

A Few Guidelines for Thinking About the Earth's Age

In considering the geologic evidences for great age we must not fall to the temptation to formulate unreasonable explanations of how things might have happened in the past. We believe all that the Bible definitely teaches, but we need to be careful not to harbor prejudices against the great body of carefully-collected scientific data which indicate that the earth is old. Geologists have identified many sedimentary layers--mostly around the edges of landmasses--which are relatively young. But the great majority of sedimentary deposits farther inland have very different characteristics which show that they are old, having been formed earlier in ancient seas.

We must always remember that God is consistent and orderly in everything He does. For example, the Flood was an immensely destructive event, designed for judgment upon man's sin. However, as a destructive event, it could not produce on the earth the many intricate and orderly structures which petroleum geologists now find nearly everywhere they drill.

The existence of these orderly structures does not support an evolutionary view of origins. They were formed by simple growth and other processes of accumulation according to the natural laws which God created. This is a view which was held by a great many of the founders of conservative, evangelical Christianity in America, and it is a view which honors God and the Bible.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The wide use of this assumption among scientists and educators, due to many creationist assertions that the Bible demands belief in a young earth, can be clearly seen in the following works which have been given extensive, nationwide distribution by the modern anti-creationist movement: Science and Creationism, National Academy of Sciences Press, 1984, p. 7, 13, 17 to 18; and Science 81, December 1981, p. 55-56.
- 2 It is true that, when sedimentary geologists and oceanographers use types of fossils which occur in various strata, for correlating strata and assigning dates to them, most of the scientists assume that the fossil forms developed by macroevolution (the supposed process of evolving from one kind of animal or plant, up to a much higher kind) as well as microevolution (small evolutionary changes with definite limits). But such an assumption is not necessary for making correct correlations and date-assignments. (The dates are not derived from rates of evolution.) The scientists can work just as effectively and accurately if they assume that God created the major types of animals and plants in the distant past, and that they multiplied and became dominant at certain periods or sub-periods in geologic history.
- 3 For descriptions of the formation processes of various types of sedimentary rocks, see Origin of Sedimentary Rocks, by H. Blatt, G. V. Middleton, and R. C. Murray (Prentice Hall, 1980, 782 p.). Also other publications listed in libraries under "Petrology", "Sedimentary...", and other headings.
- 4 The following are excellent primary sources describing these biologically-