

In an article entitled "Apparent Age and its Reception in the 19th Century" (*Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, September 1980), David J. Krause quotes from advocates and opponents of the belief that the universe (or parts of it) was created with the appearance of an age greater than its actual age.

Viscount de Chateaubriand, for example, in his *Genius of Christianity* (1802) wrote:

'The earth,' it is said, 'is an aged nurse, who betrays her antiquity in everything. . .' This difficulty has been solved a hundred times by the following answer: God might have created and doubtless did create the world with all the marks of antiquity and completeness which it now exhibits

He added:

The oaks, on springing from the fruitful soil, doubtless bore at once aged crows and the new progeny of doves . . . the very day the ocean poured its first waves upon the shores, they dashed against rocks already worn, over strands covered with fragments of shell-fish. . .

The prime advocate of the theory of apparent age was Philip Henry Gosse, whose book *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot* (1857), Krause called "the high-water mark of the apparent age concept." Krause asserted that Gosse based his thinking on two major propositions. The first was that "All organic nature moves in a circle" of birth, life, death, and rebirth, with the result that for any living creature any stage of its existence automatically bears the evidences of its previous stages. The second proposition was that "Creation is a violent irruption into the circle of nature," and therefore all created living things must have possessed, at the time of their creation, all the evidences of a previous but unreal existence, these evidences being therefore "effects which never had causes." Adam, for example, although never born of a woman, clearly must have had a navel (thus the title of the book, *Omphalos*) Krause points out the fact that this led Gosse to draw a distinction between "diachronic" developments (those which occurred in real time) and "prochronic" developments (those which were unreal, whose apparent results were seen in organisms at the time of their creation). Gosse wrote:

Hence the minuteness and undeniableness of the proofs of life which geologists rely upon so confidently, and present with such justifiable triumph, do not in the least militate against my principle. The marks of Hyænas' teeth on the bones of Kirkdale cave; the infant skeletons associated with adult skeletons of the same species; the abundance of coprolites; the foot-tracks of Birds and Reptiles; the glacier-scratches on rocks and hundreds of other beautiful and most irresistible evidences of