

PART FIVE:

THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNINGS

Gen. 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

1. What is the relation of this verse to the Creation Narrative as a whole? (1) It could refer to the creation of "first matter," the first form or forms of what we call "physical" energy (the elemental forces to be arranged subsequently into the cosmos). This seems to be the view of the majority of commentators. (2) It could be designed to emphasize the fact that God created the physical (inanimate) universe *first*; that is, prior to His creation of living beings to inhabit it. (3) Or, does it designate an earlier beginning (creation) of a cosmos which later suffered a cataclysmic reduction to its elemental forms, with v. 2 describing the beginning of a reconstruction of the whole? As Rotherham paraphrases (EB, 33): "In the beginning (of the present order of things) God created (that is, shaped or formed according to his own divine idea) the heavens (above) and the earth (below). Now the earth (emphasized idiomatically for the purpose of singling it out for first remark) had become waste and wild (probably by previous catastrophe); and darkness (emphasized as about to be dealt with) was on the face of the roaring deep; but (preparing the mind for a new order of things) the Spirit of God was brooding (with quickening effect) on the face of the waters. And (things being so; such being the state of the earth) God said (and thus the renewing, re-creating divine acts commence)." (See the objections to this reconstruction theory under Part Four *supra*. My main objection is that it in no way resolves the problems it is intended to resolve, namely, those of the geological "history" of the earth, and much less those of the origins of the celestial worlds. However, there are many eminent scholars who champion this theory.) (4)

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Finally, 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 the truth 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 in this textbook. 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 have 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 (MG, 28-30): "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

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testimony, and the actual world in us and around us is the reality. Faith takes account of the one, observation of the other."

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. 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."

3. *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, Roth-

erham: "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." Thompson (MPR, 310): "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 (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 (PURT, 69): "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

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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."

(5) *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, without beginning or end.

4. In the beginning, *God*: that is, *El* (the general Semitic Name for the Deity), but here, *Elohim*, the plural

form, and yet used with a singular 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 beings 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.

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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*.)

Whitelaw (PCG, 2): "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 (IBG, 365): "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 gracious 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." (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 (PBG): "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."

Christlieb (MDCB, 210ff.) 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 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,

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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."

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 conscious-

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ness" 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).

5. *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 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 (PCG,3): "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." 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 (AtD,8): "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." (I must protest the indirect allusion, in this excerpt, to the Genesis narrative as a "myth." See Part IV *supra*, under "the mythological view.")

(4) Skinner (ICCG, 7): "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 wholly the product of divine intelligence

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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.”

(5) Adam Clarke (CG, 27): 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.” (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 (CDHCG, 162): “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.”

(6) What does present-day science have to say about the Creation? As we have noted previously, Bertrand Rus-

sell thinks 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. As stated heretofore (see the Cosmological Proof, Part IV, *supra*), the only possible alternative to an absolute beginning would be an infinite regress, and infinite regress is 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 (UDE, 104): “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

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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." It is generally conceded, I think, by modern physicists that the problem of Creation cannot be avoided even from the scientific point of view.

(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 (NU, 112-114), 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." Gamow and his school present a somewhat different theory (CU, Intro.), namely, "that the present state of the universe

resulted from a continuous 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 exist-*

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ence 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, notably in the Department of Parapsychology at Duke University, under the direction of Dr. J. B. Rhine. (See Rhine's latest books, *The Reach of the Mind*, *The New World of the Mind*, etc.). 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

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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 ever 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 (UDE, 114): "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.'"

(10) D. Elton Trueblood contends (PR, 98-105) 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. (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 (Cos., 42): "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." 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

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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 energy is irreversible. A clock which always runs down and is never rewound cannot have been running forever.” Again quoting Barnett (UDE, 103-104): “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.”

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? This general subject will be treated later in the present text. Suffice it, at this point, to present Trueblood's argument.) The argument 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 cog-

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nitively, 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 eye-witnesses. (Cf. Deut. 17:6, 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1; Acts 10:40-43; 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.

(11) *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 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 universe 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.

(6.) *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

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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. We have here a picture of the "struggle for existence" more graphic than any portrayal by Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, or any of the evolutionists.

