

observing an apple seed will tell us precisely how many apples will be produced from the tree that springs from that seed. Observers are left with their theories and hypotheses, but little else. It seems, therefore, most prudent not to adjust the Bible to fit one's theories of science.

Contrary to Dr Helweg's assertion, I do not use his approach and neither do I believe in a 'flat earth'. It is not the curvature of the horizon that I require to understand a spherical Earth, but the written Word of God. Isaiah 40:22 speaks of the 'circle of the earth', and, rather than the world supported on the shoulders of Atlas or the back of a turtle, Job 26:7 says that God 'hangs the earth upon nothing'.

Second, and more important, is that Dr Helweg's criteria are flawed. I might be a little more at ease interpreting the written Word by the created world if this present world were the same as the one God created originally. Unfortunately, it is not. Scripture is clear that the entire universe (the 'whole creation' of Romans 8:22) was affected by the fall of Adam into sin. The whole of God's created order groans until the long-awaited arrival of our Lord. While the written Word of God is perfect, this world and this universe are not because of sin. It is more appropriate to interpret the imperfect by the perfect than the other way around. I would argue that Dr Helweg's 'two-book' hypothesis needs to be reconsidered.

Dr Helweg mentions that Augustine would not

'have supported an interpretation of a Biblical passage that was opposed to the obvious facts in science'.

I would remind each of us that an Earth millions or billions of years old is not a 'fact of science' but a **theory** of science. As far as we know, the only eyewitness who was present at the time of creation was God. He told us plainly what He did and how He did it.

Finally, I would like to address the 'who' and the 'how' of Genesis 1. My brother does not see the 'how' of Genesis 1 and I do. I am willing to

agree to disagree at this point. When God's Word says: 'Let there be light, and there was light' (Genesis 1:3), the clear implication is that light came into existence immediately upon God's verbal pronouncement. I do not consider that simplistic or superficial. It is consistent that if God 'Upholds all things by the word (*hremd*) of His power', He could create it the same way. Even if the 'how' of creation is not explicit in Genesis 1 (and I believe it is), it is certainly implied.

Of great importance is Dr Helweg's comment I mentioned earlier:

'we should look to the Bible as much as possible to see how it interprets itself.'

In the Scriptures, specifically Psalm 33:6, God clearly gives us a 'how': 'By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth'. Frankly, that is good enough for me. I regret that it is an 'embarrassment' to Dr Helweg.

There are also tangential, though not less significant, problems with Dr Helweg's approach. Adam was created on the sixth day. If the days of creation were actually thousands or millions of years, then Adam lived from whatever point in the sixth day for the thousands of years remaining in that day, and then for the many thousands or millions of years of the seventh day and beyond. Yet, Scripture is clear that all the days of Adam were 930 years (Genesis 5:5). Obviously, something is amiss. If a person concludes that Adam was not a literal individual, he runs into insurmountable problems in the genealogy of Luke's Gospel which lists Adam as an individual with real children. I doubt Dr Helweg would entertain the notion that non-literal persons can beget literal offspring. Indeed, allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture is the single most important principle of Biblical hermeneutics.

Let us do just that.

David G. Shackelford,
Schenectady, New York,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

REFERENCE

1. Helweg, O., 1997. How short an evening and morning? Reply. CEN Tech. J., 11(3):304-306.

IS GENESIS POETIC?

Dear Editor,

Dr David Fouts, in his response to Dr Otto Helweg in **CEN Tech. J., 11(3):323**, claimed:

'Genesis 1 therefore should not be considered poetry. Historical support of this is seen in the fact that no edition of the Hebrew text of which I am aware ever indented the passage in a poetical format (though I understand the NIV could be interpreted as doing so)!'

All that paragraph is accurate and good evidence for a plain interpretation, except for that unfortunate parenthetical comment about the NIV. This was an 'own goal', giving the old-Earthers some ammunition to their empty gun. It should have been easy enough to check a copy of the NIV rather than relying on faulty 'understanding'.

The format in Genesis 1 is hanging paragraphs, that is, every line but the first is indented by the same amount. An identical format is used for the Ten Commandments and the genealogies in Genesis 10 and I Chronicles. Surely no-one would claim these are poetic. No, the NIV uses this format for **lists** — six days, ten commandments, etc.

The formatting of the Psalms, which are definitely poetic, is different. They lack the constant indentation of the passages above.

Jonathan D. Sarfati,
Brisbane, Queensland,
AUSTRALIA.

PELEG, AND BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Dear Editor,

A final response to John Watson's

CEN Tech. J., vol. 12, no. 1, 1998