

result may be the space shuttle, but most of us would have to see it to believe it.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

How did life originate on Earth? We don't know, but Robert Jastrow hits the issue squarely, offering us two -- and only two -- choices:

Perhaps the appearance of life on the earth is a miracle. Scientists are reluctant to accept that view, but their choices are limited; *either* life was created on the earth by the will of a being outside the grasp of scientific understanding, *or* it evolved on our planet spontaneously, through chemical reactions occurring in non-living matter lying on the surface of the planet.

The first theory places the question of the origin of life beyond the realm of scientific inquiry. It is a statement of faith in the power of a Supreme Being not subject to the laws of science.

The second theory is also an act of faith. The act of faith consists in assuming that the scientific view of the origin of life is correct, without having concrete evidence to support that belief.⁸

The above statements by Robert Jastrow focus our choices into a fundamental decision between *Creator* and *no-creator*. They also emphasize that faith is required in either choice. However, an unnecessary wedge may be driven between science and religion if Jastrow's statements are not given more careful scrutiny.

It is certainly true that those who hold the world view or philosophy of *no-creator* must believe (or have faith) that life arose through *spontaneous* prebiotic chemical synthesis. That is, *causation* for the first living cells must be attributed to *random chance* and "*natural*" *mechanistic forces*. This position presupposes that there is no Creator involved in the presence of the raw materials, the requisite energy and forces, and in their selective assembly into life.

In contrast to this belief system, those of us who believe in the *Creator*, believe that the *causation* for the origin of life (whether by prebiotic chemical synthesis or by more direct means) is due to the action of God. However, those of us who believe in biblical creation must be very clear what we mean when we say that the origin of life is due to the action of God. Certainly we mean that God, not blind chance or random accident, created life. But do we require God to create vegetative life *ex nihilo* (out of nothing)? Or does the interpretation of Scripture allow for the use of inorganic materials to assemble