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## Book Review

***Origins of Life.*** Jim Brooks, Lion Publishing Corporation, Herts, England; Lion Publishing Corporation, Beleville, Michigan, U.S.A. and Albatross Books; Sutherland, Australia, 1985; pp. 160, Price £ 9.95.

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We have all wondered one time or the other about the Universe and our own place in it. Who made it? When? Why? And how did it all begin? This book tries to answer these inquisitive queries and much more—the wisdom researched and gathered by scientists and philosophised by many. *Origins of Life*, the subject of the book, is a complex one. It requires knowledge of varied disciplines of sciences, like astronomy, biochemistry, geology and biology and even metaphysics. Evidences brought forward from all these varied disciplines of science have been successfully woven into a story told in a lucid style. The excellent illustrations collected from different sources, supported by colourful panoramas and diagrams provide an added attraction to an already lively presentation.

The book presents complex theories, like the Steady State Theory and the Big Bang Theory for the origin of the universe and continues to discuss the origins of stars, solar system including the earth and provides a good background of time scales, radiometric dating, interior of the earth, continental drift, evolution of biosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere, and the life through ages which are necessary to understand and appreciate the problems of origins of life. With this backdrop, the author defines life, explains theories on chemical

evolution including the importance of DNA. Fossil remains of both non-structured organic matter and structured organic micro-organisms are discussed and well illustrated.

The chapter on extinction of dinosaurs is a bit out of place in a book dealing with the theme on *Origins of Life*. The only relation one can find is the cometary hypothesis on the dinosaur extinction and the study of carbonaceous chondrites.

The author considers the views of pioneers in the field, such as J.D. Bernal, J. B. S. Haldane and A. I. Oparin to have been mainly influenced by Marxist—Leninist doctrine. The present state of our knowledge is due to the efforts of these great men of science who were only motivated by a spirit of enquiry. To consider their efforts as atheistic does not do them justice. The support their views may have given to the Marxist—Leninist theory may just be coincidental.

The author is successful in his approach in presenting latest knowledge in a compact and well-woven form. The Publishers are also worthy of commendations for an excellent publication and a good layout.

B. S. VENKATACHALA

