

The Hillside Messenger

A Message from the Rector

by The Rev Christopher Parrish

*"Put on the Whole Armor of God" –
Ephesians 6:10-20*

As we come to Trinitytide, the ordinary season of the ecclesiastical year, it is necessary to give attention to how we live the ordinary Christian life. Many trials may come our way, and we must be prepared for them all. The Lord Jesus Christ has promised to be with the faithful forever (Matthew 28:20b), the Father and the Son have made their home with us (John 14:20 & 23), if we keep their commandments and continue believing in the Blessed Trinity, and the Holy Spirit has been given to us as our eternal Counsellor and Advocate (John 14:16). Seeing that the Holy Spirit empowers us for witness and service, we must realize also that He empowers us for spiritual warfare against the hosts of evil.

Therefore, St. Paul urges the Ephesian Christians to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might" (Ephesians 6:10b, KJV). The Greek verb for "be strong" can be understood either in the sense of "strengthen yourself" in the Lord, or in the sense of "be strengthened" in the Lord, and the words are added "and in the strength of his might." This implies it is no good trying to find strength within us, since we do not have the strength to fight spiritual battles and win. We are weak, but it is in our weakness that God's strength becomes appar-

ent (2 Corinthians 12:9-10) and overshadows us. But so that we may rely on God's might and be strengthened by his power, we must continue living at peace with him and be doing his will. St. Paul now tells us what we must do to strengthen ourselves in God's might, and for what purpose:

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

(Ephesians 6:11, KJV)

He commands us to put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the deceits and cunning of the devil. Without the whole armor of God, we will not wage successful warfare against the attacks of the devil. The whole armor is described in terms of the armor a Roman soldier would use, but each piece of it has a spiritual application to an aspect of spiritual armor. Next, St. Paul puts in perspective the warfare in which Christians are engaged all their lives. It is not warfare against human beings ("flesh and blood"), but against "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12b, KJV). Just as there are hierarchies of angels in the kingdom of heaven, so there are hierarchies of demons in the kingdom of the

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devil. Therefore, we cannot wage war against them in our own strength, but only in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the strength that God gives us by our faith in him. What we have to realize is that these evil hierarchies of demons are at work in the media, in politics, in the governments of this world, through books, music, fashion, and all that appeals to the senses, as well as in cults and even in churches. We must pray for God's revelation and insight to know how to conduct ourselves and how to pray in every circumstance. So important is the whole armor of God, that St. Paul repeats the command to take up the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:13), but this time he adds another purpose to wearing the full armor of God: "so that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13b). Resisting and withstanding the devil is vitally important. The devil's purpose is "to steal, kill and destroy" (John 10:10a), and he will do his utmost continually to achieve his goal. What we have to do is resist all his temptations and all his attacks, "in the evil day," which means any time of trial, when evil seems to be overwhelming us, and having done all that God has commanded us to do, be still undefeated and standing.

What are the parts of spiritual armor? First of all, the girdle of truth (Ephesians 6:14a). The girdle fastens your clothes for action. It is a belt around your waist. Now the girdle, or belt, of truth, is the truth of God supporting our life and witness to Christ. If we are girded with the belt of truth, it means we are sincere, not living a double life, or sinful life in secret while pretending to be good, but we are what we profess to be as Christians. St. John Chrysostom understood the "girdle of truth" to be the foundation of the soul, the crown of our thoughts, the truth of God. We must live in that truth and not be liars either in word or in deed. This means the truth of God informs all our thinking, all our words, and all our actions. We live by it.

Then we must put on the breastplate of righteousness (Ephesians 6:14b). This is the righteousness of Christ that we have received by faith in him (Romans 4:13-25) and apply to our lives by presenting the members of our bodies to God (Romans 6:13). Chrysostom commented that as a breastplate is impenetrable, so is righteousness, which is a life of complete virtue, which the devil cannot destroy. Of course, such righteousness has Christ as its giver and Christ as its foundation, for any righteousness of our own based on our own efforts and pride, cannot stand up to the assaults of Satan.

