REFLECTIONS IN MY FINAL YEAR AS PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY

WILBERT H. RUSCH, SR*

Received 14 November 1986; Revised 31 March 1987

Abstract

Biology textbooks for classroom use are discussed. A history of the Creation Research Society (CRS) and an evaluation of its work as seen by an old warrior is presented.

Origins and Textbooks

As part of the experience of my final year as CRS President, I have engaged in a certain amount of introspection as well as retrospection on my whole tour of duty with the Society. However, my thoughts took a new turn. I received a telephone call from a San Antonio newspaper. It seems that some of the staff wanted to arrange an interview over the telephone with me, that would take place about an hour later. The subject of this discussion had to do with the current Texas textbook adoption controversy. A hearing was to take place shortly regarding the recommended adoptions for a new set of science high school textbooks in the public schools of Texas. The controversy was over the fact (as I understood it) that there was a total lack of any reference to macroevolution in the recommended books proposed for adoption. Various members of the scientific community in Texas were understandably upset of this adoption.

Naturally with only at best an hour's notice, I was not about to get involved in that sort of situation. It was unsatisfactory in terms of a lack of sufficient time for preparation, e.g. collecting references, doing the requisite preliminary reading, ascertaining all of the facts in the story, as well as all the other aspects of a proper preparation. So I declined.

*Wilbert H. Rusch, Sr., M.S., L.L.D., receives his mail at 2717 Cranbrook Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

However, the main point in the matter was that I was not sure that I was not in sympathy with the Texas scientists. After all I have always felt that there were inherent serious problems with either of these two extreme sides; either a text with an entire utterly biased macroevolutionary stance, or a text with an entire creation stance. In any case it certainly should be clear by now that producing the latter situation would never survive a court challenge.

Thinking back through my own career, I have taught courses in biology and as well as in geology for over 30 years in a number of church colleges as well as in an occasional public secular school. Naturally the subject of 'origins' always appeared in the subject matter. Macroevolution was discussed in my classes many times. No proper teacher could escape the matter. So what would be the point or need in insisting that there be no discussion of macroevolution in the text? Of course in my case, I have always had the opportunity to contribute the creation side of the argument.

Among the courses I taught in my final years of active teaching was one entitled 'Evolution.' In that particular course I had no compunctions in using as a text William D. Stansfield's *The Science of Evolution* (1977). I chose this book because it was the one text of which I was aware that recognized the existence of creation as an alternative proposal. Of course, Stansfield, being a macroevolutionist, presented the theory of evolution, as he saw it, at every turn of the road. Although he presented it at times as theory, usually at the beginning of a new section, shortly he would slip into discussing macroevolution as if it were factual.

But Stansfield was always fair enough that somewhere he also presented some of the creation side. For example, he did include some 36 points that had been raised by Norman Macbeth in his work, *Darwin Retried* (1971) as difficulties to the theory (pp. 573-79). To my surprise he also presented a number of points that Macbeth raised showing the religious devotion toward the theory found among many macroevolutionists (p. 577-8). In addition, he also presented a discussion of the criticisms presented in Moorhead, P. S. and M. M. Kaplan, editors. 1967. *Mathematical Challenges to the Neo-Darwinian Theory*. The Wistar Institute Press. Philadelphia (pp. 571-3).*

To the best of my knowledge, Stansfield's text was the only one on the subject of macroevolution in the United States that seemed to make at least an attempt at presenting both sides of the matter of origins.

As documentation of his approach, I would present two quotes from Stansfield (1977):

> It would be quite wrong for the student of evolution to obtain the impression from reading this or any other text on evolution that adequate answers have now been found to all the problems in this field. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Many of the questions that troubled Darwin are still being raised today. (p. 571)

And again:

> It is not within the scope of this or any other textbook to attempt to answer, one by one, all of the criticisms that have been leveled at the theory of evolution. This would indeed be a herculean task. Darwin did an admirable job for his time, in anticipating the jabs of his critics. More recent publications by other evolutionists have usually been lax by comparison in this regard. Several current publications are written for the express purpose of criticizing evolutionary theory, rather than explaining its basic principles. This is a healthy situation, for these authors bring to light many of the unresolved problems that are a source of embarrassment to evolutionists. (p. 574)