7. The following *concluding word* from the pen of the distinguished physicist, Sir Arthur Eddington (SUW, 37, 69-70) 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 own 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 anti-theological 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

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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 (ST, 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 (DD, 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 always was 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? 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 imagination. (Cf. Gen. 1:1, John 1:3, Rom. 4:17, Heb. 11:3.)

FOR MEDITATION AND SERMONIZING

The Mystery of Being

1. Who has not been overwhelmed at times by a profound sense of the Mystery of Being? What is it "to be"? Someone may say, "It is to exist." But this is just a synonym, not a definition. The fact is that being can only be experienced, never defined. 2. Being exists either *potentially* or *actually*. For example, a mighty oak existed once, potentially, in an acorn. A baby is actually a baby; potentially it is an adult person. A seed is actually a seed; potentially it is a plant. Cold water is actually cold; potentially, it is hot. One does not inherit diseases; rather, one inherits the tendency to a certain disease because the mechanism is not present in his body metabolism to prevent it; all such mechanisms must be potentially present at conception, in the fertilized ovum in which one begins to be. 3. A potency, however, cannot actualize itself: it requires an efficient causality to make it actual (just as, *e.g.*, the living being requires food and water in order to grow). So it is with the totality of being. It can be explained only as the complex or manifold produced by the Efficient Causality who actualizes all the potencies inherent therein. This cosmic Efficient Causality is God, the Intelligence and Will (Power) who creates and sustains all things (Psa. 33:6-9, 148:1-6). 4. God alone is pure actuality (completeness, perfection: cf. Matt. 5:48, Rom. 12:2, Lev. 19:2—holiness is *wholeness*). In God existence and essence are one; it is the very essence of God *to be* (Exo. 3:14, John 8:58). The Russian astronaut is reported to have said that while he was traveling through the upper reaches of space he looked everywhere for God but found Him not. What stupidity! Our God is Spirit (John 4:24), hence not apprehensible by sense-perception. Although no man has seen Him at any time (John 1:18), the fact is, in the words of the Psalmist, that

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“the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork” (Psa. 19:1). (6) God, who is being, is *one*. He is *Spirit*, that is, without body or parts, but having understanding and free will. He is *everywhere*; wherever anything exists, God is there giving it existence. God is *eternal*; because it is His nature to be, He could never be non-existent, but is without beginning or end (Rev. 1:17-18, Heb. 9:14, Isa. 9:6, Exo. 3:14, Job 36:26, Psa. 90:2; Rom. 1:20, 16:26; Eph. 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:17, 6:16; Rev. 1:8, 22:13). All contingent things depend on other things for existence, but our God depends on nothing outside Himself for His existence, that is, His ground of existence is within Himself: He is *self-existent*.

The simple fact is that there must be Being who is without beginning or end; otherwise the something that exists must have come from nothing. This is absurd. The Self-existent Being is known in philosophy as the First Principle or First Cause, but for religious faith He is God. No man can logically *think* His way into atheism. When it occurs, atheism is the consequence of an emotional reaction of some kind.

In the Beginning

This phrase is used with great significance in the Bible. As a matter of fact, the Bible is the only book to which we can go for the truth about cosmic beginnings. Science treats of the *how* of things only; its laws are descriptive of the processes which the human mind discovers in the various realms of the natural world. Revelation alone can give us the truth about cosmic beginnings, especially the beginnings absolute, because absolute beginnings occur only by the operation of the Intelligence, Will, and Power of God. Absolute beginnings lie outside the realm of what is called natural law, in the area of the Primary or First Cause. Things once begun, however, are perpetuated in their various natures and functions by secondary causes,

that is, by the decrees of God as exercised through the "laws of nature." Let us consider the three passages in which this phrase, "in the beginning," occurs in Scripture, used in a context such as to make it profoundly meaningful, as follows:

