

REACTIONS

Readers are invited to submit their reactions to the articles in our journal. Please address contributions to: ORIGINS, Geoscience Research Institute, 11060 Campus St., Loma Linda, California 92350 USA.

RE: BROWN: GEO AND COSMIC CHRONOLOGY (ORIGINS 8:20-45)

I wish to compliment R.H. Brown and the editors of ORIGINS for making the data of “Geo and Cosmic Chronology” available to your readers. There seems to be a definite need for this subject matter and the style is quite fitting. All too often the Genesis creation week account is assumed to record the origin of our solar system, galaxy, etc., without critical study into the assumption.

More significant than the data itself is Brown’s forthright statement of his “basic hermeneutic principle that the books of nature and the Scriptures should be consistent with each other.” As thoughtful Protestants it is all too easy to fall into the error of applying *sola scriptura* loosely to everything covered by Scripture. In selecting his hermeneutic principle he chooses a principle that will be neither popular nor easy. I commend him for selecting this approach.

William M. Allen
Professor of Chemistry
Loma Linda University
Riverside, California

The review article by Dr. R. Brown on “Geo and Cosmic Chronology” is informative and puzzling. Informative in that Brown appears to be taking a major step toward amassing evidence for an old inorganic earth, something which has not been so boldly done in “apologetic scientific creationism.” Brown cited several lines of evidence for the age of matter using an annotated bibliographical style. References were organized, and appropriate disclaimers were made concerning lack of reference completeness.

The puzzling nature of Brown’s paper stems from an apparent lack of depth when he launches into a discussion of theological implications. Does Brown suggest that these are his own selection of the options? Further, do they reflect the review nature of his paper? Where are the references supporting these issues?

It is my view that Brown’s theological issues section was not treated with any of the rigor apparent in the rest of his article. Its presence raises serious questions about the necessity of the “addendum” to an otherwise scholarly paper.

Charles J. Amlaner, Jr.
Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences
Walla Walla College
College Place, Washington

RE: BROWN: SCIENTIFIC CREATIONISM? (ORIGINS 8:57-58)

I felt Dr. Brown presented a reasonable approach to the too enthusiastic expressions of some in the creationist position. Yet when I turned to page 58 and came to the word “neutral” I was caused to wonder along with another reader. Since I hold that basically all facts are either oriented with God or against God, then “neutral” seemed a strange word.

Then “it science is to be taught soundly” was a phrase that led me to wonder further since quite technically “origins” questions are formally outside of proper, orderly scientific investigations. This assertion seems realized even by an evolutionist spokesman at June 1982 Pacific section of AAAS. (By evolutionist Root-Bernstein: at least, from my reading of his paper.)

In short *if* origins are to be discussed at all in the science classrooms of America, then students should be most carefully apprised of the fact that such discussions are *outside* the purview of proper, orderly science. Rigorously such discussions are centered in metaphysics, or as Root-Bernstein expressed it: in statements of *metascientific* nature.

John N. Moore
East Lansing, Michigan

R.H. BROWN REPLIES:

I understand your concern over my use of the term “neutral.” I intended to use it in the sense of uninvolved with biblical specifications, and as a means for emphasizing that there is a strong philosophical and scientific basis for creationism entirely apart from the testimony of the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures.

My contention is that science cannot be taught soundly if such teaching includes a one-sided view of origins. As you point out, if consideration is given to origins in scientific instruction, it must be emphasized that any consideration of origins is metascientific.

RE: NEWS AND COMMENTS: ARKANSAS ACT 590 (ORIGINS 8:46-48)

When the ACLU challenged the Arkansas law requiring a balanced treatment of evolution and creation-science, they based their argument on the claim that since creation-science got its inspiration from statements in the Bible, it must be religious. The judge followed the same line of thought, and ruled that the fact that creation-science supposes a Creator, makes it religious and therefore unconstitutional.

This petition arose from a misunderstanding of the meaning of creation and creation-science, and their relation to religion. According to Funk and Wagnall’s Dictionary, religion is “a belief binding the spiritual nature of man to a supernatural being.” Creationism, as a religious dogma, involves, of course, belief in God as the Creator. But creation-science does not do this. Why? That is what we wish to explore.

Millions believe, and have believed for thousands of years, that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). And these millions are not always ignorant; they have included some of the keenest minds. Therefore it is not reasonable for anyone who may not believe in a Creator to deny the *possibility* that the creationists *might* be right. Once it is admitted that such an origin is within the bounds of possibility, it is only just and fair to investigate the matter, and to see if the facts of science might perhaps fit the creation model as well as, or better than the evolution model.

By *model* we mean a set of criteria by which we judge which mode of origin seems to be the most likely. Evolutionists set up an evolution model, around which they gather an array of scientific data that they feel support their concept of a slow, gradual development of life on the earth. Creationists set up the model around which they arrange the facts of science that they feel lend support to the theory of origin by supernatural intervention.

Correlation of scientific facts with the two models does not mean that one has an obligation to accept either view. One may admit the possibility of direct creation and admit that there is a wealth of facts supporting that concept, and yet not allow these facts to demand that he believe in supernatural origin. He might still believe evolution to be a superior concept.

On the other hand, since many sincere Christians believe in the Creation doctrine, it is only fair that when their children are brought face to face with the question of origins, they should be given a chance to know the facts on both sides of the question, and to make up their own minds as to which concept is the most satisfactory.

Both evolutionists and creationists freely admit that their views cannot be proved scientifically. Outstanding evolutionists declare without hesitation that evolution is a “way of thinking,” but that the facts of science cannot prove that this way is right. The same is true for creation. Creation-science organizes the facts around the creation concept, but that cannot prove this concept to be true. All that can be done is to present the scientific evidence, and leave every individual to draw his own conclusions.

Parents rightfully object to the procedure in the public schools of presenting only one side of the question. They demand that their children be shown that there is more than one possible mode of origin of the earth and its life.

To present to the children the evidence that creation scientists have gathered in support of the creation concept *is not religious*. It is simply a study of evidences that creationists believe support the concept of origin by creation. Of course there has to be a supernatural Being to perform the act of creation, but a mere study of the evidences for this mode of origin does not demand belief in God as the Sovereign of one’s life. The religious aspect of the case is another matter.

In conclusion, therefore, when the ACLU or any scientists or anyone else claim that presenting a “balanced treatment” of the two views regarding the origin of the earth and its life is religion, they are confusing religion with a mere factual presentation of the evidence bearing on the two different concepts of origin. It is only fair and just that both sides of the question should be given in an honest, open consideration, and that the children be left free to accept whichever view they feel is most satisfactory. They should not be expected to accept as truth what is only theoretical. Theory may be debatable; but everyone has a right to his own convictions, a right no one can deny. A fair presentation of both sides of the question in no way demands nor forbids a religious view.

H.W. Clark
Calistoga, California