (things visible)? Has an atom ever been seen

by the naked human eye, or even by the naked eye implemented by the most powerful microscope? Of course not. What is an atom? Is it properly described as a "particle," "corpuscle," etc.? Hardly. It seems best described as a kind of "field" in which elemental forces operate. Does an atom occupy space? It is difficult to determine just how it does so, if at all. If these characteristics are true of the atom, how much more so of the sub-atomic forces that are constantly operating within the atom? In our day physicists talk about both "matter" and "anti-matter." They give us a strange—almost weird—picture of thirty or more of these inconceivably powerful sub-atomic forces, existing in, or emanating from, the nuclei of atoms. (In recent days we hear about the neutrino, the Xi-minus, and now the Omega-minus, and indeed what yet lies in the offing to be discovered, no one knows.) An electron has been defined as an elementary "something" which can move in all directions at once without even being found at any intermediate point. All this means that these ultimate facets of what is called "physical" energy are completely invisible to the human eye; that matter in its ultimate form is so attenuated as no longer to be regarded as "material," or hardly even as quasi-material. The fact is that our knowledge of matter and its elemental forms has been derived originally through the media of mathematical formulas, and not by means of sense perception. These original forms of energy, then, belong to the realm of things *not seen*; and matter, in our present-day understanding of it, is metaphysical in its ultimate aspects, rather than "physical." And the things that are not seen, the Apostle tells us, are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18). Does this statement take in these elemental forces also? And where is the line to be drawn between the strictly non-material (mental, invisible) on the one hand, and the material and visible on the other? Or is it so thinly drawn as to be well-nigh non-existent? Can God as Spirit (John 4:24) rightly be thought of as including in His own being these forms of first energy? We do not know. We can not know. Much would depend, it seems, on how we define "Spirit" and "material" or "physical." Surely we are justified in affirming that all power is of God. Perhaps, in the final analysis, we are bogged down here in semantics; hence, in the limitations of human language. Quoting Barnett again:

Man's inescapable impasse is that he himself is part of the world he seeks to explore; his body and proud brain are mosaics of the same elemental particles that compose the dark, drifting dust clouds of interstellar space; he is, in the final analysis, merely an ephemeral conformation of the primordial space-time field. Standing midway between macrocosm and microcosm he finds barriers on every side and can perhaps but marvel as St. Paul did nineteen hundred years ago, that "the world was created by the word of God so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear."<sup>1</sup>

(10) D. Elton Trueblood contends that our scientific thinking at present, by two of its most fundamental laws, *positively supports* the doctrine of Creation. These two laws are what is known as The Second Law of Thermodynamics and what is known as the Evolution Hypothesis.<sup>1</sup> (Trueblood writes of the latter, quite arbitrarily, it seems to me, as the "Fact" of Evolution.) The First Law of Thermodynamics is the well-known law of the conservation of energy, that is, that the totality of energy-matter making up our universe is constant. But, according to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the fact that the totality of energy is constant does not mean that this energy is always available. This is what is known among physicists as the "progressive degradation" of energy, namely, that because there is diffusion of energy constantly with no accompanying addition to the total supply, we are compelled to envision a final state of complete stagnation. McWilliams: "As the useless energy increases, the useful decreases by the same amount. This ratio of useless to useful energy is called *entropy*. The law of entropy states that the ratio is constantly increasing. This means that the amount of energy available for the energizing process of the world is ever growing less."<sup>2</sup> How, then, is this law related to the problem of Creation? Trueblood explains: "We are driven, logically, to the conclusion that the physical world is something which not only will have an end, but also something which had a beginning. 'If the universe is running down like a clock,' says Dr. Inge, 'the clock must have been wound up at a date which we could name if we knew it. The world, if it is to have an end in time, must have had a beginning in time.'" (Would it not be precise to say that if the world is to have an end *with* time, it must have had a beginning *with* time?) Trueblood continues: "This follows strictly from the fact that the law of

1. *Op. cit.*, 114.

1. *Philosophy of Religion*, 98-105.

2. James A. McWilliams, S.J., *Cosmology*, 42.

## THE SPIRIT AND THE COSMOS

energy is irreversible. A clock which always runs down and is never rewound cannot have been running forever." Again quoting Barnett:

If the universe is running down and nature's processes are proceeding in just one direction, the inescapable inference is that everything had a *beginning*: somehow and sometime the cosmic processes were started, the stellar fires ignited, and the whole vast pageant of the universe brought into being. Most of the clues, moreover, that have been discovered at the inner and outer frontiers of scientific cognition suggest a definite time of Creation. The unvarying rate at which uranium expends its nuclear energies and the absence of any natural process leading to its formation indicate that all the uranium on earth must have come into existence at one specific time, which, according to the best calculations of geophysicists, was about two billion years ago. The tempo at which the wild thermonuclear processes in the interiors of stars transmute matter into radiation enables astronomers to compute with fair assurance the duration of stellar life, and the figure they reach as the likely average age of most stars visible in the firmament today is two billion years. The arithmetic of the geophysicists and astrophysicists is thus in striking agreement with that of the cosmogonists who, basing their calculations on the apparent velocity of the receding galaxies, find that the universe began to expand two billion years ago. And there are other signs in other areas of science that submit the same reckoning. So all the evidence that points to the ultimate annihilation of the universe points just as definitely to an inception fixed in time.<sup>1</sup>

