

The Bible *and the* World

Creation • History • Deification



APOSTOLOS MAKRAKIS

*“Time is the becoming of things,
wherease eternity is the immutable being of God,
and of His works.”*

In *The Bible and the World*, Apostolos Makrakis presents far more than a commentary on Genesis. He offers a sweeping Orthodox vision of creation, human destiny, and the divine purpose unfolding through history.

Reading the opening chapters of Scripture as the blueprint of all reality, Makrakis interprets creation as progressive divine activity. Man is not fashioned in static perfection, but created for growth, instruction, and ultimate deification. Paradise becomes the first school; the commandment becomes moral pedagogy; death becomes not annihilation, but philanthropic correction; resurrection becomes the restoration and perfection of the human person in Christ.

Written in the turbulent intellectual climate of nineteenth-century Greece, this work boldly confronts secular modernity while remaining rooted in the Christ-centered theology of the Orthodox tradition. It presents a unified philosophy in which creation, history, society, and eternal life converge in the fulfillment of the divine words: “Let us make man in Our image.”

Long overshadowed by controversy, Makrakis’ writings have too often been dismissed without careful reading. Now restored and republished, *The Bible and the World* invites scholars, clergy, and thoughtful readers to reassess a theologian who sought to articulate a comprehensive Orthodox philosophy of divine progress centered on Christ the Logos.

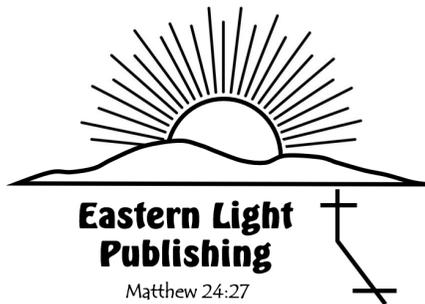


The Bible and the World
Apostolos Makrakis
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THE BIBLE AND THE WORLD

OR GOD'S GREAT BOOK STUDIED IN THE
LIGHT OF HIS SMALL ONE

by Apostolos Makrakis



Eastern Light Publishing
Sheridan, WY

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Contents

NOTE ON THIS EDITION.....	i
HOW TO READ THIS BOOK.....	iii
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO THE 1950 EDITION.....	v
EDITOR'S FORWARD TO THE 1950 EDITION.....	xiii
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION (2026 EDITION).....	xix
THE BIBLE AND THE WORLD.....	1
OR.....	1
INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF GENESIS.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST CHAPTER.....	8
1. THE COMPARISON.....	13
2. PROGRESS AND THE WAY.....	19
3. THE PROGRESSIVE AGE CRITICIZED IN THE LIGHT OF PROGRESS.....	26
4. PROGRESS AND THE WAY SPECIFICALLY DEFINED.....	32
5. PROGRESS IN THE WAY.....	38
6. A SENSIBLE EXAMPLE OF THE WAY AND OF PROGRESS.....	44
7. THE CORRECT STATEMENT AND THE TRUE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF MAN'S HAPPINESS.....	53
8. CONCERNING THE CONDITIONS, LAWS AND CONVENTIONS OF MAN'S HAPPINESS.....	59
9. THE SEAT OF PLAGUES.....	65
10. THE INCONSISTENT.....	72
11. RETURNING TO OUR MAIN SUBJECT.....	76

12. THE PROOFS	83
13. CONCERNING THE INVISIBLE AND UNFORMED STATE OF THE EARTH ...	90
14. THE DARKNESS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP, AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD THAT MOVED UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS.	96
15. WHAT SPIRIT MOVED UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS?.....	102
16. ON THE GENESIS OF LIGHT.....	108
17. CONCERNING THE FIRST COMMAND IN THE CREATION HAVING REFERENCE TO US.	114
18. INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST COMMAND IN CONFORMITY WITH THE FOREGOING EVIDENCE.	119
19. CONCERNING THE SEPARATION OF LIGHT FROM DARKNESS, AND THE FIRST DAY.....	126
20. CONCERNING THE METAPHYSICAL AND THE MORAL DAY AND NIGHT. 132	
21. CONCERNING THE ORDER OF THE DAYS WE HAVE DISTINGUISHED AND OUR RESULTANT DUTIES.	138
22. IMITATION OF GOD THE LIGHT-MAKER.	143
23. THINGS CONTEMPLATED IN THREE LIGHTS.....	149
24. THE AILMENTS OF VISIONLESSNESS & BLINDNESS.....	155
25. THE STRATEGY OF THE DEVIL.....	160
26. CONCRETE VIEW OF SATAN'S STRATAGEM.....	166
27. THE LOGICAL PLAN OF BATTLE AGAINST THE DEVIL.....	173
28.THE WORK OF THE SECOND DAY.....	180
29.THE WORKS OF THE THIRD DAY.....	186

30. THE WORK OF THE FOURTH DAY.....	192
31. THE WORK OF THE FOURTH DAY AGAIN.....	198
32. CONCERNING THE CREATION OF MORAL LUMINARIES AFTER THE LIKENESS AND ANALOGY OF MATERIAL LUMINARIES.	203
33. CONCERNING SIGNS, SEASONS, DAYS, AND YEARS	207
34. THE WORK OF THE FIFTH DAY.....	211
35. THE WORKS OF THE SIXTH DAY	216
36. THE CREATION OF MAN	221
37. CONCERNING MAN IN THE IMAGE AND AFTER THE LIKENESS OF GOD ..	226
38. THEORY OF THE SALVATION AND GLORY IN JESUS OF UNHAPPY GREECE 233	
39. WHAT IS TO BE RENDERED TO CAESAR.....	240
40. CONCERNING THE FIGURATIVE AND SHADOWY MAN	247
41. WHAT IS AFFIRMED BY THE EIGHTH COMMAND	253
42. CONCERNING THE BLESSING OF THE HUMAN PAIR.....	260
43. CONCERNING THE TWO KINDS OF DOMINION.....	267
44. THE FOOD OF THE FIRST CREATED PAIR.....	272
45. A GENERAL VIEW OF THE SIX DAYS' CREATION.....	276
46. THE CONTENTS OF THE AUTHOR'S MIND	282
47. THE DUTIES OF FINDING	287
48. FOR THE FIRST TIME - TWO GREAT TRUTHS BROUGHT TO LIGHT.....	291
49. HOW MAN CAN BECOME GOD.....	299
50. SOCIETY ARRANGED ACCORDING TO GOD	304

51. INTERPRETATION OF THE SECOND CHAPTER OF GENESIS.....	310
52. INTERPRETATION OF THE THIRD CHAPTER.....	332
53. AN EXEMPLIFICATION OF DEATH.....	388
EPILOGUE	391
ABOUT APOSTOLOS MAKRAKIS.....	395
ABOUT THIS EDITION.....	396
ABOUT EASTERN LIGHT PUBLISHING.....	397

THE BIBLE AND THE WORLD

OR

GOD'S GREAT BOOK

STUDIED IN THE LIGHT OF HIS SMALL ONE

BY

APOSTOLOS MAKRAKIS



"Search the Scriptures." (J. C.)

*"The invisible things of Him since
the creation of the world are clearly seen,
being perceived through the things that
are made." (Romans 1:20)*



Translated by
D. CUMMINGS



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1950

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.”

—Psalm 19:1-2

“The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens.”

—Proverbs 3:19

“All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

—John 1:3

“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever.”

