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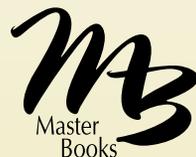
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Chapter One

What Do the Rocks Say?

How many times have you opened a newspaper and read an article describing the discovery of a new fossil, archaeological find, or underground fault? After describing the nature of the discovery, the article explains how scientists are so thrilled with its confirmation of evolutionary theory. An age is reported, perhaps millions or even billions of years. No questions are raised concerning the accuracy of the date, and readers are led to feel they have no reason to question it either.

Did you ever wonder how scientists got that date? How do they know with certainty something that happened so long ago? It is almost as

if rocks and fossils talk, or come with labels on them explaining how old they are and how they were fossilized.

As an earth scientist, one who studies rocks and fossils, I will let you in on a little secret. My geologic colleagues may not like me to admit this, but rocks don't talk! Nor do they come with explanatory labels.

I have lots of rocks in my own personal collection, and there are many more in the ICR museum. These rocks are well cared for and much appreciated. I never did have a "pet rock," but I do have some favorites. I have spent many hours collecting, cataloging, and cleaning them. Some I have even polished and displayed.

But what would happen if I asked my favorite rock, "Rock, how old are you?" "Fossil, how did you get that way?" You know what would happen? Nothing! Rocks do not talk! They do not talk to me, and I strongly suspect they do not talk to my evolutionary colleagues either! So where then do the dates and histories come from?

The answer may surprise you with its simplicity, but the concept forms the key thrust of this book, which I have designed to explain how rocks and fossils are studied and how conclusions are drawn as to their histories. But more than that, I have tried to explain not only how this endeavor usually proceeds, but also how it *should* proceed.



Inclined rock strata

Before I continue, let me clearly state that evolutionists are, in most cases, good scientists, and men and women of integrity. Their theories are often precise and elegant, and we can learn much from their endeavors. It is not my intention to ridicule or confuse. It is my desire to expose the mind trap they have built for themselves and show a better way. Let me do this through a hypothetical dating effort, purely fictional but fairly typical in concept.

How It Is Usually Done

Suppose you find a limestone rock containing a beautifully preserved fossil. You want to know the age of the rock, so you take it to the geology department at the nearby university and ask the professor. Fortunately, the professor takes an interest in your specimen and promises to spare no effort in its dating.

Much to your surprise, the professor does not perform carbon-14 dating on the fossil. He explains that carbon dating can only be used on organic materials, once-living things that consist mostly of carbon, not on rocks or even on the fossils, since they, too, are rock. Furthermore, in theory, carbon dating is only useful for the last few thousand years, and he suspects your fossil is millions of years old. Nor does

this expert measure the concentrations of radioactive isotopes to calculate the age of the rock. "Sedimentary rock, the kind which contains fossils," he explains, "ordinarily cannot be accurately dated by radioisotope methods. Such methods are only applicable to igneous rocks, like lava flows and granite." Instead, he studies only the *fossil's* shape and characteristics, not the rock. "By dating the fossil, the rock which contains it can be dated," he declares.

For purposes of this discussion, let us say your fossil is a clam. Many species of clams live today, of course, and this one looks only a little different from those you have seen. The professor informs you that many different clams have lived in the past. These were the ancestors of modern clams, but most have now become extinct.

Next, the professor removes a large book from his shelf entitled *Invertebrate Paleontology* and opens to the chapter on clams. Sketches of many clams are shown. At first glance many seem similar, but when you look closely, they are all slightly different. Your clam is compared to each one, until finally a clam nearly identical to yours appears. The caption under the sketch identifies your clam as an *index fossil*, and explains that this type of clam evolved some 320 million years ago. With a look of satisfaction and an air of certainty, the professor explains, "Your rock is approximately 320 million years old!"

Notice that the rock itself was not examined. The fossils in it dated it, and the fossil type was dated by the assumption of evolutionary progression over time. The limestone itself might be essentially identical to limestones of any age, so the rock cannot be used to date the rock. The fossils date the rock, and evolution dates the fossils. Evolutionists determined the order of evolution and estimated the ages involved even before the discovery of radioisotope decay and long before the formulation of radioisotope dating methods, but these were used to calibrate the fossil succession. The many problems with these methods are discussed in chapter 5, but today they give fossil dating an air of credibility.

You get to thinking. You know that limestones frequently contain fossils, but some seem to be a fine-grained matrix with no visible fossils. In many other limestones, the fossils that appear seem to be ground to pieces, and other sedimentary rocks, like sandstone and shale, might contain no visible fossils at all. "What do you do then?" you ask. "How can you date those rocks?"

The professor responds with a brief lecture on stratigraphy, information on how geologic layers are found one on top of the other, with the "older" ones (i.e., containing the oldest fossils) beneath the "younger" ones. This makes sense, for obviously the bottom layer had to be deposited before the upper layers. "But how are the *dates* obtained?" you ask. "By the fossils they contain!" he says.

It turns out that many sedimentary rocks cannot be dated all by themselves. If they have no fossils which can be dated within the evolutionary framework, then "We must look for other fossil-bearing layers, above and below, which can help us find the range of possible ages within which the true age must lie," the professor says. Such layers may not even be in the same location, but by tracing the layer laterally, perhaps for great distances, some evidence can be found.