As stated above, the other "law" which Trueblood cites to support both theism and creationism is the Evolution Hypothesis. Contrary to the thinking of many, writes this distinguished scholar, the inclusion of man in the evolutionary scheme, does not make religious faith "difficult or even impossible"; it is this very inclusion which subsequent reflection has fastened upon as one of the chief features of the natural order among those which substantiate and corroborate the theistic hypothesis." (Perhaps I should state here that the inclusion of man in the evolutionary process is precisely the notion which I cannot accept. Trueblood admits that evolution is "a highly speculative theory," adding, however, that "the evidence is sufficient to satisfy most minds which have considered it fairly." This last statement, too, is debatable: too often the evidence alleged to support this theory is presented as *fact*, when as a matter of fact, it is evidence arrived at only by inference. This raises the corollary question, Is the inference *necessary* (unavoidable) inference? (Let it suffice, at this point, to present Trueblood's argument.) The argu-

1. *Op. cit.*, 103, 104.

ment is as follows: (a) The climax of the creative process is the capacity to understand the world around us, and this capacity is inherent in man only. (b) This capacity has arisen by degrees in the natural order, the evidence to support this being the claim that "man shares much of his mental experience with the humbler creatures." (This too, it seems to me, is debatable: see *infra* under the comments on Gen. 2:7.) (c) Any plan is to be properly evaluated by its end product (cf. Isa. 45:5-7, 45:12, 46:9-11). Therefore, "the ground of rationality need not appear until the end of the series of events, but when it appears it illuminates the entire process." (d) "If the general evolutionary theory is true and if man's life be included in this theory, we cannot escape the conclusion" that "mind and nature are genealogically, as well as cognitively, akin." (e) Therefore, "how can nature include mind as an integral part unless it is grounded in mind?" Mind, that is, is not something alien or accidental to the scheme of things, but is a phenomenon "which is deeply rooted in the entire structure." (f) In virtue of the fact that "science knows nothing of the wholly fortuitous," that is, that there are no truly accidental events, "then mind, so far as we know it, is an integral part of the system and a revelation of the nature of nature." The obvious conclusion must be that "cosmic and biological evolution are one," and that there has been "a single orderly development with mind and matter belonging to the same inclusive system." "At one end of the evolutionary series is unconscious life, and at the other is self-conscious life, but *it is all one series.*" (This, to be sure, points up the argument that Evolution is properly described as a theory of Creation.) (I should like to add here that if the evolutionary series is described in terms of an unbroken continuity, it demands Mind as the directing Force and it demands that all higher phenomena of our experience—those of the processes of life, thought, personality, etc.—must have been present potentially in the first material with which the process of Creation had its origin. It demands, furthermore, an Efficient Causality to actualize all these potencies in the upward surge of being. It has long been an accepted norm of evidence that before anything can be established beyond all possibility of doubt, it must be supported by the testimony of two or more 43; Acts 2:32; 1 Cor. 9:1). Unfortunately, the time element

that is involved in the Evolution Hypothesis puts it beyond either proof or disproof on the ground of this indispensable norm.) Dr. Trueblood's argument is presented here for whatever value it may have in strengthening the student's faith.

\* \* \* \* \*

*In the Beginning, or When time began.* Clarke: "Before the creative acts mentioned in this chapter, all was eternity. *Time* signifies *duration* measured by the revolutions of the heavenly bodies; but prior to the creation of these bodies, there could be no measurement of duration, and consequently no *time*; therefore *In the beginning* must necessarily mean the commencement of time which followed, or rather was produced by God's creative acts, as an effect follows, or is produced by a cause. *Created*, caused to exist which, previously to this moment, had no being. The rabbins, who are legitimate judges in a case of verbal criticism on their own language, are unanimous in asserting that the word *bara* expresses the commencement of the existence of a thing; or its egression from nonentity to entity. It does not, in its primary meaning, denote the *preserving* or *new forming* things that previously existed, as some imagine, but *creation*, in the proper sense of the term."<sup>1</sup>

