

Lyell could not accept this view of successive creations and extinctions, of regarding each new flora and fauna as a step upward in the progressive series leading to man and the world he inhabited. He rejected it for two reasons: first, because he believed that discontinuities in the fossil record arose from the imperfection of the record as then known; and second, because the supposed progression from epoch to epoch was contradicted by the record. As more and more evidence came to light, it became evident that, instead of the record's showing successive creations and extinctions of all living things, it showed some species continuing while others became extinct, some bridging major divisions of the record while others existed for only one period, and an orderly and continuous record instead of a series of breaks.

Special Creationists hold that God used both natural and supernatural means to shape the past geologic history of the earth. The ordinary mode of God's working may be described in terms of the orderly, uniform operation of natural, secondary causes. The extraordinary mode of God's working may be described in terms of the special, unique activity of God through the exercise of supernatural efficiency. Thus viewing God's activity through natural, secondary causes, the geologic history of the earth may be seen to have been generally uniform. (This includes the uniform operation of such gradual operations as sedimentary deposition, elevation and depression of the earth's crust, and erosion; as well as such abrupt and catastrophic events as earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, and great tidal waves.) But in viewing God's activity through immediate, supernatural efficiency, the geologic history of the earth may be seen to have included miraculous interruptions, interpositions, and interventions.

b. Exegetical Considerations

How shall the contention of geology and paleontology that the strata and the fossils are very old be squared with the Scriptural data? There are a number of theories which attempt to reconcile the geological data with the Scriptures:

(1) Theories which hold that the geological strata are relatively young:

- (a) Pro-Chronic Creation -- maintains that the earth was created with the appearance of age.
- (b) Flood Geology -- the strata may all be explained as the effect of sedimentation laid down by the Noachian Flood.
- (c) Successive Catastrophes -- that the strata may be explained on the basis of the effect of various catastrophes, especially that at the Fall of man, and that at the time of the great Flood.
- (d) Chronological Gaps -- the strata were laid down by natural causes, during a somewhat longer period of time than 6,000 years, which period of time is implied from gaps in the genealogical tables of Genesis 5 and 11.