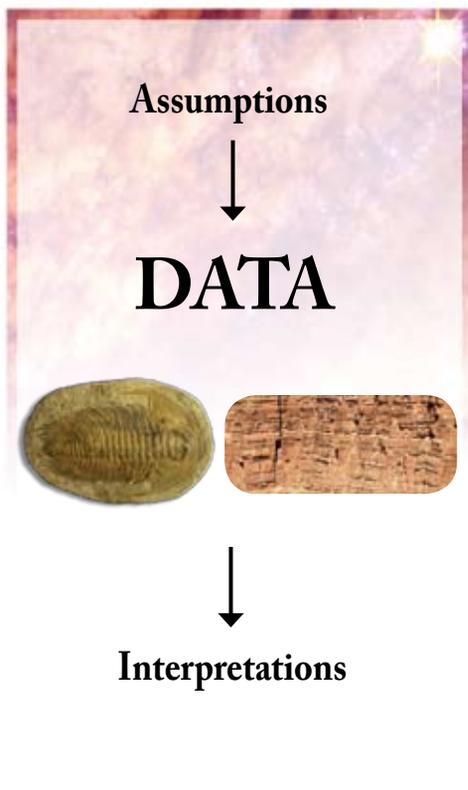
"Fortunately, your rock had a good fossil in it, an *index* fossil, defined as an organism which lived at only one time in evolutionary history. It is not that it looks substantially more or less advanced than other clams, but it has a distinctive feature somewhat different from other clams. When we see *that* kind of clam, we know that the rock in which it is found is about 320 million years old, since *that* kind of clam lived 320 million years ago," he says. "Most fossils are *not* index fossils. Many organisms, including many kinds of clams, snails, insects, even single-celled organisms, did not change at all over hundreds of millions of years, and are found in many different layers. Since they did not live at any one particular time, we can't use *them* to date the rocks. Only *index* fossils are useful, since they are only found in one zone of rock, indicating they lived during a relatively brief period of geologic history. We know that because we only find them in one time period. Whenever we find them, we date the rock as of that age."

Let us pause in our story to identify this thinking process as circular reasoning. It obviously should have no place in science. In circular reasoning, instead of proceeding from observation to conclusion, the conclusion interprets the observation, which "proves" the conclusion. The fossils should contain the main evidence for evolution. But instead, we see that the age of rocks is determined by the stage of evolution of the index fossils found therein, which are themselves dated and organized by the age of the rocks. Thus, the rocks date the fossils, and the fossils date the rocks. The unquestioned assumption of evolution provides the context for the entire process.

Back to our story. On another occasion, you find an interesting piece of hardened lava, the kind extruded during a volcanic eruption as red hot, liquid lava. Obviously, it contains no fossils, since almost any remains would have been incinerated or severely altered. You want to know the age of this rock, too. But your professor friend in the geology department directs you to the geophysics department. "They can date this rock," you are told.

Your rock fascinates the geophysics professor. He explains that this is the kind of rock that can be dated by using *radioisotope-dating techniques*, based on precise measurements of the ratios of radioactive isotopes in





the rock. Once known, these ratios can be plugged into a set of mathematical equations that will give the *absolute* age of the rock.

Unfortunately, the tests take time. The rock must be ground into powder, which then must be sent to a laboratory where they determine the isotope ratios and report back. A computer will then be asked to analyze the ratios, solve the equations, and give the age.

The geophysicist informs you that these tests are very expensive, but since your rock is so interesting, and since he has a government grant to pay the bill, and a graduate student to do the work, it will cost you nothing. He may even be able to publish the results in a scientific journal, thus advancing his career. Furthermore, he will request that several different tests be performed on your rock. There is the *uranium-lead* method, the *potassium-argon* method, *rubidium-strontium* method, and a few others. The tests can be done on the whole rock or individual minerals within the rock and then can be analyzed by the “model” or the “isochron” techniques (to be discussed later). All these tests can be done on the same rock. “We are sure to get good results that way,” you are told. The results will come back with the rock’s *absolute* age, plus or minus a figure for experimental error.

After several weeks the professor calls you in and shows you the results. Finally you will know the true age of your rock. Unfortunately, the results of the different tests do not agree. Each method produced a different age! “How can that happen on a single rock?” you ask.

The uranium-lead model method gave 500 ± 20 million years for the rock’s age.

The potassium-argon model age test gave 100 ± 2 million years.

The rubidium-strontium model test gave 325 ± 25 million years.

The rubidium-strontium mineral isochron test gave 375 ± 35 million years.

Then the professor asks the all-important question. “Where did you find this rock? Were there any fossils nearby, above or below the outcrop containing this lava rock?” When you report that it was just below the limestone layer containing your 320 million year old fossil, it all becomes clear. “The rubidium-strontium dates are correct; they prove your rock is somewhere between 325 and 375 million years old. The other tests were inaccurate. There must have been some leaching or contamination.” Once again, the fossils date the rocks, and the fossils are dated by evolution.

Our little story may be fictional, but it is not at all far-fetched. This is the way it is usually done. An interpretation scheme (evolution) has already been accepted as truth. Each dating result must be evaluated — accepted or rejected — by the assumption of evolution and the billions of years it needs. The whole dating process then proceeds within the

backdrop of the old-earth scenario. No evidence contrary to the accepted framework is allowed to remain. Evolution stands, old-earth ideas stand, no matter what the true evidence reveals. An individual fact is accepted or rejected as valid evidence according to its fit with evolution.

Let me illustrate this dilemma with a few quotes from evolutionists. The first is by paleontologist Dr. David Kitts, a valued acquaintance of mine when we were both on the faculty at the University of Oklahoma. While a committed evolutionist, Dr. Kitts is an honest man, a good scientist, and an excellent thinker. He and many others express disapproval with the typical thinking of evolutionists.

The record of evolution, like any other historical record, must be construed within a complex of

inspect the interpretation, and note that it confirms the theory. Well, it would, wouldn't it?³

In God's Image

Is circular reasoning the best science has to offer? Are better decisions possible? Are scientists doomed forever to run in this circle? Is the human mind capable of more?

The Bible reveals that hope exists. In fact, even "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). Thus, by studying the creation, the things that are made, we ought to be able to accurately



particular and general preconceptions, not the least of which is the hypothesis that evolution has occurred.¹

And this poses something of a problem: If we date the rocks by their fossils, how can we then turn around and talk about patterns of evolutionary change through time in the fossil record?²

A circular argument arises: interpret the fossil record in the terms of a particular theory of evolution,

determine certain things, especially the fact that things were made by something or someone separate from the creation, an entity that was *not* made in the same fashion as everything else. The exquisite design of living things far exceeds the potential of natural processes, like natural selection. The character of the creation reveals (among other things) the character of its Maker.

Surely this verse means that the natural man, using his own senses and reasoning ability, is capable of correct observations and interpretations, perhaps within certain limits, but indeed an observer is "without excuse" in concluding that the creation has no maker, or that the maker is part of

1. David B. Kitts, "Search for the Holy Transformation," review of *Evolution of Living Organisms* by Pierre P. Grasse, *Paleobiology* 5 (summer 1979): p. 353.
2. Niles Eldridge, *Time Frames: The Rethinking of Darwinian Evolution and the Theory of Punctuated Equilibria* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985), p. 52.

