

Re: Compelling Evidence

11/9/2005

David Abbale (letters, 11/9/2005) must be have skipped a lot of science classes or he is disingenuously committing the typical creationist fallacy of supposing that there is a scientific controversy about the age of the Earth. This hasn't been the case since the 19th century when even in Darwin's day it was accepted by educated people that the earth was millions of years older than the Bible claimed. In fact when Lord Kelvin insisted that the earth was ONLY 100 million years old, Darwin and many geologists responded "too bad for physics". Guess who turned out to be right after radioactive sources of heat were discovered which made Kelvin's calculations off by a few billion years!

Let's respond to Abbale's assertions beginning with the claim that radiometric dating is "based on assumptions that are not generally published". Does he mean he can't find them on his box of corn flakes? There are thousands of papers that discuss both the precision and accuracy of radiometric data available in university and public libraries. Next he claims scientists have to assume "the clocks initial setting" and that the "clock must have remained undisturbed". Does he think scientists aren't aware of these issues? These sources of error have been exhaustively examined and corrected for decades. In fact there is not one, but a half a dozen different radiometric clocks all operating with different decay rates used in determining the age of numerous geologic environments and guess what? They all agree with each other!

The problem is that creationists and scientists are at cross purposes. Scientists are interested in accurately determining the actual history of the Earth based on careful analysis of all the evidence, while creationists like Abbale are only trying to cast doubt on well established science in the forlorn hope that this will magically create support for metaphorical fables written by men whose knowledge of science was based on the belief the Earth was flat.

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