

in the oceans today, and also many that are found in limestone deposits of the Triassic System up through the Quaternary. This order of corals includes many solitary, as well as colonial, species. Of great significance for our consideration of fossil distribution is the fact that the scleractinian corals all have very fundamental and obvious morphologic differences which distinguish them from both of the great extinct orders we have just discussed. So there is no possibility of confusing them with Order Rugosa (the "tetracorals") or with Order Tabulata (the "tabulate corals") when they are found in the field--or as one examines museum specimens. (Large numbers of specimens of all 3 orders are available in any of the larger museums, and all of them are well described in most paleontology textbooks. The distinct differences between these 3 orders can be observed and understood even by people who have had no training in paleontology.) Thus, Morris's claim that the ancient animal groups "were much the same as in the present world," without important contrasts (1974, p. 116), is easily refuted by examining the fossil specimens of these, as well as of several other animal phyla.

Since the scleractinian corals are found in abundance almost worldwide, and since more actual volume of their fossils is present on the earth than of any other group of Cenozoic, animal megafossils, it is inconceivable that they would not have become mixed into the lower strata--in fact, all strata--of the earth's sedimentary cover, if the "Flood geology" hypothesis were correct. By reading any of Henry Morris' descriptions of the convulsive activities which he visualizes as having occurred during the Flood (such as that quoted below from Morris, 1974, p. 117-118) one can see how completely illogical it is to assert that the Paleozoic strata were formed by the Flood, with these dense, calcified animals somehow being held up and not allowed to sink into the lower layers of sediment. (They are as dense as the corals of the two great ancient orders, because composed of CaCO_3 , the same as those orders were.)

Morris' description of the Biblical Flood, in which these corals were excluded from the lower two-thirds of the local sedimentary columns supposedly being formed, reads as follows:

Visualize, then, a great hydraulic cataclysm bursting upon the present world, with currents of waters pouring perpetually from the skies and erupting continuously from the earth's crust, all over the world, for weeks on end, until the entire globe was submerged, accompanied by outpourings of magma from the mantle, gigantic earth movements, landslides, tsunamis, and explosions. The uniformitarian will of course question how such a cataclysm could be caused, and this will be considered shortly, but for the moment simply take it as a model and visualize the expected results if it should happen today.

Sooner or later all land animals would perish. Many, but not all, marine animals would perish....

On the ocean bottom, upwelling sediments and subterranean waters and magmas would entomb hordes of invertebrates. The waters would undergo rapid changes in heat and salinity, great slurries would form, and immense amounts of chemicals would be dissolved and dispersed throughout the seaways.

Eventually, the land sediments and waters would commingle with those in the ocean. Finally the sediments would settle out as the waters slowed down.... (Morris, 1974, ¹⁹⁷⁵p. 117-118).

If Morris were correct in this scenario of how the sedimentary cover of the earth was formed, then God would have had to perform a very specialized miracle to keep the scleractinian corals out of the lower strata. A similar miracle would also have had to be performed in order to exclude the diatoms of the earth from the same strata, as we will see in the section on microfossils below.