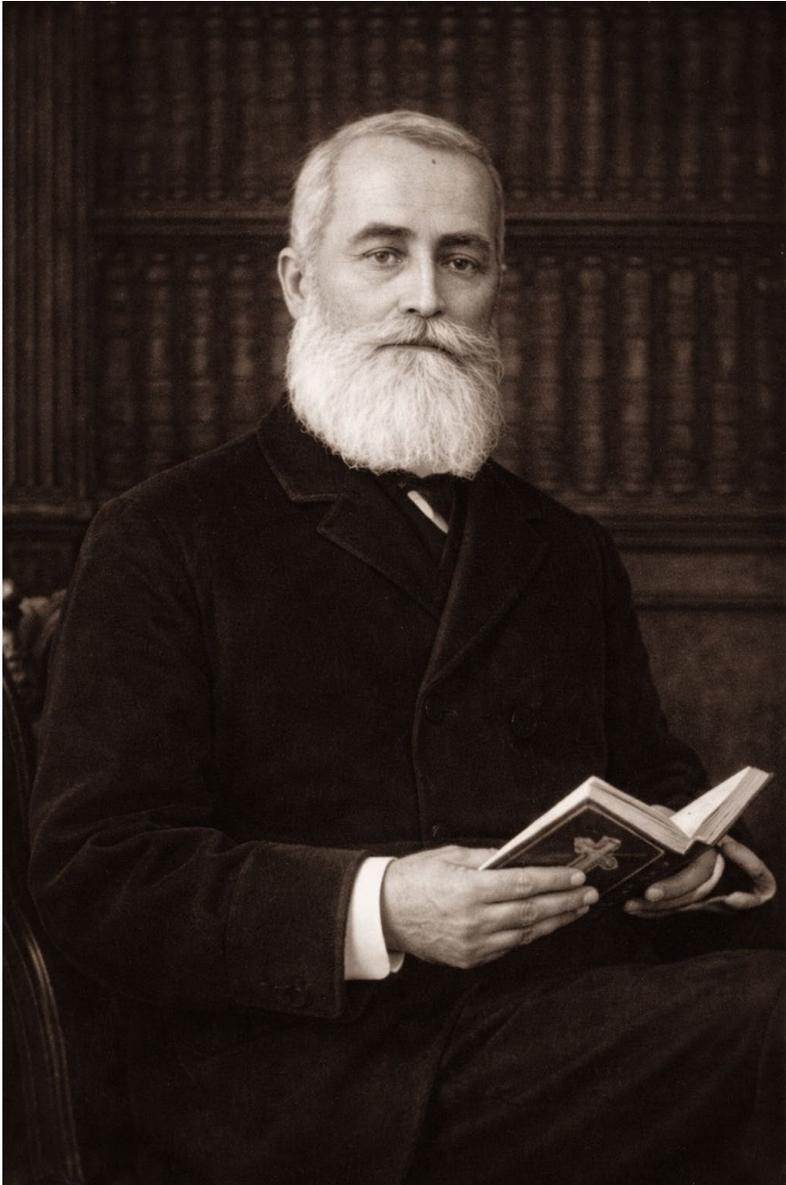
—Romans 11:36

“The Logos of God, very God, wills always and in all things to accomplish the mystery of His embodiment.”

—St. Maximus the Confessor

“For the Word of God came in His own person, because it was He alone, the image of the Father, who could recreate man made after the image.”

—St. Athanasius – On the Incarnation



APOSTOLOS MAKRAKIS
Relative Effects : Relative Causes

NOTE ON THIS EDITION

The present volume is a modern republication of *The Bible and the World*, a theological work by the Greek Orthodox thinker Apostolos Makrakis (1831–1905). The text reproduced here follows the English translation prepared for the mid-twentieth-century edition of the work. The translator's preface and editorial introduction from that edition have been preserved and are reproduced in this volume for historical context.

In preparing the present edition, the aim has been to make the work accessible to contemporary readers while maintaining fidelity to the original translation. Minor adjustments have been made to formatting, punctuation, and typographical presentation in order to improve readability. No substantive changes have been made to the content of the text.

Additional editorial materials have been included in this volume to assist modern readers in approaching Makrakis' work within its historical and theological context, while allowing the author's voice to be heard in its original form.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

The reader approaching *The Bible and the World* should keep in mind that Apostolos Makrakis was not attempting to write a conventional biblical commentary in the modern academic sense. Rather, this work represents a philosophical and theological meditation **on the opening chapters of Genesis**, in which the author seeks to interpret the meaning of creation, human life, and history through the lens of the Christian revelation.

Makrakis reads the Bible in conversation with what he calls “the two books of God”: the book of Scripture and the book of the world. The first speaks through inspired words; the second speaks through the structure and development of creation and human history. For Makrakis, these two books cannot contradict one another, because both originate from the same divine Author. Scripture therefore provides the key for understanding the deeper meaning of the world, while the world itself confirms the truths revealed in Scripture.

Readers will also notice that Makrakis frequently interprets the six days of creation as patterns that reflect the development of the human person and of human society. The creation narrative, in his view, reveals the stages through which humanity passes in its moral and spiritual formation. In this sense the early chapters of Genesis become a symbolic framework for understanding the entire course of history.

Another feature that may strike modern readers is the author’s rhetorical style. Makrakis wrote in the intellectual climate of nineteenth-century Greece, where theological debates were often expressed with great passion and urgency. His arguments are therefore presented with strong conviction and occasionally sharp criticism of the secular philosophies of his time. Yet beneath this rhetoric lies a consistent and coherent vision centered on *Christ the Logos*, whom Makrakis sees as the key to the meaning of creation, history, and the destiny of mankind.

Readers may benefit from approaching the work with three guiding ideas in mind:

Creation – History – Deification

Creation reveals the beginning of God's purpose in humanity. History represents the arena in which that purpose unfolds. Deification expresses the ultimate goal of human existence: participation in the life of God.

Seen in this light, *The Bible and the World* invites readers not only to reconsider the meaning of Genesis but also to reflect on the larger question that lies at the heart of Makrakis' vision: What is the ultimate purpose of human life in the world created by God?

The following preface appeared in the first English edition of this work published in the mid-twentieth century and is reproduced here for historical context.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO THE 1950 EDITION

The Greek original of which the present work is a translation was published in Athens Greece in 1905 under the same title (‘Ἡ Γραφή καὶ ὁ Κόσμος, ἦτοι τὸ μέγα τοῦ Θεοῦ βιβλίον διὰ τοῦ μικροῦ μελετώμενον).

In this book the story of the six days' creation as told in the first chapter of Genesis is interpreted in a most lucid and instructive manner, and many questions entirely new to the world are presented and solved with the marvellous accuracy and acumen that characterize all the writings of Makrakis. The creation of heaven and earth are herein explained for the first time. The various other works of creation are vividly described and minutely examined, and the account given in Genesis is shown to be in strict accord with the conclusions of modern science. At the same time some vitally important problems that have vexed mankind for ages, such as those concerned with true progress and true happiness, are elucidated and their solution revealed, while many points of great interest to everyone are brought out and new spiritual horizons are opened to the intellect of the reader. In addition to this commentary on the first chapter of Genesis Makrakis also interprets the second and the third chapters of Genesis with logical clearness and surprising penetration, providing still further arguments in support of the inspired authority of the Holy Writ. He also throws much additional light upon the nature and the destiny of man.

In Greece this book aroused so much interest that there can be no doubt that an English translation will be welcomed by

believers and skeptics alike. However, it is my duty to note here the fact that the full meaning and charm of the original cannot be reproduced in the translation, on account of the inadaptability of the English language to the expression of certain ideas that are essential to a perfect understanding of many points.

Thus, in Greek the relation between way and progress is more or less clear from the words themselves (*ὁδός* and *πρόοδος*), as though the English equivalents were “way” and “foreway”; but in English this relation could be brought out only at the expense of a long and tedious discussion of the Greek words that would hardly be proper in what is intended to be a popular defence of the Scriptures against the virulent attacks of unscrupulous atheists who call themselves rationalists. In spite of these deficiencies, it is believed that the translation will be found to be quite intelligible and very interesting.

