Evidences of a Recent Creation[1]

BY HAROLD G. COFFIN

We see and hear much today about an old earth, that it takes millions of years to build mountains or erode canyons. However, all the evidence does not point to great ages.

Cliffs and Lakes

Natural processes will destroy cliffs in time. Rocks and talus, breaking off the cliffs because of erosion, freezing and thawing, earthquakes, etc., accumulate at the bottom. Without continued tectonic uplift, after millions of years only a low slope or rounded hill will remain.

Lakes also will disappear. Plants that grow along the margins gradually push in toward the center. Skeletons of small organisms living in the water accumulate on the bottom. Trees, leaves, and other materials that fall or get blown into the water help to fill it. In New England the early settlers rowed their boats across lakes where meadows now exist. That lakes still occur all over the surface of the world is a good sign of its youth. Lakes south of areas formerly covered by glaciers would have been filled to become marshes or meadows if hundreds of thousands or millions of years had passed since their formation.

Sediment Deposits

The Po River flows into the Adriatic Sea on the east side of the Italian boot. We can trace the growth of its delta by historical and archaeological records.[2] Sites once directly on the coast are now several kilometers inland. The present protruding delta has built out into the sea mostly since 1000 B.C. Although the Po River deposited some sediments not in the present delta but spread along the upper end of the Adriatic Sea, there is no way to extend the age of the Po and its delta-building activity beyond more than a few thousand years. Such figures do not agree with the ideas of uniformitarian geology that require the deltas of the world's rivers to be much larger and much older than they actually are.

Sediments presently accumulating in the ocean basins derive from dissolved substances and solid material in runoff from continents and islands; remains of organisms that lived and died in the oceans themselves; glacier- and iceberg-transported sediments; windblown dust; seashore erosion; volcanic eruptions; and cosmogenic (meteor) dust. At the present time such sources amount to more than 16 billion tons per year.[3] Eventually, given enough time, the oceans would fill up. But since they cover about 70 percent of the earth's surface and also have an average depth nearly five times the average height of land above the sea, the land areas would erode down to sea level long before the sea basins became full.

At the present rate of sedimentation into the oceans and the consequent rise of sea level as filling occurred, the continents would lower to sea level in 12 to 15 million years. The 150 million years that geologists claim that the continents have been breaking apart would have provided sufficient time for the land areas to erode to sea level 10 to 12 times. The calculated rate of separation of the Western Hemisphere from Europe and Africa since the Jurassic is so slow that the runoff from the continents would easily have kept the developing Atlantic Ocean filled until the continents eroded to sea level.

The present rate of runoff could have buried the whole of the Gulf of Mexico with sediments in 6 million years. The Mississippi River alone could have eliminated the whole Gulf in 10 million years. The Gulf of Mexico, still largely open, witnesses against long geological ages. Erosion and runoff rates would decrease as land surfaces approached sea level, but the increasing miles of shoreline (more erosion) in proportion to land area would probably offset it. That the continents still rise well above sea level and the great ocean basins remain largely unfilled surely throws into question the existence of the continents and oceans for hundreds of millions of years, as well as the theory of gradually separating continents for the past 100 million years. The absence of major erosion in the geologic record is a striking feature of its morphology. If long periods of time have transpired between strata, weathering and erosion should have broken up the lower strata. Yet such irregularities are not common and when seen are often minor. The millions of years claimed for the geologic activity on earth may not be as certain as the geological literature would lead us to think.[4]

Human History

Humanity itself may provide evidence for believing that the surface of the earth as we know it is young. On the basis of known rates of increase in human populations, it does not seem possible for humans to have occupied the earth for several million years. The history of language and agriculture goes back just a few thousand years and then disappears.

If the popular theory of evolution were correct, the primitive or uncivilized races of the world could be the less developed peoples--those who had not evolved as far. But it is obviously not the case, because we find such people to be similar to other races in intelligence. Furthermore, their languages are often quite complicated--far more complex than necessary for their survival. Much evidence favors degeneration rather than evolution.[5]

Living Fossils

One of the basic premises of historical geology is that the absence of fossils of a certain group of organisms from sediments of a supposed geologic age suggests that it did not exist then because it is found living in modern oceans. The present-day survival of organisms absent from the fossil record for supposedly long periods of geologic time weakens such an assumption. *Neopilina* occurs as fossils in rocks dated 280 million years old. We obviously cannot take its absence from the intervening layers to mean it did not exist then. Since the lack of fossils of *Neopilina* proves nothing, we cannot use the absence of any other group of organisms at any period of geological history to support geological ages or evolutionary development.