*Why the Creation at all?* The esthetic theory would have it that Creativity is the very nature of Love; that because our God is Love, it is of the very essence of His being *freely* to create. (John 3:16; 1 John 4:7-21; Rom. 5:5.) It could well be that Creation and Redemption are all of one general Plan of the ages, and that Creation, insofar as man is concerned, will not be complete until the saints appear in the Judgment clothed in glory and honor and immortality (Rom. 2:6-10, 8:28-30); that this will be the ultimate end of Creative activity—the end foreseen by our God, and the goal of His Eternal Purpose, from the "beginning" (Eph. 3:1-12, 1:3-14; Isa. 46:9-11). This would mean that the physical or "natural" Creation was just one phase of the Divine Plan and designed to set the stage for the Recreation or Regeneration, the end purpose being the vindication of Divine Justice challenged by Satan and his rebel host, and the conclusive demonstration to all intelligences of the uni-

1. *Commentary: Genesis, 27.*

verse that the diabolical charges were utterly false. (Cf. 2 Pet. 3:4, Jude 6; Luke 10:18, John 8:44, 1 Cor. 6:3, 2 Cor. 4:4, Eph. 6:10-16, John 12:31, Rev. 20:7-10.) This vindication was achieved by just such a demonstration of Love as was actualized in God's offering of His Only Begotten Son for man's redemption. These problems are all inherent in the over-all problem of moral evil (sin) and physical evil (suffering), a problem which lies beyond the scope of human intelligence to fully resolve; hence, concerning which Divine revelation has given us only intimations. Unless by faith one accepts these intimations, one can never hope to attain any satisfying understanding of the Mystery of Being.

*The heavens and the earth.* (1) In view of the obvious fact that the Genesis Cosmogony is written from the terrestrial viewpoint (that is, that of a person on earth), some commentators hold that this phrase designates simply "the earth and the starry skies above it." Others hold that the phrase is descriptive of our own solar system; others that the term "earth" stands for the cosmic mass out of which the earth was composed, and the term "heavens" for the rest of the universe. (2) Again, the "earth" alluded to in verse 1 could not have been the "dry land" of verse 10; this was not separated from the Seas until the third "day" of Creation. Moreover, in v. 10, the "dry land" as Earth and "the gathering together of the waters" as Seas are associated in such a way that we are obliged to think of them as two parts of the whole, namely, the Lands and Seas which go to make up the geography of our planet. (3) We conclude that the phrase, "the heavens and the earth" of verse 1 is intended to designate the whole *organized* universe or cosmos. This view, of course, lends support to the doctrine that this verse is to be taken as an introductory heading to the rest of the Creation Narrative.

(4) According to Scripture, the old or natural Creation consists of "the heavens and the earth" and "all the host of them" (Gen. 2:1; Psa. 33:6, 9; Psa. 148:1-6), the former phrase designating, as stated above, the *organized* cosmos. The "host of heaven" takes in (a) the sun, moon, and stars, and (b) the angels. Deut. 4:19, 17:3; Gen. 32:1-2; Ki. 22:19; Psa. 103:21 (cf. Heb. 1:13-14); Dan. 7:10 (the prophet's Vision of the Ancient of Days); Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11. The "host" of earth, of course, takes in all living creatures upon the earth. Cf. Gen. 7:21-22; also Rom. 8:20-22—"the whole creation" of this text

evidently includes all living things upon the earth, all of which are regarded in Scripture as being under the curse, and therefore suffering the consequences, of sin (Gen. 3:17, Rom. 3, Gal. 3:13, Rev. 22:3)—and hence is equivalent to the “host” of earth.

The following *concluding word* from the pen of the distinguished physicist, Sir Arthur Eddington is especially pertinent here:

In comparing the certainty of things spiritual and things temporal, let us not forget this—Mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience; all else is remote inference. That environment of space and time and matter, of light and colour and concrete things, which seems so vividly real to us is probed deeply by every device of science and at the bottom we reach symbols. Its substance has melted into shadow. None the less it remains a real world if there is a background to the symbols — an unknown quantity which the mathematical symbol  $x$  stands for. We think we are not wholly cut off from this background. It is to this background that our personality and consciousness belong, and those spiritual aspects of our nature not to be described by any symbolism or at least not by symbolism of the numerical kind to which mathematical physics has hitherto restricted itself. Our story of evolution ended with a *stirring* in the brain-organ of the latest of Nature's experiments; but that stirring of consciousness transmutes the whole story and gives meaning to its symbolism. Symbolically it is the end, but looking behind the symbolism it is the beginning. [Again]: Theological or antitheological argument to prove or disprove the existence of a deity seems to me to occupy itself largely with skating among the difficulties caused by our making a fetish of this word. It is all so irrelevant to the assurance for which we hunger. In the case of our human friends we take their existence for granted, not caring whether it is proven or not. Our relationship is such that we could read philosophical arguments designed to prove the non-existence of each other, and perhaps even be convinced by them—and then laugh together over so odd a conclusion. I think that it is something of the same kind of security we should seek in our relationship with God. The most flawless proof of the existence of God is no substitute for it; and if we have that relationship the most convincing disproof is turned harmlessly aside. If I may say it with reverence, the soul and God laugh together over so odd a conclusion. [Heb. 11:6, he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.]