To make up for some of these deficiencies, I have thought best to offer a few explanations regarding them in this preface. With reference to the first article, it is to be observed that the Greek word for mind (*νοῦς*) has a still broader, but yet a more definite, meaning than the English word, and in some connections it cannot be translated by the word mind at all, but has to be changed to “meaning”, “thought”, etc.; at the same time the cognate verb (*νοῶ*) has quite a different meaning from that of the English verb “to mind”, and its sense cannot be adequately represented by any word in the English language. In most cases “cognize” approximates the meaning, though in others some other word like “conceive” or “understand” has to be employed to translate it. In consequence the point upon which the author dwells in the beginning of the first article is not so clear in the translation as it is in the original. Again, the explanation of the meaning of the verb “to create” is hard to comprehend in the English translation because in Greek the noun derived from this verb is used to denote both “creator” and “poet”. Moreover, the Greek words do not imply the creation of something out of nothing, as the English words “create” and “creator” are supposed to do.

The noun “being”, employed here and elsewhere to translate the Greek word (*ὄν*), must be taken in a broader sense than is usually attached to it in English, for it includes not only all

intelligent beings but also every kind of thing that has actual existence. Hence the words “actuality” or “reality” might have been substituted for it with advantage were it not for their frequent application to abstract notions and unsubstantial entities not included among “beings”. On the other hand, we have no word at all to express the meaning of the Greek verb (*γίγνομαι*) or the corresponding noun (*γένεσις*). The meaning of the former is much the same as that of the German verb “entstehen”, and can be approximated in English only by certain circumlocutions, such as “come into existence” or “come into being”, though sometimes it can be rendered by such words as “to be formed”, “to result”, “to originate”. Its true meaning can probably be best conveyed by defining it as the inchoative of the verb “to be” (when signifying “to exist”). Hence it corresponds to the English verb “to become”, but, unlike the latter, it is also used even without a complement in the sense “come to be” or “come to exist” or “spring into existence”. The noun (*γένονός*), to translate which I have employed the word “fact”, means therefore anything that has come into existence, or has become something else than it was,—as opposed to “being”, which may always have been what it is. God, for instance, is a being, not a fact, because He has always been God, and did not come into being or become God at any time in the past. The world, on the contrary, is a fact, or *par excellence* “the fact”, because it came into being when it was made, and did not always exist; in other words, it became a world at some time in the past prior to which it did not exist as a world. However, it must be remembered that anything that is a being is also a “fact” (in this technical sense of the word), except God; for everything else has come into existence at some time or other. The word being is preferred when the emphasis is on its permanency of existence, while the word fact is used to connote its antecedent inexistence.

Another thing which needs to be remarked is the fact that the English version of the Old Testament in many passages differs radically from the Greek version, commonly called the Septuagint. The reason of this is that the Greek version is a translation made, according to the most reliable authorities, several centuries before Christ (about 283 B.C.), by some seventy-two men who were familiar with both the Hebrew and the Greek

languages, and therefore well qualified to decide what the true meaning of the Hebrew text was and to render it in Greek. The Greek version was made at the command of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the king of Egypt, who was himself a scholar of no mean learning and who took extraordinary precautions to assure the utmost correctness possible in the translation, putting the translators two together in separate houses on the island of Pharos and afterward collating the thirty-six partial translations to guard against any deception or mistranslation. A detailed historical account of the undertaking is given by Epiphanius the Cypriote in his work entitled "Concerning Weights and Measures". Essentially the same account is also to be found in a letter of Aristeeus, who was a bodyguard of King Ptolemy. Further confirmation is afforded by Justin the Philosopher, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons (in Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Book 5, chapter 8), by Clemens the Alexandrian, by Eusebius of Cesarea, by Cyril of Alexandria (Julian, Book 1), by Cyril of Jerusalem (in his 'Catechism'), and many others. Thus there can be no doubt whatever that the translation in question is at least far more perfect and trustworthy than any that could be made in modern time from texts that have been garbled and altered to suit the whims and prejudices of fanatics. Furthermore, it is to be noted that, contrary to the assertions of certain modern critics, the Greek translation does not appear to vary much in style and diction, as can be seen by anyone well versed in the Greek language. The English version, on the other hand, was made many centuries later by men ill acquainted with Hebrew, which had already become a dead language and was not very intelligible even to the Jews themselves. Scholars of to-day cannot translate the Hebrew text correctly, even where it has been preserved intact, because they have nothing to guide them except conjecture, as is evident from the fact that there is no other Hebrew literature from which to ascertain the true meaning of Hebrew words. Moreover, it is notorious that Hebrew words, as written in the oldest texts of the Old Testament, have always been apt to be more or less ambiguous or doubtful, even in ancient times when the language was still a spoken tongue. In consequence, the English version, and especially the so-called King James Version, is very faulty in numerous places, and, being at variance with the Greek, had to be

corrected for quotation in the present work. And the same is true to a lesser extent of the New Testament also.

For example, in the first verse of the first psalm the English version has “seat of the scornful” where the Septuagint says “seat of plagues”. In the second verse of the second chapter of Genesis the English version reads “And on the *seventh day* God ended his work”, whereas the Septuagint has it “on the *sixth day*”, which is obviously correct, since God did not work on the seventh day. In the sixteenth verse of the third chapter the English version reads “and thy desire shall be to thy husband”, whereas, instead of the word desire, the Greek version employs the word (*ἀποστροφή*), which means “turning away” or “yearning”; hence I have deemed it best to render the passage in question by “and thy yearning shall be to thy husband”, which also agrees far better with the sense of the Hebrew word, for yearning denotes a tendency to return to something and is therefore almost precisely what Makrakis says the Greek word means. Elsewhere (Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:27) the English version says “hell” while the Greek says “hades” and the Hebrew says “Sheol”, both of which terms signify much the same thing as the English word “limbo”; accordingly, I have substituted the latter for “hell”. In the same passage “thine Holy One” is incorrectly used for “thy devout one”. Likewise, in the English version of both the Old and the New Testaments we find the expression “in the volume of the book it is written of me” (Ps. 40:7; Heb. 10:7), whereas the true meaning is “at the head (or, in the beginning) of the book it is written of me”, plainly with reference to the first chapter of Genesis.

The word translated “subtle” in the first verse of the third chapter of Genesis is mistranslated in the English version of the New Testament (for instance, Mat. 10:16) “wise”, a meaning foreign to the Greek word (*φρόνιμος*). Though we have no exact equivalent of this word in English, the meaning is certainly not that of wise: the nearest English equivalent is probably sagacious or thoughtful. Again, in the third verse of the fourth chapter of Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews the Greek word (*γεννηθέντων*), meaning “born” or “generated” or “begotten”, is mistranslated “finished”. It scarcely needs to be said that I have everywhere employed the correct term *Holy Spirit* for the translation of

(*Άγιον Πνεῦμα*), instead of the horrid appellation “Holy Ghost”. In only one place have I deliberately ventured to alter the meaning of the language of Makrakis; there I have substituted “guilt of the transgressor” (page 317) for the original “guilt of transgression”.

In this work the author undertakes to interpret the initial three chapters of Genesis, the first of which is referred to as the head of the Book of God, and it requires a powerful mind to interpret and comprehend them, for the cosmogony of the world is only tersely dealt with in Genesis; but the author is not destitute of such a mind. Just as he is original and unique in his Philosophical System, so he appears in his commentaries on the Scriptures. His interpretation of Biblical passages proves him to have been gifted with an intuition nothing short of divine. Yet he draws conclusions from the text that are perfectly logical; and they always agree and comport with the text of the Greek Septuagint, though they may sometimes be at variance with the corrupt text of the English Bible. Moreover, his conclusions are invariably confirmed by right reason and consciousness, the two most effectual instruments of ratiocination. He faithfully follows the law of interpreting the Bible by means of the Bible, and always seeks to avoid mere probabilities and uncertainties by confining himself to premises that may be safely considered certain and beyond reasonable dispute. All previous commentators on the first chapter of Genesis have misinterpreted it, and have contradicted either themselves or well-known facts. In his interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis Makrakis brought to light the entification of matter out of nothing, showing that the current theory of an instantaneous creation of the world out of nothing was misconceived and mistaken. The entification of matter preceded the formation of our world as well as the establishment of the angelic world, and many other ontological, scientific, and theological facts, the mere enumeration of which would take up too much space in a small book such as this. By piecing all the shreds of evidence together the author verifies the fact that the Holy Scriptures were divinely inspired, and shuts the mouths of cunning critics who dispute the authority of the Scriptures in matters of science in order to throw doubt upon them in matters of conduct and moral law.

