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Life—by Luck or by God?

C. Mervyn Maxwell

Be careful. If you have believed evolution, this article may change your whole way of thinking.

The origin of life on earth can far more rationally be attributed to the work of an intelligent Deity than to the fickle whims of Lady Luck.

As a matter of fact, attributing creation to Lady Luck is becoming intellectually less respectable the more science discovers about the complexity of the problems involved.

In 1952 the Nobel prizewinning physicist Harold Urey, then of the University of Chicago, suggested that the first living cell may have come into existence as the result of a lightning flash searing its way through a smoggy primeval atmosphere composed of hydrogen, ammonia, water vapor, and methane. Not that the lightning could have alchemized a living cell at a single stroke; but it might, Dr. Urey proposed, have combined the gases into a number of different amino acids, and these in turn might have combined into proteins, and these, in their turn, might have combined themselves into the first living cell.

In 1955, only three years later, one of Dr. Urey's students, Stanley Miller, mixed the four suggested ingredients in a bottle, discharged an electric spark through them for a week, and discovered on analyzing the result that he had indeed

brought about the formation of a number of different amino acids. I well remember the excitement his achievement occasioned. Man was about to demonstrate in the laboratory the manner in which life on this earth began.

Or was he?

Suppose the earth *was* at some time in the long-distant past draped with the necessary four-component atmosphere. Suppose the lightning did play through it with continuous and cacophonous abandon. Suppose amino acids by the million did rain down day after day from this agitated air into the primitive ocean below it. What are the chances that the *right* amino acids would have linked up with each other in the *right* order to form a protein molecule?

The answer is fantastic!

Amino acids occur in nature today in an almost infinite variety, and living protein molecules as we know them are highly complex. Unless every needed amino acid is present in a protein molecule, and located within it in its own rightful place, the molecule simply cannot function properly if at all.

In 1964 Malcolm Dixon and Edwin Webb, on page 667 of their standard reference work, *Enzymes*, pointed out to their fellow evolutionist that—depending on the laws of chance arrangement alone—in order to get the needed amino acids close enough to form a given protein molecule there would be required a total volume of amino-acid solution equal to 10^{50} times the volume of our earth.

The term 10^{50} does not indicate a multiplication factor of fifty but of a one with fifty zeros after it. This means that only if you had a solution saturated with amino acids, and only if you had a quantity of this solution sufficient to fill a mixing bowl equal in capacity to one



An electric spark in a bottle of gas? Did life begin like this?

Have you been told it takes “blind faith” to believe that God created life on earth? Have you heard that scientists have already created life in a test tube?

Read here what really happened in that test tube, and the enormous odds against life’s beginning by itself. Then decide whether it is the Christian or the evolutionist whose faith is blind.



hundred quadrillion nonillion times the volume of our entire planet, could you hope that somewhere far away in so incomprehensibly immense a volume would the correct association of amino acids take place to form a single protein molecule!

But we are dealing with the chance origin of a very simple protein. What are the odds in favor of the formation of a larger protein molecule such as hemoglobin? (Hemoglobin is what makes blood red.)

S. W. Fox and J. F. Foster have worked this out for us in their *Introduction to Protein Chemistry*, page 279, and my colleague Dr. Dwain Ford has checked their calculations and verified them for us. They have shown that only *after* the necessary amino acids had come together to form random protein molecules by the process described above, and only *after* these protein molecules had been formed in such a quantity that they filled a volume $10^{5.12}$ times the volume of our entire known universe (that is, 1 with 512 zeros after it times the volume of our *entire known universe*) packed solid, protein molecule to protein molecule, could we reasonably expect that just one hemoglobin molecule might form itself by luck alone!

ERIC KREYE

If the mathematical improbability of such an event leaves us gasping, let me add that the problem is even more astonishing than this. In order for a hemoglobin molecule to *live*, every one of the 508 amino acids in it must be what biochemists call “left-handed” amino acids. By the laws of chance it could take a vast number of solid universes filled with *nothing but hemoglobin molecules* before one molecule would occur that happened to have the required perfect lineup of 508 “left-handed” amino acids.

