

generic words for its god, it never defines him, it magnifies the "American Way," it has its own saints (Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln) and its own shrines (mostly in Washington, DC). Its holy day is July 4 and it holds that the USA is a "god-favored" nation. Schmidt attacks the Masons, the authors of the 1786 Virginia Religious Freedom Act, and even the U.S. Constitution (a hand offered to future polytheists). He concludes by arguing that "faith" is not to be equated with "religion." As an example, the phrase "Hindu religion," is OK; the phrase "Hindu faith" is without meaning. The word "interfaith," he says, is an oxymoron. He concludes with four scriptural arguments forbidding Christians from participating in civil religious exercises.

Adams returns again with "The Church in the Public Square in a Pluralistic Society." Summarizing the preceding essays, he presents ten theses, all keyed to recognizing that American Civil Religion is the state religion, and warning Christians against it.

Two short essays conclude the book. Adams writes about the tensions involved in being a Christian, the experience of living as "strangers in a strange land." He writes at length on "the scandal of particularity," and the need to not confuse the two kingdoms, the church and the secular realm.

Finally, Mark Sell writes on the two kingdom concept. It is best to read this essay first before engaging the other authors, for it is foundational to what they have to say.

I found the book interesting; it gave me insight into some of my Christian brothers with whom I have issues. I recommend everyone read it and Lutherans buy it.

Reviewed by John W. Burgeson, Rico Community Church, Rico, CO.



Letters

Serial Endosymbiosis Theory and the Hierarchy of *rps* Genes

I agree with Michael Buratovich concerning the validity of the serial endosymbiosis theory, and that neo-Darwinian mechanics alone do not explain the grand history of universal phylogeny (*PSCF* 57, no. 2 [June 2005]: 98-113). However, I disagree with the Buratovich hypothesis that the hierarchal transfer of ribosomal protein small unit (*rps*) genes from mitochondrial genomes to nuclear genomes indicates inbuilt Intelligent Design (ID) instead of neo-Darwinian mechanics, where inbuilt ID involves "purposeful forces that are wholly natural in their scope and activity."

Buratovich explains that the hierarchal transfer of *rps* genes relates to the importance of each *rps* gene to the function of the ribosome. This suggests that the hierarchal transfer of *rps* genes relates to the selective advantage of the particular *rps* genes. And basic population genetics probability indicates that the percent of selective advantage of a particular mutation relates to the probability of fixation by natural selection for the particular mutation.

Likewise, the percent of selective advantage of particular *rps* genes relates to its probability of fixation that results in gene transfer from a mitochondrial genome to a nuclear genome. This indicates that probabilistic neo-Darwinian mechanics alone could have been responsible for the hierarchal transfer of *rps* genes.

Perhaps the major flaw of the Buratovich hypothesis is that Buratovich seeks to find inbuilt ID other than neo-Darwinian mechanics in the processes of evolutionary genetics. While I encourage an exhaustive search for inbuilt biological ID, I conjecture that biologists will never find inbuilt ID apart from neo-Darwinian mechanics. But outside manipulation may have occurred in natural history.

James E. Goetz
7 North West Street
Coudersport, PA 16915
jimgoetz316@yahoo.com

Soul-Doctrine

Jeeves and Rüst grant that common soul doctrine is unfounded in Scripture (*PSCF* 57, no. 3 [Sept. 2005] 170-86; 191-201). But both seem concerned over how to discard mythology without becoming heretics. Only in real Protestantism can one suggest that both Plato and Calvin were incompetent on the subject of the Hebrew "soul."

Realizations about Greek ghosts have long existed among the "patently heretical" notions (p. 188) that Siemens (*PSCF* 57, no. 3 [Sept. 2005]: 187-90) is anxious to label and condemn. Tyndale and Luther both taught that the Greek immortal soul doctrine and its dualism are in clear opposition to Scripture.¹

Rüst grants souls only to higher animals. However, the seas brought forth "abundantly the moving souls" during creation (Gen. 1:20). This unique *abundance* suits Cambrian invertebrates.

The meaning of the Hebrew term for living animals—translated "soul"—is in Scripture, not Greek philosophy. Tyndale realized that Greek doctrine steals Christ's argument by which he proved the Resurrection. Abraham is alive, and this *proves* he will physically awaken. No mention is made of the alien notion of ghosts awake in heaven.

Scripture speaks of identity, not a ghost addition. Animals *are* souls. Humans *are* souls. Adam was not given a soul; he *became* a soul. The *religious* "soul" is no more (or less) than "person," "self" or "creature." It includes such abstract, but physically linked realities as thought, feeling and memory—but never *apart* from the physical. The Resurrection is God's anti-Greek declaration of reorganizing this *very same dust*. Humans struggle to accept the audacious claim, primarily because they demand immediate gratification over millennial patience.