It is hoped that the translation of this extraordinary work into the English language will be welcomed and approved by the theological and scientific circles of English-speaking peoples, and that it will enable them to enrich their knowledge of things divine, and prevent them from being misled by the specious arguments of atheists pretending to knowledge of science.

D, Cummings
Translator

The following Editor's Forward appeared in the first English edition of this work published in the mid-twentieth century and is reproduced here for historical context.

EDITOR'S FORWARD TO THE 1950 EDITION

"Sacrifice and offering thou hast not desired; but a body thou hast prepared me. Burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast not asked for. Then I said, Behold, I am come (in the commencement of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, my God; and to do thy law I have wished in the midst of my womb"
— (Ps. 39:6-8) (40:6-8).

What is the will of God written in the first chapter of the book of God? It is: "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). This passage, which reflects the will and final purpose underlying God's whole plan of creation, has been interpreted both intensively and extensively in the present book by the teacher of Christianity and expounder of the Holy Scriptures, A. Makrakis, after previous efforts of others that so misinterpreted it as to render it well-nigh inexplicable and incomprehensible.

"And to do thy law I have wished in midst of my womb."

NOTE:

In order that the Son might do the final will of his Father—which is to say, that he might voluntarily sacrifice himself for the remission of the sins of the world—he had to keep all the law ever since his conception, so that he might be a perfect lamb without blemish and without sin. Wherefore he says that even in the womb in which he was conceived he wished to keep God's law, and he kept the very first law of human birth by remaining

for nine months in his mother's womb and by having observed the common law of birth to which our nature is subject.

Furthermore, an extensive interpretation is given herein of the first three chapters of Genesis, a knowledge of which is exceedingly beneficial and edifying to all Christians except such as think themselves wise and scienced without Christ and the Holy Spirit though in reality they are nothing of the kind. For such were not the objects of Christ's coming nor of the Holy Spirit's mission.

The Pentateuch, or five-tome book of God, comprising Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, was written by God's eyewitness, Moses, who also formulated the law of God. On the one hand inspired by God Himself through the Holy Spirit, and, on the other guided and taught by the angel of God, he faithfully transcribed whatever God commanded him to write. Wherefore he is praised by God Himself as being a faithful servant in all his house (Num. xii. 7-8; Heb. iii. 5). That the most of these books contain historical accounts handed down by tradition is not to be denied; but that the accounts concerning the entification of matter and the creation of the world from it, concerning the creation of things animate and inanimate, and concerning the formation of man—as embodied in the first two chapters of Genesis—and the Mosaic legislation set forth in the other tomes, possess an angelic power of teaching and impressing and swaying those who study them, is also indisputable. In order to afford the faithful some evidence on this point, we quote a few pertinent passages from the Bible itself:

“And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. . . . And when the Lord saw that he was drawing nigh to see, the Lord called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, What is it?” (Ex. iii. 2-4; cf. Acts vii. 30-31). “This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. . . . This is he that was in the church, in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers, he who received the living oracles to give unto us. . . . Who have

received the law in commands of angels, and have not kept it." (Acts vii. 35, 38, 53). "For if the spoken word (law) of an angel is certain, and every transgression and disobedience a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which was first spoken of by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will?" (Heb. ii. 2-4).

Concerning the Mosaic law our Lord Jesus Christ said: "I am not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them." The verb "fulfil" here has a twofold meaning: it signifies to keep the law to a T and to the letter, and also to supplement it, i.e., to complete it. Six times He repeated the expression "it was said by them of old time," meaning the Mosaic legislation, and in continuation He added "But I say unto you. . . ." meaning the Gospel legislation (Mat. V). In other words, He affirmed that both the Old and the New Testaments possessing God-inspired validity, are books of God, and as such must be believed by every faithful Christian. Those who believe in God but do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ or in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures are worse and more harmful than atheists and idolaters. Those, again, who believe Christ to be a perfect God and perfect man, and the Holy Scriptures to be inspired of God, but who disobey and act contrary to what is written in the Bible, will be condemned like the unbelieving, unless they repent and return to the state from which they fell.

Makrakis as a philosopher is the scepter-bearer of his philosophy. The enemies and opponents of his philosophy only betray, contradictoryness and fallacy without being able to confute his Philosophical System, which is grounded on the solid rock of truth, which, in turn, is Christ. On the other hand, his Philosophical System is recommended and lauded by many clerical and non-clerical professors, authors, and men of science. Likewise as a theologian and commentator Makrakis is entitled to the highest rank by his works themselves, viz., "A Commentary on the Whole of the New Testament," the present book ("The Bible and the World"), "An Extensive Commentary on the Book of Revelation of St. John the Divine," "A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah," and commentaries on other official prophecies of the

prophets. Moses the God-beseer wrote the first chapter of Genesis, and St. John the Divine of divines wrote the book of “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.” Makrakis the philosopher and theologian interpreted the works of the other two unerringly, after being endued with the illumination of the Trinity’s radiance, for the enlightenment of faithful theologians and Christians.

In having the works of Makrakis published in English, we have had regard primarily to the younger generation of Orthodox Christians in the United States whose mother tongue is English, and secondarily to those who wish to learn who Christ is and what His Church means. For as a servant of Christ and a teacher of His Church Makrakis teaches the important facts concerning Christ and His Orthodox Apostolic Church. It should be borne in mind, however, that Makrakis censures en masse all those who are actively opposed to Christ and the Gospel, and especially such as belong to the Orthodox Church, in whom he naturally took the most interest. Consequently those who belong to other churches, and particularly those who are working for the union of the churches and in general of all nations, need not be chagrined. Throughout his life Makrakis wanted the union of churches and nations, but in fact under Christ as the sole head, that is, Christ as King, Christ as Chief Priest, and Christ as Professor and Teacher, in accordance with the prophecies of the prophets, with all governments and authorities ruling and working in His name. Any other union, outside of Christ, is doomed to failure, as is written, “Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.” (Mat. xv: 13). Our Heavenly Father planted but one plant, which He referred to when He said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.” Those who are working for the union of the nations by sheer lip-love—outside of Christ—and allowing each nation to have its own religion and its own form of government, are working for what is impossible, making merely a hole in water. The latest system, too, of Satan’s (Communism)—the union

of all nations, without God, Christ, and Church, under one clique and head is likewise doomed to failure, because it is working for what is impossible and fighting with God. With the aid of this system the Prince of this world, Satan, is endeavoring to gain control over all nations by fire and sword, and to reign over them instead of Christ. Forgetting or ignoring the fact he was vanquished by Christ, first during the temptation in the wilderness and secondly in the voluntary submission of Christ to an unjust death on the Cross, Satan continues in his ambition to rule the world, after having been condemned to everlasting fetters but released and set free for a while, evading justice and operating through his seed until this too is defeated by the seed of Christ. Then will come the end of his system, when that which Christ said will be put into effect, to-wit, "he shall be cast out."

Therefore, from what has been said hereinabove, we conclude that a logical discussion in favor of Christ and His Church and against His enemies and opponents is indispensable to the servants of Christ. This kind of discussion, which is based upon *right reason* and *logical proof*, is employed by the advocate of Christ and teacher of Christianity in all his writings.