And, of course, a living cell is



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composed of many hundreds, even thousands, of different protein molecules—all of which would have to come together into very close proximity if a living cell were to evolve out of them on its own just by chance. With each correct molecule occurring only once in an incomprehensible number of universes, just what really are the odds that enough of them would be found within the tiny space necessary for them to locate each other and link up to form a living cell?

The answer to all intents and purposes is none. None at all.

And yet the evolutionary hypothesis asks men of the twentieth century to believe that it did happen. Indeed, it asks us to believe that it happened, with a little bit of luck, right here on our tiny little earth; or rather, that it happened in the relatively shallow layer of moisture that wets a portion of our little earth's surface.

Here, surely, is "blind faith"! Here indeed is a "leap in the dark."

How different is the way the Lord works. He asks us to let nature "tell it like it is," and then, on the basis of the most obvious evidence and guided by His inspired revelation in Scripture, to recognize that our earth and the life upon it are the result of the working of an infinitely powerful and intelligent Person. Heaven and earth declare the glory of God. Even the wild daisy, not to speak of the latest All-American rose; even the common earthworm, not to speak of the Arabian horse; even the robin on the lawn, not to speak of the bird of paradise; even, we may say, the stray feather of an untidy English sparrow, not to speak of the plume of a courting peacock—all these and many, many more declare with convincing finality, "The hand that made us is divine."

Darwinian evolution in its various forms may have served the relatively uninformed science of the Victorian era in which it first evolved, but now we live amidst the scientific advances of the twentieth century with their breathtaking discoveries of the incomprehensible complexity of everything about us. The time has come for all to give God the glory He deserves. Scientists should be the first—and some of them are among the most prominent—to acknowledge the agency of God in His created works.

Instead of our assuming the mathematically bankrupt theory of evolution, how much more astute it is to accept the uniquely inspired account of creation contained in the Bible!

The Bible says that when God made our earth and prepared it for the human race, He proceeded in an orderly manner toward His predetermined goal.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . .

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. . . .

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. . . .

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living after his kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. . . .

"And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. . . .

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. . . .

"And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Genesis 1.

It is a great story of a great and wonderful God. In its magnificent simplicity and simple magnificence it has no parallel in all literature. It cannot possibly be a version of the creation myth written by the ancient Babylonians, as some ill-informed journalists have supposed. In *that* bizarre account, discovered in recent times recorded in cuneiform letters on hardened clay tablets, Marduk made man out of the mangled corpses of his enemies—and made him to be his slave.

The God of the Bible, our loving heavenly Father, made man to be His son. "Adam," the Bible says, "was the son of God." Luke 3:38.

Today this God of the Bible invites us to believe that it was He who made the earth and us who live in it. He asks us, also, to believe that He raised Jesus from the dead.



"The hand that made us is divine."

He asks us to believe these things not for His own sake but for ours—partly because believing in them and in the God who did them can have a marvelous effect on our daily lives, and partly, too, because He is going to "do it again." God is going to re-create the earth someday, free from all traces of sin and disease. See Revelation 21:1-5. And He is going to raise from the dead everyone who through faith in the resurrected Christ has been fitted to live again on that re-created earth. See John 6:54; Revelation 21:7.

He asks us to believe in the certainty of these future events, not on the basis of blind faith or a leap in the dark, but in light of the fact that He has done such things already in the past. And He asks us to believe in these past events, not on the basis of some fine feeling about the fitness of things, but in view of the enormous quantity of evidence—chemical, physical, biological, mathematical, historical, and Biblical—that is available to us.

What an intelligent and wise counselor He is! What a gracious Father! What an all-powerful Creator!

Man, what a God! □

This article is part of a chapter in Dr. C. Mervyn Maxwell's book, "Man, What a God!" There is no doubt but that the author is on to something the evolutionists have missed. You really should read the whole book (just 64 pages). Only 50 cents each plus 10 cents postage and wrapping. Get enough to give your friends. Please add sales tax in California. Address your order to "Signs of the Times," 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California 94040.



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