

## Because It Had Not Rained

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THERE are no signs that the debate over the chronological data of Genesis 1 is abating. Among those who hold biblical views of the inspiration of the Scriptures certain interpretations of that chronology have, indeed, long been traditional. These may disagree as to the duration of the “days” of Genesis 1 but they have in common the opinion that the order of narration in that chapter coincides with the actual sequence of creation history. Although these traditional interpretations continue to be dominant in orthodox circles there also continues to be debate and its flames have recently been vigorously fanned by the bellows of the dissenters.<sup>1</sup>

At the heart of the issue, though its crucial character appears to be generally overlooked is the question of whether the *modus operandi* of divine providence was the same during the creation era as that of ordinary providence now. This is not to raise the question of whether Genesis 1 leaves the door open for some sort of evolutionary reconstruction. On the contrary, it is assumed here that Genesis 1 contradicts the idea that an undifferentiated world-stuff evolved into the present variegated universe by dint of intrinsic potentialities whether divinely “triggered” or otherwise. According to Genesis 1, the divine act of absolute beginning—or creation *in nihilum*—was followed by a succession of divine acts of origination, both *ex nihilo* and *intra aliquid*.<sup>2</sup> The present

world with the fulness thereof is the net result of this succession of discrete creation acts of God completed within the era of the “six days” (Gen. 2:1–3).<sup>3</sup>

Though this closed era of the “six days” was characteristically the era of creation, it was not exclusively so. That is, the works of creation were interlaced with the work of providence—in a manner analogous to the mingling of natural and supernatural providence in the structure of subsequent history.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, one aspect of the creative acts themselves (excepting the act of absolute beginning) may properly be subsumed under the rubric of providence. They were works of providence in that they were part of the divine government of the world in so far as...

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