*“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*

[Strong, 371]: By creation we mean that free act of the triune God by which in the beginning, for His own glory, he made, without the use of pre-existing materials, the whole visible and invisible universe. [Everest, 147]: It is objected that the creation of something out of nothing is absurd. Now the Bible does not say that the world was created out of nothing. There was always something in existence, and this something was the cause of whatever else came into being. Matter was produced by the divine energy. That this was impossible, no man can know; for we do not know what matter is. What is an atom?

## THE ETERNAL SPIRIT — HIS WORD AND WORKS

Has an atom ever been seen, measured, weighed, or analyzed? One of the most plausible theories is that an atom is a mathematical point where force is located; a point around which there play unceasingly attractive and repulsive forces. If this is true, that God should call it into being would not be impossible, but analogous rather to what we know of mental power; for man is also a creator, calling into existence thoughts, choices, and bodily motions. [In the final analysis, Creation, in the absolute sense, is a truth that is to be received by *faith*; it transcends both human reason and im-  
amination.] [Cf. Gen. 1:1, John 1:3, Rom. 4:17, Heb. 11:3.]

Gen. 1:2—“*And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*” This entire cosmogony is presented from the viewpoint of an observer on the earth; hence the language here obviously relates to the original state of the earth itself. At this point in the Creation, then, the earth was still formless and uninhabited; that is to say, it had not yet taken the form of a planet, nor had any living thing been put upon it; it was still, along with the rest of the Cosmos, in its incipient state of primal energy or matter. To illustrate: The desk in my office once did not exist as a member of the species known as “desks,” as it does now, but existed only as a mass of lumber, originally in fact as part of a great tree in the forest. So the earth, at this stage of the Creation, existed only as a part of the primal energy or matter, out of which it was subsequently hewn, so to speak, and formed into what it is today, the planet Earth. It is significant, too, in this connection, that there is no generic or abstract word in the Hebrew language such as, or corresponding to, our word “matter.” (Cf. Prov. 8:26—“While as yet he [Jehovah] had not made the earth, nor the fields, Nor the beginning of *the dust of the ground.*”)

[Cf. also Gen. 2:7]: Jehovah God formed man of the *dust of the ground*, etc. [Gen. 3:19]: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. [All this has reference, of course, to the body or *material* part of human being.]

From these Scriptures it seems evident that the words “earth,” and “ground,” as used in the second verse of *Genesis*, has the same meaning as “dust of the ground,” and therefore coincides with our abstract term, *matter*, that is to say, the physical “elements.” If this be the correct interpretation, it would make

1. Eddington, *Science and the Unseen World*, 37, 69-70.
2. *Systematic Theology*, 371.
3. H. W. Everest, *The Divine Demonstration*, 147.

the verse mean that it was *first matter*, "the dust of the world," which was at this stage of the Creation both formless and uninhabited. This is, in all probability, the correct interpretation of the passage, for it coincides exactly with that which follows. At any rate, what is said here of the original state of the earth may properly be considered as describing also the original state of the whole Cosmos. This text takes us back to the initial stages of the Creative Process, to that stage, in fact, which was subsequent to the first putting forth of energy from the Being of God. The Spirit, literally, was *brooding*: that is, the process was actually going on when the account opens; as yet the primal energy (was it *psychical* or *physical*?) had not transmuted itself into gross matter, however; there was only *formlessness* and *emptiness* (voidness). Writes Lange:

It is through the conception of voidness, nothingness, that Thohu and Bohu are connected. . . . The *desert* is *waste*, that is, a confused mass without order; the *waste* is *desert*, that is, *void*, without distinction of object. The first word denotes rather the lack of form, the second the lack of content, in the earliest condition of the earth. It might therefore be translated form-less, matter-less.<sup>1</sup>

"*And darkness was upon the face of the deep.*" Is this a reflection of the Babylonian cosmogony which pictured the earth as resting upon a subterranean ocean? Such a view is based, of course, on the pre-supposition that the Babylonian versions of the Creation and Deluge traditions were the originals from which the Biblical accounts were derived,—a view which discounts altogether the possibility of the *Genesis* narrative's having been a Divine revelation. But, in opposition to this *derivation theory*, the preceding affirmation, to the effect that the earth was formless and void, indicates, as we have just learned, that the earth as such did not even exist, that in fact the whole heavens and earth were as yet unformed, at this stage in the Creative Process. It must be granted, of course, that the "deep" is a term frequently used in the Hebrew Scriptures to designate the sea.

E.g., [Psa. 42:7]: Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterfalls; All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. [Job 38:30]: The waters hide themselves, and become like stone, And the face of the deep is frozen. [Isa. 44:27]: I am Jehovah . . . that saith unto the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up the rivers.