And finally:

> These are indeed danger signs, for scientists cannot allow themselves the privilege of irrevocable commitment to any one idea, theory, or model. Their minds must ever remain open to the possibilities in alternative conceptual schemes. Bigotry in other areas of human endeavor can sometimes be excused on the basis that no methodological framework is available to prohibit same. But scientists cannot use this excuse; bigotry has no place in science. (p. 588)

So without apology or opposition I used Stansfield's book as the text in my course. In addition, I also had the opportunity to demonstrate via Stansfield the bias among macroevolutionists in favor of the theory. For example, despite the many disclaimers found among embryologists today, Stansfield nevertheless included the well-known series of drawings that originated with Haeckel, with the caption 'Comparison of Vertebrate Embryos at Three Different Stages of Embryonic Development.' This naturally gave me a beautiful opportunity to bring my article (1969) into play, in which I had demonstrated the fraudulent nature of Haeckel's work. I will leave to your imagination how effective that situation was in at least raising some doubts about the validity of, as well as the methods used in supporting macroevolution. So I allowed the use of evolutionary texts and discussion about the various aspects of evolutionary thought in my classroom. Naturally, I was using every opportunity of selling the creationist point of view.

If we return for a moment to Stansfield's remarks about the scientist remaining completely free of bias, I fear that is an unattainable goal. No matter how much any scientist claims that he is utterly free of bias, or completely isolated in his scientific reasoning from any effect of his personal philosophy or beliefs, I am afraid that I would simply doubt his position. I am reminded of an essay by James B. Conant (1964) where he pointed out the following:

> There is a fairly common fallacy that if you are dealing with scientific and technical matters, judgment of values rarely, if ever, enters in. Facts speak for themselves in science we are often told. Anyone who is familiar with the course of scientific research and development knows this is nonsense . . . The notion that a scientist is a cool, impartial, and detached individual is, of course, absurd. Their vehemence of conviction, the pride of authorship, burn as fiercely among scientists as among any creative workers (p. 221)

Another noted evolutionist has frankly admitted that he has a bias towards punctuated equilibrium because

*A detailed book review of this symposium is as follows: Williams, Emmett L. 1968. *CRSQ*. 5:123-6.

of his prediliction towards Marxism.

Obviously in teaching biology, one cannot omit the subject of macroevolution, particularly since it is necessary to point out the differences in the two concepts; microevolution and macroevolution. Much of the whole argument for creation hinges on this point (See Howe, 1981). Actually, what I am really working for is the end of that situation which seems to be prevalent in many regions, where the theory of evolution is presented as being utterly and without doubt factual. In addition, any student wishing to hold to his belief in creation is often ridiculed or discriminated against because of his belief. This situation must not be allowed to continue.

A more honest and scientific approach is demonstrated in the following: In 1981, the Natural History Museum in South Kensington, England opened a new exhibition on Darwinism. The first thing a visitor sees is a notice:

> Have you ever wondered why there are so many different kinds of living things?
>
> One idea is that all the living things we see today have EVOLVED from a distant ancestor by a process of gradual change.
>
> How could evolution have occurred? How could one species change into another?
>
> The exhibition in this hall looks at one possible explanation—the explanation first thought of by Charles Darwin.

A little further down the hall a poster actually admits:

> Another view is that God created all living things, perfect and unchanging.

