

The Story of Creation

In the beginning there was only God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, completely perfect and completely happy. God needed nothing. Yet out of His goodness He chose to create. All that He willed came into being; the heavens and the earth, all that is visible, and all that is invisible. One after another He made the light, the stars, the sky, and the earth with its plants and animals. And they all obey his commands.

Can we imagine animals and plants and rocks obeying God? The animals do not understand when we talk to them, so how could they be obedient? Or the winds and the sea and the mountains? You can shout and scream and wave your arms at them, but they cannot hear you for they are not even alive, and they certainly won't obey you.

But, as you will see, everything that exists, whether it has life or not, in all that it does and by the very fact of its being there, actually obeys the will of God.

God's creatures do not know that they are obeying. Those that are inanimate just go on existing. Those that have life move and go on living. Yet every time a cool wind brushes your cheek, its voice, if we could hear it, is saying: 'Lord, I obey.' When the sun rises in the morning and colors the glittering sea, the sun and the sunbeams are whispering, 'My Lord, I obey.' And when you see a bird on the wing, or fruit falling from a tree, or a butterfly hovering over a flower, the birds and their flight, the tree and the fruit and its fall to the ground, the butterfly and the flower and its fragrance are all repeating the same words: 'I hear, my Lord, and I obey.'

(turn off the lights)

In the beginning, before there were people or planets or even stars, there was chaos and darkness. In this measureless void of cold and darkness, God said: 'Let there be light', and there was light.

(light a candle)

And there appeared something like a vast, fiery cloud which included all the stars that are in the sky. The whole universe was in that cloud, and among the tiniest of stars was our own world; but they were not stars then; as yet there was nothing except light and heat. So intense was the heat that all the substances we know - iron, gold, earth, rocks, water - existed as gasses, as insubstantial as the air. All these substances, all the materials of which the earth and the stars are composed, were together in one vast, flaming intensity of light and heat.

This raging fiery cloud, too huge to imagine, moved in the immensity of freezing space. The fiery mass was no bigger than a drop of water in the ocean of space, but that drop contained the earth and all the stars.

As this cloud of light and heat moved through empty space little drops fell from it.

(dip fingers in water and flick the droplets across some newspaper, noticing pattern)

The countless hosts of stars are like these little drops, only instead of falling they are constantly moving round in space, and never meet. They are millions of miles from each other.

One of these stars, one of these grains of sand among those thousands of billions of grains of sand, is our sun, and one millionth part of this grain is our earth.

If this is the sun (pointing to a box, 1 meter cubed), then this is our Earth (show a 1 cm in your hand.)

Now, when God's will called the stars into being, there was no detail He had not planned. Every scrap of the universe, every speck which we might think too tiny to matter, was given a set of rules to follow.

To the littlest particles which were like smoke, like vapor - he said: 'As you become cold you shall come closer and become smaller.'

And so, as they cooled they moved more and more slowly, clinging closer and closer to each other and occupying less and less space. The particles assumed different states which we call solid, liquid, and gas.

(show chalk, water, and perfume)

Everything we know is either a solid, liquid, or gas, depending on how hot or cold it is.

Then God gave other instructions. Each of the tiny little particles was given a special love for certain particles and a special dislike for certain others. Some were attracted to each other and some were not. Just like human beings, they like some, and refuse to have anything to do with others. So they form themselves into different groups.

(Show how grains of pepper on the surface of water can be scattered by a drop of dish detergent)

In this way, the particles combined and formed themselves into different groups.

In the solid state, God has made the particles cling so closely together that they are almost impossible to separate. They form a body which will not alter its shape unless one applies force. If a piece is broken off, the particles will still cling together.

(Drop a piece of chalk on a hard surface and notice how it breaks)

When it came to liquids, God said: 'You shall hold together also, but not so very closely. You will have no shape of your own and will roll over each other. You shall flow and spread, filling every hollow, every crevice in your path. You will push downward and sideways, but never upwards.'

(Pour water into an interesting shaped vessel, noting that it takes the vessel's shape.)

And to the gasses He said: 'Your particles shall not cling together at all. They can move freely in all directions.'

(Spray perfume into the air.)

But as the particles were also different individuals, they did not become solid or liquid or gas all at the same time. They changed their state according to the temperature.

(Show how ice, placed on a skillet, will melt into water, then change to vapor.)

And so, while obeying these laws, the blazing mass that was to become our Earth, went spinning and spinning around itself and around the sun in the tremendous coldness of space.

And as time went on, the outer ring of this mass began a dance, the dance of the elements.

The particles that were dancing at the outermost edge, farthest away from the blaze, got cold and shrank. Huddling together they hurried to the blazing earth. But as soon as they got close, they became hot and up they went again. Like little angels, they carried a bucket of hot, burning coal from the hot little earth into the vast coldness of space, and returned with some ice.

(Show chart: The Dance of the Elements)

How marvelous it is! And how simple! If you become hot you expand and as you expand, you become lighter and soar upwards, like a bubble of air in the water. But, if you become cold, you shrink and fall as a grain of sand sinks to the bottom of a pond.

Because of this law the earth gradually changed from a ball of fire to the earth we know. For hundreds, thousands, millions of years this dance went on: hot little buckets of fire going up, warmed and lifted up by the tiny earth's furnace—only to return with another bucket of ice from the infinite coldness of space.

Finally, after the cold, cold universe had carried off just enough of Earth's heat. The particles settled down, like tired dancers, and one after the other, they became first liquids and solids. And as they became liquid or solid some of them joined others to which they were attracted, forming new substances.

The heavier ones went nearer to the heart of the earth and the lighter ones floated above them like oil floating on the water.

(Put vegetable oil, honey, and water in a clear glass, noticing how they settle out by weight)

A thin scum was formed, like the skin which forms on milk when it is boiled and left to cool. It seemed as though the earth had taken some shape. But the elements inside this skin were still very hot. They felt trapped. They wanted to get out. What could they do otherwise? They had to follow the law of God: 'If you are hot, you expand.' There was no place to expand and so they burst out. They broke the skin and it was like a terrible fight.

(baking soda/vinegar volcano, or sparklers, or other dramatic display)

The water that had formed on the surface turned immediately into vapor and went up as the hot stuff came out from inside the earth.

(Show volcano/cloud chart)

There were also ashes. A veil of clouds was drawn to cover the earth. So nobody could see what was going on.

Eventually, the fighting ceased. As everybody cooled down, more and more gasses became liquid, more and more liquids became solids again. The earth itself shrank and became wrinkled like an old apple that has been left in a cupboard.

(Show dried apple or raisin or other round, dried fruit)

The wrinkles are mountains and the hollows are the oceans.

For, as the rocks had cooled down, water was able to return to the earth and it rained and rained! And the water, being liquid, filled every hollow and crevice found in its path. Thus the oceans were formed. Above them was the air, the air that we breathe. The cloud had disappeared.

(show chart of earth with mountains and seas)

Rocks, water, air: solids, liquids, gasses. Today, as it was yesterday and millions of years ago, God's laws are obeyed in the same way. The world spins round itself and round and round the sun. And today, as it was millions of years ago, the earth and all the elements and compounds it is made of, as they fulfill their tasks, whisper with one voice:

'Lord, Thy will be done; we obey.'