

GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED

Solus Christus — Solo Scriptura — Sola Fide — Sola Gratia

Who? What? Whence? Whither?

Desmond Ford

The Times Are Changing!

Ken MacLeod

January 1987

Editorial

It's that time again! The new and the old confront each other as 1986 passes into 1987. It is a sad-happy time for me. Sad because this will be the last editorial I shall write as Jill, Dean and I have decided to move to Southern California where we will be closer to a medical clinic that has given Jill excellent help. We are not looking forward to the painful goodbyes but we shall continue to stay in touch.

I am happy that Good News Unlimited has called Roy Gee to take my place. I have been blessed many times by Roy's ministry. He will be a great help to Des and the rest of the staff as we make plans for a greater proclamation of the gospel in 1987. On grounds of conscience, about the time of the Glacier View meeting, Roy resigned from denominational ministry. He has been a successful pastor and has accepted the call to join the staff at GNU.

Some, not kindly disposed towards GNU may assume that I am leaving because of some difference with Dr. Ford. Such an assumption will be ill-founded. I am too indebted to Des to allow anything, *even* my most studied theological opinions (!) to jeopardize my friendship with him. I really mean "indebted." I remember the hundreds of classes at Avondale College which brought many hours of spiritual blessings as I listened to the best teacher I have ever had. I remember the time he saved me from a possible drowning at Terrigal Beach in New South Wales, Australia. I was suffering from a stomach cramp and gasping for air as each wave thundered over my head. I was grateful for his supporting arm and thankful that we both made it to the shore.

Good News Unlimited will always have my earnest support. It is my prayer that 1987 will be a year in which we all draw closer together in mutual support of the gospel we so dearly love. I, for one, intend to do all in my power to help spread the good news as the Lord gives me opportunity.

We read in the Bible that God's grace is greater than all the sins of mankind. I like the way the New English Bible translates Romans 5:15,16:

But God's act of grace is *out of all proportion* to Adam's wrongdoing. For if the wrongdoing of that one man brought death upon so many, its effect is *vastly exceeded* by the grace of God...

"Out of all proportion," "vastly exceeded" here is good news—unlimited! What grounds for rejoicing even in the midst of our sorrow and pain!

Sometimes we slip into apathy and fail to appreciate the gravity of the human predicament and the power of the gospel to transform that predicament. We become overly familiar with the grace of God and fail to appreciate what life was like before the power of God brought that wonderful inner transformation. "Woe unto me," Paul says, "if I preach not the gospel." Remember the story of the dying lepers in 2 Kings 7? They realized the hopelessness of their life situation, and at dusk they got up and went to the camp of the Arameans. There in the tents they found an abundance of food, lots of gold, silver and clothes. Instinctively they buried their treasures but then, under the assaults of conscience, they cried, "We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves" (2 Ki 7:9). God forbid that we should selfishly hoard the treasures of the gospel so necessary for man's spiritual life.

At the beginning of another new year, let us resolve that nothing will keep us from a wholehearted commitment to the gospel we love.

by Noel Mason

Editor:


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WHO
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by
Desmond
Ford

THE OLDEST AND most important questions asked by human beings are these: Is the universe friendly? Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? How should I get there? On each individual's answer to these inquiries depends everything else. Morality and happiness, for example, are impossible without satisfying answers to these queries.

No person can rightly refuse the task of seeking answers to these vital questions. We are all on life's merry-go-round and we must either go on or go off. We are like a man who has left the trenches and gone "over the top" into no man's land towards the enemy. He must now either fight or lie down. The business of choice which perpetually confronts each of us demands that we have a philosophical basis on which to make those decisions which have so much to do with our own well-being and that of those whom we influence. No one is excused from the task of constructing a worldview and upon that construction all else follows.

Pascal's Observation

No one said these things better than Blaise Pascal. He was a mathematical prodigy, literary stylist, physicist, inventor, and religious thinker of the mid-seventeenth century. Born in central France, the son of a lawyer, he lived only to the age of thirty-nine, but influenced the world as few men have. His most important book was a defense of the Christian religion

which was never completed, but finally published as a set of remarkable notes under the title of *Pensees* (Thoughts).

It was Pascal who asserted that "all the unhappiness of men arises from one simple fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own

room." He explains his comment by saying that a contemplation of man's mortal state and the uncertainties of his future would slump him into gloom, unless he is diverted by a succession of trifling engagements. For example, Pascal writes:

When we imagine a king attended with every pleasure he can feel, if he be without diversion, and be left to consider and reflect on what he is, this feeble happiness will not sustain him; he will necessarily fall into forebodings of dangers, of revolutions which may happen, and, finally, of death and inevitable disease; so that if he be without what is called diversion, he is unhappy, and more unhappy than the least of his subjects who plays and diverts himself.

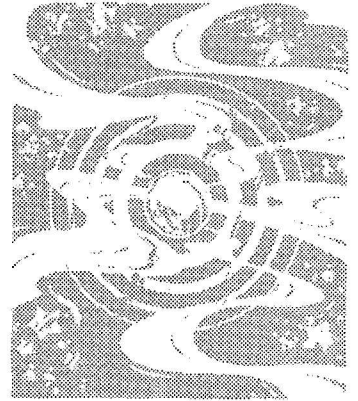
Hence it comes that play in the society of women, war, and high posts are so sought after. Not that there is in fact any happiness in them, but we do not seek that easy and peaceful lot which permits us to think of our unhappy condition, nor the dangers of war, nor the labor of office, but the bustle which averts these thoughts of ours, and amuses us....

Hence it comes that men so much love noise and stir; hence it comes that the prison is so horrible a punishment; hence it comes that the pleasure of solitude is a thing incomprehensible.... He is unhappy....¹

Pascal proceeds to add that men avoid nothing so much as solitude and rest, because it gives them too much time to think of the uncertainties of life and destiny. It suggests that for all mankind "it is the chase, and not the quarry, which they seek." "They think they are truly seeking quiet, and they are only seeking excitement." "Thus passes away all man's life. Men seek rest in the struggle against difficulties; when they conquer these, rest becomes insufferable."²

Pascal's Wager

What is then the Frenchman's suggestion for weary seekers of relief?



Men avoid nothing so much as solitude and rest, because it gives them too much time to think of the uncertainties of life and destiny.



The answer is his famous wager long-known and discussed among philosophers and theologians. In essence, the wager amounts to this: Because the existence of God has to do with infinity, and because our resources are finite, mere reason cannot solve the question with certainty. Yet we are forced to come to some conclusion or other because of the regular confrontation with life and the unending call to decision-making. Pascal proceeds:

Let us weigh the gain and the loss in wagering that God is. Let us estimate these two chances. If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation that he is.³

That reasoning has lost none of its cogency today. It remains true in the twentieth century that mankind, being part of the pattern it investigates, has no means of getting beyond itself. We finite beings can never comprehend the infinite, or subject it to our gaze. We are forced to make a decision from the tiny portion of reality that surrounds us, though it be infinitely incomplete.