The journal *Nature* made reply to such open-mindedness in an editorial headed 'Darwin's Death in South Kensington.' It quotes a phrase from the Museum's latest brochure; "If the theory of evolution is true . . ." as evidence of the "rot at the Museum." The editorial went on to say (Anon., 1981):

> The new exhibition policy, the Museum's chief interaction with the outside world, is being developed in some degree of isolation from the museum's staff of distinguished biologists, most of whom would rather lose their right hands than begin a sentence with the phrase "If the theory of evolution is true . . ." (p. 735)

The editor of *Nature* subsequently published a letter (Ball, et al., 1981) signed by 22 of the museum's staff of distinguished biologists:

> Sir—As working biologists at the British Museum we were astonished to read your editorial "Darwin's Death in South Kensington" *(Nature* 26 February, p. 735). How is it that a journal such as yours that is devoted to science and its practice can advocate that a theory be presented as fact? This is the stuff of prejudice, not science, and as scientists our basic concern is to keep an open mind on the unknowable. Surely it should not be otherwise?
>
> You suggest that most of us would rather lose our right hands than begin a sentence with the phrase "If the theory of evolution is true . . ." Are we to take it that evolution is a fact, proven to the limits of scientific rigor? If that is the inference then we disagree most strongly. We have no absolute proof of the theory of evolution. What we do have is overwhelming circumstantial evidence in favor of it and as yet no better alternative. But the theory of evolution would be abandoned tomorrow if a better theory appeared. (p. 82)

The question also might be asked why orthodox Darwinians are so sure of their conclusions, yet ready to admit that the evidence is woefully incomplete. The simple answer could well be that evolution has really become a faith. See Midgeley (1986) and Macbeth (1971).

A possible desirable end would be the appearance of a textbook on the subject of origins, written by a pair of authors, one a creationist and the other an evolutionist. But the evolutionist would have to be one who is not afraid to present the utterly theoretical nature of macroevolution. It is the one-sided, biased, and at times outright misrepresentational approach used in most texts today, that I find so offensive.

I probably would even settle for a text that presents the evolutionary side, but is honest in admitting and presenting the difficulties of macroevolution. To my knowledge, Stansfield (1977) is the only one that comes even close to this requirement.

But this is far different from requiring a text that does not even mention the theory of macroevolution. Feeling as I do on this matter, you can see how I would have been uncomfortable in the requested interview, and therefore not a desirable representative for the Texas school of thought. So in addition to the short notice, I fear that I would not have been a good witness of the status quo; hence I had a further reason for declining the invitation.

Creation Research Society

This whole episode for some reason brought me back to other thoughts. Recently I was sitting in my study preparatory to working on a possible paper. In a moment of relaxation, I began to reflect on the change in the situation in our country with regards to this whole matter of origins. As I contemplated the size of the mailing which we had just sent out, and as I looked at the quality of the current *Creation Research Society Quarterly,* and finally thought of our developing research program and facilities, I had to recognize again how God has blessed this project we call the Creation Research Society. I compared this picture with the time of our first mailing in July of 1964. What a difference! No pictures whatever, a far thinner journal, a membership of several hundred at most, etc.

As one of the 10 individuals who started this venture on its way I never dreamed of the possibility of the degree of success we have had in the course of these more than 20 years. I often have wondered if we had known the future, what would we have done differently? What would our fate have been had we organized on simply a scientific basis, without any religious references in our statement of belief? Would the Indiana adoption under those conditions have held up? How would this have affected the outcome of the Arkansas trial, to say nothing of our whole future?

I remember that we were optimistic about the future beyond what we had any right to expect. In those days, creationism apparently was of no account

or interest except to the faithful in conservative churches and schools, along with their pastors and faculties. The science personnel of that day did not even see fit to consider the subject of creation, much less pay any attention to us. I do not remember seeing the subject of creation even mentioned in any text on either high school or college level. Now hardly a day goes by without the appearance of some new item on the subject of creationism vs macroevolution appearing in some paper. The subject, as evident by my telephone call, is NEWS.

Creationist and Evolutionist Books

Probably the times were right in those days for our particular stone to ripple the waters. Four years before our appearance, the Darwin Centennial had been celebrated. The papers were published under the editorship of Sol Tax in a three volume work. As an answer to this event, a book, *Darwin, Evolution and Creation,* edited by Paul A. Zimmerman (1959), with John Klotz, Ray Surburg and myself as contributors, made its appearance. Generally the reviews by the liberal church press were unfavorable. Scientific journals ignored it in their book reviews, as did the secular press. However, it was praised by the few conservative reviewers. Today, although out of print, it still would seem to have a market. It is listed in the bibliography of a number of secular texts, even Stansfield (1977) p. 588.