1. John Peter Lange, *Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical Commentary: Genesis*, 163. Translated by Tayler Lewis and A. Gosman.
1. Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v.

But again there is no evidence that a sea or ocean existed at this point in the process of Creation. The inspired writer is not describing here the final state of the universe, that is, its state as a Cosmos; he is describing, rather, its state prior even to the beginning of its arrangement into a Cosmos. What is being described here, evidently, is the genesis of physical force, motion, and finally gross matter, through the operation or continuous activity of the Divine Spirit. In view of these considerations, I am inclined to think that the "deep," in this particular passage, *could have reference to the great "deep" of limitless Space.* This indeed seems to be the import of the term in Gen. 7:11 also: "On the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (cf. Gen. 8:2). Under this view, then, we have here a picture of an illimitable Space filled with, and enshrouded in, impenetrable darkness, in which the Spirit of God was already at work, brooding, stirring, energizing, creating, that is, bringing into existence forms of energy which had never before that moment operated, and which were capable of transmutation into the various kinds of matter known to us today. This interpretation is further corroborated by the use of the term "waters" in the subsequent sentence: "*And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" This suggests an even more advanced stage in the Creative Process, probably the stage at which matter had begun to assume, incipiently at least, a gaseous or perhaps even a fluid state. This interpretation is corroborated again by the language of vv. 6-8: "*And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.*" Here again, we are confronted with the fact that the Hebrew word *mayim*, although translated "waters," does not necessarily mean what we mean by the English word, "waters." It applies as well to the gaseous atmosphere or to matter in a fluid or plastic state. (Cf. Psalm 148:4—"ye waters that are above the heavens": these evidently are the "waters" of the first chapter of Genesis, which preceded the light, the atmosphere, the earth and the seas, into existence.) In short, the term "waters" being the best afforded by the Hebrew language to express the idea of fluidity, evidently we have here a description of the separation—at a later stage in

the process of Creation—of the earth-mass from the fluid (and probably molten) mass of which, up to that time, it had been a part. The word translated “firmament” in this passage (vv. 6-8) means, literally, an *expanse*. And thus “the waters which were under the firmament” (the detached earth-mass in its most primitive state as such) became separated from “the waters which were above the firmament” (the parent molten mass, which probably became a sun) by the intervening expanse. Cf. again Psalm 148, in which the “waters that are above the heavens” (v. 4) are distinguished from the “deeps” below (v. 7) and from the “vapor” above (v. 8). Moreover, after having become detached from the parent mass, naturally the earth-mass began to cool at its surface, as it whirled through Space; and as this process of cooling continued, the gases were thrown off which formed the atmosphere. And no doubt the entire earth-mass became enshrouded in dense vapors at this stage, the vapors thus obscuring for a time the light of the parent “sun” from which the planet had been detached. All this occurred on “Day” Two. Moreover, the entire process by which the earth was detached and developed as a separate planet was probably duplicated in the detachment and separate development of all the heavenly bodies; and so, under the impulsion of the “brooding” of the Spirit of God, the universe began to march into being.

Thus it will be seen that in the second verse of *Genesis* we have a graphic portrayal of the primordial Chaos, the chief characteristics of which were *emptiness* and *darkness*. It is significant, I think, that the tradition of such a primordial Chaos, with precisely the same two characteristics, was widespread among ancient peoples. The Greek word *Chaos*, for instance, meant primarily “empty, immeasurable space,” and secondarily, “the *rude, unformed mass* out of which the universe was created.”<sup>1</sup> Thus Hesiod wrote as follows:

Verily at the first Chaos came to be, but next wide-bosomed Earth, the ever-sure foundation of all the deathless ones who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus, and dim Tartarus in the depth of the wide-pathed Earth, and Eros (Love), fairest among the deathless gods, who unnerves the limbs and overcomes the mind and wise counsels of all gods and all men within them. From Chaos came forth Erebus and black Night; but of Night were born Aether and Day, whom she conceived and bare from union in love with Erebus. And Earth first bare starry Heaven, equal to herself, to cover her on every side, and to an ever-sure abiding-place for the blessed gods.<sup>1</sup>

1. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 116-128. Loeb Classical Library Edition, *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and Homericæa*. Translation by H. G. Evelyn-White.

