

Letters

the New Testament are themselves capable of adding considerably to our belief in the documents' historical authenticity. F. F. Bruce and, more recently, Peter Williams have published accessible studies of this, and it is an area that strongly merits being taken into consideration.

Throughout the book Holder's writing is clear and readable, although some of the on-the-fly references to various philosophers and theologians might frustrate a beginner. One must digest a fair bit of mathematics at the level illustrated above. It seems to me that, on the whole, the book is a graduate-level text whose hefty price-tag (even the e-version is not inexpensive—\$48.95) will deter many potential readers. Still, within its given remit and despite a few limitations, the book does a good job. It can be well recommended for theological libraries and researchers in the area. I suspect, however, that the conclusions may need to be de-mathematized a little in order to convince ordinary citizens.

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Letters

Expanding Isaac's Concluding Statement

In the article entitled "The Significance of *The Mystery of Life's Origin*" (PSCF 73, no. 3 [2021]: 158–62), Randy Isaac gives a very thorough, critical review of the two books on intelligent design (ID) by Charles B. Thaxton and others: the first published in 1984,¹ and its most recent edition with updates, published in 2020 by the Discovery Institute.²

At the conclusion of the article, Randy contends that "Origin-of-life research offers no compelling apologetic either for or against a Creator." That is well and good, but not surprising. Arguments from the mysteries of nature alone, be it origin-of-life, fine tuning of the universe, complexity of the structure of living cells, or others, are necessary arguments for a Creator, but they are not sufficient, ergo not compelling.

I wish Isaac had added to his above concluding remark, the statement that there are other evidences

that are necessary to make the argument of a Creator compelling.

We all know that in addition to the evidence from the physical world, we have evidence, for example, from human nature, from history and archeology, and from scripture and the person of Jesus Christ. Only when put together can these make the argument of a Creator compelling.

Each of the above evidences, starting with evidences from the physical world pointing to a Creator, form a single string which is necessary, but it can be broken by a counter argument unless the strings are all wound together to form a strong rope and thus make a compelling apologetic case. If the various strings of evidence are wound together, they would fulfill the case of a necessary and sufficient condition for the existence of a Creator.³

As an obvious illustration, Nobel Laureate and brilliant physicist Steven Weinberg (recently deceased), vehemently denied the existence of God all his life, whereas another Nobel Laureate, Eugene P. Wigner, gave credit to a Creator based on laws of nature in his lectures on quantum mechanics, when I was a graduate student at Princeton.

Notes

¹Charles B. Thaxton, Walter L. Bradley, and Roger L. Olsen, *The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1984).

²Charles B. Thaxton et al., *The Mystery of Life's Origin: The Continuing Controversy* (Seattle, WA: Discovery Institute Press, 2020).

³See Kenell J. Touryan, *A Cord of Multiple Strands: An Evidence-Based Assessment of Christian Truth Claims* (Holland, MI: Black Lake Press, 2011).

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The Mystery of Life's Origin: Know Thyself

Randy Isaac, in "The Significance of *The Mystery of Life's Origin*" [MLO] (PSCF 73, no. 3 [2021]: 158–62), provides a strong case for the failure of MLO-1¹ and MLO-2² to suggest, from the scientific work dealing with the origin-of-life question, the metaphysical implication for the existence of an intelligent designer. This is quite important since the MLO-1 book laid the foundation for the rise of the intelligent design movement.

Richard Bube³ emphasizes that scientific models are descriptive and not prescriptive. In describing nature by means of mathematical models, Einstein said, “Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.” Models can predict new results that may later be confirmed by observation or experiment. However, models are like maps of cities, helpful, but not actually the cities themselves.

It should be remarked that mathematical models, for example, Dirac’s relativistic theory of the electron, could not bring electrons into being. In fact, no scientific theory whatsoever can bring anything into being. This is obvious, since the notion of existence is not in the subject matter of the physical description of nature, namely, science. The ontological question of existence is solely the purview of metaphysics and theology. In science, one must first postulate a particular metaphysics in order to carry on the scientific enterprise.

In order to obtain a complete description and understanding of the whole of reality and to include a true description of what a human being is and what the totality of the human experience is, one must integrate science with a particular theology. However, which theology or religion should we use? As done in science, one must choose the theology that has the highest explanatory power—namely, by applying the principle of parsimony, Occam’s razor.

The inscription “Know Thyself” was carved on the stone entrance to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, Greece. Scholars, philosophers, and civilizations have debated this question for a long time. A theist follows the ancient Greek injunction by basing it on the knowledge of God—namely, who God is and what his commandments are. However, a Christian must know not only God and his commandments, but also who Christ is and what he accomplished on the cross. Accordingly, science alone can give an accurate physical description of humans; however, science, together with the Christian faith, gives the complete and the true picture of what human beings are.

Notes

¹Charles B. Thaxton, Walter L. Bradley, and Roger L. Olsen, *The Mystery of Life’s Origin: Reassessing Current Theories* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1984).

²Charles B. Thaxton et al., *The Mystery of Life’s Origin: The Continuing Controversy* (Seattle, WA: Discovery Institute Press, 2020).

³Richard H. Bube, *The Human Quest: A New Look at Science and the Christian Faith* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971), 65.

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Evidence for Genesis Historicity

Regarding Carol Hill’s article, “Original Sin with Respect to Science, Origins, Historicity of Genesis, and Traditional Church Views” (*PSCF* 73, no. 3 [2021]: 131–44), Genesis contains numerous clues that underscore the validity of the Genesis account as a fairly accurate narrative of the beginnings of the Semitic peoples, and that help pinpoint the time and place where Adam and his family resided. Genesis 2:10–14 focuses on southern Mesopotamia where the covenant family lived until the flood. The oldest city in that region dated by archaeologists to 4800 BC is Eridu.

Archibald Sayce (1845–1933) was a famous British Assyriologist and linguist, who held a chair as Professor of Assyriology at the University of Oxford from 1891 to 1919. He spent countless hours in the British Museum transcribing ancient texts from the Near East. In his *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion* (1880), he stated: “Babylonian tradition places the Garden of Eden near Eridu.”

At the ASA Annual Meeting in Colorado in 2017, I presented a talk on commonalities between the Genesis 5 patriarchs and the Sumerian King List (SKL). In that talk, evidence was presented to show that the last three names recorded in Sumerian in the pre-flood portion of the SKL, ending with Ziusudra, most probably were also the last three pre-flood patriarchs—Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah. Even the seventh patriarch, Enoch, who “walked with God” in Genesis 5:24, has been linked with the seventh king, Enmeduranki, who according to legend was taken by the gods and taught “divine mysteries.”

The pre-flood part of the Sumerian King List also begins at Eridu, modern Abu Shahrein in Iraq. These are some of the names on the list recorded in the Sumerian language: Enmenluanna, Enmengalanna, Ensipadzidana, and Enmenduranna. The En- prefix designates kingship in both Akkadian and Sumerian.