

CONTENTS

PREFACE

v

CHAPTER 1 WHAT IS LIFE? 13

The characteristics of living things. Growth and irritability. Replication and evolution. Time's Arrow. Kinetic theory and probability. The meaning of order and disorder. Life and thermodynamics. The origin of life.

CHAPTER 2 ABOUT BEGINNINGS 39

The great discovery. The architecture of the solar system. Early theories of the origin of the sun and planets. The theory of tidal collision. Recent theories of the origin of the solar system. The cosmic time scale. Dating the past by radioactivity. How old is the universe? The expanding universe.

CHAPTER 3 THE EARTH BEFORE LIFE BEGAN 66

ONE THE EARTH'S CRUST AND INTERIOR

Clues from earthquake shocks. The earth is a spinning top. Heat balance and radioactivity. Continents and ocean basins.

TWO THE ATMOSPHERE AND THE HYDROSPHERE

Kinetic theory—a digression. The primitive atmosphere of the earth. Evolution of the atmosphere. The oxygen problem. The escape of helium.

CHAPTER 4 WHERE DID LIFE COME FROM? 94

Special creation. Spontaneous generation. Life as a universal principle. Did life come from other worlds? The chemical origin of life. Life is exclusive. The cradle of life.

CHAPTER 5 THE CHEMISTRY OF LIVING THINGS 113

ONE SOME FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS

Bonding properties and valence.

TWO CARBON: THE KEY TO LIFE

A basic hydrocarbon series. Substituted hydrocarbons. The benzene ring.

THREE LIFE'S ESSENTIAL SUBSTANCES

Carbohydrates. Fats. Proteins. The amino acids. Water. Colloidal systems. The gross structure of proteins. Nucleic acids and other specialized substances. Right- and left-handed molecules.

CHAPTER 6 THE BEGINNING OF LIFE 146

The soup that ate itself up. Chemical evolution. Accelerators. Integrity of the organism. The mobilization of energy. Quantity production. The mechanisms of replication. Is life a unique system? The riddle of left-handed life. The time factor.

CHAPTER 7 BREAKTHROUGH 172

The infancy of life. The quest for energy. Anaerobic energy reactions. Heterotrophs and autotrophs. The meek inherit the earth. The chemistry of photosynthesis. The age of plenty. Life burns its bridges. The animal fair. The living flame.

CHAPTER 8 LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE 202

Changing perspectives.

ONE POSSIBILITIES OF LIFE ON THE SOLAR PLANETS

Fundamental considerations. Observational methods. The moon. The giant planets and their satellites. Mercury and Pluto. Venus. Mars.

TWO IS LIFE POSSIBLE WITHOUT CARBON CHEMISTRY?

THREE BEYOND THE SOLAR SYSTEM

CHAPTER 9 THE EMERGENCE OF MIND 235

The ascendancy of man. The riddle of mind. The proper study of man is man. The developing crisis. The control spiral. Adventure in loneliness. The coming technology of life. Sunset or dawn?

ADDITIONAL READINGS 270

INDEX 273