Makrakis' wisdom was not human from below, but was given from above by the Father of Lights through the Holy Spirit, and was not taught to him by men. "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." (Rev. xviii. 1). In daytime the earth is lightened by the sun, but in the night-time dimly by the moon and stars. Hence, in this passage the word "earth" means in reality "earthly souls," or mankind in general. The words "an angel come down from heaven" allude to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who sheds His light and glory through the Holy Spirit, just as it was given to the Apostles and other saints from the time of the Pentecost forward, and through that Spirit the entire earth is enlightened.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. . . . And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, . . .

three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. . . . And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon those who saw them.” (Rev. xi. 3-11). The “two witnesses” are the clergy and the laity of the Orthodox Church which is in the hands and control of the antichrist Mohammed, and they confessed the truth and censured error for a time. The death of the two witnesses was a spiritual, not a bodily, death, they having been killed by simony, the bitter enemy of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual death of the two witnesses lasted for three and a half centuries, i.e., 350 years. Apostolos Makrakis was the first to receive the spirit of life from God and stood upon his feet, fearlessly censuring every error inspired by the Devil and bearing witness to all of God’s truth, as the two witnesses’ teacher.

Those who assailed Makrakis only kicked against the traces. For Makrakis as a teacher taught under the two absolute lords and teachers, namely, the Logos (or Word) and the Holy Spirit, who eternally have in common their being from the absolute Mind of God the Father. The Logos is born; the Spirit is emitted (emission, though, is a mode of birth).

This book, *The Bible and the World*, and the ideas in it, were first brought to light by the teacher of teachers, Apostolos Makrakis. Originally they were written and published in Greek, but have now been carefully translated into the English language. As a result of the publication of this translation it is to be hoped that philosophers, theologians, and scienced men of all nations will study these books and in consequence begin thinking more rightly about God, world, and man and about their interrelations after being enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It scarcely needs to be mentioned that the present translation is offered as a fairly accurate representation in English of the meaning conveyed by the Greek original, without any regard to linguistic elegance, and therefore cannot compare with it in point of style.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION (2026 EDITION)

APOSTOLOS MAKRAKIS AND A FORGOTTEN ORTHODOX PHILOSOPHY OF CREATION AND HISTORY

Among the many voices that shaped modern Orthodox thought in the nineteenth century, few were as bold, prolific, and controversial as Apostolos Makrakis (1831–1905). A lay theologian, preacher, philosopher, and reformer in post-revolutionary Greece, Makrakis devoted his life to proclaiming what he believed to be the authentic teaching of the Orthodox Church and to calling both clergy and laity to spiritual renewal. His sermons stirred large audiences, his writings circulated widely throughout Greece and beyond, and his ideas generated intense admiration among followers and sharp criticism among opponents. More than a century after his death, Makrakis remains a polarizing figure within Orthodox intellectual history.

Yet despite the controversies that surrounded him, Makrakis was unquestionably one of the most ambitious Orthodox thinkers of his era. He sought not merely to preach repentance or to comment on isolated passages of Scripture, but to construct a comprehensive vision of the relationship between God, humanity, history, and the destiny of the world. His works range from theological treatises and biblical commentaries to philosophical reflections on society, politics, and education. At the center of this vast body of writing stands a single conviction: that Christ the Logos is the key to understanding both Scripture and the unfolding drama of human history.

The present work, *The Bible and the World*, represents one of Makrakis' most intriguing attempts to articulate this vision. Written during the later period of his life, it presents a philosophical interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis and uses them as a framework for understanding the entire course of human existence. Makrakis reads the biblical account of creation

not merely as an ancient narrative describing the origin of the cosmos, but as a universal pattern that reveals the structure of reality itself. In his view, the same divine principles that govern the formation of the world also govern the development of the human person, the organization of society, and the ultimate destiny of humanity.

For Makrakis, the story of creation is therefore not simply a record of the past; it is a blueprint for understanding the present and the future.

CREATION AS PROGRESSIVE DIVINE ACTIVITY

One of the central ideas that emerges throughout this work is Makrakis' interpretation of creation as **progressive divine activity**. Rather than viewing the six days of Genesis as a static description of completed acts, he understands them as stages in a divinely ordered process. Each command of God unfolds a new dimension of order, structure, and life within the created world. Creation, in this sense, is not merely an event but a movement of divine wisdom, revealing the gradual organization of chaos into harmony.

This interpretation allows Makrakis to draw a striking analogy between the macrocosm of the world and the microcosm of the human person. Just as the earth emerges from a state described in Genesis as "without form and void," so the human being begins existence in an undeveloped state and gradually acquires consciousness, moral awareness, and spiritual direction. The stages of creation become, in Makrakis' thought, a symbolic representation of the stages through which every human life must pass.

The first divine command—"Let there be light"—finds its counterpart in the emergence of consciousness within the human soul. Just as physical light allows the world to take form, consciousness allows the human person to become aware of existence and capable of moral development. Subsequent stages of creation correspond to the formation of will, the ordering of desires, the cultivation of virtues, and the illumination of the mind through the knowledge of Christ and the example of the saints.

Through these analogies Makrakis presents creation not as a finished structure but as a dynamic process of formation, one that continues within every human being.

HISTORY AS THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITY

From this foundation Makrakis proceeds to a second major theme: the interpretation of *history as a divine pedagogy*. If the creation narrative describes the formation of the individual human being, it also provides, in his view, a model for the development of entire nations and civilizations. Just as a person passes through stages of awakening, discipline, and growth, so societies must gradually acquire moral consciousness, lawful order, and spiritual orientation.

Makrakis therefore interprets the life of nations through the same pattern found in Genesis. A people begins in a state of confusion and disorder, comparable to the “formless earth” of the biblical account. With the emergence of national consciousness—an awareness of common purpose and destiny—the first light appears. Law and political structure serve as the “firmament” that organizes social life, separating authority from obedience and establishing order within the community.

Religion, and particularly the revelation of God through Christ, provides the illuminating lights of the social firmament. The knowledge of Christ, the witness of the saints, and the moral teachings of the Church guide the development of the nation in the same way that the sun, moon, and stars guide the rhythms of the natural world.

In this framework, the arts, sciences, trades, and institutions of society correspond to the diverse forms of life that emerge during the later stages of creation. Each contributes to the vitality of the whole, forming a complex but ordered organism.

Makrakis thus presents a vision of history that is profoundly moral and theological. Human societies do not evolve merely through economic or political forces; they develop through the gradual awakening of conscience, freedom, and responsibility before God.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Makrakis' thought appears in his reflections on death and resurrection. In one of the concluding sections of this work he offers a vivid analogy: the human person is compared to a watch constructed by a skilled watchmaker. When the mechanism becomes damaged, the watchmaker dismantles it in order to repair and restore it. The temporary destruction of the watch's form is therefore not an act of abandonment but a necessary step toward its improvement.

Makrakis uses this analogy to interpret death as a *philanthropic correction* rather than a final annihilation. Death dissolves the visible structure of the human body, but it does not destroy the elements from which the body was formed, nor does it extinguish the soul that animated it. In the resurrection these elements will be reassembled and perfected by the divine artisan who created them.

This perspective reflects a deeply traditional Christian conviction: that death, though painful and tragic in human experience, ultimately serves the divine purpose of restoring humanity to incorruption. The sorrow of death, Makrakis argues, is temporary, whereas the joy of resurrection will be eternal.

CREATION, HISTORY, AND DEIFICATION

Taken together, the themes of this book can be summarized in three interconnected ideas:

Creation. History. Deification.

Creation reveals the beginning of God's work in humanity. History becomes the arena in which that work unfolds through instruction, discipline, and freedom. Deification—the transformation of humanity into the likeness of God—stands as the ultimate goal toward which the entire process moves.

Makrakis repeatedly returns to the biblical declaration: "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*" For him this statement is not merely a description of the past but a promise concerning the future. Humanity is created in the image of God but must grow into the likeness of God through knowledge, virtue, and divine grace.

The seven creative commands of Genesis represent the stages of preparation through which humanity must pass. The eighth and final stage—the realization of God’s likeness in humanity—belongs ultimately to God Himself, who will complete the work in the resurrection and the eternal kingdom.