Then there are the shoes of the Gospel of peace. This idea of the "preparation of the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15b, KJV) on our feet means that wherever we go, we must be ready to share the Gospel of peace, the Gospel that reconciles people to God and gives them peace through the forgiveness of their sins. This means that wherever we go, we must bring peace, not hurt, and be alert to the opportunities given us to share the Gospel.

The shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16), corresponding to the long shield of the Roman soldier, keeps the fiery arrows of Satan from harming us, and quenches the fire of those arrows. What does this mean? Our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is very important. The fiery darts can be feelings of worthlessness, slander or persecution, hurtful words spoken by others, even by our families against us. We must realize from whom those words ultimately come, and not believe them to be true, for they proceed from the deceit of the devil.

Finally, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God (Ephesians 6:17) complete the armor. The helmet of salvation is the assurance of salvation. We cannot go through life being unsure whether we have been saved, are being saved, or will be saved from hell and brought into God's eternal kingdom. We must study the Scripture



Fra Angelico, St Michael, 1423-1424.

passages that speak of how to be saved (for example, John 1:12; 3:5-6; 14:23; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9-13) and continue in faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are not sure of our salvation, then it unsettles all our thoughts, rendering us ineffective in our spiritual battles. The sword of the Spirit is the weapon we use to overcome Satan and all the thoughts, imaginations, temptations, slander, accusations, and other fiery darts that he shoots at us. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. For this reason, we must carefully read, study, learn, meditate on, and obey the commandments

and teachings of the Bible, for the more we know and obey God's written word, the more effective we will become as spiritual warriors.

To this spiritual armor must be added continual prayer and intercession at every opportunity in the power of the Holy Spirit, for we must be vigilant and pray with the utmost perseverance for all God's people (Ephesians 6:18). When prayer appears to have no answer or no effect, we must nonetheless persevere, for only when we persevere, will the resistance of evil principalities against our prayers be broken (Daniel 10:13).

From Big Bang to DNA: the Documentary that Reunites Faith and Science

by Garet Comer

To the modern mind, science and theology are in entirely separate realms. At best, some treat them as non-overlapping domains of knowledge; at worst, as empiricism versus superstition. *The Story of Everything* challenges that divide head-on. Directed by Eric Esau, the documentary presents the latest findings in cosmology and biology as powerful evidence for an Intelligent Designer.

The film opens with a montage of prominent scientists – Richard Dawkins, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Carl Sagan, and Stephen Hawking – explaining the origins of the universe and life through purely atheistic, materialistic processes, with no room for a Creator. From there, it launches into a whirlwind tour of three key scientific domains: cosmology, the fine-tuning of the physical constants that make life possible, and molecular biology. Together, these threads build a compelling case for Intelligent Design.

The narrative pulls you in; the score is engrossing; but it is the visual effects that truly elevate the film. Scenes depicting the space-time continuum at the singularity or the intricate dance of macromolecular enzymes inside a living cell are breathtaking and highly educational. At key moments, the blend of narration, music, and imagery left me gasping in awe.

Despite a focus on big scientific concepts, the film also includes some deeply poignant human stories. We meet several scientists whose research hit a wall where no natural mechanism could explain their findings. A few acknowl-

edged the dead end and opened themselves to the possibility of the supernatural. Others clung to materialism with hardened hearts, grasping for answers till the end of their days.

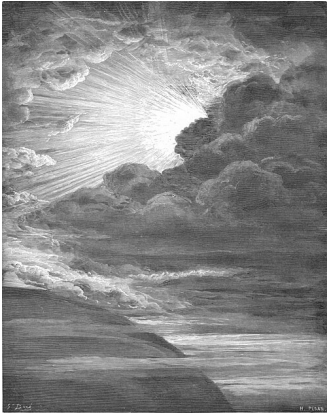
By and large, the documentary treats atheists, agnostics, and theists evenhandedly. In only one instance did I feel the atheistic/agnostic perspective received short shrift – still far more charitable than most mainstream science documentaries treat Intelligent Design.

