

It is ironic that Christadelphians, with our understanding that much of the Bible is not written in literal language, have correctly rejected the Trinity, a literal devil and the literal flesh and blood of the Catholic Eucharist, but nevertheless have fallen in with the extreme young earth interpretation of Genesis 1 on the basis that they are following the literal truth of the Bible. All our pioneers and all the editors of *The Christadelphian* have accepted that the earth is extremely old, so what is the explanation for this recent capitulation to an American fundamentalist interpretation of Genesis 1?

Let me assure my critics that I have no objection to alternative interpretations of Genesis 1, nor do I insist that my understanding is necessarily correct. But I am deeply concerned with the attitude of those who insist that young earth creationism is the *only* interpretation of Genesis 1. Since the vast majority of earth scientists believe that the evidence points to a very old earth, and that young earth creationism is anti-science, they will inevitably be led to believe that the Bible is also anti-science and so fail to realise that it contains vastly more important truths, concerning their salvation. So here is another irony, in this case a tragic one: geologists may become atheists because well-meaning Bible believers force them to make a false choice between the Bible and the evidence of their eyes.

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May I, as a non-Christadelphian who nevertheless believes the BASF to be Scriptural, comment on [Brian Hurn's statement](#) on page 84 of the *March Testimony*? He writes: "God wrote these important words in stone: 'for in six days the LORD [Yahweh] made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is' (Ex. 20:11). That is, Yahweh made everything in our universe in six literal days about 6,000 years ago, and this repeated scripture excludes all other interpretations of Genesis 1".

This dogmatic interpretation results from taking what Moses wrote in Exodus 20:11 out of the

context of what he wrote in Genesis 1, and can cause much needless conflict between scientific ideas on the age of the earth and those who seek to uphold the Biblical record of the work of the six days Creation.

If we compare Exodus 20:11 with Genesis 1 we find that God made heaven on the second day (vv. 6-8), the earth and the seas on the third day (vv. 9,10), and so on. Yet before all this happened, that is, before any of the work of the six days, it is written that, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (vv. 1,2).

Obviously Moses is referring to a different heaven and earth in verse 1 from those in verses 6-10. Clearly the physical globe was in existence when the work of the six Creation days was started, and therefore there can be no Scriptural objection to the so-called 'Gap Theory', whereby the earth could have been created billions of years before the work of the six days of Creation, the account of which starts in verse 3.

A similar argument can be used to explain the apparent making of the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day, after the creation of light (and day and night) on the first day. Concerning the fourth day we read: "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also (v. 16). "Made" here can be translated 'appointed', and, from the point of view of an observer on the earth, the fourth day is when they appeared in the heaven. The work of the first day can be explained as the lifting of the impenetrable darkness that enveloped the earth at that time in order that the difference in day and night could be discerned, but not to the extent that the source of the light could be seen.

The earth *may* only be about 6,000 years old, but the Genesis account does not require it—only that it was without form and void before the work of the six days commenced.

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### A Bible story for children

*Little Joe Goes to Market* is the first in what is hoped to be a series of books that introduce well-known Bible stories to children in the 4-7 age range. It is written by Sister Jean Green and illustrated by Sister Morven Barbaresi (both married to Testimony committee members), and is available at £3.90 plus postage and packing from Sister Green at Walnut Tree Cottage, Part Lane, Riseley, Reading, RG7 1RU. Tel. 0118 988 7558.