



FIGURE 14.1.

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The Grand Canyon. The Colorado River has cut this magnificent canyon more than one mile below the plateau rim. The rocks exposed at the bottom are thought to have been formed more than 1 billion years ago.

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new idea to those steeped in its tradition. But those who advance the theory of evolution have stretched beyond its goal of discovering an order and composition in nature into the realm of a philosophical belief system called evolutionism.

The belief in evolutionism has two central articles of faith. First, there is the scenario of our origins which generally runs as follows:

- The Universe (all matter, energy, space, and time) originated from random fluctuations in nothing or from some other Universe or world with an as-yet-undetermined origin.
- Owing to the vast numbers of stars and planets in the Universe, vast numbers of solar systems have evolved.
- Over a period of approximately 4 billion years, some of these planets have continually possessed a life-inhabitable environment (the proper temperature for water to exist as a liquid).
- Forms of life are bound to arise spontaneously from chemical elements on these planets.
- Life forms quite naturally evolve toward more complex forms.