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March 29, 2020: Thinking of the Virus and the Earth in a Different Way

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3/29/2020—Brian Swimme tells a very strange and mysterious, indeed impossible, story in the documentary, *Journey of the Universe*. During the past 4 billion years, the heat radiation coming from the sun increased by 25%, because of changes in nuclear fusion in the sun. This should have caused problems for life on Earth, because life only exists in a narrow band of temperature. It turns out that the temperature did not increase by 25%, because at the same time, the concentration of carbon in the atmosphere dropped, allowing the Earth to cool. But why should this have happened? Swimme says that you could think of the Earth not as dead or mechanical, but as a kind of living system designed for the flourishing of life. One way that happens is if carbon becomes the shells of animals and sinks to the bottom of the ocean. But if we think in terms like those, why should not the virus be another natural response to increasing temperature? We know that greenhouse gas emissions will now actually fall because of the catastrophic effect of the virus on all economic and social life. I am not claiming this is the case. I don't understand how such things could happen without the kind of intervention that Christians used to call God's judgment. But that just raises the question of the virus in a different way. Five hundred years ago, Christians would have called the virus a purposive act of God and would have looked for the cause of such an action—like the sailors inquiring of Jonah what he had done to cause a storm at sea. Where are the Christians calling the virus God's judgment for the abuse of the natural world that is leading to climate change? The Bible says that if God's will is not obeyed, the rain will not fall. Well? In many places, the rains are already beginning to fail. The absence of a robust theological response to the virus is the clearest indication that God is Dead.