

Book review: God and design, edited by Neil A.Manson

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- *From:* Anthony Campbell <ac@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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[moderator's note: This treads VERY close to the line, in my view, of what is acceptable in this newsgroup. Because it is simply a book review, I've elected to allow it. I am not going to allow further discussion of "Design" here. – JAH]

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Neil A.Manson (editor)

GOD AND DESIGN

The teleological argument and modern science

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The Argument from Design has a long history in Western thought and has often been one of the main reasons advanced to justify a belief in God. It has, however, been frequently criticised, notably by David Hume. So far as biology is concerned, most people today think design has been decisively discredited by Darwinism. Contrary to what was so often alleged, the appearance of design in the natural world is just that – appearance but nothing more.

If design is pretty well dead so far as biology is concerned,

however, the same is not true of cosmology. Since the middle of the twentieth century it has been increasingly recognized, first, that the Universe began in the Big Bang, and second, that it has laws and properties that make it suitable for life but which apparently could easily have been quite different; even small changes in some of these values would have made it impossible for life to occur.

Although most scientists are reluctant to conclude from this that the Universe has been designed, it seems difficult to deny that it appears to have been designed, and theists have naturally taken up this idea and run with it. In the absence of any very obvious reason why the Universe should have the