Churchgoers should note that the film makes a case for Theism but not specifically for Christianity. There is no mention of Jesus, the Cross, or the Bible. That said, many will recognize executive producer Lee Strobel from his well-known books on Christian apologetics.

Whether you're a hardcore science buff or someone who enjoys wrestling with big ideas, *The Story of Everything* is a catalyst for the intellect. It is a heavy-weight documentary; the science is not entry-level. Viewers without some background in physics, chemistry, and molecular biology may benefit from a second viewing or a bit of outside reading to catch every point.

As a final verdict, I strongly recommend it. The film will affirm your faith and leave you in awe of our Creator.

The Story of Everything was in theaters through mid-May 2026 (after a limited release beginning April 30), with streaming to follow. Visit thestoryofeverything.film for more details, showtimes, and streaming options.



Gustave Doré, *The Creation of Light*, 1866.

In the Beginning

by Mark Benjamin

THE opening words of the Bible have few equals in memorableness. More instantly recognizable than “Call me Ishmael” and even “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife,” the lines that introduce the Story of Creation,

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

are at once imposing and oddly reassuring, bringing to mind fantastical images of an all-powerful Creator creating, and the comforting knowledge that all creation is subject to the Creator. While the above sentence is what one finds in the King James Bibles in the St Luke’s pews, it is in fact not what the Jacobean Translators originally penned in 1611. Rather, our Bibles contain Benjamin Blaney’s 1769 revisions to the text, with a view to updating spellings and fixing errors that had crept in over a century and half. However, in regards to this verse at least, the author is of the view that the original 1611 text is superior to the 1769 revision. Here is the Translators’ version:

In the beginning God created the Heauen, and the Earth.

In two important respects, the Blaney version differs from this (three, if you count the minor update of the character “u” to “v” in the word Heaven, in keeping with standardized spellings), leading to a verse whose magnificence is somewhat dimmed.

The first change is the removal of the comma after the Heaven, which lends to the original a measured and majestic cadence. The pause between both clauses adds gravitas to the verse that is amiss in the Blaney. Moreover, the image of heaven conjured up in our minds in the original is somehow more dra-

matic, more splendid, more worthy of the Psalmist’s cry of “what is man, that thou art mindful of him?”; in contrast, the missing comma in the Blaney seems to put heaven on equal footing with earth as a work of creation, forcing a comparison with the familiar that lessens the listener’s awe. In the Translators’ version, the creation of the earth is almost an afterthought, a mere footnote compared to the grandeur and glory of the heaven above.

Secondly, the 1769 revision omits the capitalization of the first letters of Heaven and Earth, in keeping with the convention of the time. Again, while the change seems trivial, it can be argued that the creation of a Heaven seems to our modern eyes a more significant event than the creation of a heaven.

All this seems excessively pedantic, and hardly worth debating. Surely the correct translation is the one more faithful to the original Hebrew? While this is true as a general rule, it must be remembered that translations always leave room for varying emphases, nuance, and connotations. Take, for instance, the reformer William Tyndale’s dour and austere version:

In the begynnynge God created heaven and erth.

Small wonder that this became the text of choice for generations of Puritans. Most modern versions like the English Standard Version and the New International Version have

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

underscoring the notion that, while all these versions convey the same idea, such minute differences as those we have examined above can make a world of difference to a reader’s or listener’s appreciation of the text.

Prayers

GOD, THE CREATOR AND PRESERVER OF ALL MANKIND, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations.

More especially we pray for the good estate of the Catholick Church; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.

