



# The Hand of God: Thoughts and Images Reflecting the Spirit of the Universe

*Michael Reagan*

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*The Hand of God* combines inspiration for the mind and spirit by juxtaposing what *Astronomy* magazine has called “the most beautiful astrophotos ever taken” with illuminating words of scientists, poets, and theologians. Introduced by an essay from award-winning science writer Sharon Begley, this revised edition includes more than sixty new images and creates for the reader an unforgettable experience of the wonder of the universe.

It was once believed that to look into the heavens was to look into the face of God. The first Hubble telescope images from space, which appeared in 1990, confirmed that sentiment in ways that are beyond imagination. These eerily luminous landscapes, splendid with color and motion, gave us a glimpse into the outermost reaches of the universe—a vast, unexplored realm where spiraling galaxies cartwheeled, nebulae shimmered, and stars were born. Dark clouds parted like gauzy curtains and allowed us to peer directly into the heart of a mystery. Since that time, more images have been captured on film that are simultaneously wondrous and troubling, restoring to our lives that very mystery that seems to be part of the human experience.

Throughout history, scientists and theologians, artists and writers, poets, and philosophers have struggled eloquently to make sense of the universe and God’s part in it. Together the images in *The Hand of God* and the accompanying reflections encourage a sense of awe and, perhaps, purpose in an age hostile to both.

“We cannot take a single step toward heaven,” French mystic Simone Weil once said. “If, however, we look heavenward for a long time, God comes and takes us up.” Perhaps it is time to look up once again.

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