



## Correspondence

*Comments on articles appearing in the magazine are always welcome, and should be addressed to the editor in whose section the article appears.*

# Science and the Bible

Regarding the critical comments of correspondents in the August issue about the May Special Issue "Science and the Bible" (pp. [318-20](#), [322-3](#)), the scientific method uses observation and experiment to help us identify and exploit the order in nature. Technology is the ultimate justification of the method. We need to be clear in our thinking, however, if we are to avoid unjustified conclusions.

First, we must distinguish between fact and interpretation. For example, the measurement of the atomic composition of a rock, including its radioactivity, or the carbon fourteen in a piece of timber, is not a date; it is merely a laboratory measurement. Any inferences we make from this data are based on some assumptions, not least of which may be what we suppose to have been the original composition of the rock or timber.

Second, we must understand that a scientific theory cannot be considered true, only that it fits the facts and ideally should predict new ones. When it is proved false it should be refined, to accommodate new facts, or discarded. If there is no way of subjecting the model to rigorous testing it may be considered an interesting story, but scientifically worthless.

Third, we must appreciate that several differing theories can normally be constructed from the same data, and fourth, that theories about the past cannot in fact be tested in any rigorous fashion because in no sense is the past open to observation or experiment; it is, after all, that which is past.

From a practical point of view, it is the utility of the theory that matters, its relationship with 'truth' is unimportant. Thus the mariners of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries who discovered sea routes from Portugal to India and from Spain to the New World, and who circumnavigated the world, used as their model of the heavens the earth-centred system of Ptolemy. Even space missions are calculated using Newtonian mechanics. The theory or model does not change the observations.

It is this reluctance to recognise the limits of the scientific method that undermines much of

the reasoning of those who argue that current views about the age and history of the earth require us to modify the plain sense of Genesis 1. This line of reasoning would suggest that we should also accept the theory of evolution, and any other popular scientific theory. My own position is simple: "where shall wisdom be found?" (Job 28:12); and the answer: not with man, but with God (v. 23). Later in the book God asked Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (38:4), and Job's answer acknowledged his ignorance (42:3). This defines our position. So I am unable to answer many things, whether it be the significance of carbon fourteen measurements or of the fossils. In no sense was I present when these things were created and in no sense can I go back there now. Where truth is concerned we are obliged to rest on the Word of God.

For 200 years scientists have followed a uniformly humanistic approach to the study of our world, eliminating God and substituting blind chance and vast periods of time. They have also blandly assumed that their stories about the past are true. The triumph of the theory that all life has evolved from primitive beginnings was inevitable, and the idea of spontaneous generation was the next logical step, although there exists no experimental evidence of any weight to support either.

Those not intimately involved in experimental science may not appreciate that what is published in the scientific journals has been carefully screened for conformity with the current scientific fashions. All observations and interpretations are first examined by referees, who inevitably reject anything that does not fit the current theories.

Nothing, for example, indicating a 'young' earth would be accepted for publication. Attempting to submit findings of this sort would actually prejudice a scientist's career. Thus the model of science presented to us is one constructed by people who are constrained by a particular world view. Quite systematically, and over a period of nearly 200 years, only data that

conform to the evolutionary model have been recognised.

This, I suspect, is the reason why Creation Science has been so successful and has caused so much trouble amongst conventional scientists. Representatives of the scientific world speak of Creation Scientists in the way the pope might have spoken of heretics in the Middle Ages. Quite simply, Creation Science has taken the published data and data that conventional theories ignore, and constructed a new model. All this is in harmony with the scientific method, although I would dispute whether the results are any more legitimate than those of conventional science, and they will take us no nearer the truth. What is so frustrating for conventional scientists is that, just as there is no compelling experimental evidence to prove their views on the history of the earth, there is none to disprove Creation Science; the unique events of the past are outside the reach of experiment. And so they are reduced to verbal abuse.

