

These men (rightly) held to the absolute trustworthiness of the Scriptures, yet saw that these holy writings do not contain dogmatic statements concerning the amounts of time which transpired prior to the creation of man. Thus the eight editors of the Scofield Reference Bible, published in 1917, recommended that we take note of the places in the early chapters of Genesis which allow for indefinite amounts of time.¹⁸

A recognition of such principles as these serves as a valuable guard against any particular group of Christians setting up its own view concerning natural processes and events of the past as a mandatory theological issue. Since the Bible does not state the amounts of time which transpired in the past, such matters can be only an academic issue, not a theological one. God is timeless (not limited or controlled by time) and certainly does not encourage us to think of Him or his works as being time-bound (II Peter 3:8-10).

The Complexity of North American Sedimentary Deposits

One of the main reasons that there is so much misunderstanding among Christians concerning God's record in nature, is the fact that the average person never sees much of the total record in a given area. We drive through a highway cut, note some of the rock layers, and do not think about the fact that this 200 or 300 foot bank of rock is usually only about 1, 2, or 3 percent of the total sediment column at that spot. No amount of study of the rock layers at the surface can give us reliable information as to the nature and age of the fossil-bearing layers which lie deeply buried beneath.

With the advent of deep-well core drilling, the study of the stratigraphic record beneath what we normally see became possible. If one were to lay the drilling cores from a two or three-mile-deep oil well, out end-to-end, on the surface of the ground, and walk the entire length of the aligned cores, examining them as he went, he would be impressed with both the extent and complexity of the local stratigraphic column from which they came. He would find that the drill had not been passing through a monotonous mass of similar layers, but through an extremely complex and variegated series. In nearly all cases, the series contains numerous layers of rock types which, because of their chemical and physical nature, could not have been formed by rapidly moving water. (A number of these will be described in the chapters which follow.)

Were it not for the fact that such sedimentary columns usually contain identifiable fossils almost to the bottom, we might postulate that the series was a part of God's original creation, and that we were only viewing an appearance of age. But since the fossils are present, the Bible-believing Christian is left with only three alternatives. First, to accept the existence of these deposits as information which God has allowed man to discover by investigation and observation, just as God allowed man to finally find out that the earth was not a flat, four-cornered structure. Second, to admit that the deposits are there, but to say that God put them there with their fossils ready-made. Third, to take the position that,