

# EDITORIAL

## WHEN ASSUMPTIONS CEASE TO BE ASSUMPTIONS

If we were prohibited from using assumptions, regardless of their implication or complexity, civilization as we know it today would cease to function properly. While this statement may seem brash at first, let us take a minute or two and examine the consequences of such a statement. Before proceeding, let me define what an assumption is. Turning to my preferred lexicon (**Webster's Unabridged**, of course!) **assumption** is defined as: "the supposition that something is true." **Supposition** is defined as "to believe in as true in absence of positive knowledge or of evidence to the contrary." In other words, an assumption is the adoption of a position that an aspect or statement is true, *even though* there may not be positive evidence to support that position! Let me illustrate.

The whole foundation of credit is based upon assumptions. First, the grantor of credit assumes that the grantee will pay his bill at the proper time. Second, the acceptor of credit assumes that the grantor of credit will disburse the funds. This continues on down the line from individual to international. Granted, there is some evidence whether or not one's credit is good; however, the whole concept of credit still hinges on the assumption of ultimate remuneration.

Another example based entirely upon assumptions is the guarantee. Many times an individual will purchase the item with the "best" guarantee when making a choice between two equivalent items. But, what is a guarantee? It is nothing more than the assumption that the company offering the guarantee: 1) is going to stay in business and 2) will comply with the stipulations of the guarantee. If either assumption is not met, the guarantee is not worth the paper upon which it is written.

Moving from the mundane to the more esoteric aspects, we observe that major segments of the sciences are based upon assumptions. What happens if these assumptions are incorrect or are accepted as truth without challenge? What happens when a scientific assumption moves across that sometimes-hazy line between assumption and truth? When does that assumption cease to be an assumption? Should that assumption be accepted unchallenged? These are questions that merit serious consideration.

There are many areas of science in which proclaimed assumptions make little or no influence to the average citizen. However, in the area of **origins** the assumptions of scientists may have immeasurable implications

for the average citizen's philosophy. In light of this strong influence, let us examine two major assumptions about origins in detail.

The first assumption is that all life originated through the processes of evolution. The second assumption is that life on planet Earth has existed for millions of years. The first assumption instantly constrains the second assumption to be factual, because it seems impossible to evolve life to its current level of complexity in a short period of time.

It has been forcefully asserted that the preponderance of evidence supports the evolution of life from abiotic material. One of the strongest sources of evidence cited in favor of evolution is the geologic column. At the bottom of the column, in the Precambrian sediments, are found fossil bacteria. Above these layers, beginning in the Cambrian, are found fossils of simple "lower" life forms. A progression of "complexity" is then declared to flow upward through the column until modern forms are found at the top of the column. It is this progression from "simple" to "complex" that is the nucleus of the supporting evidence for evolution. But what about the other evidence to the contrary?! What about the extreme complexity of the "simple" bacteria cell? What about the chemical processes taking place within that "simple" cell? Irrespective of its position within the geologic column, the cellular complexity defies statistically random processes!

The assumption about the length of time for the existence of life is derived from the radiometric ages of the rocks associated with the various fossils. At this point our problems become compounded, because absolute radiometric age dates are also based upon a series of assumptions, the greatest of these being the **Zero Reset hypothesis**. (This hypothesis assumes that the radioisotope pairs before and after a geologic event are always differentiated.) Many times, in the scientific literature, the zero-reset hypothesis has been demonstrated to be an unreliable assumption. The criteria for its applicability is never firmly established, but instead varies from situation to situation as circumstances and results dictate.

For many, the assumptions of evolutionary beginnings and long ages have ceased to be acknowledged as assumptions and are accepted as true. This unchallenged approbation of assumption as truth results in sometimes-interesting consequences.

One of the most paradoxical consequences that ensues from the approbation of evolution as fact is the acceptance of spontaneous generation for the "beginning" of life on the one hand, but the total repudiation of such processes on the other hand. The acceptance of evolution as fact necessitates the endorsement of untenable chemical reactions under

unrealistic conditions occurring at absurdly small statistical probabilities for life to begin. In short, by accepting evolutionary processes for the origin of life, one must deny any evidence which supports another paradigm, or interpret that evidence in such a manner as to support evolution, regardless of the position such an interpretation may demand.

When an assumption ceases to be an assumption, the investigator is led in one of two directions. If the assumption is supported by the data, then the path should lead towards ultimate TRUTH and understanding. On the other hand, if the cessation of an assumption requires the investigator to adopt an unreasonable and/or illogical interpretation of data, the path cannot help but lead ultimately away from TRUTH!

As mortal members of modern society, we must be willing to recognize that assumptions are not always testable; therefore, we must attempt to validate every assumption before we accept it as fact. We must be willing to search for assumptions that fit as much data as possible, realizing that assumptions which have been proven either true or false are no longer assumptions. Only when such a course is charted will ultimate TRUTH become available, and maybe not even then.

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