Scripture tells us that God raised up Pharaoh and hardened his heart (Ex. 9:16; 10:1), that He put a lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's prophets (1 Kgs. 22:19-23), and that He sends strong delusion on those who refuse to receive the truth (2 Thess. 2:9-12). So we can see that God does assist ungodly men in their delusions.

There seems to be some muddled thinking, therefore, when it is suggested that to accept the simple sense of Genesis 1 is also to imply that God is deceiving those who speculate about the history of the earth. Surely it is men who deceive themselves, by supposing that their untestable models actually represent historical truth. If we are not careful we may seem rather to imply that God has deceived men over millennia by giving the account of Creation in Genesis 1. It is true that the conflict has only emerged with the rise of science, but why all this detail of the six days, which has no relevance to the 'scientific' view, when a simple claim to be Creator would suffice? The obvious answer is that God knows what happened and the scientists do not. It is always unwise to attempt to constrain God to our standards.

I appreciate the problems that confront us when presenting the simple accounts and truths of Scripture to the world about us, and particularly how difficult it is for young people growing up in this age. It is, however, no different in principle from the problems over much of the history of Christianity, when heresy led to

the stake. At least we are only ridiculed. The truth is always mocked, as Paul found at Athens (Acts 17:32) and as he wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:18-24. What is the Word of God? Is it merely the word of men? Has it no enduring value or meaning, that we must forever be changing its plain sense so as to seem a little less foolish to those around us?

John Watts  
Norwich

It was interesting to see in the August magazine that Brethren Tony Fitzgerald and Bill Davison in their respective letters (pp. 318, 322) both refer to the possibility of God having created the world with "an appearance of age", though the latter is more dismissive of this possibility than the former.

Far be it that we should think of the Almighty as "a deceiver", but why should He not have done exactly this? The Elohim were called on to "make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26), which presumably resulted in the creation, not of a newborn infant, but of a mature man—with "an appearance of age" if you like. How is this different from God doing the same with the rest of His creation, be it other breathing things or physical aspects of the earth?

Both on the fifth day (v. 22) and the sixth day (v. 28) the creatures of God's handiwork were appointed to "Be fruitful, and multiply", and it beggars belief that God should have issued this command without having provided them with the means of doing so. In other words, we presume that the animals too were mature, capable of reproducing as God designed them to—with "an appearance of age", as they were in fact only a few hours old. We do not know, but perhaps hens (which produce eggs every day) were created ready to lay; or other animals which have a short gestation period had their young already in the womb.

Extending the thought, when God created the mountains, did He wait for seismic activity and continental drift to shape them as we recognise them today? Surely not. Moses refers to the mountains being "brought forth" (Ps. 90:2), and he uses a word normally referring to the birth of children; that it is to say, they were 'born' like that, God made *mountains*. They did not change into mountains from something else.

Whatever God meant when He declared His beautiful new earth "very good" (Gen. 1:31), we can be sure that it was perfectly prepared to

receive and support every living creature, ideally suited to His every intention. Why, then, should this “appearance of age” be thought so unlikely? “Ah Lord GOD! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee” (Jer. 32:17); “O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches” (Ps. 104:24).

With thanks for a stimulating and encouraging special edition.

*Jeremy Thomas  
Sale*

I would like to make some general comments about the letters by Brethren Fitzgerald and Mallinder (Aug. 2001, pp. [318](#), [321](#)).

There are many questions about Creation and the age of the earth for which we do not have definite answers. We shall have to wait till as redeemed saints we can converse with the angels, who were eyewitnesses of and participants in the Creation work, to receive the answers that we seek. I agree with correspondents that the evidence favours an ancient earth, and I am content to accept this evidence without being dogmatic about this view. It is clear that to have correct understanding of the age of the earth and the origins of fossils is not a matter that is essential for our salvation. We are at liberty to make up our own minds, and to respect differing viewpoints on these two matters.

