

THINKING ABOUT THE CREATION

I would like to suggest that the creation story in Genesis 1 attempts to supply the THOUGHT PROCESSES which must have been necessary to design the world - what we would call today a high level design document. In it the author - surely like Aristotle one of the greatest intellects of all time - is thinking about the necessary distinctions (light/dark, sea/land, earth/sky etc) and associations (such as creatures and their habitats) that must have led to the world he observes about him. In so doing he is 'thinking God's thoughts after him' in best scientific fashion; understanding of the IMPLEMENTATION did not come in any depth until some three millennia later. The traditional ascription to Moses, who as Churchill appreciated was unquestionably one of the giants of history, seems to me entirely credible. I can readily imagine him grappling with such things during the long years he spent as a shepherd in Arabia after escaping a murder charge in Egypt, and in which he first encountered God (Exodus 2-3).

The essential teaching of Genesis 1, as I see it, is that the universe was designed by a highly rational THINKING PROCESS ('And God said...', presumably to himself). This includes mankind in its many manifestations. The entire universe is filled with the thoughts of God, in whose own image we ourselves are made.

So the essential issue between the accounts of the universe given by the believer and the unbeliever is whether or not there is a Thought Process prior to and underlying it. How do we test this hypothesis? By learning to THINK, ourselves: truly to learn to use our brains.

I once asked a friend, 'Do you suppose that life is meant to be an exercise in thinking?' He reflected for a moment, then shook his head sagely. 'Doesn't seem probable,' he replied. 'Too many people never give it a try!'

I know of two books, from radically different traditions, which above all others available today offer help to any of us embarking on such a project. The first, from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, is the Bible. The second, from the classical (Greco-Roman) tradition, is Plato's *Republic*. Both of these have proven ability radically to transform the thought life of the careful student. Both seek to lead the inquirer to a Goodness beyond all natural categories from which all else derives.

As we learn to Think for ourselves, we may come to ask the question, 'How is thought possible?'. The believer, for whom the universe is filled with the thoughts of God, has no serious problem. But the unbeliever, it seems to me, must either deny that he is thinking at all, or else must admit that what he is doing is on his own terms inexplicable. I do not envy him his dilemma.

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B/W 19.6.5, am.