3. Tom S. Kemp, "A Fresh Look at the Fossil Record," *New Scientist* 108 (December 5, 1985): p. 67.

the creation. At least some understanding of the character of the Creator, “even His eternal power and godhead,” must result. But the tenor of the passage indicates that people do not always come to the right conclusion. Sometimes they suppress what they see, and choose not to perceive. What is wrong? What has happened?

The Bible teaches that humankind is created “in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27). Man is not God, nor is man omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent; but being God’s image brings certain abilities and characteristics. What does God’s image entail?

The image of God does not refer to God’s physical body. On occasion, God took on human flesh in order to reveal himself to man in the Old Testament (Gen. 18:24), but God in man’s flesh was most powerfully revealed when Jesus Christ “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7). On other occasions, Scripture talks of His arm or face or hand in communicating God’s attributes or actions, discussing them in terms understandable by humans, but not implying that God has a physical body, for “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24).

Rather, the “image of God” refers chiefly to the fact that man possesses personal, rational, and moral qualities and has a God-consciousness, making him totally distinct from the animals. Much of man’s physical and emotional make-up is shared (to a lesser degree) with the animals. Animals were created “after their kind,” but man was created “in God’s image,” somehow adequately reflecting His glory and attributes. This image was in the beginning “very good” (Gen. 1:31). Notice that man was not and is not God, but a representation of His image.

God’s image carries great potential for the study of God’s creation and the accurate understanding of it, and Adam and Eve were told to do just that (Gen. 1:26, 28). It is hard to imagine what they and their descendants would have been capable of had they been obedient to God’s command.

But we know they were not obedient. They chose to rebel against their Creator and incurred His wrath (Gen. 3). They were placed under the penalty of death and along with all of creation began to deteriorate and ultimately to die. The image of God was marred so that even man’s spiritual and rational abilities were shackled. Beginning with Eve, every man’s natural desire has been to avoid the consequences of sin and to elevate himself to a position of power, refusing to acknowledge God as Creator. Little wonder that today Adam’s descendants so often make false conclusions. “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:21–22). “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. 14:1), for “the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not” (2 Cor. 4:4). They walk “in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated

from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:17–18).

This incomplete reasoning ability and lack of a complete desire for truth, coupled with lack of access or unwillingness to discover and discern all the relevant data, as well as imperfect logical tools, lead to “science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20).

In principle, the marred image of God is capable of discovering limited truth, but in practice man seldom, if ever, accomplishes this in an ultimate sense. God exists, creation occurred, but can we truly understand it as it needs to be understood? Dim approximations are about the best we usually achieve.

One must recognize that determining the age of a rock delves into the long-ago past, before human observers were present or cared to make observations. A good rule of thumb to follow when evaluating pronouncements about earth history is to separate valid observations from interpretations of those observations, especially if the interpretation process involves an anti-God component.

Man, in the image of God, can make valid observations, although necessarily incomplete in most cases. A scientist can measure the precise abundance of elements in a rock, and can discern its stratigraphic position among other rock strata. The scientist can describe and catalog the fossils present and compare them to other fossils. But since the deposition and timing of the rocks and fossils were not observed, interpreting the ages and origins is much more difficult, if possible at all, and many times interpreters resort to circular reasoning.

Is There an Alternative?

How should a creationist react to circular reasoning? In fact, how should a scientist of any persuasion react to circular reasoning? Obviously, with skepticism and even rejection. Circular reasoning has no place in science. We *can* do better.

The key is understanding our assumptions held at the start. Is the assumption of evolution necessary to do science? Despite the pronouncements of some modern-day evolutionists, obviously not! Are other assumptions possible? Yes! Can good science be done without an exclusive commitment to naturalism? Certainly! How can we determine which assumption set is correct?

Before discussing this, let me clarify something that too few people recognize, and evolutionists seldom admit. Science operates in the *present*, and in a very real sense is limited to the present. Scientific theories must involve, among other things, the *observation* of data and processes that exist and occur in the present. But who has ever seen the long-ago *past*? Rocks and fossils exist in the *present*. We collect them, catalog them, study them, and perform experiments on them, all in the present! The scientific method is an enterprise of the *present*.

Of course, observations and records dating from within human history are usable, to the extent that the observers are deemed reliable.

Theories must also be *testable* and potentially *falsifiable* (i.e., there must be some conceivable test which could prove them wrong). But who could disprove an idea about the past? What test could be run to conclude that evolution (or creation) is impossible?

Another requirement for good science is *reproducibility*. This means that observations made today of a particular event or object will be the same as observations of an equivalent event or object tomorrow. Similar events will yield similar results and similar observations.

Events that occurred only once might have been observed, and their results studied, but they cannot be repeated. But some events that occurred only once (such as the origin of the earth) may not have been observed at all. When scientists have only the *results* of an event or its after-effects to study, a full reconstruction of the one-time event (sometimes called a singularity) is lacking.

Even if someone did observe an event in the past (or claimed to), can we really know his observations were accurate? And is the written record complete and trustworthy?

Let me further expand on this difficult concept. I am not trying to discredit science; I am only trying to show its limitations. For example, geology is science. Studying the nature of existing rocks and fossils and the processes that act on them — that is science. Predictions about the future of the rock are another matter. Likewise, historical geology — the reconstruction of the unobserved past of rocks and fossils — is also another story. The same difficulty exists in biology, ecology, astronomy, archaeology, etc.

Note that evolution, if it ever occurred, did so in the unobserved *past*, and each supposed stage only occurred *once*. No one ever saw the origin of life from non-living chemicals. No one has ever seen any type of organism give rise to a completely different type (macro-evolution). No one has ever even *claimed* to see meaningful evolutionary changes take place. The minor variations (micro-evolution) in plant and animal groups (e.g., DDT resistance in insects, shift in



There are two different views on the formation of canyons like the Grand Canyon. Evolutionists believe it was carved over millions of years; creationists believe it was formed by the Genesis flood.



