

CONCLUSIONS

The current anti-creationist movement has now gained a great advantage over creationists in the field of public education and in other segments of public affairs. One of the major methods of achieving this has been the frequent quoting of young-earth creationist claims that creationist decisions not to use the scientific evidences for great age are based squarely on the Bible. Because of this all evangelicals should now realize our responsibility to try to do something to correct this false accusation against the Bible. It is true that the Bible is still a "best seller" in North America, but its effectiveness is now being deliberately minimized more than at any time in our nation's history, by the widespread teaching that it is an outdated book which had value only in the past. The creationist-authored claims that the Bible annuls the relevance of immense amounts of carefully-collected geologic and astronomic data are being used as a prime spearhead in the attack against the Bible in most areas of public education.

How tragic this development is, when in reality most of the conservative, evangelical Bible scholars of the past 100 years have emphasized that the inspired writers of the Bible were obviously guided in such a way as to avoid putting a limit on the age of the earth! (We are here speaking of scholars who have rejected the theories of macroevolution and abiogenesis and who hold to the doctrine of special creation and the historicity of the first chapters of Genesis.) So, we need to openly acknowledge and publicize the fact that it is an error to accuse God of producing a Book of special revelation which contradicts what He has created and supervised in the natural world. Dr. James D. Dana and Sir William (J. W.) Dawson, two of the best-known, Bible-believing geologists of the latter part of the 19th century, made valiant--and often successful--efforts to demonstrate to the scientific community that special creation is an intellectually respectable position which includes a high respect for scientific data. We would do well to follow the example of those and other such defenders of our faith.

It is very difficult to understand why so many present-day creationists are unwilling to take seriously the data published in petroleum-geology research reports. Apparently a major reason for this unwillingness is that young-earth creationists often feel that any data that are collected by persons who believe in macroevolution are in some manner "tainted" and reduced in value, even though the research project was not made for the purpose of supporting evolutionary theory. These creationists need to start examining the results of some of the type of petroleum-geology research reports to which I have referred in Part III above. If they would do this they would soon see that such research is not at all dependent upon evolutionary theory, and therefore the geologists have had no possible reason for distorting or wrongly evaluating the data. (Any wrong reporting or wrong evaluation of the data would reduce the opportunity for success in locating the petroleum deposits being sought.) It is important that creationists use all of the data which help to show us what the earth's sedimentary cover is like. The great amounts of non-radiometric data collected by petroleum geologists are ideal for this.

We need to openly face the fact that God is consistent in all that He has done, and that, since the earth is full of so many evidences for great age, He would not also give us information or evidences to the contrary. We have an obligation to teach and elaborate on this truth in all of the Christian schools of the United States and Canada, as well as to teach the nature and legitimacy of honest scientific research. If evangelical Christians were to actually do this we could soon get back on a track of respecting both special and natural revelation, and we could also more correctly and effectively teach the scientific accuracy of positions on origins which reject the theories of macroevolution and abiogenesis.

The acceptance of geologic data which indicate long periods of time is not at all for the purpose of making room for evolution, as many young-earth creationists have charged. We accept geologic data because they are a part of God's created world. Why should we any more reject the in situ, biogenic structures in a limestone formation than we would reject the existence of limestone? God is the author of both. Furthermore, the age of the earth and how life was created are two distinct and separate questions. We know that man was created very recently, but the Bible leaves the time of the creation of "the heavens and the earth" completely unspecified (Genesis 1:1-2). How can anyone decide how long ago "in the beginning" was, when the Bible leaves that point of time without definition, both in Genesis and elsewhere?

In comparing scientific discoveries with the Genesis account of creation we need to remember that, ever since the early 19th century--when geologic data