Of course these are all personifications, but their import is obvious. Chaos (Space), says Hesiod, was first of all; of him was born Erebus (Darkness) and black Night; and by the union of Darkness and black Night came Aether (the upper air) and Day. In short, Chaos and Darkness preceded Light and Day, and after all these, Earth and Heaven. And Plato, writing some four centuries after Hesiod, in a speculative yet more scientific vein, in the celebrated *mythos* of the *Timaeus*, describes the creation of the Cosmos, by the Demiurgos (Divine Reason), out of the Receptacle of Becoming (pure Space), according to the patterns supplied by the Eternal Forms or Ideas existing obviously (although Plato himself does not explicitly so affirm) in the mind of the Divine Reason Himself. The Receptacle, moreover, he compares to a mass of plastic "stuff" having no qualities of its own.<sup>2</sup> Hence, says Lange, commenting on Gen. 1:2—

It would be odd if in this the Biblical view should so cleanly coincide with the mythological. Chaos denotes the void space (as in a similar manner the old northern Ginnun-gagap, the gaping abyss, which also implies present existing material), and in the next place the rude unorganized mass of the world-material. There is, however, already here the *world-form*, heaven and earth, and along with this a universal *heaven-and-earth-form* is presupposed.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly it is worth noting well, in this connection, that one of the concepts which has gained widespread credence among the most advanced physicists of our own time is that Space may have been the very first "stuff" out of which our physical universe had its beginning.

"And the Spirit of God moved [literally, was brooding] upon the face of the waters." Not "a wind of God," of course, for the simple reason that the air did not yet exist at this early stage in the development of the Cosmos. As Skinner comments:

Not, as has sometimes been supposed, a *wind* sent from God to dry up the waters, but the divine Spirit, figured as a bird brooding over its nest, and perhaps symbolising an immanent principle of life and order in the as yet undeveloped chaos.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Whitelaw has written:

In accordance with Biblical usage generally, this term [Spirit of God] must be regarded as a designation, not simply of "the Divine power, which, like the wind and the breath, cannot be perceived" (Gesenius),

1. J. P. Lange, *op. cit.*, 163.

2. *Vide* F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*.

2. John Skinner, *The International Critical Commentary: Genesis*, 17-18.

but of the Holy Spirit, who is uniformly represented as the source or formative cause of all life and order in the world, whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual. . . . As it were, the mention of the *Buach Elohim* is the first out-blossoming of the latent fulness of the Divine personality, the initial movement in that sublime revelation of the nature of the Godhead, which, advancing slowly, and at the best but indistinctly, throughout Old Testament times, culminated in the clear and ample disclosures of the gospel.<sup>1</sup>

The following additional Scriptures corroborate this truth:

[Job 26:13]: By his Spirit the heavens are garnished; His hand hath pierced the swift serpent. [Job 27:3]: For my life is yet whole in me, And the Spirit of God is in my nostrils. [Psa. 33:6]: By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. [Psa. 104:29-30]: Thou takest away their breath, they die, And return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; Thou renewest the face of the ground.

"The Spirit of God *was brooding*." The Hebrew word used here has a double meaning. In the first place, it conveys the idea of a *stirring*, a fluttering, as of an eagle stirring up her nest and teaching her young to fly. The word has this import in the Song of Moses, Deut. 32:11:

As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,  
That fluttereth over her young,  
He spread abroad his wings, he took them,  
He bare them on his pinions.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the entrance of the Divine Spirit into the primordial Chaos—empty, immeasurable Space—was signalized by a stirring therein, an energizing, a setting in motion. In the second place, the word *merachepeth* (from *rachaph*, to be tremulous, as with love) signifies a *brooding*, an incubation. The complete picture is that of a mother-bird brooding over her nest, hatching her eggs, and nurturing her young. As Milton puts it, the Spirit

. . . from the first  
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,  
Dove-like, sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,  
And mad'st it pregnant.<sup>1</sup>

Rotherham comments:

The beautiful word *brooding*, an exact rendering of the Hebrew, is most suggestive; since it vividly describes the cherishing of incipient life,

1. *The Pulpit Commentary: Genesis*, New Edition, 4.

2. Or, "Spreadth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her pinions."

1. *Paradise Lost*, I, 17-22.

as a preparation for its outburst. The participial form of such a word clearly denotes a process, more or less lengthened, rather than an instantaneous act.<sup>2</sup>

And John Owen writes:

The word "moved" (*merachepeth*) signifies a gentle motion, like that of a dove over its nest, to communicate vital heat to its eggs, or to cherish its young. Without him, all was a dead sea; a rude unformed chaos; a confused heap covered with darkness; but by the moving of the Spirit of God upon it, he communicated a quickening prolific virtue. . . . This is a better account of the origin of all things than is given us by any of the philosophers, ancient or modern.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, does not this verb suggest clearly that the Creation was essentially an act or outpouring of Divine Love (as well as of Divine Power)—of Divine Love seeking perhaps the fellowship of kindred holy spirits, that is, the spirits of the redeemed and sanctified of mankind? And may we not reasonably suppose that this activity of the cherishing Spirit was the origin of the myth of Eros, and that of the primordial world-egg, whether regarded as Persian or as Greek?

