

Preface

This book looks at a series of issues that cause Christians to doubt.

The first is the widely-believed idea that science has eliminated the need for a Creator, that it can now explain how we got here without design. This idea is easily countered; chapters 1 and 2 present simple but powerful evidence showing that Darwin's implausible explanation for evolution has become even more implausible in recent years, leaving intelligent design as the only reasonable explanation for the origin and development of life. The arguments in these chapters do not require a strong scientific background to understand; for a more extensive presentation of the evidence, the reader should look at my recent *Discovery Institute Press* book *In the Beginning and Other Essays on Intelligent Design, 2nd edition*,¹ or any of a number of other recent books on intelligent design (ID), such as *Darwin's Black Box*,² *The Edge of Evolution*,³ or *Darwin's Doubt*.⁴ Section 2.5 shows that design is now being discovered not only in biology but also in the laws of physics themselves, which seem to be very fine-tuned for life.

After making the case for intelligent design in chapters 1 and 2, in the remaining chapters I attempt to deal with, from a non-fundamentalist point of view, some of the theological problems many

¹ Sewell, *In the Beginning*.

² Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*.

³ Behe, *The Edge of Evolution*.

⁴ Meyer, *Darwin's Doubt*.

educated people have with the Bible and with Christianity. These problems are more difficult, and since chapters 3-6 are about theology, I am naturally not as sure of my conclusions there as in the first two scientific chapters. Nevertheless, I believe that some of the most important insights into both the scientific and theological problems can be made by applying a little common sense, without relying on ideas that can only be understood by the “experts.”

Here is a summary of the theological chapters:

3. *The Light of the World*. Before looking at the problems educated people have with Christianity, I explain why I am a Christian, in spite of these problems.

4. *The Bible*. This chapter looks at some of the problems with the Bible, concluding with C. S. Lewis that “[The Bible] is not ‘the Word of God’ in the sense that every passage, in itself, gives impeccable science or history. It carries the Word of God; and we receive that word from it not by using it as an encyclopedia or an encyclical but by steeping ourselves in its tone or temper and so learning its overall message.”

5. *Is the Gospel Good News or Bad?* Section 5.1 looks at the Christian ideas of resurrection and judgment, both of which are very difficult for modern minds to take seriously. Section 5.2 deals with a doctrine which has been taught in many Christian churches over the centuries, which was particularly repulsive to Darwin himself and which may have been responsible for much of his antagonism toward Christianity. As readers will see, I also find this doctrine unreasonable and unbiblical. The last section looks at the meaning of the cross.

6. *Is God Really Good?* This chapter looks at the “problem of pain”—how can we reconcile the idea of a loving God with the pain we experience in the world God created?

Of course, you do not have to believe anything in chapters 3-6 of this book or anything in the Bible to believe in intelligent design; pre-Columbian American Indians, for example, had never heard of the Bible, yet most of them believed plants and animals were designed. In fact, some intelligent design advocates are uncomfortable with a book that combines chapters on intelligent design with explicitly Christian chapters because it might encourage those who claim that ID proponents do not understand the difference between science and religion. Most of us do understand the difference; we are just interested in both.

And so are ID critics. In fact, I have been making the case for ID for many years, and my experience has convinced me that most of the angriest critics of intelligent design will never be persuaded by logic or evidence because their opposition to ID is based primarily on *religious* convictions. In a June 15, 2012, post at www.evolutionnews.org, Max Planck Institute biologist W. E. Lönnig said “Normally the better your arguments are, the more people open their minds to your theory, but with ID, the better your arguments are, the more they close their minds, and the angrier they become. This is science upside down.”

This has been my experience as well; these angry opponents of ID, at least in the Western world, do *not* really have trouble seeing the obvious evidence for design in the living world. They simply have problems with the Bible, which they see as the primary competition on origins, and find Christianity—as they have been taught it—unattractive, and so they prefer materialist explanations of origins, no matter how implausible. For these people, just presenting the scientific evidence for intelligent design in Nature, as done in chapters 1-2, is not sufficient. They need answers for the more difficult theological questions, which I have attempted to address in the final chapters.

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