

Another Look At Ambrose's Book

A book review which I had submitted (*The Nature and Origin of the Biological World* by E.J. Ambrose) appeared in the December 1983 issue of the *Journal* (JASA 35, 4, 247). I found it interesting to recently read another review of this same book (by William C. Kyle, Jr. in the *Journal of College Science Teaching*, XIII, 4, Feb. 1984, pp. 324-325). The review by Kyle was very negative. He called into question for example, the professionalism of the author. He stated:

It soon becomes clear . . . that Ambrose lacks a sound understanding of that discipline with which he has worked for many years.

Kyle goes on to say,

It is apparent that this book has little to offer to the biological community and a great deal to offer to the scientific and science education community. That is, there are "scientists" who unfortunately lack a basic understanding [of] the nature of their discipline. This should be of grave concern—especially in light of current public attitude towards science.

The true nature of Kyle's criticism of Ambrose is revealed in the final paragraph. He criticizes the book because of "the obvious error of trying to present nonscientific material as science . . ." Those of us familiar with the controversies between religion and science recognize the real intent of this statement. Yet, did Ambrose actually seek to "present nonscientific material as science?" Perhaps the following statement by Ambrose will answer the question:

But we must recognize that there are ways of acquiring knowledge other than those obtained by the scientific method of successive approximations, ever approaching closer and closer to reality. As scientists we must respect these other approaches to the acquisition of knowledge.

Thus, it can be questioned whether Ambrose in reality sought to incorporate "nonscience" into the body of science. Rather, it would seem that Ambrose is merely willing to accept information from a source other than science. Is that not something that all scientists who accept Christianity have in common? Further, is that not the crux of the controversy between science and Christianity.

In my dealings with students and non-scientists, I try to point out that both science and religion (or Christianity) are ways of gaining knowledge or information. They are different in their approach to knowledge, and often in the kinds of information obtained. Yet, they can both be valid sources of information about the real world. Information from Christianity may cause one to interpret scientific data a little differently than a colleague who does not accept information from outside of science. But, does that make him any less of a scientist? I should think not.

I would hope that those of us who live in two worlds—science and Christianity—could present to the Christian community a positive view of science, and to the scientific community a positive view of Christianity.

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Correction to "Complementarity and Christian Thought—An Assessment"

In the December 1983 issue of the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* there is an error in a quotation of Donald MacKay. Four key words were inadvertently omitted and the meaning of MacKay's statement was drastically changed. On page 205 (left column) Dr. Haas' paper, as published, reads as follows:

"The longstanding problem of predestination may be handled along similar lines.

It follows that even predestinarian explanations of created events as acts of their creator cannot be reduced to mere translations of libertarian explanations in terms of human actions (such as prayer) within the created history, for it is not the facts asserted in the one explanation which are necessarily different from (though not contradictory of) those asserted in the other.¹⁹"

The quotation from Dr. MacKay should have read:

It follows that even predestinarian explanations of created events as acts of their creator cannot be reduced to mere translations of libertarian explanations in terms of human actions (such as prayer) within the created history; for it is not *the terms used but* the facts asserted in the one explanation which are necessarily different from (though not contradictory of) those asserted in the other.¹⁹

. . . I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1b-6)