1. John 1:1-3. John is described in Scripture as the disciple whom Jesus loved. (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20). He it was who leaned on the Master's bosom on the occasion of the Last Supper, and he it is who has given us, in the fourth Gospel narrative, the sublime spiritual truths concerning the origin, person, and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1) It was John who, in the first three verses of His Prologue, climbed into the very "heaven of heavens" to give us the revealed truth that "in the beginning was the Word," the Logos. In the beginning of what? This phrase can be measured chronologically only if eternity can be so measured. It declares simply that *from all eternity was the Word*, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. From all eternity Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten, was with God—"in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18), in a position of loving intimacy with Him (John 17:5,24). From all eternity the Word, the Only Begotten, was God, that is, one of the Godhead, and therefore is to be worshiped with the worship that is due the Father. What man could have given us such a profound revelation? Because the Spirit alone searches the deep things of God, He alone can give us insight into these eternal truths (1 Cor. 2:10). In the manger at Bethlehem the eternal Logos became in fact the Only Begotten Son of God, through the passive instrumentality of the Virgin (Matt. 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38, Gal. 4:4-5). (2) Note that in John's Prologue, before he has anything to say about the Creation, he declares that the Logos was in being "originally." In this "hymn" on the Creative Logos, he takes us back even farther than Moses does in Gen. 1:1; back, indeed, to the eternity

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before time itself had a beginning. Note the other Scriptures in which the pre-existence of Christ is affirmed: John 1:14, 17:5, 8:58; Col. 1:17; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:14-15. (3) Note the meaningful affirmations about the Logos in John 1:1-3: (a) His *eternity*: "originally," that is, from all eternity, He is the Word of God (1 John 1:1-2, Rev. 1:17-18, 22:13). (b) His *fellowship* with the Father: "and the Word was with God," that is, there were Two, God and the Word; (c) His *deity*: lest anyone get the notion that the Word was less than God, John adds, "and the Word was God," that is, as truly God as the entire Godhead (Heb. 1:8, Rev. 19:13-16). (4) Note that John uses Logos and not Sophia (Wisdom: cf. Prov. 8:22-30). Thus the Hebrew doctrine of the going forth of the Divine Word from God is emphasized, by way of contrast with the Greek idea of the immanent Divine Reason, as the governing idea in the revelation of the true relationship between the Son and the Father. (Cf. John 1:18, 5:30, 6:38, 10:30, 17:4-5, 17:18-21; Gal. 4:4; 1 John 1:1-2, 5:20.)

2. *Gen. 1:1*. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In the beginning of what? Of the space-time process. "Beginning" is a familiar word with most of us, but we are inclined to think of it as a fashioning or rearrangement of what is already existent. But the "beginning" of *Gen. 1:1* was, as we have noted previously, an absolute Creation by the Power of Divine Thought and Will. There was a time when the cosmos was not; when there were only God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God (in the sunlight of the New Testament revelation, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Hence we are told expressly 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*). This beginning was of necessity the work of Divine power, and hence

is properly designated *supernatural*. As a matter of fact, changes from non-being to being, from the unconscious to the conscious, from the conscious to the self-conscious (personality), apparently lie outside the scope of any strictly natural process (cf. Gen. 1:1, 21, 27). Energy-matter, the cosmos, animal life, human personality (self-consciousness and self-determination)—all must have been originated by Divine agency, through the introduction of new increments of power into the Creative Process at successive intervals—and hence, although originating in a miracle of absolute creation, are nevertheless perpetuated in what we call natural processes (secondary causes).

3. Acts 11:15—the words of Peter to the brethren at Jerusalem, explanatory of the conversion of the first Gentiles, Cornelius and his household at Caesarea. (See Acts 10, 11, and 15.) “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them” (Cornelius and his household, the first Gentile converts) “even as on us” (the Apostles, all of them Jews) “*at the beginning.*” What beginning? The beginning of the regeneration, of the spiritual creation (John 3:3-7, Tit. 3:5, 2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10, 4:24), of the Reign of the Messiah, of the Church of Christ, of the New and better Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34, Heb. 8:6), of the Dispensation of the Spirit. The time was A.D. 30; the place, Jerusalem. On that occasion, the Spirit descended on the Apostles in baptismal measure (Luke 24:45-49, John 20:21-23; Acts 1:1-5, 2:1-4), thus making them charter members of the Church by miracle. They in turn preached the Gospel to the assembled multitude, telling inquiring sinners what to do to be saved. Some three thousand persons heard, believed, repented, and were baptized into Christ (Acts 2:37-42). “And there were added together in that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41): thus the Body of Christ was incorporated, vitalized by the indwelling Spirit. It seems reasonable to

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conclude that the Apostles were thus made members of the Body by the miracle of Holy Spirit baptism; those who obeyed the Gospel on that day, and all who have done so since that day, have been added to them—literally, *added together*—by the psychological process of conversion (Acts 3:19-20, Gal. 3:27, Rom. 10:9-10); and so that which began in miracle is perpetuated by the hearing and obedience of faith (Acts 2:38, Rom. 6:3-5, Eph. 2:19-22, Gal. 3:2).