Scientific proof requires observation and repeatability.

dominant color of peppered moths, etc.), which do occur in the present, are not evolutionary changes. In fact, since creation allows for adaptation and variation *within* created kinds, small changes are perfectly compatible with creation theory as well, and are certainly not proof of evolution. Major changes (macro-evolution) have *never* been scientifically observed, and thus the theory of evolutionary descent from a common ancestor has not been and could never be proven scientifically. How could you ever run a test to see if it happened in the past? Or how could you ever prove that it did not happen in the past? Evolution is a belief system some scientists hold about the past, and they use this view of *history* to interpret the evidence in the present.

Likewise, creation, if it ever occurred, did so in the unobserved past. It is not going on today. No human observer saw the creation of the world take place. Thus, creation has not been, nor could it ever be, scientifically proven. It, too, is a belief some scientists have about the past.

Appealing to scriptural authority for proof, while appropriate for Bible-believing Christians, does not constitute *scientific* proof, in a modern sense, which requires observation and repeatability. But if Scripture is truly God's Word, and He is reliable, then we *can* have confidence in it. But how do we come to the notion that Scripture is authoritative and its Author reliable? Many books have been written on this subject, each one taking a slightly different approach, and I don't

pretend to have the final word. For our purposes, suffice it to say that our confidence in Scripture does not spring from nowhere, nor is it a blind leap of faith. We all live in a real world and deal with realities that do not always fall into any neat philosophical framework. We can and do observe which ideas make sense to us — which ones seem to work. If an idea repeatedly fails, or lacks common sense, we reject it.

Scripture makes many statements that are testable and potentially falsifiable. And each time we investigate, we find Scripture to be true or at least possibly true if we had all the data and perfect reasoning skills. Even though many detractors have claimed otherwise, never has a charge against Scripture stood up under close and objective scrutiny. We see scriptural teachings work in medicine and economics, and in science and history. We see prophecies come true long after they were made. We see societies and families thrive if guided by biblical principles, as do legal, governmental, and educational institutions. Scriptural values such as love, honesty, and truth witness in our spirits that they are correct.

In short, Scripture works! We see it provide useful results and good fruits in every realm. Other systems and teachings don't work nearly as well. This does not prove Scripture; we must still believe it by faith. And we must always be willing to fine-tune our interpretation of it as our understanding grows, but we have every reason to accept it as God's true and authoritative Word. So, while we cannot scientifically *prove* Scripture, it is, at least, valid for us to hold the position, by faith, that Scripture is true and applicable in all areas. And since Scripture speaks of a recent creation, it provides us with a basic scientific model that can guide our research and understanding, a model that warrants consideration in the marketplace of ideas. But, because it involves one-time events in the past unobserved by humans, supernatural creation cannot be scientifically proven.

Thus, both evolution and creation are outside the realm of empirical science, inaccessible to the scientific method. Neither is observable or repeatable. They are in the category of singularities, one-time events. It is not illegitimate for a scientist, who exists in the present and conducts his or her science in the present, to wonder, "What happened in the unobserved past to make the present, which is observed, this way?" Scientists can then try to reconstruct history in the most logical way possible, but no historical reconstruction can be proven (or disproved). Any view of origins must be held ultimately by faith.

Having said that, let me also say that as a scientist, I am totally convinced that the creation view of history is correct. I am a Christian, a child of God, a fact which I know to be true beyond a shadow of a doubt, but which likewise

I cannot prove scientifically. I know the Creator personally and trust His account of past events. After all, He was there, and in fact, He was doing it all! His record, the Bible, does not give me all the scientific details, but it does provide the general framework that guides my own scientific study. I am convinced it is an accurate record of real events.

A Christian's Resource

All other factors being equal, a Christian, reasoning from a scriptural position, has greater potential for understanding these things than the non-Christian, who starts the process with a non-biblical (i.e., false) world view. This is due to the fact that the Christian has input from a source not available to the non-Christian — the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught that when “the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. . . . He shall glorify me” (John 16:13–14).

The presence of the Spirit does not guarantee a right conclusion, for even a Christian is subject to practical limitations. All of us live in a world whose education system and popular media has been taken over by those who often emit false knowledge. And Christians still live in a sin-dominated world, and bear the *marred* image of God. Getting saved

does not change that. Furthermore, we all live in a society that brainwashes its citizens with a secular viewpoint, and we experience difficulty in ridding our minds of ingrained error. And how about personal sin? While we can be forgiven and victory gained over wrong habits, sin still clouds our thinking processes and inhibits the Holy Spirit from complete control.

But a Christian can start from the right perspective, and many times he receives enlightenment from the Spirit in varying degrees. Through the work of the Spirit, the recognition of truth can be realized by inner conviction and Spirit-directed thinking processes. We must always be willing to grow in understanding and change our opinion as more information comes in and our maturity in Christ deepens, but Christians at least have greater potential to arrive at truth than the non-Christian.

By adopting the view of ancient history given in Scripture, a Christian is then able to study the results of creation, the plant and animal types that were created. We can study the *results* of the flood of Noah's day, which certainly laid down the majority of the earth's sedimentary rocks that contain fossils. Although we did not witness creation or the Flood, we are convinced they really happened in history, and can attempt to interpret the *present* evidence, the results of



past events, within a true historical framework. In this way, we can fill in the gaps in our knowledge, more fully understand the past, and make sense of the present.

On the other hand, if the Bible is correct and creation, the Curse, the Flood, and the dispersion at Babel really happened, what occurs when someone assumes an evolutionary history instead? Obviously, if one *denies* true history, and accepts a false view by assumption, any attempt to reconstruct history is doomed to failure. It will not only be wrong, it will be inferior to a reconstruction based on *real* events, and it will neither be internally consistent nor scientifically satisfying. The data will not fit very well, yet it cannot be absolutely disproved. There will always be a story that can be told about the evidence.

In recent decades, a grave change has taken place that limits the parameters in which scientific study is allowed. The change has not so much happened as it has been foisted upon us. Previously, science was defined as “the search for truth,” but now it is nearly always equated with naturalism, the search for a naturalistic answer to all questions, even those ultimate questions of the long-ago past that defy normal explanations. The very possibility of supernatural involvement is denied, excluded by definition. Thus, naturalistic evolution is science and creation is religion, which does not belong in scientific discussions.