On the other hand, there is a need for a right attitude to Scripture. If God says in Genesis 5 that Adam had lived 130 years when his son Seth was born, and that Seth was 105 when Enosh was born, etc., then I accept this data to be true because it is part of the Word of God which endures for ever. To believe, as the Scriptures reveal, that man was created only 6,000 years ago, runs counter to currently accepted ideas of the origin of man. As a follower of Christ, I believe what Moses was inspired to write. Somewhere, errors or mistaken assumptions must underlie the human data that insists that man is much older than 6,000 years.

I would rather believe what God has revealed than human measurements. Men of the world have a vested interest in long geological periods, because their evolutionary philosophies fit better into long ages; and if, as they believe, man evolved, then he has no responsibility to a Creator, and can justify leading a godless life. The

same goes for the days of Creation. The Scriptures are so clear that the Creation took just six days, plus the day of rest. Maybe the reason why God chose to take this period of time is that He foresaw the benefit to man of six days of labour followed by a day of rest, and so He and the angels laid down this pattern.

Our faith lies in our acceptance of what is written. To maintain our faith in God’s Word, despite the opposition of human wisdom and ideas, is surely the teaching of the apostle in Hebrews 11, when he writes about men and women whose faith was tested.

*John Nicholls*

I am moved to write because of the number of letters that you have published that seem to wish to lend support to the old age of the earth (Aug. 2001, pp. [318](#), [321](#), [322](#)). As a strong supporter of the literal truth of God’s Word, “for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Ex. 20:11), I feel that we should be made aware of the limitations of so-called science.

It is not true—as one correspondent claims—that the “mass of scientific evidence” supports the idea of an old earth (p. 319), or, as another claims, “it is a scientific fact that dinosaurs lived on the earth long ages before man was created” (p. 322). I would admit that the mass of evidence that the evolutionists put forward points to an old earth. But that is not surprising. There is an equal, nay greater, mass of evidence that points to a young earth. Do not expect to come across it in the scientific magazines or on the radio and TV programmes. Those who desperately need to make the earth old to accommodate their evolutionary ideas quietly ignore such evidence. Because we live in an age when man does not want to acknowledge a Creator and seeks for ‘natural’ explanations for the creation and development of this world, we will only hear a one-sided argument. There are many Bible-believing scientists, both inside and outside our community, who find the evidence for a young earth overwhelmingly convincing. The information is widely available in both readable and technical creationist publications.

What it boils down to is whether it is reasonable to be able to trust the reasoning of men. God has warned us as to the folly and godlessness of man. If most of the “wise of this world”

cannot understand the message that God has hidden within His Word, is it really surprising that they utterly fail to understand what God has hidden in the natural world? Why do we want to give credence to man's evolutionary ideas? An old earth and evolution go hand in hand. What do those correspondents who want us to believe in an old earth think that God was doing all through that time? Was the world evolving? If not, what was the purpose of it? Was Adam the first man, as Scripture claims, or not? Was the earth very good at Creation, as Genesis says, or was the earth the graveyard of countless deaths? Was death introduced as a punishment for sin, or had it existed for aeons? As to the claim that creation with an apparent age would be a deception on God's part, what folly! God has told us what He did. If people wish not to believe it then the conclusions that they draw are not deceptions on God's part but the result of the folly of man.

Does holding to a literal interpretation "drive away our young folk" (p. 322)? Not in my experience; in fact, the very opposite is the case. The way to destroy a community is to question its foundations. My experience of showing to our young people—and their parents—the soundness of a six-day Creation, while pointing out the folly of evolutionary ideas, is that it increases their faith and reinforces their confidence in the trustworthiness of the Word of God. There are, after all, many other matters that set us apart from popular thinking, so why not this too?

Finally, Jesus has already told us what gospel message is to be preached when he returns. It is revealed in Revelation 14:7: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him That made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters". This surely indicates that at this time—our time—men will not be believing the truth about this matter.

*Don Pearce*  
Rugby

*This correspondence is now closed.—D.J.B.*