"The breath of man," writes J. P. Lange,

the wind of the earth, and the spirit, especially the spirit of God, are symbolical analogies. The breath is the life-unity and life-motion of the physical creature, the wind is the unity and life-motion of the earth, the spirit is the unity and life-motion of the life proper to which it belongs; the spirit of God is the unity and life-motion of the creative divine activity. It is not a wind of God to which the language here primarily relates, but the spirit of God truly. From this place onward, and throughout the whole Scripture, the spirit of God is the single formative principle evermore presenting itself with personal attributes in all the divine creative constitutions, whether of the earth, of nature, of the theocracy, of the Tabernacles, of the church, of the new life, or of the new man. The Grecian analogue is that of Eros (or Love) in its reciprocal action with the Chaos, and to this purpose have the later Targums explained it: *the spirit of love*.<sup>1</sup>

"This, then," writes Marcus Dods,

is the first lesson of the Bible: that at the root and origin of all this vast material universe, before whose laws we are crushed as the moth, there abides a living, conscious Spirit, who wills and knows and fashions all things.<sup>2</sup>

2. *The Emphasized Bible*, 3, fn.

3. *A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit*, abridged by George Burder,

1. *Op. cit.*, 164.

2. *The Expositor's Bible: Genesis*, in loc.

## THE SPIRIT AND THE COSMOS

It is significant that the two characteristics of the primordial Chaos which occur in all ancient traditions are those of voidness and darkness. In a word: *where God is not, there is always emptiness, darkness, non-being. Where God is, there is, by way of contrast, life, light, being. And the ontological difference between non-being and being consists essentially in the activity of the Divine Spirit.* Heaven is Heaven because it is filled with the presence of God, and God essentially is Spirit (John 4:24).

Now the fact should be pointed out here that the *Genesis* cosmogony does not teach, in the strict sense of the term, a creation *ex nihilo*. It is often objected that the notion of a creation of *something* out of *nothing* is absurd. That is true. Human reason insists that Something has always existed, and that whatever that Something may be, it must have been the First Principle, the First Cause of whatever else came into being. This, precisely, is the teaching of the Scriptures. The Something who has always been, affirms the Bible, is our God. It was God—the eternal and unoriginated One, who is without beginning or end, who is essentially Spirit, whose Name is, significantly, I AM (Exo. 3:14)—it was He who, through His Word and His Spirit, created the heavens and the earth and all the host of them. It is He, moreover, who conserves the Cosmos and sustains it in its processes: hence the “laws of Nature,” which but express the Will of the Divine Lawgiver. These are sublime affirmations which appear again and again on the pages of the Scriptures. The religious significance of the *Genesis* cosmogony, writes Dr. Skinner,

lies in the fact that in it the monotheistic principle of the Old Testament has obtained classical expression . . . The central doctrine is that the world is *created*—that it originates in the will of God, a personal Being transcending the universe and existing independently of it. The pagan notion of a Theogony—a generation of the gods from the elementary world-matter—is entirely banished. It is, indeed, doubtful if the representation goes so far as a *creatio ex nihilo*, or whether a pre-existent chaotic material is postulated; it is certain at least that the *kosmos*, the ordered world with which alone man has to do, is the product of the divine intelligence and volition. The spirituality of the First Cause of all things, and His absolute sovereignty over the material which He employs, are further emphasized in the idea of the *word* of God—the effortless expression of His thought and purpose—as the agency through which each successive effect is produced; and also in the recurrent refrain which affirms that the original creation in each of its parts was “good,” and as a whole “very good” (v. 31), *i.e.*, that it perfectly reflected the divine thought which called it into existence. . . . When to these [doctrines] we add the doctrine of man,

as made in the likeness of God, and marked out as the crown and goal of creation, we have a body of religious truth which distinguishes the cosmogony of Genesis from all similar compositions, and entitles it to rank among the most important documents of revealed religion.<sup>1</sup>

However, the Bible does teach clearly a Creation *without the use of pre-existing matter*,—a Creation out of Divine Thought-Power, Will-Power, Word-Power, and Spirit-Power. There is no such doctrine as that of “the eternity of matter,” in Scripture. As it has been pointed out already, the primordial Chaos described in the second verse of *Genesis* should probably be interpreted as an immeasurable Space characterized only by *formlessness* and *voidness*. It was, so to speak, the realm of non-being; that is, prior to the beginning of the energizing activity of the Spirit of God. It is impossible, of course, for the human mind to conceive the character of this primordial Space (or indeed the “essence” of Space at all); it seems to have been equivalent essentially to *nothingness*. There is no intimation in the *Genesis* cosmogony that “physical” force of any kind had existed co-eternally with God, Pure Spirit—although, as it was pointed out in our discussion of “matter” and “spirit,” the dividing line between the “psychical” and the “physical” is so thinly drawn by present-day physics, that it is impossible any longer to determine where the former leaves off and the latter begins. As a matter of fact, however, metaphysical dualism is rationally untenable: it would be unphilosophical to postulate two eternal First Causes of all things, when one self-existent Cause will account for all the facts. Hence the Scriptures uniformly affirm the exclusive priority of Spirit. The writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* says: “By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear” (Heb. 11:3). It is significant, I think, that the Greek word *aiōn* which is used here, means literally “age,” rather than “world” as commonly translated. Hence the passage seems to convey the idea that the whole Plan of the Universe, the entire Temporal Process, in *both* its physical and spiritual phases, is the product of the Word of God, that is, of the Divine Thought and Will. Moreover, this text explicitly affirms that things visible were not constituted originally of things visible, but of things invisible or spiritual; that is to say, matter did not have its origin from pre-existing