A WORK REDISCOVERED

In modern discussions of Orthodox theology, the writings of Apostolos Makrakis are often mentioned primarily in connection with the controversies that surrounded his career. These disputes, though historically significant, have frequently overshadowed the intellectual ambition of his work. As a result, many readers have encountered his name without ever encountering his ideas.

The republication of *The Bible and the World* offers an opportunity to approach Makrakis anew. Whatever judgments readers may ultimately reach regarding his interpretations, this work deserves attention as a bold attempt to articulate a comprehensive Orthodox philosophy of creation and history. Makrakis sought to demonstrate that the truths of Scripture are not confined to isolated theological doctrines but illuminate the entire structure of human existence—from the formation of the individual soul to the destiny of nations and the resurrection of the world.

His vision is unapologetically Christ-centered. For Makrakis, Christ the Logos stands at the beginning, the center, and the end of all things. Creation originates in the divine Word, history unfolds under the guidance of that Word, and the final perfection of humanity will be accomplished through union with Him.

READING MAKRAKIS TODAY

Modern readers may find Makrakis’ style at times passionate, polemical, or rhetorically intense. Such characteristics reflect the intellectual and spiritual climate of nineteenth-century Greece, where debates over religion, philosophy, and national identity were often conducted with great fervor. Yet beneath the rhetoric lies a serious and sustained effort to interpret the Christian revelation as a coherent vision of reality.

To read Makrakis attentively is therefore to encounter a thinker who refused to separate theology from life. Scripture, philosophy, politics, education, and society all belonged, in his view, to a single divine drama whose purpose was the formation and transformation of humanity.

More than a century after his death, the questions that motivated his work remain profoundly relevant: What is the purpose of human existence? How should societies be ordered? What role does faith play in shaping history? And what destiny awaits humanity beyond the limits of mortal life?

Makrakis believed that the answers to these questions were already present in the opening chapters of the Bible.

-Jonathan Photius
Eastern Light Publishing, LLC

THE BIBLE AND THE WORLD

OR

INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF GENESIS

INTRODUCTION

The World and The Holy Bible are two books composed by the original and perfect Mind to impart mind to man, who is naturally imbued with love of learning and love of wisdom, and to make him a worthy representative of Itself in the management of the rest of created things. This truth can be grasped more fully by considering the following observation.

Numerous books have been composed by many men, but no book has ever been produced without an author. Moreover, every book reflects its author's mind; and to those who can read and understand, it imparts the author's mind, without thereby becoming itself exhausted or losing even a particle of its contents. In fact, every author of books, in composing them, intends nothing else than to reveal and impart his own thoughts to other minds and he rejoices in proportion as he achieves this aim. From the foregoing observation, then, may be gathered the following general truth. It is the nature of mind to beget speech, and through speech to reveal itself by imparting a cognition, or understanding, of itself to other minds, without becoming itself in any way exhausted or losing anything in the process.

While it is true that it is the nature of mind to beget speech, it is equally true that it is the nature of speech to reflect the mind

that begot it. Accordingly, speech is like the mind that has begotten it; a book is like its author. Nevertheless, we must distinguish two kinds of books: books of letters, and books of things. For instance, a mechanical mind that has contrived a machine in thought may express the conception of it either by actually constructing a real model or by merely describing in writing how he means the machine to be built. By embodying his conception both in the form of letters and in the form of things, it is evident that the mechanic produces two books that express the same conception in different ways. Heaven and earth, and whatever lies between them, are, of course, a great book of things, and not of letters. Since there is no book but has an author, and a book resembles its author, the great book of the world betokens a great and Supreme Mind able both to conceive the composition of the book and to make it such as it appears. But can it be that a great and Supreme Mind composed such a great book without intending to impart His conception to other minds? One who possesses any sense cannot ascribe such utter senselessness to the great Supreme Mind, but unhesitatingly conceives and believes that the purpose of the great book of the world is to impart to every human being in the world of a studious turn the mind of the Author, which is as vast as the book containing it. Once we have understood that God has composed the great book of things for the purpose of teaching and educating man, it is easy to understand that He has also composed a small book of letters designed to afford preliminary instruction and to interpret the pages of the great book for man, who, being an infant in the beginning, is unable to understand the book of things until he has received the necessary preliminary instruction for the book of letters. It has been shown and proved in the "trial of Philosophy" that the Holy Bible is a book of God's just as the world is a work and creation of His. And just as it is stupidity to say that men made heaven and earth, so it is stupidity to say that men composed the Holy Bible. Well knowing, then, the genuineness of the two books of God, and being cognizant of the purpose for which each was composed, let us approach them with a philosophical frame of mind, and study the great book in the light of the small one, that is, the book of things by means of the book of letters. Let our souls be possessed of no other desire than to

obtain the mind of the Author as embodied in both books, and after realizing the perfection and goodness of God, to praise it everlastingly.

The first book of the Holy Bible is the book of Genesis, and the first words of this divinely-inspired book are these:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

These words may not unreasonably be called the alpha of the divinely-inspired words, for by beginning with them we can gain possession of all true and saving knowledge. What are we taught, then, by this alpha of the divinely-inspired book? We are taught first the name of the Author of the great book which we are about to study by means of the small one. It is the custom for authors to prefix their names to the books they compose, and thus the first thing the reader learns from a book is the name of its author. For instance, Herodotus and Thucydides, authors of historical works, prefix their names to their own books: the one begins by stating, “This is the historical work of Herodotus the Halicarnassian”; while the other begins by saying, “Thucydides the Athenian has written the account of the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians.” Now just as the Greek historians deemed it necessary to prefix their own names to their writings, that their readers might know whose books they were reading, so has the Author of the great book of things desired by means of the small book of letters to make known His own name, that every reader in the world may know whose work the world is which he sees, and long for and seek out the Creator of heaven and earth. We learn, then, from the first words of the small book of letters that the Author of the great book of things is GOD, whose incomprehensible and incomparable majesty can be partly comprehended by contemplating His works. For heaven and earth, the works of His creation, bespeak and proclaim the glory of their Creator. By the words “created the heaven and the earth”, the Bible teaches indirectly that God is the possessor of perfect wisdom and of perfect power; for if God were not almighty and all-wise, He could not, of course, create the heaven and the earth. The inevitable conclusion, therefore, is that the Creator of heaven and earth is all-wise and almighty and, in a word, all-perfect for wherever perfect wisdom and perfect

power exist, every virtue and perfection must also need exist. Now let us see whether we can read in the book of things the same truth which we have read in the small book of letters, namely, that God eternal is the creator of heaven and earth, and possesses the attributes of almightiness and of all-wiseness and every other perfection.

On looking into the world and inspecting it from every angle, we see that it is made up of many different things, each of which has some definite function and order. When any part of the world is analyzed and examined, it is found to have come into being without existing; and all things, in general, that are not eternal, but have come into being, could neither have been produced spontaneously nor have been put together and maintained of themselves. The whole world, therefore, testifies that it is a work of creation, that it has a Creator whose power brought it out of non-being, into being, whose wisdom put together and arranged all its parts so as to serve a single excellent end. This creator is God, concerning whom the book says that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”. In the book of things we read the same truth which we read also in the beginning of the book of letters, and both books are in concord and agreement as concerns the primary and fundamental truth that *there is a God who is the perfect creator of heaven and earth*.