In some of these bibliographies it is also joined by *The Genesis Flood,* by Morris and Whitcomb. This latter book, although appearing some years later, generally had the same reception, with the exception of the reviewers from the discipline of geology. Attacking as it did the basic assumptions of historical geology, this book caused workers in this field to immediately react in an exceptionally hostile and virulent fashion. However, the book still stands as a creationist landmark work in the area of geology.

Finally, there was the appearance of the BSCS (Biological Sciences Curriculum Study) texts. The utterly uncompromising macroevolutionary basis of these texts caused many Christian parents to become greatly exercised. Rightly they feared the resulting brainwashing of their children by the macroevolutionary doctrine promulgated, leaving them helpless to intervene. Protests were organized on larger and larger scales. The most effective was when two Orange County housewives, Jean Sumrall and Nell Seagraves took on the California State Board of Education. It was into this turmoil that the *Creation Research Society Quarterly* arrived. The first issue appeared in July 1964 as a small journal without any photographs (we could not afford them). But it did contain some good solid, meaty articles, representing in a scholarly manner the minority viewpoint on origins. Since then, the battle has intensified. Today I do not think any knowledgeable individual in the field of macroevolution or creation has not heard of our journal. Our membership still stands at near 2,000, and is now worldwide. We even have a slight penetration behind the iron curtain!

Then, although the Creation Science Movement, formerly known as the Evolution Protest Movement, was still functioning in England, in the U.S., the CRS practically stood alone. Today, however, we now find over 59 creationist organizations all over the world. Likewise there are also in this day many creationist orientated journals, tapes, seminars, conferences flourishing as the green bay tree. Some, like Loma Linda's journal Origins, are excellent and definitely can be classed as scholarly efforts.

Conclusions

In reflecting on what we really have accomplished through these more than 20 years, I feel that it has been the steady devotion to what we had in mind in the beginning; that being to acquaint our fellow Christians in the field with the numerous evidences that indicate there is no necessity to surrender to the forces of macroevolution. Also that in this way we reinforce their decision to remain faithful to God the Creator. Further, that aim is to enable them to share with still others the information we have unearthed.

Personally, I have felt this responsibility very deeply. Believing as I do, I have held that we who work in the area of origins are to exist for the CRS, not that the CRS is to exist for our aggrandizement. Again, this also lays on us, as authors, reviewers, and editors some very great responsibilities as we produce our journal with the above ends in mind. The most important of these responsibilities would be:

a) that we always be careful to accurately document our work to the fullest extent possible;
b) that we always be careful not to quote out of context;
c) that we always be careful not to misrepresent those whom we quote;
d) that we are rigorous in our reasoning; and finally
e) that we refrain from being moved by wishful thinking.

Under c), we might further realize that we always be careful that we become aware of a possible change in the position of the person whom we quote, so that during the interim when he wrote the words quoted and the time we are writing, under such circumstances, if we become aware of such changes, we duly note the same.

I have served in various positions in the CRS from 1963 to the present. I have felt that one of the great benefits I have received during my tenure have been the countless blessings called down on my head by my many correspondents. These largely have been by creationists, who found themselves perplexed by some problems. They were in danger of capitulating to the concepts of macroevolution. Then if it has been given me to clarify such problems, and enable them to reaffirm their faith, they express their appreciation for the enlightenment I have provided. It has made all the work, sweat and sacrifices on my part through more than 20 years all worth while. I hear these voices saying to all of us: Praise the Lord and continue to pass us the ammunition!

References

Anon. 1981. Darwin's death at South Kensington. *Nature* 289:735.
Ball, H. W., et al. 1931. Darwin's survival. *Nature* 290:82.