Design Implies a Designer

Today, the argument from design to a designer called teleology has come back into fashion and with good reason. Even though assumptions are involved in the argumentation, that is true of all reasoning and does not discredit it. Even reasoning in a circle, as all are compelled to do, is acceptable provided the circle be large enough.

Here is an example of the teleological argument from a former president of the New York Academy of Science, A. Cressy Morrison:

Suppose you put ten pennies, marked from one to ten, into your pocket and give them a good shuffle. Now try to take them out in sequence from one to ten, putting back the coins each time and shaking them all again. Mathematically we know that your chance of first drawing number one is one in ten; of drawing one and two in succession, one in 100; of drawing one, two, and three in succession, one in 1,000, and so on; your chance of drawing them all, from number one to number ten in

*The stream
can rise no
higher than
its source.
Personal
beings must
have had a
source that
was also
personal.
Intelligent
beings must
have had an
origin that
was itself
intelligent.*

succession, would reach the unbelievable figure of one in 10,000,000,000.

By the same reasoning, so many exacting conditions are necessary for life on the earth that they could not possibly exist in proper relationship by chance. The earth rotates on its axis 1,000 miles an hour at the equator; if it turned at 100 miles an hour, our days and nights would be ten times as long as now, and the hot sun would likely burn up our vegetation each long day while in the long night any surviving sprout might well freeze.

Again, the sun, source of our life, has a surface temperature of 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit, and our earth is just far enough away so that this 'eternal fire' warms us just enough and not too much! If the sun gave off only one half of its present radiation, we would freeze, and if it gave half as much more, we would roast....

It is apparent from these and a host of other examples that there is not one chance in billions that life on our planet is an accident.⁴

Since that time we have come to understand something of the mysteries of the marvelous human cell. We live in a body of a hundred trillion such cells, each of which carries one hundred thousand different genes which are encoded segments of DNA. A gene basically is a biochemical piece of information written in the code language of DNA. (DNA is the abbreviated form of Deoxyribonucleic Acid.) For example, all that a sperm consists of is a bundle of DNA with a tail. A decade ago, *National Geographic*, in an extraordinary article called "The Awesome World Within A Cell," by Rick Gore, informed us that:

Enormously long strands of DNA intertwine within the core of living cells. So narrow and tightly coiled is this DNA that all the genes in all the cells in a human body would fit into a box the size of an ice cube. Yet if all this DNA were unwound and joined together, the string could stretch from the earth to the sun and back more than 400 times.

Moreover, biologists have found that virtually every cell contains the entire repertoire of genes for that



plant or animal. One cell in my toe, say, has all the data in its DNA for making another man physically identical to me. That many instructions, if written out, could fill a thousand 600-page books. The unique experiences of our lives, of course, makes us more than a product of our genes. Yet it is our DNA that sets the basic physical limits of what we can and cannot become.⁵

All of which takes me back many years to a remarkable Christian classic called *Theism*, by Robert Flint, which was my privilege to read in the 1940's. As a teenager, I was struck by the following words:

We may believe either in a self-existent God or in a self-existent world, and must believe in one or the other; we cannot believe in an infinite regression of causes.⁶

The Options

Happily the options for any intelligent mind are few. We must choose from these: 1. an infinite nothing made matter and mind, 2. infinite matter made mind, 3. an infinite mind made matter and mind. No one believes the first and only those, who desperately wish to, settle for the second. It takes a mind to create a mind. Long ago the famous Montesquieu inquired, "What can be more absurd than to imagine that a blind fatalistic force has produced intelligent beings? The stream can rise no higher than its source. Personal beings must have had a source that was also personal. Intelligent beings must have had an origin that was itself intelligent. What materialists actually do is to ascribe to matter all that theists ascribe to a personal God. And the ascription in one case is sheer nonsense. It is similar to affirming that a chair or table can think.

Our human nature presupposes and demands a personal author. Otherwise our nature must be viewed as an enigma and self-contradiction. We can put the matter more strongly than that. If the human mind is the mere product of chance, then none of its conclusions are reliable. We do not say about a broken milk bottle or the shape of a cloud that it is true. Anything that has to be what it is, cannot be spoken of as true. As C.S. Lewis pointed out long ago, we use

our minds as we use windows without realizing that we are using them. But the reasoning powers of man can only rest in the divine reason as the primary cause of all else. Similarly our affections tend towards a supreme good which can only be found in the Creator, so, too, our conscience enshrines a moral law which reflects the nature of that Creator.

As man contemplates himself apart from the rest of existence, again he is forced to choose between options. Either he is the product of matter plus time plus chance, or he is the child of a loving heavenly Father. If he is the first, then he is of no significance. A zero awaits him at the end, just as a zero produced him in the beginning. Therefore, everything along the way is only a zero, whether it be the love of spouse, or child, or truth, or beauty. Who could live consciously aware of such a reality as that?

The Difficulties of Atheism

The world of the atheist is an infinitely sad and dangerous place. One of them wrote these words:

In the enormous machine of the universe, amid the incessant whirl and hiss of its jagged iron wheels—amid the deafening crash of its ponderous stamps and hammers—in the midst of this terrible commotion, man, a helpless and defenseless creature, finds himself placed—not secure for a moment, that on some unguarded notion, a wheel may not seize and rend him, or a hammer crush him to powder. This sense of abandonment is at first very awful.⁷

But we do not reject the atheistic view because it is gloomy. We reject it because it is not consistent. For example, the strict materialist employs the use of reason to conclude that ultimately there is no reason but only a brain composed of a fortuitous concourse of atoms, none of which had any connection with intelligence. To believe that a countless number of inconceivably small manifestations of electric force scattered through immeasurable fields of space are self-existent and eternal is much more difficult to believe than the self-existence of deity. Indeed, such a belief would be millions and millions of times more mysterious. We know

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that we exist. We are here and we are personal, intelligent beings. It is much less difficult to conceive of our Author as similarly personal and intelligent, though transcendent, than to think that personal and intelligent beings came from that which lacked both characteristics.

We take so many things for granted, including, as mentioned earlier, our capacity for thought. The marvel of this computer, balanced on top of our shoulders that makes all else intelligible, does not impress us as it should. Then there is the miracle of the senses. If these were changed, all the universe would be thereby changed, everything in it becoming something other than it is. Under these circumstances, green could be red, the bitter sweet, and the loud noise but a gentle murmur, and very hard substance soft. But we take our senses for granted.

Darwin is said to have shuddered when he tried to work out the origin of the human eye. How much more mysterious is the origin of the human mind. But there is something more mysterious still—the reality of our moral sense. The unbeliever is confronted by the strange phenomenon of a moral being in an immoral universe. “I ought” is the unending refrain of conscience.