My former faculty colleague, Dr. David Kitts, quoted previously, often engaged in spirited discussions with me on this issue. He claimed to be a religious man, who believed in God, yet he scrupulously kept his beliefs out of his reasoning about earth history. He insisted that even if creation is true, even if God created all things in six literal days, just like it says in the Bible, even if Noah’s flood deposited the rock strata and the fossils, even if it happened just that way, even if that is absolute truth, it is still not science and its study has no place in science. Science is the attempt to find the best naturalistic explanation for things, even if the supernatural explanation is true and fits the data better!

My contention is that evolution is the religion of naturalism — that it is at least as religious as creation and that creation is at least as scientific as evolution.

Keep in mind that facts are facts, evidence is evidence. All too often, Christians who believe in creation only by faith are afraid to look at the facts. Many are afraid they might find something that will contradict their faith, so they choose not to look.

But we should never be concerned that facts, which exist in the present, will be incompatible with our assumptions about the past. Facts are like rocks: they don’t talk; they must be interpreted by one’s assumptions. When I was in graduate school, the professors frequently admitted, “There is no such thing as a value-free fact,” especially when it comes to unobserved history. Facts must be interpreted: they must be placed within an existing world view before they have much meaning at all. Christians must try to discover

God’s interpretation of the facts. We must also be willing to fine-tune our presuppositions as our understanding grows in both science and Scripture. Truth does exist; and we must strive, with God’s help, to overcome our limitations and discern it with diligent study.

To make matters worse, raw facts or data relating to the unobserved past can usually be interpreted in more than one way, within more than one world view, although both interpretations cannot be true. That fossil clam, mentioned at the start of the chapter, *can be* interpreted by an evolutionary historical reconstruction as a clam type that supposedly evolved from other animal types and ultimately single-celled organisms. In this view, it lived 320 million years ago, and its descendants either became extinct or they descended into modern clams.

Or, it can be interpreted by the creation historical reconstruction as an animal deposited in sedimentary material during Noah’s flood, but which was a descendant of the original clams in the clam kind created on day five of creation week. Other clams survived the Flood, and their descendants survive to this day.

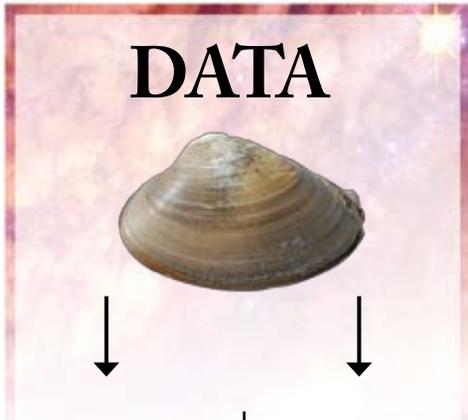
In this scheme, the Christian/creationist accepts by faith God’s record of creation. Contrary to what some might think, the scientific research that stems from a creation view is anything but trivial and sterile. The details of the view are yet to be fully worked out, and much is to be learned. But, if the events in Scripture really happened, we have a chance to reconstruct the specifics of a particular fossil deposit correctly, while those who deny history have no chance at all. They are forever doomed to tell and retell an inferior reconstruction that offends our logic and makes a farce of the present.

The Christian should stand in submission to Scripture in every area of life, including science and reconstructions of the past. We must interpret scientific data within the framework given there.

Can the Matter Be Resolved?

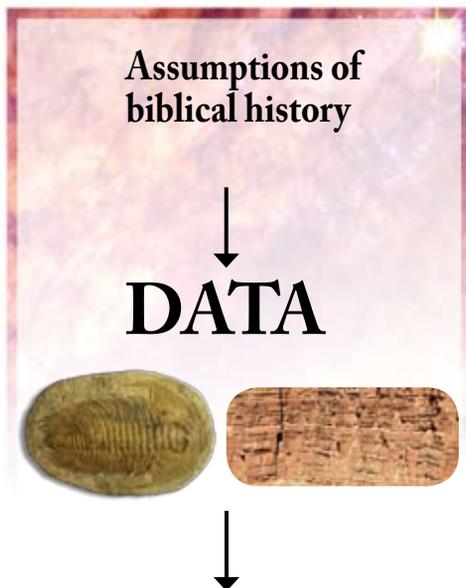
Since neither view of history can be scientifically proved or disproved, what hope is there? Will the creation/evolution debate go on forever, or can it be resolved? Can it even be resolved in the mind of a particular individual?

I was lecturing at a seminar one time when a representative of the local atheist group showed up. He had brought a young man, a university graduate student. They sat in the front row, right below where I stood, and whispered and gestured at my comments, calling attention to themselves and their disgust. (I suppose they hoped to discredit me and my statements, but they were so obnoxious that many, who may not have been on my side to start with, wanted nothing to do with the position of these men, whatever it was. Intending to thwart my effectiveness, they were actually a big help.)



Interpretation A
This clam evolved over long periods of time.

Interpretation B
This clam died in Noah's flood, having descended from originally created clams.



Interpretations consistent with the Bible.

As the lecture ended, many people gathered around to ask questions. The two atheists shoved their way to the front, and the younger man fired one question after another. He appeared to have been coached by the older. I tried to be polite, but each time he saw I had an answer for his last question, he interrupted and asked another. Finally, I challenged him (i.e., them) to give me his hardest question and then listen while I answered, if I could. The crowd hushed to hear his question, but it never came. Perhaps the older man's coaching had not prepared him to think for himself.

The older man, a professor with a long history of "fighting creationism" as he put it, stepped in to rescue his protégé from having to think for himself. He said he didn't like creationism because it disagreed with all the great scientists of our day — Stephen Gould, Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, etc. (atheists all). My view was different from theirs; therefore, I must be wrong.

But his main point was that my view mixed science and religion, and we all know that only naturalistic (read atheistic) evolution is science, but creation is religion.