Jesus is the *one unique person* ascended to heaven. David is still in his tomb (Acts 2). Further, Paul did *not* offer condolences by claiming the dead to be awake in heaven; instead, he gave assurance that the sleepers would be gloriously awakened—literally. The physicality of resurrection is crucial to the Gospel message. Orthodoxy rejected extreme Gnosticism and came to regard its own moderate infection of the disease as correct.

These articles make little mention of *spirit*, and little is known. The spirit-breath-wind is given up at the sleep of death. Marvelously, the action is reflected physically, and its ephemeral continuance is physical. Jesus' spirit-breath was commended unto God; his *soul* (identity) went to the grave (Sheol or hades, *not* Hell-Fire).

Siemens raises the heresy stakes by charging the "impossibility of accounting for the Incarnation ... something too important to ignore" (p. 190). Trinitarians might fold, but Scripture calls the bluff and raises one Messiah, the Son of Humankind, the *declared* son of God, the man given David's throne, the *unique* High Priest at the right hand of the Almighty. Scripture raises one physical Resurrection of the just and the unjust that "shall be" rather than "is" (Acts 24:15). Siemens' support is the "original version of the Nicene Creed," *originally* a controversial, human-authored *law* that bloodily divided the empire. This tool of tyranny—fashioned three centuries after Christ—is called an "ancient universal creed" (p. 190), though hundreds of equally "ancient" heresies contradict the creed.

The ghost-soul has "called in question" the "Resurrection of the dead" (Acts 24:21). If all believers have gone into the presence of God at their deaths, the monumental importance of Jesus' resurrection is negated. Behind this are indeed the high stakes of deification, which nullifies the Gospel message that God has proved the coming Day of Resurrection for *humankind* (Acts 17:31). Incarnation denies the sign of resurrection and says the explanation is a routine Greek myth. Jesus becomes alive like any resurrected god or immortal soul. It does not matter whether the gardener did it or his wife. Many imply Jesus did it.

Humanity's "image" (*shadow*) and the identity of the Great Light are both obscured behind the *image of deification*. This over-elevation of the shadow of God in humanity is a worship of image. Jesus the perfect *icon* is an image. Worship of the heavenly Son of Humankind on a stake is the same as worship of the brass *image* Moses raised up. Jesus foretold the required symmetry between these events. Greek deification mythology has "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," turning Paul's words into prophecy (Rom. 1:23).

Notes

¹For a presentation of Tyndale's and Luther's views on the subject, as well as a good general overview and a slate of *mostly* correct conclusions, see Mark H. Graeser, John A. Lynn, and John W. Schoenheit, *Is There Death After Life?* (Indianapolis, IN: Christian Educational Services, 1991). Tyndale is quoted at length on pp. 8–9. Luther is quoted on p. 24 and p. 66.

Derek Eshelbrenner
3657 CR 1500
Havana, KS 67347

Did Isaac Oversimplify His Categories?

I fear that Randy Isaac, "From Gaps to God" (*PSCF* 57, no. 3 [Sept 2005]: 230–3), condenses his introduction too much, for he appears to shortchange some areas of natural knowledge and to oversimplify the applicable categories. While it is legitimate to focus on the sciences, he passes too quickly to them as if they form the whole of natural knowledge. However, historical studies seem to be as natural

as anthropology, psychology and sociology. Aborigines, though without science in their tribal condition, appear to have a great deal of accurate information about the plants and animals in their environment. Another area that may be included is the foundation of science, like the claim that the universe is understandable. Surely the foundation of empirical knowledge is also knowledge, although it cannot be demonstrated empirically.

As to the categories given, the recognized known, K, is obvious, although human fallibility and the corrigibility of science were not mentioned. What is labeled K is always tentative. With the unknown, Isaac suggests only U_K , what we know that we do not know, and U_U , where we know that we cannot know. An additional subcategory involves what is hidden from us because we do not even have enough information to anticipate it. Examples in the past are Kepler's elliptical orbit of Mars before he painfully worked it out; the range of electromagnetic radiation before the work of Faraday, Maxwell, and several others; $E=mc^2$ before Einstein's publication. Unfortunately, U_H cannot be labeled until after the fact.

An additional category is embedded in the facetious "It ain't what we don't know that gives us the most trouble; it's what we know for sure that just ain't so." Indeed, here are Augustine's view that there cannot be Antipodeans, for they would fall off; Cavendish's dephlogisticated air; Carnot's caloric; and oxygen, because Lavoisier thought it the essential element in acids. In the modern world, we find the belief, notable in Sagan and Dawkins, that science proves atheism. But what is not known because mistaken, U_M , will raise acrimonious debate from those who are sure it is K.

David F. Siemens, Jr.
ASA Fellow
Canyon Institute for Advanced Studies at Grand Canyon University
Phoenix, AZ 85017
dfsiemensjr@juno.com

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Fax: (978) 356-4375
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