Their own inconsistencies have not often been perceived by unbelievers. They accept as real, certain postulates which are just as beyond proof as an even more valid set of postulates. Let me explain. The existence of the world, ourselves, and God are all incapable of absolute proof. There have always been philosophers known as solipsists, each of whom thought he was the only being in the universe. A question must be asked about every idea: Is this a true estimate of reality or is it part of a dream? After all, all that we have operates within us—we have no other perceptions of the outside world other than the ones locked in our brains. In that sense we are forever talking to ourselves and we never get beyond ourselves.

Christian Revelation

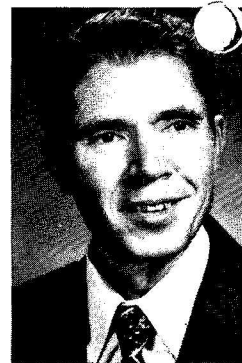
A child-like Christian believer has cause for gratitude in the simplicity and profundity of his own faith. He knows that while a bird cannot get outside its own atmosphere, the hand of the bird's Creator can invade that atmosphere and touch the creature. Thus, while we have no capacity, as finite beings, to lay hold

of God, we know he can lay hold of us. And this he has done in the Christian revelation.

It is only common sense that if there is a personal Creator, he would want to communicate with his creatures. We would expect a revelation embodied in some permanent form such as a book and preferably one that could be cared for by a group or a race of people. This we have, in Holy Writ. The first Testament was preserved by a nation and the second by a church. Best of all, if along with the written revelation so preserved, there should be some manifestation of the truths of revelation in a person. This we have in Jesus Christ. Christ was the only man who claimed to be God who was recognized as sane by his contemporaries. None of the other great leaders of religion ever claimed to be God. Christ is unique in this regard. The more we contemplate his life, the more we conclude that the most natural explanation of it is the supernatural. If he was really good, then he was God. Good men don't go around telling lies about themselves. Lewis was right when he said that Christ was either what he claimed to be or on a level with the man who thinks he's a poached egg.

Let us never be ashamed of the Christian worldview. It is the world's only hope. Those who deny it forget that a man must himself possess divine attributes to be able to deny that God exists. The atheist would have to be omnipresent if his contention is true, for if there were an area from which he is absent, God may be there. The unbeliever would have to be omniscient, for if there was only one fact he didn't know it might be the fact of the reality of God.

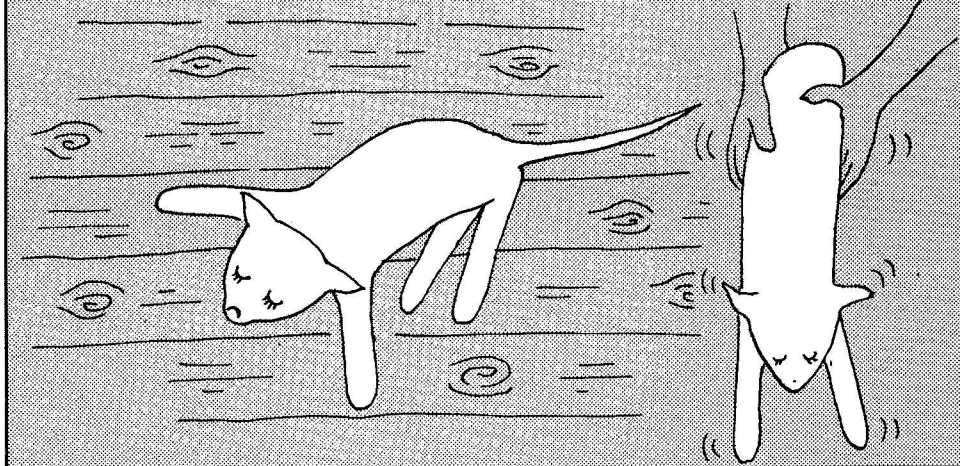
But the person who accepts the Bible can say with joy and fervent gratitude, “This is my Father's world.” What a radiant light that casts upon everything. Even the bitterness and pain of reality is thus transmuted as we recognize the world as our Father's school and acknowledge that on graduation day all will be made clear and wonderful, and examinations will be over!



DESMOND FORD

1. *Penses*, pp. 52, 53.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
4. *Unlocking God's Treasury*, p. 5.
5. *National Geographic*, pp. 356-257.
6. *Theism*, p. 120.
7. *Anti-Theistic Theories*, p. 30.

THE CAT FLAT ON THE MAT



I WAS awful sick the other day and lay quite distracted on the deck. I was all woozy round the gills and coughing as though my lungs would come up. In between that, it sounded as though I was about to vomit, but it was just a dry retch. My stepmother came home and I could see she was worried. She told Dr. Ford that I sounded like a broken starter motor in a car. I was hot too. She didn't like it at all. He said that nature fixed things like that, but she wasn't sure. "She's had her shots," she said, "but you never know." So she called Uncle Gary. Now Uncle Gary is a v-e-t-e-r-i-n-a-r-i-a-n—I always have trouble spelling that, but looked it up in my pocket dictionary. It's easier if you just say vet for short.

Uncle Gary deals with horses just about most of the time, but he's quite partial to cats. He said to take me over there to his house. I didn't hear that. I just heard her say, "I'll bring her over." If I'd had the energy, I'd have gone and hid in a tree lickety-split. You'll remember I don't rightly like cars.

Dr. Ford said to put me in a box, but she said, "No, she'll sit up on my shoulders after a bit and won't yowl as much." I heard that and thought it sounded like fun. I often jump on her shoulders when she's hanging out the washing. She says she feels like Old John Silver with his parrot on his shoulder, so when I'm up there she calls herself Cap-

tain Parrot. So, right after supper, we headed for Lincoln which is about eleven miles away. I got on her shoulder, sneezed all over her, cried for a bit and then settled down, hanging on with my nails for grim death. I looked out the window until it got dark and then I had a small snooze. My stepmother pushed her shoulders back against the car seat, but you know how cars are. I gradually shifted position until I was shaken right down the middle of her back. I was comfortable enough, but she was afraid I'd get squashed and panic, so she stopped halfway and put me back on her shoulders again.

We got to Uncle Gary's country farm, and he was there in his garden spraying weeds. Mom said I'd like him and I did (except for the matter of the needle which came later). He said to go round the back of the yard to the surgery. That's where you get examined. We went inside and, of course, though I'd sounded as though I was near death, I rallied for the doctor and didn't even cough. But he wasn't fooled. When he took my temperature, it was quite high he said. I looked around at the surgery while he prodded my intestines and listened to my chest. I didn't have a hairball like mom thought. Nor was my throat obstructed. She felt bad when she found that out, because she'd hung me upside down when she came home and gave me a few

shakes to get the obstruction out of my throat.