Conclusion: Things that are begun *supernaturally* are perpetuated *naturally*. The beginning of the world, of man, of life, of all things in God's Eternal Purpose, was of necessity outside the realm of the strictly natural. The beginning of the Jewish nation was accompanied by miracles (Exo. 4:1-9). The ministry of Jesus was authenticated by miracles (Acts 2:22). The beginning of the church was in a miracle (Acts 2:1-4). The Gospel in its earliest proclamation was attested by miracles (Acts 8:4-24, 9:32-35, 9:36-42, 10:38-40, 19:1-7, 28:1-6; Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:2-4). In the days of the early Church, when disciples had to depend on the *oral* teaching of the Apostles, God graciously confirmed the word by the signs that followed (Rom. 1:11, 1 Cor. 12). However, when the New Testament was written and compiled, this miraculous element passed away (1 Cor. 13:8, Eph. 4:8-16). Do not expect a miracle to be performed today to convert a sinner. *Demonstration accompanies revelation*; however, when the revelation is completed, the demonstration is no longer necessary (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Matt. 12:38-40, Rom. 1:4). Rom. 10:6-10—the righteousness which is of faith says, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach," etc. Accept and obey the Gospel, enjoy salvation through obedience to its commands, and live in the blessed hope of life everlasting.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART FIVE

1. State the various theories of the relation of Gen. 1:1 to the rest of the Creation Narrative that follows.
2. What are the objections to the reconstruction theory?
3. What does our text say about the agreement between the Genesis Cosmogony and present-day science?
4. Name the various concepts which, according to Murphy, are denied by the first verse of Genesis.
5. The phrase, "in the beginning," implies the beginning of what?
6. Explain the distinction between *mathematical* time and *real* time.
7. What seems to be the essential difference between *eternity* and *time*?
8. Who or what existed prior to the beginning of time, according to Biblical teaching?
9. What is the name used for the Deity in Gen. 1:1? What is the special significance of this name?
10. What suggestions have been made to account for the use of the plural subject with a singular verb, in this Scripture?
11. What explanation of this problem harmonizes with the teaching of the Bible as a whole?
12. Explain the theistic doctrine of God.
13. Explain how, according to Christlieb, Genesis 1:1 is a protest against atheism, materialism, pantheism, emanationism, deism, and rationalism.
14. Show how theism differs from both deism and pantheism.
15. What is the significance of the verb *bara* as used in the first chapter of Genesis? How does this verb differ from the verb *asah* in meaning?
16. What are the objections to the notion of the "eternity" of matter?
17. Explain what is meant by Efficient Causality.

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18. State the main rival theories, in present-day science, of the origin of the universe.
19. In explaining the cosmos, with what *something* does each of the following scientists begin: Lemaitre, Hoyle, Gamow, Whipple?
20. What kind of Creation does Genesis teach?
21. What is meant by Creation without the use of pre-existing material? How does this differ from Creation *ex nihilo*?
22. Show how research in the field of psychic phenomena supports the Biblical doctrine of Creation by the power of Divine Thought.
23. On what grounds do we say that matter as it is understood today in its ultimate forms is *metaphysical* rather than *physical*?
24. How does the Second Law of Thermodynamics give scientific support to creationism?
25. How, according to Trueblood, does the Evolution Hypothesis support both theism and creationism? Do you agree?
26. Show how the teaching of Heb. 11:3 might be harmonized with current knowledge in the area of nuclear physics.
27. What answers may be given to the question, Why Creation at all?
28. Give the various suggested meanings of the phrase, "the heavens and the earth." Which view is preferred in this textbook?
29. What is included in this phrase, "the heavens and the earth"?
30. What is included in "the host of heaven"?
31. What is included in the "host" of earth?
32. State Dr. Strong's definition of Creation and discuss the various parts of this definition.