

## SCIENCE & YOU *Visible creation showing the invisible God*

### In the Beginning...♦♦

Ask One who was there.

**F**rancis Schaeffer begins his book on the rise and decline of modern Western thought and culture by considering ancient Rome and the Greek influences on its culture and thinking.<sup>1</sup> Among these were the 4th century B.C. writings of the Greek philosopher Aristotle who believed that the earth was at the center of a universe made of concentric crystalline spheres. He also believed that the universe was eternal and uncreated, a concept later disputed by Christian and Jewish philosophers because of the first three words of Genesis: “In the beginning...”

For a thousand years after the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, Christian, Jewish, and even Muslim scholars argued from logic and mathematics that the universe was not eternal but, in fact, had a beginning and that beginning was proof that a transcendent Creator God existed. The argument from logic can be stated as follows: Whatever begins to exist has a cause that brings it into being, and, since the universe began to exist, the universe is therefore not eternal but had a cause outside of itself.<sup>2</sup> But those who accepted the testimony of the book of Genesis had known for a thousand years before Aristotle that the universe had both a beginning and a Beginner. Ironically, the Christian philosopher Thomas Aquinas, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D., accepted Aristotle’s view of an eternal universe even as he sought to prove the existence of God based, in part, on the need for a “first efficient cause.”

The belief that matter, energy, and the universe were uncreated persisted through the development of modern science and on into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. But by then both theory and observational evidence suggested the universe had a definite beginning. For example, William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) and others

developed the First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics, which state that matter and energy cannot be created or destroyed (the First Law) but only changed in quality (the Second Law) by energy becoming less

useful for mechanical and biological work (increased entropy). Together, these two laws predict the universe had a beginning at some point in time past, when all energy was useful energy. What they do not explain is where the energy came from originally. In 1929, astronomer Edwin Hubble observed light from distant stars was “red-shifted.” This suggested they were moving away from us and the universe

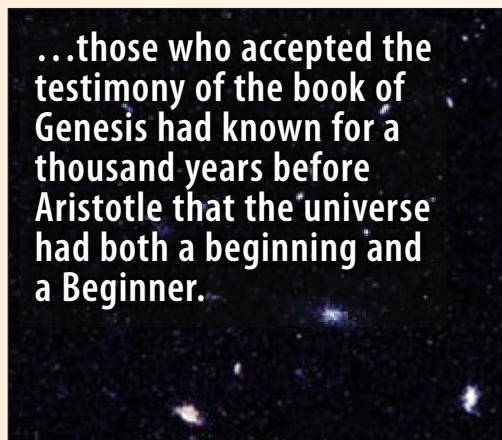
was expanding. We are told that such an expansion or explosion would have started from an infinitely dense, hot kernel at some time in the past. But where did the kernel come from?

Today, almost one hundred years later, the weight of theory and observation has produced a cautious, uneasy acceptance by many scientists that the universe is not eternal but did have a beginning. They are uneasy because if the 3500-year-old biblical statement “In the beginning...” was correct long before science came to the conclusion of a beginning, then perhaps the next phrase—“God created”—requires their attention as well.

—MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

1 F.A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996).

2 W.L. Craig, *God, Are You There?* (Norcross, GA: Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, 1999).



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