Two living plant fossils are *Ginkgo* and *Metasequoia*. Botanists found the latter living in China at the turn of the twentieth century. Both genera are abundant in the fossil records.[6] Difficult to believe, especially for those who think in terms of many millions of years, are the reports of living fossil bacteria. Salt beds of Mesozoic, Paleozoic, and even Precambrian ages possess them. Scientists have successfully cultured fossil bacteria both in North America and Europe.[7] Most scientists suspect contamination by modern bacteria. With the discovery of abundant living bacteria in deep sediments, the opinion developed that living bacteria have successfully contaminated and penetrated many sedimentary beds.[8]

However, several factors, besides meticulous care in extracting the samples, argue against contamination or recent penetration in some cases. The organisms are not typical contaminants, efforts to pick them up in deliberately exposed cultures have not been successful, and their metabolic and biochemical capacities are greater than their modern living counterparts. If the bacteria have not been circulated into deep sediments recently, they would be living fossils of 100 million to more than 500 million years of age by standard geologic reckoning, depending on where found. Recent research on rock salt considered to be of Permian age (250 million years) reaffirms that some of these bacteria are not contaminants.[9] It is understandable that uniformitarian geologists find such longevity incredible. It amazes even creationists, many of whom think in terms of only thousands of years since the Genesis flood. However, bacteria existing for 5,000 years is certainly much more possible than for them to live for hundreds of millions of years. Thus it appears that the abundant living bacteria found in deep sediments might derive from two sources: recent contamination from the surface and burial by the Genesis flood only a few thousand years ago.

Rapid Geological Activity

In the town of Thermopolis, Wyoming, a large hot spring emerges from the ground and flows into the Bighorn River nearby. The local inhabitants began piping some of this water to the city park in 1905.

Travertine from minerals in the water that flowed from the top of the pipe has formed a tent-shaped dome around the pipe. It now has reached a height and width of about 20 feet. This dome even has a couple of small caves with stalactites inside. Obviously, under the correct conditions stalactites, stalagmites, and other cave structures can develop quickly.

Under large pillars in New Cave, near Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, park staff have found Indian projectile points. When water drips from the ceiling of a cave, stalactites may form on the ceiling where some evaporation occurs before the drop falls. On the floor, a stalagmite may build from minerals left by water dripping from the ceiling. Eventually the two may join to produce a column. These pillars in New Cave were two to three feet in diameter and about 15 feet tall. The Indian artifacts definitely limit the amount of time available for these large pillars to form. Stalactites have developed under limestone bridges, in the basement of the Washington Monument, and in other human-made structures. Factors involved in the rate of stalactite formation are the solubility and thickness of the limestone; the amount, temperature, and acidity of the water; and the air flow in the cave. The long time figures given for rates of stalactite formation may correctly represent some present processes, but may not apply to markedly different conditions that existed in the past.

The upright floating of trees and their sinking to the bottom in the same stance raises doubt about the wisdom of the automatic assumption that any fossil tree that is upright represents one preserved in its original position of growth. The eruption of Mount St. Helens and the formation of a large log raft in Spirit Lake illustrated a mechanism that would be widely available at the time of the Genesis flood. The rapid formation of beaches and cliffs on the island of Surtsey and the scouring of canyons quickly during the volcanic eruptions of Mount Katmai and Mount St. Helens have surprised geologists. Turbidity currents with the resulting turbidities have forced a major change in the interpretation of many sediments from slow gradual accumulations to sudden, almost instantaneous deposition. The identification of tidal cycles in certain sediments likewise changes the time for deposition from hundred of thousands or millions of years to as little as months, weeks, or even days. The good preservation of animal remains (sometimes even with scales, flesh, feather, etc.) and intact skeletons require rapid burial and little disturbance since burial. If repeated uplift and erosion of land had occurred, most fossils would be fossil hash. The recent discovery of soft, unpetrified tissue, including red blood cells, in dinosaur bones casts serious doubt on the geological ages usually attached to the bones.

As we consider all these factors, we come away with the strong suspicion that there is something wrong with conventional geologic time and that in fact only a few thousand years have passed since the formation of the earth's present surface.

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[1]This article is a condensed form of the chapter "Evidences of a Youthful Earth," in Harold G. Coffin with Robert H. Brown and R. James Gibson, *Origin by Design* (rev. ed.; Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 2005), 365-79, updated by the author.
[2]Bruce W. Nelson, "Hydrography, Sediment Dispersal, and Recent Historical Development of the Po River Delta, Italy," in *Deltaic sedimentation* (ed. James P. Morgan; Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, Special Pub. No. 15., 1970), 152-184.
[3]Alexander P. Lisitzin, *Sedimentation in the World Ocean* (Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, Special Pub. No. 17., 1972), 35-38.
[4]A. A. Roth, *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1998), 215-232, 262-274.
[5]J. G. Penner, *Evolution Challenged by Language and Speech* (London: Minerva Press, London, 2000).
[6]Chester A. Arnold, *An Introduction to Paleobotany* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1947), 273-77; E. D. Merrill, "A Living *Metasequoia* in China," *Science* 170 (1948): 140.

[7]Heinz Dombrowski, “Bacteria From Paleozoic Salt Deposits,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 108 (1963): 453-560; Ralph Reiser and Paul Tasch, “Investigation of the Viability of Osmophile Bacteria of Great Geological Age,” *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* 63 (1960): 31-34.
[8]A. A. Roth, “Life in the Deep Rocks and the Deep Fossil Record,” *Origins* 19 (1992): 93-104.
[9]Russell H. Vreeland et al., “Isolation of a 250-Million-Year-Old Halotolerant Bacterium From a Primary Salt Crystal,” *Nature* 407 (2000): 897-900.

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