

and that "the glacial furrows and scratches on rocks,...the tilted and twisted strata, the piles of lava from extinct volcanoes, the fossils of every sort in every part of the earth, the foot-tracks of birds and reptiles, the half-digested remains of weaker animals in the fossilized bodies of the stronger," etc., were all created ready-made by God.²⁵ The attitude of Gosse was a very pious one, and he freely stated that his only desire in setting forth this hypothesis was to glorify God and to uphold what he thought the Scriptures taught. However, the work of Gosse was taken seriously by very few, since it represented God as producing an enormous body of deception.

A Calm After the Storm--The Latter Half of the 19th Century

By 1850 most of the leading churchmen in the British Isles had come to realize that the geologic evidence for long periods of time was real, and that it was inappropriate to contradict it. It is true that a great controversy between science and theology was yet to be carried out, namely, the controversy concerning Darwinian evolution. But that was a conflict against a theory which in some of its representatives took almost the form of a religion--not against the value of many complex series of fossiliferous rock layers. Theories of evolution were set in array against the direct statements of the Biblical account concerning the creation of life, but the actual geologic evidence for time did not oppose direct Biblical statements. The influence of Hutton, Buckland, and Lyell had been effective in showing the value and acceptability of systematic geologic observations. Not only the observations of geologic evidence by these men, but also their personal views were generally accepted. Along with this the Biblical Flood came to be regarded as a local, rather than global, judgment. Theologians as a rule were sincere and emphatic in their belief in the Genesis account of creation, but conceded that the history of the earth has been more elaborate and extensive than the brief summary in Genesis sets forth.

It was indeed fortunate for Christendom that the early geologists who discovered the evidences which brought about this change of attitude were not anti-biblical in their purpose or in their tone of writing. In the latter part of the century a pronounced anti-biblical tone did arise among some scientists who were promoting theories of evolution, but this was not the case with those who had founded the science of geology.

In order to understand the problem of the 19th century opposition to geology, and the solution which finally came to be generally accepted, we will here consider the works of four outstanding mid-19th century evangelical writers, Hitchcock, Miller, McCaul, and Birks.

Edward Hitchcock

Edward Hitchcock was a well-known president of Amherst College, in Massachusetts. A large collection of his public lectures was published in 1851, under the title The Religion of Geology and its Connected Sciences.²⁶ These lectures did a great deal to alleviate