Evidently he had not been listening to my lecture. Over and over again, I had insisted that the majority of university scientists did not hold my interpretations, and that I had specifically been giving another interpretation. I had pointed out that I did not disagree with scientific data, just the religious opinions (i.e., naturalistic opinions) of some scientists about those data and their reconstructions of unobserved history. I had specifically pointed out that the modern definition of science is improper, self-serving, and harmful. Furthermore, I had shown many data censored by my evolutionary colleagues, facts which do not fit an evolutionary view very well at all and which were therefore usually ignored. But I had not disagreed with the *facts!*

The place we differed was in the *interpretation* process. I had started from a different assumption set, performed good scientific research on the data, and derived an interpretation consistent with my world view. I had insisted that my presuppositions were different from those of many scientists. But, when I asked him to find fault with my interpretations given my assumptions, he got strangely silent. The only thing he would say was to repeat the oft-repeated charge that science has no room for the supernatural, and that I could not be a scientist if I believed in God.

He was unwilling to consider my assumptions as possibly legitimate, but admitted he couldn't fault my science or my interpretations. My heart ached, and still aches, for the millions of students brainwashed and badgered by religious evangelists of naturalism into accepting a wrong "religion" in the name of science.

Until a person is willing to think on an assumption or presuppositional level, there can be little movement on this issue. The facts are roughly compatible with both models of history. Both groups can do good science, and the resulting

interpretations can be consistent within each model, although quite different from each other.

The schematic drawing on the previous page illustrates the point well. It actually works for many situations, even in the present. This is how you get political liberals and conservatives, for example.⁴

Where Are You Coming From?

As we have seen, the Christian's assumption set should come from a careful and honest interpretation of Scripture, guided by the Holy Spirit, and in submission to its teachings. The evolutionist's assumption set comes primarily from an unnecessarily high assessment of the ability of scientists to discern truth. Finite men who were not present to make the necessary observations, have access to only a portion of the total data and possess fallible logical tools, and therefore can hardly expect to fully understand the past. Humankind, created in the image of God, can do many things, but there are limitations.

Many evolutionists believe in evolution simply because that is the only concept they have ever been taught. Their mentors, from high school on up, have drilled into them the false notion that only ignorant fundamentalists — flat-earthers — believe in creation, so young evolutionists reject creation thinking without investigation.

They have never heard a credible case for creation, and so they perpetrate the lie that evolution is the only legitimate view. This fallacy is furthered by the redefinition of science as *naturalism*, which denies the possibility of creation.

Comets: Assumptions and Interpretations

Consider this interesting application of the two models. We observe comets in our solar system in elliptical orbits around the sun. We observe that on each swing around the sun, a comet loses some of its mass. By measuring the mass of the comets and the amount of loss over time, we can conclude that many comets (especially the short period comets which make frequent passes around the sun) are not extremely old.

Young-earth advocates have interpreted this to imply a young solar system. If the solar system were many millions of years old, the short-period comets would have all ceased to exist. But since those comets still exist, the solar system must be young. Seems simple enough.

But those who insist on an old solar system hold that position in spite of the evidence from comets. They acknowledge that the present comets must be young,

4. I am indebted to my friend Dr. Donald Chittick for helping firm up my thinking in this area. This schematic is adapted from his excellent book *The Controversy* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1984).

but are convinced the solar system is old. They propose a hypothetical storehouse of comets in the outer reaches of the solar system, too far out to see with telescopes or to measure with any sensing device. They call this hypothetical (read imaginary) cloud of comets the Oort Cloud, after the man who first proposed it. Oort claimed that inter-stellar events occasionally dislodge a piece of material from this otherwise stable cloud, propelling it into a near solar orbit, furnishing our solar system with an inexhaustible supply of comets.

Did you follow the logic? Assumption: The solar system is old. Observation: Comets live for only a short time. Conclusion: Youthful comets are continually coming in from a faraway unseen source.

When young solar-system advocates bring up the age of comets, old solar-system advocates say, "Oh, we have solved that. Comets are replenished from the Oort Cloud." Thus, the observations play second fiddle to the assumptions. Without getting a person to question the assumption, you will seldom get him to question the imaginary Oort Cloud.

Resolution becomes even more difficult when dealing with proposed one-time events of the long-ago past, events outside the realm of scientific observation.

Unfortunately, evolutionists seldom admit they have presuppositions. They present their view of history and their interpretations as if they were observed facts.

Students and laymen alike are either duped by authority or intimidated into acceptance of a world view with its philosophical and religious implications without even knowing what has happened. Simply put, most people believe in evolution because most people believe in evolution.

It is all they have ever been taught.

If creation is even mentioned, it is

ridiculed and unfairly caricatured. Thus, evolution is assumed, not proved; and creation is denied, not refuted.

Observations made by careful observers in the past, such as Newton and Pasteur, for example, are legitimate within the limitations of the day. One must always discern the difference between scientific data and interpretations of those data, and the observed past and unobserved, inferred past. By the way, many of the founding fathers of science, including the two giants

mentioned above, were Bible-believing Christians and creationists and did their study from a scriptural world view. I recommend *Men of Science, Men of God*, by Henry M. Morris,⁵ for brief biographies of many such scientists.

Nevertheless, comparison, evaluation, and rational discussion *are* possible if both parties recognize their own assumptions and interpretative process. You will not get very far with

someone who will not even admit he has presuppositions. But let us look at how we can and should proceed to choose between the evolution and creation models of the unobserved past.

Predicting the Evidence

We first must agree on the basic nature of each model. Recognizing that there are many shades of opinion on many points within each view, let me first list the basic points about which we can agree.

Evolutionary theories generally start with either nothing or chaos. Something happens to cause matter to coalesce into particles, atoms, molecules, stars, galaxies, planets, and life. Over time, the life becomes more and more complex: single-celled organisms branch into plants and marine invertebrates, then into fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, and finally, into man. All of life, modern and extinct, came from a common ancestor through innumerable stages, all by natural,

5. Henry M. Morris, *Men of Science — Men of God* (Green Forrest, AR: Master Books, 1988).

unguided processes. Biblical creation ideas start with nothing other than an omnipotent God, the God of the Bible. The state before creation is totally unknowable, but there came a point in which He called into existence the space-mass-time universe, out of His own inexhaustible power. He created light, water, the continents, the atmosphere, and stellar bodies, preparing earth for life. He created each basic category of life distinct from all others, complete with a means of replicating. He created man after His own image, separate from the animals. It was perfect at the start, but fell into disarray as man rejected God's authority.

Obviously, since both views deal with the unobserved and unobservable past, neither can be empirically proved. The best we can do is determine which view is best, and which we choose to believe.

