INVESTIGATING THE DESIGNER

The Case For A Creator: A Journalist Investigates Scientific Evidence That Points Toward God. Lee Strobel. 2004. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 341 p. Cloth, \$19.99.

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Lee Strobel holds a Master of Studies in Law degree from Yale Law School and also a journalism degree from the University of Missouri. "His journey from atheism to faith has been documented in the Gold Medallion-winning books *The Case for Christ* and *The Case for Faith*" (p 341).

Using his experience in journalism and law, Strobel's approach in *The Case for a Creator* is "to cross-examine authorities in various scientific disciplines about the most current findings in their fields." He chose doctoral level professors "who refuse to limit themselves only to the politically correct world of naturalism or materialism...." Having listened to the arguments, Strobel stands, "in the shoes of the skeptic, reading all sides of each topic and posing the toughest objections that have been raised" (p 28).

Interviewing Jonathan Wells, Strobel begins by probing Darwinism (naturalism) in general as a theory, and some specific "proofs," including Darwin's "tree of life," Haeckel's embryos, *Archaeopteryx* as a missing link, the "legend of Java man" and a number of other significant icons of evolutionary theory (p 31-67). Then, in his interview with Stephen C. Meyer, Strobel learned that "there are insurmountable hurdles involving the origin of biological information that simply cannot be resolved by more research and effort" (p 278). These and other factors led him to his first general conclusion:

... if I were to embrace Darwinism... I would have to believe that: nothing produces everything, non-life produces life, randomness produces fine-tuning, chaos produces information, unconsciousness produces consciousness, nonreason produces reason....Simply put, the central pillars of evolutionary theory quickly rotted away when exposed to scrutiny (p 277).

Strobel's probe continued with six different scientific disciplines "to see whether they point toward or away from the existence of an intelligent designer" (p 279).

On *Cosmology*, William Lane Craig emphasized the new credibility that the old cosmological argument has taken thanks to discoveries of the last fifty years: "First, whatever begins to exist has a cause. Second, the universe had a beginning. Therefore, the universe has a cause" (p 96-121).

On *Physics*, Robin Collins noted that one of the most striking discoveries of modern science is that the laws and constants of physics are indispensable to make the universe habitable for life. For instance, gravity is fine-tuned to one part in a hundred million billion billion billion billion. "One expert said there are more than thirty physical or cosmological parameters that require precise calibration in order to produce a universe that can sustain life" (p 280). The "God hypothesis" has significantly gained credibility.

On *Astronomy*, after interviewing Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Wesley Richards, Strobel remarked that, like in physics, "Earth's position in the universe and its intricately choreographed geological and chemical processes work together with exquisite efficiency to created a safe place for humans to live" (p 281).

On *Biochemistry*, Michael Behe explained that "irreducibly complex" molecular "systems are strong evidence of a purposeful, intentional design by an intelligent agent" (p 215). On the related question of *Biology* and its quest for the origin of life, Stephen C. Meyer explained that the naturalistic explanation is facing its greatest challenges today.

In the last chapter of this book, Strobel highlights the impact that this research had on himself: "As I reviewed the avalanche of information from my investigation, I found the evidence of an intelligent designer to be credible, cogent, and compelling" (p 283).

It is not difficult to agree with Strobel. Yet, a flaw is present in the chapter on "The Evidence of Consciousness." Strobel is correct in stating that, according to numerous Biblical references, the whole human person is constituted by body and soul or spirit (p 250). Following the majority view of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, Strobel believes that the existence of the soul (spirit) refutes the assertion of Darwinism that "the [physical] brain is solely responsible for consciousness" (p 252). He appears unaware of the fact that the Bible identifies the spirit as the divine spark of life that transforms the material body into a "living soul" (or living human being, Gen 2:7). The "living soul" dies when the spirit of life is withdrawn. The spirit (soul) by itself is

not a separate thinking entity. Strobel's basic conclusion still points in the right direction: the human being is not just a material body. The body by itself is not only incapable of consciousness, but it is simply dead. Consciousness is an emergent property when the God-given spirit brings matter to life.

As a whole, *The Case for a Creator* summarizes well, for the nonspecialist, the essential elements of the debate between naturalism and intelligent design during the last decade. The language can be understood by a high-school graduate who has taken the basic sciences courses.