Finally we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those, who are any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate;

Jim and Edna Davis, Debbie, Scott, Brittany, Tanya Theiler, Mark Quinn, Lisa, Ben, Marion, Flo, Max, the Pack, Stanko, and Bouchard families, Dan Hubbard, Mary Frances Reeves, Julie Sine, Wyn Reeves, Mrs. Kitt, Jon Carter, Linda Capone, Rose Handwerker, Ann and Frank MacVoy, Bishop Ilgenfritz, Victoria Grace, Christina, John and Heidi Donnelly, Carl, Judith Boreham, James Kitchin, Molly Ferguson, Deacon Peter & Kim Vogel, John Bainbridge, Alan, Mark Askew, Rosalia Ortiz's extended family, Jodi Schaeffer, Father Darrell Driver, Julia McNeely, and Joshua, that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions, and this we beg for Jesus Christ his sake. Amen.

ALmighty and Everlasting God, who alone workest great marvels: Send down upon our

Bishops, and Curates, Steve our Archbishop, Julian our Dean, Darryl our Bishop, Archbishop Samy of the Diocese of Egypt, Canon Penfield, our Vicar-General, Father Parrish, Deacon Vogel, and Deacon Bracken, and all Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen.

LORD OUR GOVERNOR, whose glory is in all the world: We commend this nation to thy merciful care, that, being guided by thy Providence, we may dwell secure in thy peace. Grant to Donald our President and Gavin, the Governor of California, and to all in authority, wisdom and strength to know and to do thy will. Fill them with the love of truth and righteousness, and make them ever mindful of their calling to serve this people in thy fear; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

GOD THE HOLY GHOST, Sanctifier of the faithful, visit, we pray thee, this Congregation of St Luke's Chapel in the Hills with thy love and favour; enlighten our minds more and more with the light of the everlasting Gospel; graft in our hearts a love of the truth; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, O blessed Spirit, whom, with the Father and the Son together, we worship and glorify as one God, world without end. Amen.



Anonymous Italian, Saint Nicholas of Myra flanked by praying figures, ca. 1460-1470.

Parish Life

- The Vestry meeting will be held in McNeely Hall after fellowship hour following the service of Morning Prayer on Sunday, June 14th. All parishioners are welcome to attend it.
- The Diocesan Synod will be held at the Cathedral Church of the Ascension in Charles Town, West Virginia from June 24th until June 26th. Our alternate lay delegates, Ray Boreham and Brandy Falcon, will be attending in person, as will Father Chris Parrish. Please pray for traveling mercies for them all and for a successful and edifying synod.
- Mark Benjamin is now the editor of *The Hillside Messenger*, for the time being. We are thankful for all the diligence of Kim Vogel in editing and producing the newsletter over many years, and we pray for the success of her chemotherapy treatment for her complete healing from cancer, and for God's strength, grace, and refreshment for Deacon Peter Vogel as he loves and supports Kim during this time of trial. Please send your articles, letters, book reviews, or any other relevant contributions to the newsletter to Mark (mail.markbenjamin@gmail.com) before the twentieth day of the month for the next month.
- Please remember to use the sign-up sheet in McNeely Hall to sign up to bring refreshments on any Sunday, so that we may share the responsibility of providing refreshments.
- Father Parrish expresses gratitude to you all for your prayers and gives thanks to the Lord that he has been hired as a substitute teacher by Orchard School District in San Jose, as from August this year.

Somewhere at St. Luke's



Can you identify where this photo was taken?
Look for the answer in next month's issue.

Calendar

Wednesday after Trinity

Wednesday, June 3rd, 6:00 PM

Evensong

Trinity I

Sunday, June 7th, 10:00 AM

Holy Communion with Holy Unction

Trinity II

Sunday, June 14th, 10:00 AM

Morning Prayer

12:00 PM

Vestry Meeting

Trinity III

Sunday, June 21st, 10:00 AM

Holy Communion

Trinity IIII

Sunday, June 28th, 10:00 AM

Morning Prayer

Wednesday after Trinity IIII

Wednesday, July 1st, 7:00 PM

Evensong

Coffee hour in McNeely Hall follows all Sunday services.

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Established in 1964

A Parish in the Diocese of All Saints,
Anglican Church in North America