Conant, James B. 1964. Science and human conduct in Arons, A. B. and A. M. Bork, Editors. Science and ideas. Prentice-Hall. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
Howe, George F. 1981. The biological macroevolutionary origins model is not a scientific theory. Southern California Academy of Sciences meeting. May 7.
Macbeth, Norman. 1971. Darwin retried. Gambit. Boston.
Midgeley, Mary. 1986. Darwinism as a religion. Methuen, New York.
Rusch, W. H. 1969. Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. Creation *Research Society Quarterly* 6:27-34.
Stansfield, William D. 1977. The science of evolution. Macmillan. New York.
Whitcomb, Jr., John C. and Henry M. Morris. 1963. The Genesis Flood. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. Philadelphia.
Zimmerman, Paul A. Editor. 1959. Darwin, evolution and creation. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis.

THE LAW OF SYMMETRIC VARIATION AND THE GENE-THEME MODEL

COLIN BROWN*

Received 24 January 1986; Revised 17 February 1987

Abstract

Organisms remain within their respective Genesis kinds since they obey the Law of Symmetric Variation. This is the fourth in a series of biological laws suggested by Brown (1982a) and it will be explained fully, along with the term Gene-Theme Model. The evidence for the latter will be discussed in conjunction with the fossil record.

The Operation of Symmetric Variation

A chain of limiting factors serves to keep organisms within their respective Genesis kinds. First, most amino acids have more than one codon coding for them. For example, alanine has four codons, namely GCU, GCC, GCA and GCG. Arginine has six codons, AGA, AGG, CGU, CGC, CGA and CGG.

With such an arrangement, we have a form of symmetry which protects against major changes. For example, in the case of arginine, a change from one of its codons (say AGA) to another in the group (CCC), will still code for arginine. This is rather like rearranging many of the individual squares on a chessboard; although some changes would produce a different pattern, many recombinations would produce a seemingly unaltered board. For example, exchange squares Al, A3, A5, with D2, D4, D6 and a seemingly unaltered board is the result.

Secondly, depending on their molecular structure every amino acid belongs to one chemical group or another. Changes from one amino acid to another of the same group will, as a rule, produce only minor changes in protein. Changes from one group to another, in which two groups do not differ too sharply from one another will, as a rule, be more readily acceptable.

Changes from one group to another vastly different group can cause harmful or lethal results. There may be times when the change from one group to another would appear likely to cause harmful or lethal results but, in fact, does not upset the balanced mechanism of embryonic development. Under such circumstances the change would cause only modification within the kind and nothing more, because the plan of that organism's Genesis kind in its embryonic development dictates everything, in the sense that any change has to conform to that plan.

Therefore, the smaller the effect of any change, the better the prospect of its spreading through the population, because there would be less chance of the change unbalancing embryonic development (Abercrombie, Hickman and Johnson, 1974. p. 186).

Most point mutations will cause either no change in the amino acids or only minor changes in protein, hence the term 'symmetric variation.' Useful mutations, when they do arise, will affect amino acid selection as mentioned earlier.

In recent work carried out on mouse cells, biologists damaged the DNA of the cells by exposing them to ultraviolet radiation. Within 24 hours, 85 percent of them were returned to the normal state. In similar work carried out on bacteria, all were returned to normal over a very short period (Holliday, 1979. pp. 598-600).

Of the changes that remain uncorrected, a percentage would be of a type not far removed chemically from the original and, under the right conditions, would be allowed to remain. A smaller amount of a wider differing group may, again under the right circumstances, be allowed in only because it did not upset the balanced mechanism of embryonic development, but conformed to the Law of Symmetric Variation. The remaining types would cause harmful or lethal results, therefore would be selected against. All of this would be heavily in favor of keeping organisms within their respective Genesis kinds.

I must emphasize that mutations are a rare event and would not, as a rule, occur on a scale noted in Holliday, 1979. pp. 598-600. Therefore, the Law of Symmetric Variation, together with organisms' repair systems would, as a rule, eradicate the vast majority of mutations that may arise.

Strong support for this concept can be seen in a paper by Graur (1985), in which he recognizes that similar amino acids are more easily interchangeable than dissimilar ones, due to the structure of the genetic code together with the selecting out of anything harmful. Likewise, Dolittle (1985) also recognizes this very significant fact.

*Colin Brown receives his mail at 61 Derby Road, Golborne, Warrington, WA3-3LE, England.