

In the Beginning

A meditation on the "New Story of Creation"

offered by

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In the beginning, about 13.8 billion years ago, the Universe flared forth with unimaginable power, the pure Energy of Creation. Within seconds some of that energy was transformed into **all** the matter that would ever be. So **all** matter, all stars, all planets, the Earth, the seas, the oak of the pews and you and me, all matter is a form of the Energy of Creation, the first light of the Universe.

But in those first moments of Creation, the Universe was too hot for matter, as we know it, to exist, too hot for planets or people or pineapples, too hot for molecules, even too hot for stars. Too hot even for atoms to exist. But from the beginning, from the first moment of creation, the potential for all these things existed! And, in the fullness of time, each would be created, atoms and stars, planets, pineapples and people.

Now this is the way it happened. After about three and eighty hundred thousand years, the Universe cooled enough for atoms to form from the myriad of tiny particles that had been forged out of the Energy of Creation. And when this happened, light was set free from the blinding fires of Creation and could radiate freely throughout the Universe. Were we there to see it, **all** of the Universe would shimmer with a warm rosy glow, a harbinger of sunrises to come; though it was still too hot for galaxies or stars or planets, people or pineapples.

But finally, after a hundred million years or so, the Universe cooled enough for stars and galaxies to congeal from the atoms that had previously formed. But those atoms were only hydrogen and helium, the two lightest and simplest

kinds of atoms. There were no heavier elements. No carbon atoms for making coal or cookies. No silicon atoms for making jelly jars or computer chips. No sodium atoms for sea salt or street lamps. But the **potential** for all these existed from the beginning, and in time they would all be fulfilled. But now I want to tell you about **how** the heavier elements were born. They were born in the hearts of stars!

Stars are **huge** spheres of hydrogen and helium. The Sun is a star and it is **so** huge that a million Earths could fit inside it. In the hearts of stars, hydrogen and helium are fused into heavier elements; every carbon atom of our bodies, every calcium atom in our bones, every nitrogen and oxygen atom in the air we breathe in and sing out as hymns. The fluorine atoms in our toothpaste, the neon atoms in an advertising sign, the iron atoms in the hemoglobin in our blood; **all** were fused into existence in the heart of a star. In addition, as stars fuse heavier elements, they convert some of their matter **back** into the energy of Creation. And it is this energy of Creation which we see shining forth from the stars as they twinkle in the night or blazing from our 'day-star', the Sun. But **how** did these elements get from the heart of a star into you and me or to make a tree from which to build a church or make a book?

It happened in this way. When massive stars die, they die explosive deaths, bursting forth with unimaginable energy, scattering the elements they had fused during their lives and forging, with the violence of their deaths, the heaviest elements, (silver, nickel, platinum, gold) blasting them all back into the galaxy, into the space between the stars, into the space where new stars form.

And so it was that, some five **billion** years ago, just such a massive star died in the outskirts of our Milky Way galaxy. And from the debris of its death was resurrected a new star and planets. A star which some future inhabitants of its third planet would one day name "the Sun".

So here we are, the stuff of stars contemplating stars, the resurrected body of a by-gone sun.

And what is the energy that we run on? None other than the liberated Light of Creation; liberated by the fusion of matter, in the heart of the sun, **back** to its original form, the Energy of Creation, which was captured by green plants which became our food.

And so we know that there is but one light in the Universe, whether the light of the chancel candles, or the light streaming through the stained glass face of the Good Shepherd behind you, or the light of our minds as we contemplate this awesome story. There is only **one** light, one energy, in the Universe, the liberated Light of Creation!

It is so