But from which book can an immature person learn this truth with greater ease and certainty, from the book of things or from the book of letters? Here is what the history of mankind tells us in answer to this question. The ancient nations that had not, like the Jews, received the book of letters from God, were unable to learn from the great book of things that *there is a God who is the creator of heaven and earth*, and, being ignorant of the true God, they deified created things, and worshiped the products of creation rather than the Creator. Thus, the barbarian nations of Asia and of Africa deified the material elements of the world, and reptiles, and four-footed beasts. The wiser nation of the Greeks deified many human beings of both sexes. And even those of the Greeks who took an interest in philosophy and paid great attention to the study of the world were unable to read correctly the truth written in it, but one had one idea and another another as concerning a Deity. Thus, the wisest of them, Plato, conceived a

Deity not as a creator but as a modeler (or form-giver) forming and elaborating crude and eternal matter. Aristotle, famed for the extensiveness of his knowledge, conceived a Deity that was motionless and inert, understanding and doing nothing outside Himself. Since these two greatest minds of the ancient world were deceived as respects the idea of the true God, much more so were their inferiors deceived. Only the nation of the Jews, because it had received the Holy Bible from God, knew that God was the creator of heaven and earth. The modern philosophical schools of the West, having rejected the guidance of the Holy Bible, were unable to discern by investigation and study of the great book that *there is a God who is the creator of heaven and earth*. The school of materialism can cognize nothing but matter, and is entirely ignorant of the existence of God. The opposite school of idealism is unable to distinguish the Creator from the things He has created, and either identifies the substance of the world with the substance of God, under the system of pantheism, or deifies the human spirit, under the opposite system of panegoism. We conclude, then, from the experience of the ages that man unguided by the word of God is unable to discern the truth, but errs deplorably, falling from one error into another and remaining as stupid as ever. The great book of things cannot be understood by immature man without the aid of the book of letters. Wherefore God, having given us the first, gave us also the second, because the former without the latter would be a source of harm rather than of benefit.

The Holy scriptures are as necessary to man as is the world in which he is born and grows up. And just as man could not exist without heaven and earth, so man could not benefit from heaven and earth without the voice of God, which teaches and interprets to him the meaning of heaven and earth. Yet what else are the Holy Scriptures but the very voice of God written in the language of men? Wherever the voice of God is, there, of course, is God Himself, too, teaching and guiding, for God is by nature inseparable from His voice. In the Holy Scriptures God Himself is present among men, teaching them the knowledge of salvation and guiding them to the supreme end to which He has foreordained them. In the Holy Scriptures we become disciples of God and we all become capable of being taught of God, and are

initiated into the mysteries of God. By the Holy Scriptures our souls are nourished just as our bodies are nourished by the world; and just as our bodies die when separated from communication with the world about us, so our souls die when separated from communication with the Holy Scriptures. In the Holy Scriptures is the spring of living water from which having drunk one thirsts nevermore. That is why Christ said: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." The world and the Holy Bible further resemble each other in this respect, that the one nourishes the body by physical work, while the other nourishes the soul by mental work. And just as the body, in order to extract from the earth its own bread, must till the soil, so the soul, in order to extract from the Bible the true meaning, must search the Bible, that is, it must pay attention to what is signified by the vocables, collate, compare, and throughout call upon the spirit of God to give it understanding, for not even can the farmer harvest the fruits of his labor without the concurrence and help. We have rightly been led into this praise of the Holy Scriptures, seeing to what extent man is led away from the truth unless he allows himself to be guided by them and realizes that they are necessary for our education and instruction. Guided by the Holy Bible, we learn from its first words that *there is a God who is the perfect creator of heaven and earth*. On afterward looking into the book of things we read the same truth, and we thus have two unimpeachable witnesses to rely upon and through them can come into communion and relation with God, whose wisdom is sufficient to satisfy our eagerness to learn. For only God knows all that can desire to learn, and only if we become disciples of God can we learn anything, otherwise not at all. Those who ignore the Holy Bible plunge into the wide sea of knowledge without a compass and without a pilot, and, being wafted from one error into another by the various winds of doctrine, are wrecked and deplorably foundered without being able to find the haven of salvation. Blessed be the God of heaven and earth who taught me by the first words of the Bible that *in the beginning He created the heaven and the earth* and that He is the Author of the great book of things as well as of the small book of letters. Once having found such a wise and good teacher, we will

wisely profit by letting Him teach us whatever we desire to learn.

INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST CHAPTER

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

We begin the interpretation with the phrase “in the beginning” by asking, What are we to understand by this term? The meaning of “in the beginning” is connected with the idea of God and with the verb “created”, which expresses the action of the creative power of God. Consequently, until we have had in mind the idea of God, it is impossible to answer the question put.

God being a Mind complete and perfect with respect to knowledge as well as power, with respect to will as well as action, and with respect to feeling and joy, He is conceived as existing eternally and as being ever the same, undergoing no alteration or change whatever either for better or for worse, because His nature, being perfect and self-sufficient and wantless, has nothing to gain by way of improvement, nor is it possible for a Mind perfect in respect to both wisdom and power to lose any attribute. The completeness and perfectness and unalterableness of the substance of God constitute eternity conceived in contrast with time. Time implies a substance coming into being and going out of being, gaining and losing, moving and progressing and being determined by its motion. Eternity implies a substance existing eternally and being eternally and ever the same, and because of its perfection undergoing no alteration. Eternity and time are abstract ideas which cannot be conceived without the concrete substances of the eternally existing God and of the world coming into existence. For, an abstract idea is naturally abstracted from a concrete substance, and in the absence of something concrete neither is abstraction possible nor can an abstract idea enter our mind. Abstract ideas must be predicated of the concrete substances from which they have been abstracted. Thus, for instance, eternity must be predicated only of God, by saying that God is eternal, because the idea of eternity has been abstracted only from God. Time, on the other hand, must be predicated of the world, by saying that the world exists in time or is subject to time, because the idea of time

has been abstracted from the world. On the other hand, it is absurd and illogical to think that the world is eternal, or that God is subject to time. Eternity and time are ideas opposed to and excluding each other, and cannot both be predicated of the same object. Wherever eternity can be predicated, time is excluded; and wherever time is predicated, eternity must be excluded. What is eternal is not in time, and what is subject to time is not eternal. Eternity, however, is the cause of time, and time depends on eternity and cannot be conceived without it. In order to conceive the relation of time to eternity, and how time is born of eternity, we must pass from the abstract to the concrete.

God eternal, being a perfect Mind with respect to knowledge and power, cognizes everything that His power can produce or create. Anything that is not in existence, but can come into existence through the action of God's power, is called contingent. If God decides to bring it into being, what is contingent becomes a being, or something actually existent. The transition of the contingent into being through the will and power of God is termed the *genesis* (origination) or *fact* (thing originated), and is the beginning, or principle, of time. The progress of which the fact is susceptible is called the future of time. As the fact progresses, time is divided into past and future, between which lies the present of the fact. For instance, before being born I was merely contingent, and, being contingent, I had been in the intellect of God for ages, for God is eternally cognizant of everything that is contingent. After passing from mere contingency into being, I was born, and my birth is my temporal beginning. But, having been born, I am capable of progress and development. All the progress and development that I can possibly pass through is my future. In proportion as I develop and progress my future becomes a past. The point at which I find myself is always the present. By thus turning the contingent into being, then, God creates the principle of time. Moreover, He creates all time through the progress and changes which the fact undergoes. God, then, being timeless and eternal, is the author, or living cause, of time, for without God the contingent cannot become a being, and without an essence already actualized and in process of development time cannot subsist. Wherefore we may say abstractly that eternity begets time, and that the relation

of time to eternity is like the relation of an effect to its cause. Now that the idea of time and that of eternity have been explained by the idea of God, we can easily define the signification of the phrase “in the beginning”. By “in the beginning” is meant the transition of the contingent into being by virtue of the will and power of God. The transition itself is termed a *genesis*, and is the beginning of time. Let us conceive God to be eternal, and let us transfer all the facts, or all actuality, into mere contingency. Nothing will then be existent except only God eternal, who decides to substantify whatever contingent thing pleases Him. No sooner has the omnipotence of God acted than the contingent has begun to subsist and has become a being, capable of progress and change—such is the beginning of creation and of time, beyond which are God and eternity. The beginning of time has no past, but only a future, and this is the essential characteristic of the beginning of time. The end of time, on the other hand, that is, that epoch when all alteration and change shall cease, has no future, but only a past. A beginning without a past, and an end without a future,—such are the extremities of time, within which is embraced every finite creature. Every point of time between the two extremities cuts time into past and future, and is itself conceived as the present moment. Of course we are situated between the extremities of time, and cut it into past and future by our present existence. Behind us we have the past, before us we have the future. So when we read in the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” we are carried back mentally to that point of time which has no beginning and which is connected directly with eternity. That is the beginning of time, and that is the meaning of “in the beginning”.