I had a temperature of 104°F which is not quite as bad as it sounds, 102°F being normal for us kittens. Uncle Gary said he was pretty sure I had a r-e-s-p-i-r-a-t-o-r-y infection, but couldn't tell if it was b-a-c-t-e-r-i-a-l or v-i-r-a-l. He thought it was a virus, but gave me a shot of an a-n-t-i-b-i-o-t-i-c in case it was a bacteria and said it would help my symptoms. The needle hurt, though he was real sneaky and crept up from the back like an Indian with a hatchet. I tried to bite him but he slipped out of the way. I could tell he was in practice running from those horses.

There was a huge whatchamacallit in the middle of his surgery, and he told Mom it was a table for doing surgery on horses. He explained how you could tie up a horse to it and turn it around mechanically so the horse ended up at table-level. I was scared I might have to have my lungs out, they sounded so bad, but he didn't mention it. I was glad though when we left the surgery.

We went into the house and talked with Gary and Donna. They are very nice people and like cats. Then we went home. I went back on the shoulders once more. When we got home, mother put me on one side of her bed on my little red and white woolly blanket. I couldn't lie down comfortably and all my symptoms came back. I sort of had to sit up and snatch at the air. Mother said it was pitiful, whatever that means. I wouldn't eat or drink. Gary had said I



by Gillian Ford

mustn't get d-e-h-y-d-r-a-t-e-d and he showed her how to feed me water with a syringe. He got it down really sneaky the first time but I thought, "They won't catch me like that the next time." I didn't realize they were trying to help. About midnight, she got all tucked out and put me on my favorite chair all nice and warm in the laundry. She had to get some sleep, because she had to get up at 5:00 a.m. to go to work. I didn't sleep too well—it's not easy to rest when you can't breathe properly. But she didn't sleep too well either. I saw her come in and look at me at 2:00 a.m. and 4:30 a.m.

The next morning, while it was still dark, she picked me up and put me in the car, along with a laundry basket, my blanket, some kitty litter and sundry other things. I rode to the freeway on her shoulder and then we got into Tricia's car. Tricia was driving so I got to sit on Mom's lap. We drove all the way downtown to Sacramento and parked behind Capital Printing and Mailing. I saw my real mother there, but she doesn't like me now that I play with Ebony the dog. I don't smell very catlike anymore.

It's probably the only place in Sacramento where you can take your cat to work if it's sick. Everybody came to see me. Most said I'd grown a lot, but one

person said I was still the same size and didn't she feed me? I felt like asking him if he needed glasses but I was too sick. I just lay in that basket or slept on Mom's lap while she typed on the computer all day. Occasionally I thought I was going to vomit, but it was a dry cough. She felt like taking me to the vet again, but Uncle Gary had said that you can't do much with viruses—just have to wait them out.

They tried to force water down me, but I only got a teaspoon an hour. One time, Scott was holding me and Mom pushed the syringe and all the water spurted out of my mouth and all over his shirt. Another time, she got water down, but I spat it up all over his glasses. Fortunately, Scott has three cats and he thought it was funny.

As I've said, I slept nearly all day and then we went home. On the way home, a man passed us in his car and pointed at me on Mom's shoulder and laughed. That night I felt a bit better. When I got home I started to drink, and



that was a good sign. The next day, Mom said I didn't need to go with her to work. She said the first day I needed water and something called special attention, and Dr. Ford was busy writing a couple of books and doing a TV program and we shouldn't bother him as he had too much to do. She also hinted he might be a worse shot with the water syringe than she was.

It is a couple of weeks later and I still have a cough, but I am very strong and lively and eating about six times my weight every day. That is an e-x-a-g-g-e-r-a-t-i-o-n. Mistress says not to worry about me as I am on the mend.

P.S. Thank you all my fans who sent me cards and gifts. I gave Good News a donation in your names. I sure did appreciate your attention and kindness.

The Adventures of Marley the Mole **"The Incident At School"**

We continue our quest with Marley the mole, who is trying to understand better the meaning of the story of Creation in the Bible. His story began with an argument at school with his cousin, Sam the shrew, who doesn't believe in God and doesn't believe God created the world. To try and help him with his many questions, Mr. Mole, Marley's father, spends a lot of time trying to explain what the Bible really teaches on the subject. To do this, he uses the Ancient Writing of King Maon the Magnificent. The first chapter, "The Beginnings" puts together a Creation story from the Bible—but it is quite different to what Marley expects. For one thing, it tells of a big battle between a war-

rior god and a dragon.

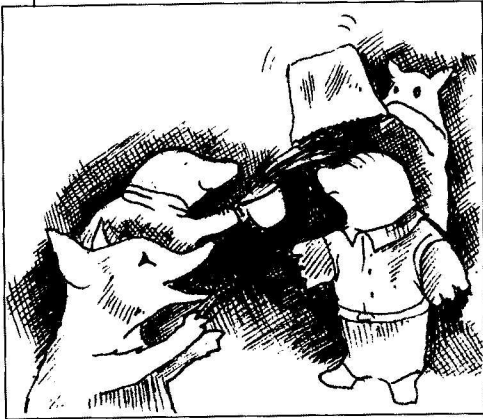
The next day, Mr. Mole and Marley go out for a boat ride while Mr. Mole explains more about Creation, but they are rudely interrupted by a hawk which appears to be about to eat them. That evening, Mr. Mole reads to Marley the story of the Great Flood, in which King Maon sets out to ancient Mount Merari to find the navel stone, the site which was meant to be used to build a temple. Unfortunately, one of his men goes down to further investigate this stone and dislodges it. In displacing it, a great flood is caused and a violent storm ensues. King Maon is left alone, abandoned by his army and the chapter ends.

IT WAS then that the incident took place at school. Sam, the shrew, had always had a mean streak in him. Two weeks previously he had tied a firecracker to a baby fox's tail. The bang and subsequent burn had resulted in the fox's losing a lump of fur. The shock was such that the tiny creature dissolved into a cataract of tears. Mary Mole, another of Marley's cousins, had also been a victim. She went home one day with her hair ribbons pulled undone, weeping copiously.

Back at school again, Sam decided to pick on Marley. Because of Marley's powerful front paws, Sam was loathe to fight him. The moles wouldn't start a fight, but they did believe in self-defense. So Sam just did all he could to

annoy Marley and make him look a fool.

It was lunchtime. Sam, a paper cup of hot coffee in one hand and using the other to wave in the air, was holding forth on the subject



of Marley and his funny ideas.

"In the beginning," said Sam blasphemously, "there was an old monkey, who one day opened his mouth to speak, and guess what!—the world was suddenly made!" His dramatic words and gestures caused a great burst of laughter from his friends who always hung around with him.