Having completed the formal statement of each model, predictions can now be made. These are not predictions of the future, but, instead, predictions about the data. In effect, each adherent must say, "If my assumptions are correct, I predict that when we look at the data, we will see certain features." The model that better predicts the evidence is more likely the correct one, but neither model can be ultimately proved or disproved.

We evaluate the predictions by looking for internal inconsistencies. Is the model consistent within itself? Does the model need secondary modifications in order to be consistent? Furthermore, does it fit all the data? Are there facts that just do not seem to fit at all? Finally, on a more basic and

intuitive level, does the model in question work when applied in science and life? Does it make good common sense, or does it require imaginary components? Can I live with its implications? Does it satisfy my personal need for purpose and hope? Does it lead to a suitable and pragmatic philosophy of life? This process of evaluation allows us to select an appropriate model, one that works in science and in life.

I make three claims for the creation model. I do not claim it is *scientifically* proven, but I do claim that it (1) handles the data in an internally consistent fashion — it does not contradict itself; (2) does so in a way clearly superior to the evolution model; and (3) makes sense of life and forms the basis of a satisfying life.

PREDICTIONS OF THE EVOLUTION MODEL

1. Transitional forms
2. Beneficial mutations
3. Things getting better
4. New species

Marxist Assumptions

In 1990, I had the distinct privilege of journeying to Moscow on a lecture tour, speaking on university campuses and at scientific research institutes. I was there just before communism was displaced. Change was in the wind.

PREDICTIONS OF THE CREATION MODEL

1. Separate, distinct kinds
2. Intelligent design in nature
3. Tendency for decay
4. Extinction of species

I once gave a lecture to several hundred biology faculty and students at the University of Moscow. I had come to suspect that Russian students had one interesting advantage over American students. Whereas in America, students are all too often expected to memorize what the professor has taught and then to give it back on a test, Russian students

tend to think presuppositionally. (Perhaps Russian students have grown up reading Tolstoy and playing chess, while American students read comic books and play video games.) Russians of that time openly admitted their atheism and their naturalistic view of science, while today, many American students and professors hold naturalism by default, without knowing it. Thus, to a greater degree than in America, Russians seem to be prone to think presuppositionally and to be less intimidated when confronted with another model.

However, at that time Russians were totally steeped in evolutionary thinking. Communism rests unalterably on atheism, and that is all this present generation had heard until the Communist government collapsed. Evolution provided the communistic world view with an air of scientific credibility.

Parenthetically, I remember one of my graduate students at the University of Oklahoma, who, as a young man growing up in Iran under the Shah's regime, had turned to communism. A leader in the Student Communist Party, he was taken to Moscow for a year's saturation in Communist thought. Do you know what they taught him? Not Marx. Not Lenin. For the whole year, they just filled him with evolution! Evolution is a necessary foundation for Marxism. According to Marxism, evolution is true, and all things come from natural processes (*materialism* is the Marxist word for this) and evolutionary progress through time is inevitable. Marxism claims to be the most highly evolved social and political system.

The Russian people tend to be very quiet, almost stoic in lecture settings, but certainly respectful of authority figures (such as a guest professor). I suspect that for 70 years they had not been allowed to show much emotion. The result was that I had little audience response during my lecture.

At any rate, my talk was focused on the presuppositional nature of science and the legitimacy of the creationist presupposition set and the scientific logic of its resulting interpretations. I used the schematic drawing of Assumptions A and B yielding Interpretations A and B respectively, and I could see they were listening intently although I got little response.

Until, that is, I showed them a revised schematic, with only one assumption set and only one interpretation. I pointed out that this was the way it was in Russia, this was how they were being taught. Remarkably, there were heads nodding all over the room. They recognized it!

Encouraged by this response, I claimed, through the interpreter, "This is not education; this is brainwashing!" Together they burst into a nervous laughter of recognition. Warming to the occasion, I blurted out, "This is adherence to the party line!" I thought they never would quit laughing and talking among themselves. They recognized their education and themselves in that chart and did not like what they saw. From then on, students and faculty alike listened intently to the presentation of a creationist world view consistent with itself and with the real world. Reporters thronged me as soon



as I was through and an article about my lecture and even my itinerary for the rest of the lecture tour was carried in *Pravda*, the first time such a thing had ever been done.

Incidentally, my tour was partially sponsored by the new and courageous Moscow chapter of the Gideons. They had just received their first shipment of Bibles — the book students had been warned about but had never seen.

As my lecture ended, having presented only logical and scientific information that pointed toward creation, the students and professors had thought it through. “With this evidence for creation, there must be a God. Who is this God? How can I know Him?” many called out. They rushed the platform with questions, nearly all of a spiritual nature. And the Gideons were there, opening boxes of Bibles and passing them out. The liberating light of creation has great power, even in the midst of darkness.

Conversely, evolutionary ideas have brought much bondage and sorrow. Without question, Marxism is founded on evolution and naturalism. Marx considered Darwin’s book, *On the Origin of Species*, as the scientific justification for his view of evolution in the social realm. He offered to dedicate his book, *Das Kapital*, to Darwin. In the name of evolution, unthinkable evils have been perpetrated, especially in Marxist and totalitarian countries. Even many of our Western social ills are the result of a society that has adopted evolution, rejecting the Creator’s authority over their lives and actions. “Ideas have consequences,” as they say, even ideas about the past.

While most evolution teachers simply repeat what they have been taught, maybe even trying to do a good job, some

understand the battle, and know what they are doing. Christ noted that while “light has come into the world,” “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). With that knowledge, the controversy comes into focus. Not only are thought systems at stake but lifestyles! Many would rather believe they came from a fish than acknowledge a Creator God to whom they are accountable for their choices and actions.

In 1993, I had occasion to speak to a packed crowd of 2,700 government bureaucrats, university students, and Communist Party officials in Beijing, China. Believe it or not, the government had requested Christian professionals to come and address the possible benefits of Christianity to China. The task of organizing the conference, identifying the lecture topics, and selecting the speakers had fallen to me. The others were to discuss education, economics, medicine, etc., while I was scheduled to expound the benefits to science of a creationist world view.

