

THE CASE FOR A CREATOR

by Lee Strobel - A Journalist investigates Scientific Evidence that points towards God.
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I've often found that many of even the brightest and most thoughtful Christian people seem to be capable of locking their thinking into separate, watertight compartments when it comes to aspects of science and faith. Yes, we believe in God as creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them. And on the other hand, Yes, we believe as we must in the discoveries of science and accept its dogmas - especially if one is a school or university student intent on passing exams. The question is, should scientists stick to their test tubes and field work, and theologians to their Bibles, with an unbridgeable gap between them and all the credibility on the science side?

Here's a book that seeks to unlock some of those compartments so our faith and our knowledge of God's world can become better integrated. We can become both scientifically and theologically literate without doing violence to either. I wonder how many of us are fully aware of how much the most recent discoveries of science are inexorably strengthening the case for a Creator. The evidence for an Intelligent Designer keeps stacking up more and more powerfully, while the mindless, meaningless chance of philosophical Darwinism takes far more faith (in the false sense of belief against the evidence) to accept.

Some will know the writer Lee Strobel for his well-known books *The Case for Christ* and *The Case for Faith*. He is a journalist who came to Christ out of atheism and unbelief. He relies on a method of interviewing expert and articulate scholars and theologians, and in this case, philosophers and scientists, and presenting his questioning dialogue with them as a means of simplifying complex ideas and making them as readable and accessible as possible to non-experts like myself. Nevertheless, many would not find the book light and easy reading.

He traces some of the history of the controversy – the assumptions and icons that convinced him as a student that Darwinian evolution meant there was no place or need for a Creator – “The whole point of Darwinism is to show that there is no need for a supernatural creator, because nature can do the creating by itself.” (P. 23, quoting Phillip Johnson). That had been the scientific consensus for more than a century – that scientific, objective intellectual honesty requires an agnostic or atheist position on creation, whereas faith in a creator God means blind belief in spite of scientific evidence to the contrary. That is old science. New science points **towards** God, but many still have fixed views that unless He is kept out of the picture, we cannot call it science at all.

Strobel cross-examines numbers of impressively qualified people - such as Jonathan Wells, author of *Icons of Evolution* - and in the process reveals how outdated the march of science has rendered those “facts” on which he had based his earlier atheism. For instance, we learn how naïve it is to think that the puzzle of the origin of life can be solved simply without reference to God, and how vast the gap is between micro-evolution on the one hand, shown in minor variations within species (and the variations ‘intelligent designers’ like dog breeders can achieve) and on the other the still unbridged leaps of macro-evolution, from one species to another. We learn more of the immense evolutionary puzzle posed by the Cambrian explosion, that sudden inexplicable appearance of millions of fossils in the one geological era, without any sign of gradually evolving predecessors.

In cosmology, relativity and the now fully accepted Big Bang mean a starting point to the universe and to time itself. “Naturalism [the belief that nothing exists outside of nature and matter] is on hard times in cosmology. The deeper you get into it, the harder it is to get rid of the God hypothesis”. (P. 77, interview with Stephen Meyer)

Strobel quotes Bill Bryson's *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, which I read recently. I found it fascinating and entertaining, but profoundly silly in the way it dodged the ultimate questions. Of the universe's beginning Bryson writes, “In three minutes, ninety-eight percent of all the matter there is

or ever will be has been produced. We have a universe. It is a place of most wondrous and gratifying possibility, and beautiful too. And it was all done in about the time it takes to make a sandwich.” But God cannot be admitted. “For Bryson and many others the universe’s mere presence somehow seems to explain itself.” (P. 94)

An interview with philosopher, scientist and theologian William Lane Craig explores the evidence of cosmology; others deal with recent discoveries in physics, astronomy, bio-chemistry, biological information – DNA and RNA - and the mystery of the human mind and consciousness, explored in an interview with the philosopher-theologian J.P. Moreland. Each reveals the astonishing fine-tuning – cosmic ‘coincidences’ whereby everything is just right for life - of almost every aspect of the universe, with the anthropic principle, as if the whole is balanced on a razor’s edge to allow life in general and mankind in particular to exist. “It’s supremely improbable that the fine-tuning of the universe could have occurred at random, but it’s not at all improbable if it were the work of an intelligent designer.” (P. 136)

The work of molecular biologist Michael J. Behe, author of *Darwin’s Black Box*, reveals the **irreducible complexity** of the most microscopic and apparently “simple” cells, the building blocks of life. Each part of the whole cell has to be present for it to operate at all. Gradual development of such an organism by tiny modifications over time is just not possible. Behe makes “an overwhelming case against Darwin on the biochemical level.” (P. 196) This leads Strobel into pondering the amazing facts of DNA and the genetic code. Quoting Bill Gates: “DNA is like a software program, only much more complex than anything we’ve ever devised”. (P. 225) The conclusion: The analogy of a programmer/intelligent designer for life in all its miraculous complexity makes perfect sense. Random undirected chance makes no sense at all.

“Like all other scientific theories, Darwinian evolution must continually be compared with the evidence. ... If it does not fit the evidence, it must be re-evaluated or abandoned – otherwise it is not science, but myth.” (Biologist Jonathan Wells, quoted P. 277.) Strobel writes, “To embrace Darwinism, one must believe that

- Nothing produces everything
- Non-life produces life
- Randomness produces fine-tuning
- Chaos produces information
- Unconsciousness produces consciousness
- Non-reason produces reason

“Based on this, I was forced to conclude that Darwinism would require a blind leap of faith I was not willing to make.” (P. 277)

I must point out that while Strobel’s book and many others it recommends in its reading lists are the work of outstanding scientists and scholars most of whom believe in the Creator God and accept and uphold the Bible, they accept a universe some 12-15 billion years old, not the Creation Science movement’s insistence on a literal six day creation about 10,000 years ago, a favourite weapon used by unbelievers to mock the Christian belief in creation.

And although rational argument alone cannot persuade unbelievers to turn to God in humble trust and to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord – that ‘s the work of the Holy Spirit - a book like this can certainly clear away some of the obstacles.

Reviewer Lesley Hicks