

began to be. (2.) It was not formed out of any preexistence or substance; but was created *ex nihilo* (3.) That creation was not necessary. It was free to God to create or not create, to create the universe as it is, or any order and system of things, according to the good pleasure of his will .

But while it has ever been the doctrine of the Church that God created the universe out of nothing by the word of his power, which creation was instantaneous and Immediate, i.e., without the intervention of any second causes; yet it has generally been admitted that this is to be understood only of the original call of matter into existence. Theologians have, therefore, distinguished between a first and second, or Immediate and mediate creation. The one was instantaneous, the other gradual; the one precludes the idea of any preexisting substance, and of cooperation, the other admits and implies both. There is evident ground for this distinction in the Mosaic account of the creation . And the Bible constantly speaks of God as causing the grass to grow, and as being the real author or maker of all that the earth, air, or water produces. There is, therefore, according to the Scriptures, not only an immediate, instantaneous creation *nihilo* by the simple word of God, but a mediate, progressive creation; the power of God working in union with second causes.

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, in three volumes. Volume 1. Reprinted (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1952), pp. 553, 556-557.

Augustus H. Strong, in volume 2 of his *Systematic Theology* states:

By creation we mean that free act of the triune God by which in the beginning for his own glory he made, without the use of preexisting materials, the whole visible and invisible universe.

-- Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*, in three volumes. Volume 2. (Philadelphia, The Judson Press, 1956), p. 371.

Louis Berkhof, in his *Systematic Theology* states:

Creation in the strict sense of the word may be defined as that free act of God whereby He, according to His sovereign will and for His own glory, in the beginning brought forth the whole visible and invisible universe, without the use of preexistent material, and thus gave it an existence, distinct from His own and yet always dependent on Him.

-- Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* Fourth Revised Edition (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1959), p. 129.

2. Scriptural Background to the doctrine