

ABSTRACT

Major advances of the anti-creationist movement in the United States and Canada began in 1981 as a result of the Arkansas law requiring the teaching of creation. Quotations from several scientific journals and other publications demonstrate that the young-earth creationist claim that the earth is only a few thousand years old was the main feature of creationism which gave prompt success in the anti-creationist efforts. The creationist neglect of large amounts of carefully collected geologic and astronomic data which indicate long periods of time was the key factor in convincing educators and other public leaders that "creation science" is a defective system which does not properly regard the results of scientific research.

The publication and distribution of the booklet Science and Creationism, by the National Academy of Sciences, brought about outstanding success in the anti-creationist effort. It, as well as many similar publications, emphasizes that creationists cite the Bible as their authority for rejecting scientific discoveries related to age. Most anti-creationists, unaware that the Bible is actually silent regarding the earth's age, portray it as the primary source of creationist "pseudoscience" and as unworthy of any serious use in the classroom.

How to begin giving the students of our Christian schools a proper view of science and of scientific research constitutes another formidable challenge. The primary steps of the scientific method of research should be taught as a valid means of obtaining information concerning the crust of the earth. If a conflict between the results of scientific research and the clear teaching of the Bible is found, there has evidently been a flaw in the research process which must then be checked out. "Flood geology" ideas, which are so frequently taught in our Christian schools, do not properly represent scientific observation. There appear to be good grounds for belief in a universal flood, but the system of thought which is usually spoken of as "Flood geology" is made up almost entirely of hypotheses which have never been confirmed by scientific research. Three of the most common of these hypotheses which are not consistent with the observed nature of the earth's sedimentary cover, and which are shown to be untenable by large amounts of carefully collected geologic data are: (1) The assumption that practically all kinds of sedimentary formations can be rapidly deposited and lithified, (2) The assertion that the order in which different kinds of fossils are found in the sedimentary strata gives no indication as to when they were deposited, and (3) The assertion that a process of "ecological zoning" during the Flood could have accounted for the arrangement of fossils now observed in most or all of the sedimentary cover of the earth. Also, the widespread practice of assuming that because some parts of the earth's sedimentary cover were formed rapidly, then all parts were formed at similar rates is a fallacious form of logic which should be eliminated from the science classes in Christian schools.

A primary reason that professional scientists and science teachers refuse to put confidence in creationist publications is that young-earth creationist leaders do not maintain any appreciable amount of communication with professional earth scientists, and seldom seriously use geologic research reports. Most of these leaders exhibit a great reluctance to recognize or use such geologic data as those which reveal the true nature of the limestone strata of the Grand Canyon or of the biogenic and evaporitic, subsurface rock formations found in many oil fields. So long as this practice exists, scientists and educators will continue to regard creationists as both ignorant and dishonest.

A great number of conservative Bible scholars of the past 150 years, who fully accept the inerrancy of the Scriptures, reject the common belief that a recognition of the age-indicating features of the earth's crust is a compromise with evolutionary theory. Christians have an obligation to God not to disregard the characteristics of His creation. Special creation as revealed in the Bible is compatible with the actual data which indicate great age; God is the author of both, and both his special revelation and general (natural) revelation agree. Creationists are urged to make every effort possible to correct the present errors which have given the anti-creationists so much advantage in their condemnation of creation, the Bible, and Christianity.