"But it's wrong to speak of God like that," said Marley hotly, with a great tightening around his throat and chest. He wished he could climb inside his own mouth and do a disappearing act. Even moles hate being different to others and want to be accepted and at peace with their friends.

"Who believes in the old monkey?" continued Sam.

"We don't, we don't," went the chorus line who believed whatever Sam believed.

"And then, ladies and gentlemen," said Sam, "the monkey switched on the electric light, so there was no darkness." A wolf had been creeping up behind Marley, and at a signal from Sam, he pulled a brown paper bag harshly over Marley's head. Of course, this was no hardship for Marley, because he was used to the dark—it was his friend. But the hand that held the bag around his neck held it too tight for comfort and unseen paws cuffed his head.

"Then," continued Sam, waving his hot drink around, "the waters were separated from the land. The old monkey did this by

blowing on the water and making dry land." At this, the wolf whisked the bag from off of Marley's head, as Sam mockingly blew on his hot drink. The burning liquid bubbled through the air into Marley's little weak eyes, causing a cry of pain. At this point his tormentors ran away.

As he later related the story to his father, Marley said, "It's a good job he waited to do it until the third day. The coffee had a chance to cool down." Mr. Mole laughed.

"Good for you, son, for taking it so well. Sam is a very blasphemous boy and life will teach him some very hard lessons. The physical and the moral world are made to run a certain way. Those who go against that way always get a kickback, though sometimes it takes a long time to happen. But meanwhile, we parents must bring judgment to Sam for his sake and everybody else's. I'll talk to the other parents tomorrow and see what should be done."

The family sat down for worship, and Mr. Mole began by saying that the Creation story in Genesis 1 taught an important lesson that the children ought to learn. He told them how the Creation story had been written to teach salvation. It began with God in the beginning, but then the earth was empty except for darkness. Into that mess came God's Spirit of separating the light from the darkness. With the coming of the light came night and day and that was the beginning of times. Then God began to make the world. First he made heaven, then the earth, and that was the beginning of places.

Then God separated the waters and revealed the dry ground. He made plants and vegetation and made the earth fruitful. He put the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens to give men more light and that was the beginning of seasons. He made fishes and birds and animals and that was the beginning of life. And then he made a man and a woman and they were the beginning of people. And then God rested to tell the people that they could rest

in God's works and not their own.

That's how it was in the beginning in the world, but it was also the same in the hearts of men. There was always God, but when Adam broke God's law and men fell from God's favor, it meant that all men's hearts were a big mess. But every day, God's Spirit is moving on the hearts of men and women, boys and girls, and light comes and brings the resurrection of a new life. This in turn brings separation from evil. It puts a man's feet on solid dry ground. His life is filled with fruitfulness and growth and he becomes a new man in the image of God and enters into rest.

Marley interrupted. "But Daddy, you were going to tell us about Maon and the flooding waters."

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "flooding waters covered the world before it was made and God used his breath or the wind to blow on them to separate them, or dry them up. If you have ever been in a flood, it is a frightening thing. Usually it happens after a lot of rain which suddenly builds up and overflows. Then the waters start to flow and they finally get into a rage and swirl around and destroy everything in their path. They are fearful to watch, especially if you get caught by them."

The physical and the moral world are made to run a certain way. Those who go against that way always get a kickback, though sometimes it takes a long time to happen.

"These flooding waters became a picture of judgment to the Hebrews in the time of the Bible. They represented death, invading armies, and more personally, troubles of the heart. You know how sometimes your heart rages with fear or sorrow or anxiety, just like being tossed by a stormy sea. But the Hebrews believed that God had power over the

floods, and that he would save them from disaster and sorrow.

"Sometimes, God used the flooding waters to save his people and punish their enemies. Can you think of some examples of flooding waters in the Bible which saved God's people, but brought judgment on their enemies?"

Marley scratched his head.

"What about Noah's flood, when God saved him and his family and punished the wicked world?"

"And what about the Exodus," said Mrs. Mole, "when Moses took the children of Israel through the Red Sea and the Egyptian armies were drowned?"

Mr. Mole was delighted at their answers. "Very good," he said, "God saved the Hebrews and punished the Egyptians by letting the flooding waters sweep Pharaoh's armies away. So what saved God's people was judgment on their enemies. Now, there were similarities between the stories of Creation, the Flood and the Exodus. Can you think of some of them?"

"Well, there were three lots of flooding waters for a start," said Marley.

"And in all three cases, God dried up the waters," said Mrs. Mole. "Good," said Mr. Mole, "let's look at those two symbols—the flooding waters and the wind blowing on the waters. In the story of Genesis 1, it says that God's Spirit moved on the waters. Now, this word 'spirit' is the same word as breath and wind. It can mean God's Spirit, or it can just mean breath or wind. They are easy enough to tie together, because the people of old believed that the wind was the breath of God anyway. Well, in the Creation story, you have the Spirit of God moving on the water, and in the Flood and the Exodus, the wind dries up the waters. So you see the Flood and the Exodus were a replay of Creation. The Flood was the Creation of a new world and the Exodus was a creation of a new nation, Israel.

"You see, Noah's flood came because the world had become so bad and the people so wicked that God had to destroy it. Create and destroy are opposite words and you have both here. God first un-created the world."

"Yes, I remember," said Marley.



"He opened up the windows of the heavens and the fountains of the deep and let the floods come back all over the face of the world. He made it just like it was before the world began. And then he began all over again."

"Exactly," said his father, "you have the wind blowing on the water to bring forth the dry ground; you have Noah as the new Adam; it mentions birds, vegetation (you remember the dove brought back a green leaf), animals (on the ark). Of course, the story is very different to the Creation story in Genesis 1, but there are these little reminders of it. Noah is told to be fruitful and multiply. He is told what he can eat (Gn 9:3) just as Adam was in the garden of Eden. The story is written in such a way to remind you of Creation. It shows how God judges an evil world by undoing what he has made. And then he starts again.

"And remember in the Exodus where there was a cloud between the Egyptians and the Israelites? To the Israelites it was light, but to the Egyptians it was darkness. That was a reference to the separation of light and darkness. And then when the children of Israel went through the Red Sea, the wind blew on the waters and they parted to reveal dry ground. Israel got through, but the waters later converged and drowned their enemies. So you have the separating of light and darkness and the blowing of the wind upon the waters, and they are both hints of the Creation story.

"Now," said Mr. Mole, "is there anywhere else in the Bible where you can think of an instance where the waters being parted is used? Well, that's too hard. I'll tell you. You remember when Jesus was being baptized, it says there was a bird hovering over the waters. Well, that word 'brooding' is the same word used for the Spirit moving over the waters in Genesis. And here, a dove symbolizes the Spirit of God hovering over Jesus, as he walks down into the waters

and they part. It was meant to teach that Jesus is God's new creation. There are many references to Genesis in the stories about Jesus—but I haven't got time to go into them all.