Now let us take up the meaning of the verb “created”. Among the ancient Greeks historical writers were distinguished from the class of poets, who were called “creators” (ποιηται), and who were imitated by later writers and are still imitated. Let us ask what is peculiar to the poet, and in what respect the poet differs from the historian. The peculiar business, or nature, of the poet is to suppose or assume the contingent to be a fact, and to speak of the supposed persons or things whatever may be conceived as possible and probable. The peculiar business of the historian is, not to suppose, but to report the fact as it actually occurred,

without of himself adding or subtracting anything. The poet, or creative writer, gives birth to a poem by his poetic, or creative, power, and differs from the historian in so far that the latter narrates what has been perceived externally, or objectively, whereas the poet narrates what has been conceived internally, or subjectively. The poem depicts the thought of the poet, whose child it is. History, however, by no means depicts the thought of the historian, but the truth of whatever is related as facts of history. From this distinction between poet and historian it is to be gathered that the verb "create" means to produce something by one's own power, or, in some way, to bring what is contingent into what is, in effect at least, a (new) being. But man's creative power is one thing, and God's creative power is another. Consequently the verb "create" in the case of God has one meaning, and in the case of men, another. Let us note the differences by a comparison. The creative, or poetic, power of man conceives the contingent, but is unable to substantify it by turning it out of non-being into being. That of God, on the other hand, can immediately bring into being everything contingent and nowise existent. The creative, or poetic, power of man cannot conceive or create anything out of nothing, for even when it conceives something, it conceives it out of what has been perceived, and even when it sometimes creates something it creates it out of matter that has already been subsisting. For instance, an architect, a mechanic, a sculptor, and a painter can conceive and create, but none of them can conceive or create out of nothing. God, however, because He is a perfect Mind, can conceive whatever is contingent, and instantly cause it to be whatever He pleases, out of nothing, because His power balances with both His intelligence and His will. Creation, then in the case of God does not signify quite the same thing as in the case of men. With reference to men, "to create" signifies to form, to suppose, to imagine, or to produce something new out of things already existent. With reference to God "to create" means to originate, that is, to bring the contingent out of non-being into being. The word "created" being taken in this sense, the whole sentence, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth", may be interpreted as follows. In the beginning, that is at that point of time which has no past before it, God created the heaven and the

earth. Having elicited this thought out of the small book, and keeping it in mind, I gaze at the great book of the world, and scan the heaven and the earth. I understand by virtue of the Scriptural thought that the heaven and the earth are products of the creative power of God, and that they reflect the wisdom and power of their Creator. I judge that God possesses at least as much power as could produce so many and such wonderful beings, and as much wisdom as would make it possible to put together and arrange in order all these things so as to enable them to serve a single common end. Try as I may, I cannot encompass within my little intellect either the infinity of the power or the infinity of the wisdom of God copiously diffused throughout the great book of things; and overcome in wonder at the transcendent majesty of God. I cry aloud like David: "Great is our Lord, and of great power; His understanding is infinite." This thought, of course, arises from the comparison of my extreme diminitiveness with the transcendent majesty of God, which is reflected and shadowed forth by heaven and earth. I, too, am conscious of my wisdom and of my power, because, being a mind, I can conceive and perform and create works on earth that none of the other animals can create. God, of course, created the heaven and the earth, but he did not create on the earth either the houses and temples and palaces of cities and states, nor the ships of the seas, whether steamships or sailing vessels, nor the railways of the continents, nor the steam engines, nor the submarine and aerial telegraph wires, or anything else of this kind. All these things are admittedly works of human wisdom and power; work which I, too, as a human being can appropriate in order that the human may be distinguished from the divine achievements. I assume, therefore, that I know and can do as much as all men put together, and that all the works of men on earth are my works, the works of man. Before drawing the comparison, I ask permission to put the following question. Can I identify my works with myself, or conceive them to have come into being without me? For instance, can I say that the houses, the ships, the steam engines, the railways, the telegraphs, and the like, are the same thing as the man who made them, or that they came into being spontaneously without the wisdom and power residing in man? I can say neither the first nor the second, for both are palpable

falsehoods that only crazy persons and madmen can regard as true. What person of sound mind can identify the things created with the creator, or conceive the things created as having come into being without a creator? Yet the learned men of the nineteenth century, because they profess these ineptitudes as scientific truths, are conceited enough to think that they are superlatively wise. The pantheists hold that the things created by God are God Himself. The materialists, on the other hand, hold that the things created by God came into being spontaneously without the assistance of God. If the pantheists be asked, Are the things created by man, man? they will answer, No. If the materialists be asked, Did the things man has created, such as houses, ships, steam engines, and the like, come into being spontaneously without the assistance of man? they will answer, No. But how is it, then, that men who cannot identify the things man has created with man, or conceive the things man has created as having come into being without man, nevertheless identify the things God has created with God, or conceive the heaven and the earth as having come into being without God? It is, of course, because they are insane, and not in their right minds. If they were sane, they would judge concerning God and His created works as they judge concerning man and the things created by him. Since, however, as concerns God and His created works they judge contrarily to their judgment concerning man and the things created by him, this fact bears witness to a loss of wits, or insanity. We, on the other hand, by the grace of the God of the Bible being of sound mind and able to distinguish God from His created works, precisely as we can also distinguish man from the things man has created, can draw the comparison between things divine and things human, in order to see how great a disparity there is between God and man, and the reason why man cognizes the grandeur of God.

I. THE COMPARISON

God created the heaven and the earth, and I, man, on earth, also created houses and ships and steam engines and the like. My created works reflect my wisdom and power, just as those of God reflect His wisdom and power. Let us, then, compare my wisdom with that of God, and my power with His. The wisdom

of God can cognize as great a number of beings as heaven and earth contain, and can cognize the nature and power of each being and the relations it sustains to other beings, and how they must be arranged in order and governed, so that they may concur towards one and the same purpose. Can the wisdom in me cognize an equal number of beings, their depth and breadth, their relations and references, their arrangement, their administration, and the universal purpose of all, as well as the particular purpose of each? Can my wisdom give birth to the plan and the idea of such a world as heaven and earth? By no means. Not only am I unable to cognize of myself the plan and the idea of such a world, but I cannot even perceive it when it lies like a pattern before my eyes. Let us imagine two architects, of whom one can conceive of himself every plan of building, while the other of himself can conceive no plan, although when he sees the plans of the first architect he can understand and imitate them. Of these two architects the first differs greatly from the second in point of wisdom. But not only am I unable to give birth to the plan for the construction of heaven and earth, but even after it has been created by God and lies before my eyes, I cannot understand and describe it in my thought, so that I am wise neither after the fashion of the original architect nor after the fashion of the one who follows and imitates him. My wisdom, though seeming to be something by itself, and superb in comparison with the ignorance of the other animals, is reduced to nothing and vanishes when compared with the wisdom of God. But what can I say as regards my power when compared with God's power, which brought the vast world out of non-being into being, after it had been conceived by His wisdom? Can I create a single grain of sand, or give existence and life to the conceptions of my intellect? Can I move one step, or move one particle of matter without the conditions and laws imposed by God? If God were to remove the air I breathe or the light by which I see or the food by which I am supported, then what could I do? Absolutely nothing. Because I can neither cognize nor will nor perform anything without the aid of the works and laws of God that I find about me, so that even though I can do something, it is again through God that I can do it, and without His power I can do nothing.