

large, biologically-formed limestone structures which have literally grown in-place in the oceans of the past and present. A few examples are (1) the Eniwetok atoll (also spelled Enewetak), a Pacific coral reef which is nearly a mile thick (and still growing) on top of an extinct volcanic cone; (2) ancient coral reefs resting under a mile of complex sedimentary layers in the oil fields of Alberta, Canada; and (3) the Great Bahama Bank, which has been slowly built to a thickness (height) of 3 miles above its original sea-floor base, to form an isolated shallow-water platform, off the coast of Florida.⁴

All of these structures are composed almost entirely of sediment particles which were produced by the natural growth of their corals and other lime-secreting organisms. They contain--even in the deeper layers--abundant, well-preserved fossils of these animals and plants. At the fastest known growth rate for coral reefs, it would have taken 790,000 years of continuous growth to form the Great Bahama Bank. However, it--as well as the other atoll structures listed above--had long interruption periods when the sea level was too low or too high for appreciable growth. During these times the marks of many centuries or millenniums of dissolving and erosion were left on the tops of the platforms before growth finally resumed. Furthermore, many of the periods of growth were slow, because slow-growing organisms--rather than corals--were producing the sediments.

Additional long periods of time were required for the shallow-water cementing processes which are so familiar to sedimentologists today. These bound the particles together to form limerock. We should remember too that every one of these great limestone structures rests on a thick foundation that was very old before the lime-secreting organisms began their work.

This is just one example of the types of natural time records which show us that the earth is very old. If we are tempted to "explain away" the time element by saying that God created ready-made fossils and biological sediments, we are accusing God of deception or trickery. Or if we try to assume that the corals and other lime-secreting organisms of ancient times grew at 20, 50, or 100 times the rate of their present growth, we have fallen into a similar error. All evidence points to the fact that the natural laws and processes by which biological growth and the cementation of rock are controlled today were created as stable and essentially constant. These natural laws are dependable, and not erratic. The Book of Genesis leads us to believe that biological growth rates during Adam's life were necessarily similar to what they are now. Even today, when a group of aquatic organisms begins to reproduce too rapidly they soon choke themselves with their own waste products, and their dead bodies then pollute the entire area.