"You see, when Adam was put in the garden of Eden, he was perfect, but he sinned and because of him the whole world was lost. But Jesus came as the second Adam, to rewrite Adam's history and to give mankind a new history."

"But how can he do that?" asked Marley.

"He became our substitute—yes, I know that's a hard word, but it means he took our place. The whole human race was under the curse of death. But Jesus came and lived a perfect life and then died a death that would pay for the price of our sins. The way it works is that God looks at Jesus and not at us. He counts Jesus' life as taking the place of yours and mine. It's his life given in place of mine, and my death is put upon him.

"So, you see, Marley, the story of Creation in Genesis 1 is written to tell you more about the light of the world, Jesus, than it is to give you facts about the sun and the moon. That's the way the Bible interprets the story, and that's how we are meant to use it—not as a geography or science book."

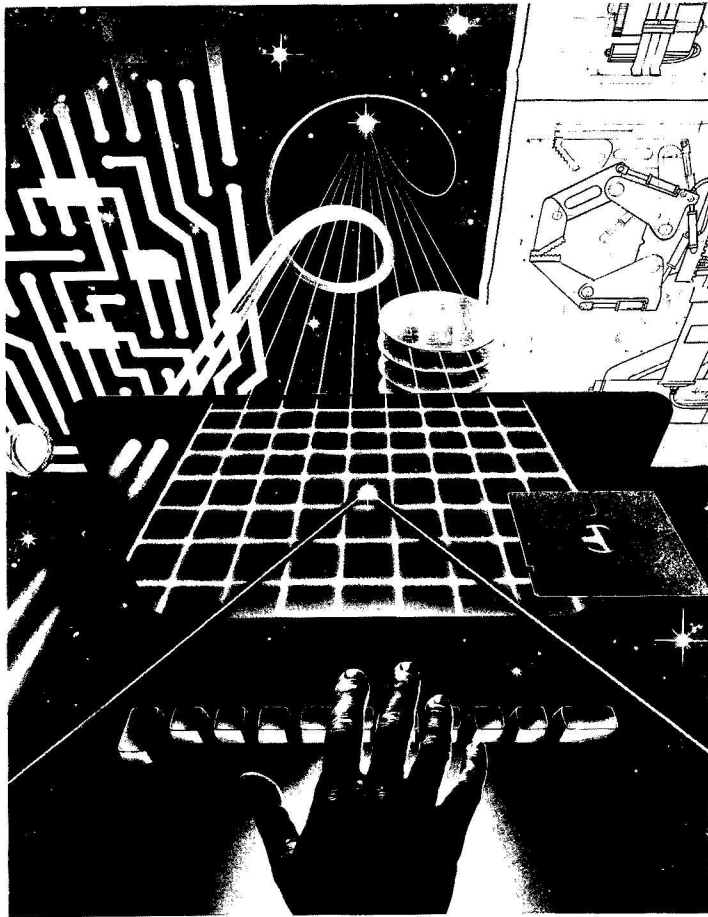
"I see Daddy," said Marley.

"Well, you need to run off to bed now, son," said Mr. Mole, "but remember, to stay in the light and keep away from the darkness. Friends are important because they guide your hearts either towards the light or towards the darkness. That is, either towards the good or the evil. You can pass the time of day with Sam and his gang, but don't give them your hearts. Don't give in to them because you want to belong and not feel left out. They will only confuse you and bring you a lot of sorrow. Good night, son."

"Good night, Mom and Dad," said Marley, and skipped off to bed.

Next month, we continue the saga of King Maon and find that the terrible storm caused by the dislodging of the navel stone, actually worked to the benefit of the Molk people and helped to destroy their enemies.

IT HAS BEEN some time now since I heard Peter, Paul and Mary sing "The Times They Are A Changin'!" Nevertheless, the lyrics of the song are still relevant in the eighties, for we are in the midst of a great revolution. We are witnessing



the dissolution of the worldview of scientific materialism (physical matter is the only reality, all things are explicable in terms of matter alone). This worldview which has dominated our thinking for more than three centuries is cracking all over. A new cosmology is being forged as new insights into

stories. The Old Story... is not functioning properly, and we have not learned the New Story."¹

The First Crack

Scientific materialism, the Old Story, received its first shock with the discoveries of the great physicists, Einstein, Rutherford, Bohr, Heisenberg, etc. In his book *Physics and Philosophy*, Werner Heisenberg states: "Atomic physics has turned science away from the materialistic trend it had in the nineteenth century."² At the beginning of the twentieth century there was no recognition of any freedom or variability in the cosmos—no room for God to intervene. But the physicists "peered" into the fundamental building block of the universe, the atom and discovered that the subatomic particles didn't play the game according to the rules laid down by nineteenth-century science. Their "randomness" called into question the iron-clad determinism of scientific materialism. The old cosmology began to crack.

The Second Crack

If the first blow from the atomic physicists only cracked the old worldview, the second from the astrophysicists knocked Humpty-Dumpty right off the world. In 1913, Vesto Melvin Slipher discovered that about a dozen galaxies in our vicinity were moving away from earth at very high speeds, ranging up to two million miles per hour. According to Robert Jastrow, "Slipher's discovery was the first hint that the universe was expanding."³ Since Slipher's observation, a host of astronomers have made their contribution to the New Story, the Big Bang cosmology.

A new cosmology is being forged as new insights into life and our universe continue to reveal the inadequacy of the old.

THE TIMES ARE CHANGING!

by NOEL MASON

life and our universe continue to reveal the inadequacy of the old.

Thomas Berry, in *The New Story* put it well when he wrote "It's all a question of Story (worldview). We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story... we are between

The observations of Einstein, Willem de Sitter, Friedmann, Eddington, Hubble, Humason, Alpher, Herman, Penzias, Wilson and many others have forced the world's leading thinkers to reject the idea that matter is eternal and to postulate that the

Living creatures no longer seem to be the result of a lucky accident but rather the ultimate intention of the processes of creation.

the universe was born in a primordial explosion, a flash of light, remnants of which can still be seen today. "Until recently," writes Jastrow, "many of my colleagues preferred the Steady State theory, which holds that the universe had no beginning and is eternal. But the latest evidence makes it almost certain that the Big Bang really did occur many millions of years ago. . . . At the present time, the Big Bang theory has no competitors. . . . The chain of events leading to man commenced suddenly and sharply at a definite moment of time, in a flash of light and energy."⁴ Thus, today, most astronomers believe in an expanding universe. Edward Milne contemplating the concept of an expanding universe states, "As to the first cause of the universe, in the context of expansion, that is left for the reader to insert, but our picture is incomplete without Him."⁵

Steven Hawking, the brilliant physicist from Cambridge University, wrote recently:

Our existence requires the universe to have certain properties. Among these properties would seem to be the existence of gravitationally bound systems, such as stars and galaxies and a long enough time-scale for biological evolution to occur. If the universe were expanding too slowly, it would not have this second property for it would recollapse too soon. If it were expanding too fast, regions which had slightly higher densities than the average or slightly lower rates of expansion would still continue expanding indefinitely and would not form bound systems. Thus, it would seem that life is possible only because the universe is expanding at just the rate required to avoid collapse.⁶

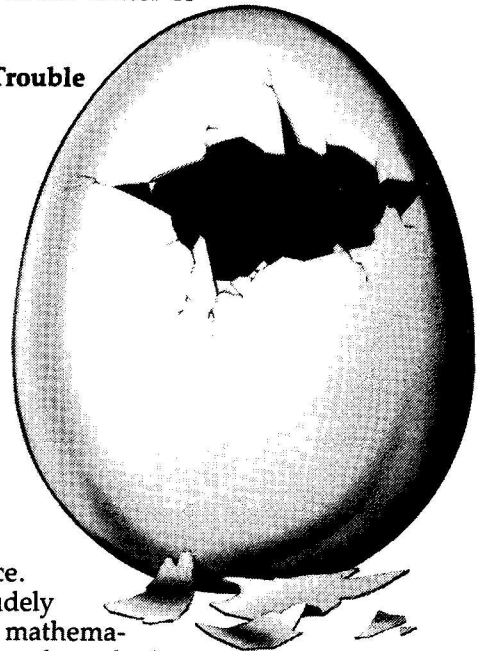
Something to ponder! Just as a beautiful bunch of flowers looks as if it were made to be appreciated by the human mind, so also the expanding universe with its gravitationally bound systems looks as though it "happened" just right for the existence of life. If Copernicus (1475-1543), with his discovery of a heliocentric universe, displaced man from the center of things, then modern physicists are cautiously putting him back! Living creatures no longer seem to be the

result of a lucky accident but rather the ultimate intention of the processes of creation. Man may not exist at the center of the physical universe, but he seems to be at the center of its purpose.

Darwin in Trouble

The old worldview is in deep trouble in other areas of science too. Darwinian evolution, popularly associated with the atheistic, materialistic worldview has fallen flat on its face. It is being rudely assaulted by mathematicians, philosophers, biologists, geologists, etc. The strongest attack is coming from evolutionists themselves. Darwin in *Origin of Species*, candidly recognized the absence of missing links, but he believed that further research would provide the missing evidence. Now, over one hundred years later, the vital links are still missing. Commenting on the gaps in the fossil record, Francis Hitching, in *The Neck of the Giraffe*, says, "The curious thing is that there is a consistency about the fossil gaps: the fossil gaps go missing in all the important places."⁷ The sudden rise of new species in the geological column and their stubborn fixity is forcing evolutionists to create a new model of evolution.⁸

Mathematicians have pointed to the improbability of atheistic evolution. Fred Hoyle estimates that 2,000 enzymes are needed to get living things into existence. The chances of this just happening are slim indeed—1 chance in $10^{40,000}$! (1 followed by 40,000 zeroes). We should remember that mathematicians generally regard anything with a probability of less than 1 in $10^{50,000}$ as totally impossible. Is it any wonder that Hoyle now believes that there is an enormous intelligence abroad in the universe.⁹





Since materialist solutions fail to account for our experienced uniqueness, we are constrained to attribute the uniqueness of the psyche or soul to a supernatural spiritual creation

Our Mind and Brain

Behavioral psychology which taught that man is just a bundle of reflexes, instincts, passions and psychic mechanisms is also in disarray. The materialistic, mechanistic models of Watson, Skinner and others are being challenged by a new breed of neuroscientists. The discoveries of William Penfield have awakened the age-old debate about the mind and its relationship to the brain.¹⁰ Is the mind bigger than the brain? "To expect," writes Penfield, "the highest brain mechanism or any set of reflexes, however complicated, to carry out what the mind does, and thus perform all the functions of the mind, is quite absurd."¹¹

In their extraordinary book, *The Wonder of Being Human*, the brain scientists, Sir John Eccles and Daniel Robinson, state: "Since materialist solutions fail to account for our experienced uniqueness, we are constrained to attribute the uniqueness of the psyche or soul to a supernatural spiritual creation."¹² Modern neuroscientists and psychologists are clearly unhappy with the explanations of the Old Story. While acknowledging the physiological base of all thinking, recent neuroscientists are stressing the freedom man enjoys in making choices.

The New Story and the Bible

It is doubtful whether any Christian will be entirely happy with the New Story, the Expanding Universe, or the Big Bang worldview which is being forged by modern science. The methodology of science forces scientists to start with *something given*, e.g., a bit of matter, a flash of light, a few hydrogen atoms, etc. To ask the question, what was there before the Big Bang, the flash of light, etc. is to go beyond the boundaries of strict science and venture into the world of philosophy and theology. The question of the ultimate origins of the universe has always been troublesome to many scientists. Yet that question must be asked. Any scientific cosmology which does not address this question, which seeks to avoid its embarrassment by beginning with something "given" is seriously inadequate. It is a cop-out!

The first chapter of a story is vital to the understanding of the whole. Who

wouldn't become impatient and frustrated with a reader who began in the middle of the book! We naturally expect the one who is telling the story to begin at the beginning!

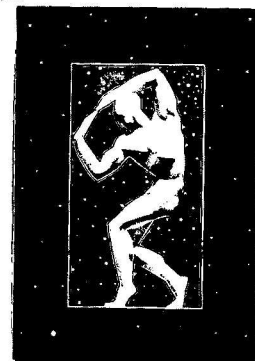
It is philosophically and logically proper to ask our philosopher scientists, "But what was there before the Big Bang or the hydrogen atoms?"

Our Choices Are Really Limited

I have never met a person yet who believes that *something* can come from *nothing* and I doubt if I ever will! And seeing that matter is no longer considered to be eternal and that the chances of the extraordinary phenomena of life just happening by accident are impossible (1 in 10^{40,000!}), it seems we may happily begin the story of the universe just like the writer of ancient times, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth..." (Gn 1:1).

We cannot, of course, return to biblical *literalism*. If scientists are willing to correct their theories in the light of better knowledge so, too, must theologians. The Christian church must acknowledge its error of interpreting the Creation story in an unhistorical, wooden, literalistic manner. Recent archaeological discoveries have demonstrated that many cultures of the ancient biblical world possessed and treasured a variety of Creation stories. The Old Testament people of God likewise told the story of Creation using a variety of metaphors and images (Ps 24:2; Amos 9:6; Is 45:18; Ps 119:20; Gn 2:8; Job 38:28; Ps 90:2). Let those who think they know the *exact* way God created the world ponder the questions put to Job:

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:1-7)



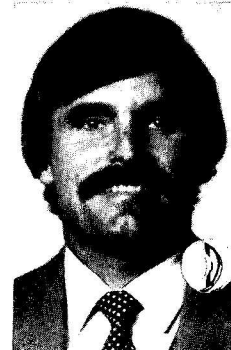
But what was there before the Big Bang or the hydrogen atoms?

