

that such splendid, dependable records of the past have been left undisturbed for our information in this century of scientific research. God is graciously allowing man to learn some of the mysteries which were once hidden in the earth's crust.

Deposits Above and Beneath

While considering the extensive sedimentary deposits which formed the Capitan reef, and filled the basin which it surrounds, we must not forget the significance of the fossiliferous sediments above and below. The reef and the banded anhydrite layers which we have described make up only from one-eighth to one-tenth of the local stratigraphic column in that area. Many of the wells have to penetrate more than 3,000 feet of sandstone, shale, dolostone, and thick evaporite layers before reaching the top of the reef. Most of these layers of contrasting sediments were applied by various processes within the sea water which continued to cover the area for long periods of time. Frequently these covering layers are in an alternating series similar to the covering layers in the Alberta oil fields; and a good number of the strata contains identifiable fossils. Some of the uppermost strata may have been deposited in a fresh-water environment, but most are marine. (See Tables 4 and 5 for a summary of the deposits which lie above and beneath the level of the reef. Note in Table 4 that a very high percentage of the covering layers consists of the evaporites anhydrite and common salt.) To this point, we have not made mention of these Salado and Rustler deposits, and will not take time to discuss them in this book.¹⁸ They are similar to some of the evaporitic layers which lie above the tops of the Canadian atolls and pinnacle reefs which we described in the preceding chapter. Above the Salado and Rustler evaporitic layers in Texas are sandstones and shale as listed in the table. Both of the latter were laid down by water, but not in an evaporitic environment.

Perhaps we should mention here the possibility of a participation of the Biblical Flood in the formation of the upper layers covering the Delaware basin of west Texas and New Mexico. Of course none of the evaporites could have been deposited by the Flood, and not many, if any, of the shales. (The Flood was a period of great water turbulence and so could not deposit any appreciable amount of uniform layers of fine clay particles such as we find in these shales.) We must not forget that the Bible very explicitly tells us that the flood waters dried up within one year after the Flood began (Genesis 7:11 and 8:13-14). Thus the many months required for the settling out of enough clay particles to form even a few feet of shale were not present as a part of the Flood. And besides, a glance at Table 4 will soon reveal the fact that the shale layers are in the wrong place in relation to the conglomeritic sandstone, in order to have been laid down by the Flood. Sandstone particles are much larger than clay particles, so they settle out of suspension sooner than do clay particles. This would put the conglomeritic sandstone beneath the shale, instead of above it.

Now it is possible that the Flood could have deposited the final,