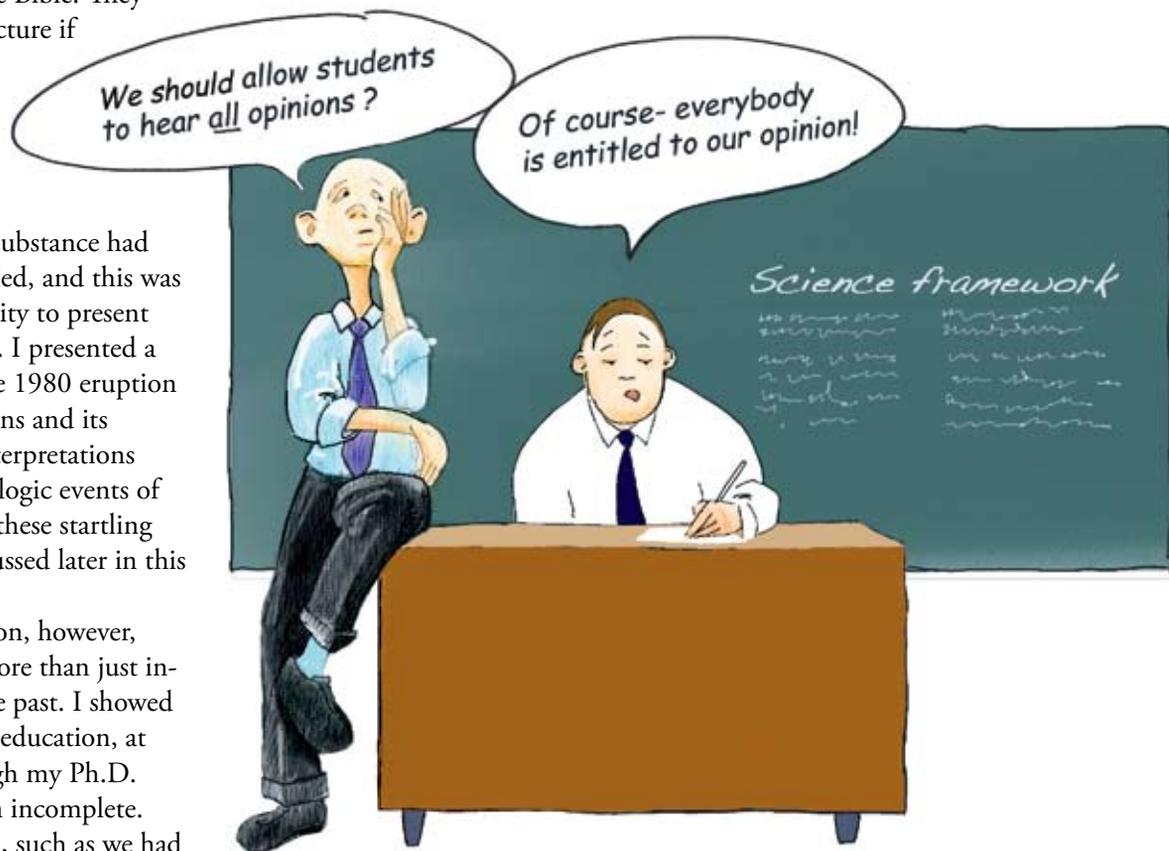
Throughout the months of preparation, the government canceled many of the presentations, including mine, on several occasions. But each time, mine was reinstated because of the primary role I was playing in conference preparations. They were quite concerned about my talk but were reluctant to lose face by canceling it. Finally, the night before the conference, it was canceled again. The Communist organizers deemed my talk a frontal assault on their world view, and rightly so.

Thankfully, in final negotiations, since I was already listed in the printed programs, they offered to let me speak if I refrained from mentioning creation, evolution,

Christianity, or the Bible. They approved me to lecture if I agreed to speak only about my own personal geologic field research. Since all the other talks of substance had been totally canceled, and this was the only opportunity to present anything, I agreed. I presented a slide lecture on the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens and its implications in interpretations of unobserved geologic events of the past. Some of these startling evidences are discussed later in this volume.

My presentation, however, included a little more than just interpretations of the past. I showed how my *American* education, at all levels up through my Ph.D. program, had been incomplete. Much information, such as we had discovered at Mount St. Helens, had been *censored* out of my education, indeed, out of all geologic education. These new ideas about catastrophes were proving quite helpful in geology. Censorship of information and ways of thinking from students produces harmful effects, both to the student and to the country involved in such brainwashing.

The Communist Party dignitaries on the front row knew what I was saying and to whom I was talking. They appeared furious, a fact that was later related to me in no uncertain terms. On the other hand, the students were delighted. They were hearing things that had been kept from them. As for the scientists, as soon as the lecture was over, I was surrounded by several, including the director of the Academy of Science, and questioned at length over these new ideas (which they themselves had never heard). They unofficially



invited me back to speak at universities and even to join them on a field trip to Tibet to see if catastrophism would help in locating oil and minerals. The only ones who approve of censorship and brainwashing are those who have a world view to protect — in this case, an atheistic world view based on evolution.

We must get away from thinking of evolution as a science. Evolutionary naturalism is a philosophical world view about the past, loaded with religious implications, which historically and presently exists in a frantic attempt to explain the fact that we are here without accountability to a Creator/God. It results in bad science, a denial of true history, and much misery to people and nations who have adopted it.

May God grant all nations a return to light and logic.



The most assertive anti-creation organization today is the Berkeley, California, based National Center for Science Education. Its director, Dr. Eugenie Scott, knows the true religious nature of the issue and even calls herself a "philosophical materialist" — a religiously held commitment to naturalism, that nature is all there is. This is essentially the same as atheism. Unfortunately, she and her religion are welcomed at school boards, legislatures, and universities nationwide, often in the name of separation of church and state.

Questions

1. Rocks don't talk. They must be interpreted. What is the most important part of the interpretation process?
2. What are some limitations on our ability to accurately interpret the past?
3. How is each fact listed below an important part of the creation model?
 - a. The creation in six days
 - b. The Curse on all things because of sin
 - c. The great flood of Noah's day
 - d. Dispersion at the Tower of Babel
4. What is meant by the term "scientific model"?
5. How can a scientific model make "predictions"?