1. John Skinner, *op. cit.*, 6-7.

## THE SPIRIT AND THE COSMOS

matter, but from the decrees of the Divine Word and the energizing activity of the Divine Spirit.

[Cf. Rom. 4:17]: God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. [Psa. 33:6, 9]: By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. [Acts 14:15]: a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is. [Acts 17:24-25]: The God that made the world and all things therein . . . he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. [Cf. again the words of Jesus Himself]: John 4:24—God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

Now to the extent that our human experience is able to determine, Spirit-power is essentially psychical. Hence, God being a Spirit, it follows that the ultimate energy back of the universe and its processes, the energy of the Universal Intelligence and Will, must also be *psychical*. Thus the question arises: Is psychical energy capable of bringing into existence, or, it may be, of transmuting itself into "physical" energy? It would seem so. As it has been shown in a previous chapter (Vol. I), through research into psychic phenomena it has been found that psychical energy in man, that is, the energy of the Subconscious, is capable of creating ectoplasms and phantasms, and even of influencing, at a distance, the movement of ponderable (material) bodies. It is well known, too, that the mental processes in man exert a profound, even controlling, influence upon the functions of the various parts of the human organism, at times heightening physical strength to the point of orgiastic frenzy. May we not reasonably conclude, then, that in the possession of these powers man but reflects the spark of the Infinite which was originally breathed into him by the Spirit of God? And if psychical energy in man is capable of what at least appears to be transmutation into physical energy, *who can gainsay the fact that psychical energy in God is capable of an absolute creation of physical energy?* Primal energy, therefore, is Pure Thought, the activity of Pure Spirit. It is the source of every other form of energy in the universe. Spirit-power, Thought-power, Word-power (which is thought-power expressed or willed) in God are one in their activity and in their effects. Our universe is the product of the Universal Intelligence and Will, the construct of Pure Thought. This is precisely what the Bible teaches—that God the absolute Spirit, according to the decrees of His Word, and by the agency of His Spirit, is the

eternal (unoriginated), efficient First Cause of all things that exist and of their conservation in existence as well. In a word, the Bible does not teach a Creation absolutely *ex nihilo*, although it does teach a Creation without the use of pre-existent matter. It teaches Creation out of the Thought-Power and Spirit-Power of God.

Moreover, the Creation itself was essentially that act of Pure Thought which embraced all the events of what we call Time. As St. Augustine puts it, in reference to the Creator:

Thy years are one day; and Thy day is not daily, but Today, seeing Thy Today gives not place unto tomorrow, for neither does it replace yesterday. Thy Today is Eternity, therefore didst Thou beget the Co-eternal, to Whom Thou hast said, This day have I begotten Thee.<sup>1</sup>

And again: "In the Eternal nothing passeth, but the whole is present."<sup>1</sup> And with respect to the author of *Genesis*, Dr. W. E. Hocking writes:

For him mentality is aboriginal. It does not enter a physical world already running on its own. On the contrary, it is the physical world which enters the realm of mind. It is the Eternal Mind who in the beginning created the raw materials of the world, and whose word evoked order from chaos.<sup>2</sup>

Hence it may be truly said that in God, all things—including ourselves—"live, and move, and have their being" (Acts 17:28).

#### 4. The Spirit and the Word in the Creation of the Physical Universe

According to Scripture, the Father plans, the Word ordains or decrees, and the Spirit effectuates every Divine work. So it was in the Creation of the physical universe. In the first verse of *Genesis*, Elohim the Absolute, the Father of spirits (Heb. 12:9), is introduced to us as the originating Cause, in verse 2 the Spirit of God is introduced to us as the effectuating or realizing Cause, and in verse 3, the Logos is introduced to us as the decreeing Cause, of the whole initial phase of the Creative Process. "And God said, *Let there be light: and there was light.*" (Literally, "God said: Light, be! And Light was.") From this

1. *Confessions*, Everyman's Library Edition, Pusey translation, 262.

1. Augustine, *op. cit.*, 260.

2. William Ernest Hocking, "A World-View," in *Preface to Philosophy: Textbook*, 436, by Hocking, Blanshard, Hendel, and Randall.