All Christians need to remember that it is "by *faith* we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear" (Heb 11:3). The Creation stories are told for *theological* reasons, not for scientific ones. If I was given a clock for the first time in my life, I would rather know what it is *for* than *how* it was made. And that is the primary function of the Creation stories. They tell us what life is for, they are written to help us understand the meaning of our own existence, how we are to relate to God and nature.

The times are changing. There is a new spirit of openness among the world's leading thinkers. It takes more than fifty years for new ideas to reach the great masses of people even in an age of hi-tech media. The future holds a new opportunity for us to share our faith. Chastened by our mistakes of the past, we may be better prepared to make a defense to

anyone who calls us to account for the hope that is in us. But let us not overlook that Peter admonishes us to make such a defense with "*modesty and respect*" (I Pe 3:15).

1. I am indebted to R. Augros and G. Stanciu for Berry's statement. See *The New Story of Science*, p. 13, 14.
2. W. Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*, p. 59.
3. R. Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*, p. 23
4. *Ibid.* p. 14, 16.
5. Quoted by Jastrow in, *God and the Astronomers*, p. 112.
6. S. Hawking, *The Anisotropy of the Universe at Large Times*, in "Confrontation of Cosmological Theories," pp. 285-86. I am indebted to R. Augros and G. Stanciu in *The New Story*, for drawing my attention to Hawking's essay.
7. F. Hitching, *The Neck of the Giraffe*, p. 20.
8. See *Time Frames*, by Niles Eldridge, for a discussion of the Theory of Punctuated Equilibria.
9. F. Hoyle, *The Universe: Past and Present Reflections*, p. 28.
10. See W. Penfield, *The Mystery of the Mind*.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76, 80.
12. J. Eccles, D. Robinson, *The Wonder of Being Human*, p. 43.



NOEL MASON

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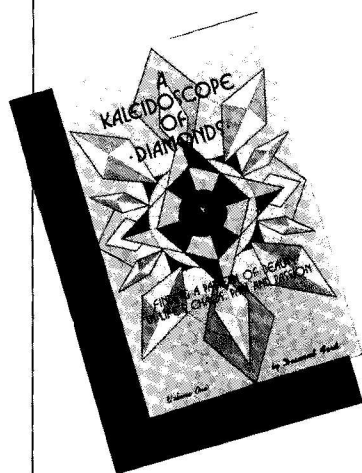
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Books in Review



A Kaleidoscope of Diamonds

Kaleidoscope of Diamonds, Desmond Ford, Desmond Ford Publications, Newcastle, CA 1986, Vol. 1, 125 pages.

According to Dr. Ford, the inspiration for *A Kaleidoscope of Diamonds* (Vols. 1 and 2) began not long after midnight one Sabbath morning! We now may all be blessed by his sleepless night, for the two volumes sparkle with gems of truth that will feed any hungry soul.

The first three chapters of Volume 1 are a mini-apologetic for the Christian faith. Dr. Ford focuses on the human predicament. "The primary disease of earth's prisoner is neither coronary heart disease nor cancer. It is meaninglessness—doubt of the reality of good at the heart of the universe.... Today suicide is pandemic, and is more a problem among the young than the old, white than black, the educated than the uneducated, the rich than the poor... 5,000 teenagers will suicide in the USA this year—400,000 other people will make the attempt...." (p. 6)

Chapter 2 offers the reader some clues as to how one can make sense

of a world that appears so meaningless. In constructing a worldview, Dr. Ford focuses on our sense of "ought" and our inability to live without purpose. Both these qualities require the greatest miracle of all "the computer of the mind" (p. 30). The author believes that our sense of morality, purpose and the phenomena of the human mind are inexplicable in terms of a materialist worldview. All readers should ponder well the quotation by the former president of the New York Academy of Sciences which has the following conclusion:

It is apparent from these and a host of other examples that there is not one chance in billions that life on our planet is an accident. (p. 32)

And F.W. Robertson's statement (p. 25-26) is worth committing to memory:

In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God and no future state, yet, even then, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than a coward. Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed is he who, when all is dreary and cheerless within or without, when his teachers terrify him, and his friends shrink from him, has obstinately clung to moral good.

The depravity of man and its solution is discussed in chapters 4 and 5. "The

Christ who was born to die, that Christ in the act of dying—here is the key to all else. Here is the mystery that unlocks all other mysteries" (p. 66). Many readers who have heard some of Dr. Ford's sermons will be interested to see in print one of his favorite quotes from Oswald Chambers:

Everything a man takes to be the key to a problem is apt to turn out another lock. For instance, the theory of evolution was supposed to be the key to the problem of the universe, but instead it has turned out a lock. Again, the atomic theory was thought to be the key; then it was discovered that the atom itself was composed of electrons, and each electron was found to be a universe of its own, and that theory too becomes a lock and not a key. Everything that man attempts as a simplification of life, other than a personal relationship to God, turns out to be a lock, and we should be alert to recognize when a thing turns from a key to a lock. God Himself is the key to the riddle of the universe, and the basis of things to be found only in Him. (p. 66)

"What was the real nature of the man who appeared two thousand years ago in Palestine claiming to be a ransom for the sins of the world?" Dr. Ford believes that this question will guide us through the labyrinth of religious and philosophical controversy (chapter 6). This chapter is probably the most important of the book. Vital questions as to the historicity of Christ, the

authenticity and reliability of the New Testament documents are answered.

The claims of Jesus (e.g., "I am the light of the world") are put to the test in chapter 7 (see pp. 90-93), while chapter 8 dissects the gospel. Here we are given the opportunity of seeing the "panacea" to all life's problems at work. Dr. Ford uses the story of David and Absalom to illustrate the various elements of the gospel.

Two short chapters conclude Volume 1 (chapters 9 and 10). The author shows how the gospel provides the perfect remedy for man's sicknesses. Note some insights: "To know our disease is halfway..." (p. 90-91). "The giants which stalk us are sin, sorrow and death, and they must be felled in that order" (p. 110). They are felled by the great verities of the gospel—grace, faith and works. Here is a concluding insightful statement:

The fruit of our new relationship with God must ever be distinguished from its root. We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. We are not saved by a mixture of faith and works, but by true faith which inevitably works. (p. 123)

A Kaleidoscope of Diamonds is excellent reading for all Christians, particularly those who in an age of skepticism appreciate a little apologetic flavor. (See accompanying advertisement for details regarding purchase.)

by Noel Mason

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