

Creation - The Works and Decrees of God

Everything in time and space had a beginning. I had a beginning; you had a beginning. The houses we live in had a beginning. The clothes we wear had a beginning. There was a time when our houses, our clothes, cars, washing machines, and ourselves, did not exist. They were not. Nothing could be more obvious.

Because we are surrounded by things and by people that obviously had a beginning, we are tempted to jump to the conclusion that *everything* had a beginning. Such a conclusion, however, would be a fatal leap into the abyss of absurdity. It would be fatal to religion. It would also be fatal to science and to reason.

Why? Did I not say that everything in time and space had a beginning? Isn't that the same thing as saying simply that everything had a beginning? By no means. It is simply logically and scientifically impossible that everything had a beginning. Why? If everything that exists once had a beginning, then there had to be a time when nothing existed.

Stop for a moment to reflect. Try to imagine nothing existing. Absolutely nothing. We can't even conceive of absolute nothingness. The very concept is merely the negation of something.

Yet, if there ever was such a time when absolutely nothing existed, what would there be now? Right. Nothing! If ever there was nothing, then by irresistible logic, there would always be nothing. There's not even an "always" during which there could be nothing.

Why can we be so sure, indeed, absolutely certain, that if ever there was nothing then there would be nothing now? The answer is astonishingly

simple, despite the fact that extremely intelligent people often stumble over the obvious. The answer is simply that you can't get something *from* nothing. An absolute law of science and logic is *ex nihilo nihil fit*, (out of nothing, nothing comes). Nothing cannot produce anything. Nothing can't laugh, sing, cry, work, dance, or breathe. It certainly can't create. Nothing can't do anything because it isn't anything. It doesn't exist. It has no power whatsoever because it has no being.

For something to come out of nothing it would have to possess the power of self-creation. It would have to be able to create itself or bring itself into existence. But that is a manifest absurdity. For something to create or produce itself it would have to *be* before it *is*. But if something already is, it doesn't need to be created. To create itself, something would have to be and not be, exist and not exist, at the same time and in the same respect. That is a contradiction. It violates the most fundamental of all rational and scientific laws, the law of noncontradiction.

If we know anything, we know that if anything exists now, then somehow, somewhere, something did not have a beginning. I am aware that brilliant thinkers such as Bertrand Russell, in his famous debate with Frederick Copelston, argued that the present universe is the result of an "infinite series of finite causes." It poses an endless series, working backwards into eternity, of one caused thing causing another forever. This idea merely compounds the problem of self-creation infinitely. It is a fundamentally silly concept. The fact that it has been proposed by intelligent people makes it no less silly. It's worse than silly. Silly things can be real. But this concept is logically impossible.

Russell can deny the law that out of nothing, nothing comes, but he cannot refute it without committing mental suicide. We know (with logical certitude) that if anything exists now, then there must be something that did not have a beginning. Now the question becomes *what* or *who*.

Many serious scholars believe that the answer to the *what* is found within

the universe itself. They argue (as Carl Sagan does) that there is no need to go above or beyond the universe to find something that had no beginning from which everything else comes. That is, we need not assume something like “God” who is transcendent to the universe. The universe or something in it can do the job quite well itself.

There is a subtle error lurking in the above scenario. It has to do with the meaning of the term *transcendent*. In [philosophy](#) and theology the idea of transcendence means that God is “above and beyond” the universe in the sense that He is a higher order of being than other beings. We commonly refer to God as the supreme Being.

What makes the supreme Being different from a human being? Notice that both concepts share a common word, *being*. When we say that God is the supreme Being, we are saying that He is a being who differs in *kind* from other ordinary beings. What precisely is that difference? He is called *supreme* because He has no beginning. He is supreme because all other beings owe their existence to Him, and He owes His existence to none other than Himself. He is the eternal Creator. Everything else is the work of His creation.

When Carl Sagan and others say that in the universe, and not above it or beyond it, there is something that is not created, he is merely quibbling about the Creator’s address. He is saying that what is uncreated lives here (within the universe), not “out there” (above or transcendent to the universe). But He still requires a supreme Being. His mysterious part of the universe from which all created things come is still beyond and above everything else in the creation in terms of *being*. In other words, there still must be a transcendent Being.

The more we probe this “within-the-universe Creator,” the more it or He begins to sound like God. He is uncreated. He creates everything else. He, or it, has the power in itself of being.

What is crystal clear is that if something exists now, then there must be a supreme Being from which all other beings come. The first assertion of the Bible is “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This text is foundational to all Christian thought. It is not only a religious statement, it is a rationally necessary concept.

Summary

1. Everything in time and space has a beginning.
2. Something cannot come from nothing. Nothing cannot do anything.
3. If ever there was nothing, then nothing could exist now.
4. Something exists now; therefore something must exist that has no beginning.
5. Things cannot create themselves because they would have to be before they are.
6. If some “part” of the universe is uncreated, then it is superior or transcendent to the parts that have a beginning.
7. An uncreated being is supreme (a higher order of being than created beings), regardless of where it lives.
8. *Transcendence* refers to a level of being, not to geography.

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