

5,000 million years yet. Therefore we can assume that the planets, including the earth, must be slightly younger—say 4,500 million years old. Plenty of time for the long-term creation of life in all its forms and subsequent development, as outlined in Brother Fowler's article.

Surely it is now time for us Christadelphians to honestly face the evident facts of science. Why halt between two opinions? God could have created everything in 144 hours, but it is plain that He did not. With all eternity at His disposal, why should He be in such a hurry? It appears that the universe runs on established laws (God's laws), and that mostly God uses natural methods in His creative work. Creation is a slow process usually.

Genesis was written in a non-scientific age for non-scientific people, and has been perfectly adequate for most of human history. Genesis, like the rest of the Bible, is a spiritual document. It teaches that God is the Creator of the universe and the Creator of life in all its forms.

Consider chapter 1 as an inspired forecast of the course of history since the creation of Adam. 2 Peter 3:8, "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years", hints at this interpretation. For example, the seventh day of rest speaks of the millennium, which is "a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). The creation of the sun on the fourth day is matched by the appearance of the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2), the first coming of Christ, after 4,000 years of history. Think about it. How could there be evenings and mornings, as in Genesis 1, before the sun was made, if you take it literally?

It seems that our interpretation of Genesis is the problem, not science. We do not even need to consider evolution by chance, it could never have happened. Now that we are in the twenty-first century it is time we got up to date with our thinking. If not, we are liable to drive away our young folk. As an example, the article in the Special Issue, "God—the first physicist", by John C. Bilello, is a brilliant exposition of a very difficult subject, but one which we should try to grapple with in order to increase our understanding of 'How does it all work?'.  
 May I conclude by offering a sincere word of praise to the editors of *The Testimony* for the forward thinking displayed in the production of this Special Issue? They have done a good job and deserve every commendation.

Arthur Mallinder  
Stirling

We were very disappointed to find *The Testimony* promoting 'Evolutionary Creationist' ideas in the May Special Issue. More specifically, we would disagree with Brother David Burges' statement that "The fact that these differing views can all be held by sincere believers suggests that there exists no objective way of proving which is correct". The Scriptures themselves prove that the Genesis record of Creation is to be taken literally. Israel is told: "for in six days the LORD [Yahweh] made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD [Yahweh] blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:11).

Even in the Genesis account of Creation, the statement that God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" (2:2) implies that the work had taken place up till day seven, that is, on days one to six. This precludes the idea that the six days "were days during which God revealed the Creation to Moses". We know that each day consists of an evening and a morning, so there is no reason to think that this is really "a longer epoch of time". No one who believes the Scriptures would claim that God lacked the power to complete the wonderful work of Creation in six literal days.

If modern science appears in any way to contradict this, can there be any question that we should believe God's Word rather than man's science? Paul exhorts Timothy: "keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding . . . oppositions of science [or knowledge] falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 6:20,21).

L. Maffioli, Bristol  
J. Ebbs, Colchester

I have read with keen interest the May Special Issue of *The Testimony*, entitled "Science and the Bible". If I may say so, the articles range from the sublime to the improbable. The article "[Fractals and faith](#)" by Sister Valerie Pinfield is first class, demonstrating that the orderly and beautiful world in which we live teaches us something of the character of the Creator, a God of love.

In sharp contrast, the article "[What happened to the dinosaurs?](#)" by Brother John Nicholls seems somewhat far-fetched. It appears unlikely that dinosaurs were put into the Ark and that they roamed the earth after the Flood, since it is a scientific fact that dinosaurs lived on the earth long ages before man was created. It seems a

similar flight of fancy to suggest that the “behe-moth” of Job 40:15 was a plant-eating dinosaur when it is more likely to be a description of a hippopotamus. This is the kind of thing that can bring the Truth into disrepute in the eyes of our contemporaries.

However, there is a much bigger bone to pick. In the foreword, “[Framed by the Word of God](#)”, by Brother David Burges, and in the article “[Calibrated radiocarbon dating](#)” by Brother John Watts, it is suggested that God created the world with an appearance of age. Are these two brethren really saying that God is a deceiver, and that He has fooled us into thinking that the earth is millions of years old when in reality He created it 6,000 years ago? This smacks of the notion put about when I was a boy, that God put fossils with the appearance of great age into the earth to test the faith of believers.

I would have thought that it was quite scientific, in the true sense of the word, to suppose that the earth and the fossils in it are of a vast age, certainly more than 6,000 years, as is proposed by some of your contributors.

Bill Davison  
Nottingham

### The story of Jonah and the Yanush legend

I enjoyed Sister Spencer’s article of the above title (Jun. 2001, p. 258). As well as her more general expositional points in relation to the book, I was particularly intrigued by the similarities between the Yanush legend and Jonah’s experience in the belly of a great fish. There seems every reason to suppose that this legend was still a powerful influence in Nineveh in spite of the passage of so many years. We have a hint, perhaps, of how enduring and influential such legends can be when we realise that excavations at Nineveh in modern times have been hampered by the reluctance of locals to allow digging in a mound that they believe is the burial place of Jonah.

Given the well-known brutality of the Assyrians, it does seem strange that Jonah, a prophet from a nation that must have been despised by Assyria, was able to meet with such success when he preached. The unintended (on Jonah’s part) link with the Yanush legend certainly seems likely to have played a part in his acceptance by the Ninevites.

There is another feature relating to the origins and culture of Nineveh that might have added to the authority that Jonah’s preaching carried when finally he delivered God’s message to the city. The French archaeologist André Parrot, in his book *Nineveh and the Old Testament*, discusses the ancient origins of the city and draws attention to the remarkable fact that “Nineveh is mentioned in a cuneiform text (twenty-first century B.C.) inscribed on a clay tablet and the name is given in an ideogram: a fish drawn in the middle of a city, an obvious allusion to the goddess Nina whose emblem it was” (pp. 24,26).

So Jonah was a man who had been in the middle of a fish preaching to a city that had been represented as a city with a fish in the middle. In conjunction with the Yanush legend this might have conspired to give Jonah an authority that he could not otherwise have expected. The remarkable conjunction of so many apparently unrelated symbols would seem to be yet another example of what Blunt described as ‘undesigned coincidences’.

Geoff Henstock  
Adelaide

### The sojourn of Israel in Egypt

The proposition put forward by Sister Debbie Hurn (Jun. 2001, p. 254) for a revised calculation of the period that the children of Israel were in Egypt (down to 195 years) is ingeniously constructed. It has as its basis (as does the article by Brother Ralph Green on which she is commenting) the idea that the 430 years of Exodus 12:40 and Galatians 3:17 began in the time of Abraham, and not with the coming down into Egypt of Jacob and his sons. However, this view does not take into account a number of very important facts.

1 The evidence supporting a sojourn by the children of Israel in Egypt for a full 430 years is much stronger than that for a sojourn of 215 years (the figure used by Brother Green) or 195 years. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch in their *Commentary on the Old Testament: The Second Book of Moses* state:

“The sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt had lasted 430 years. This number is not critically doubtful; nor are the 430 years to be reduced to 215 by an arbitrary interpolation such as we find in the LXX. (Exodus 12:40: ‘And the sojourning of the children