

deposition as necessarily representative of practically all deposition. This is very commonly done in young-earth creationist circles. Various deposits of rapidly covered animal shells, plant remains, and vertebrate skeletons are considered to be sufficient evidence that all, or practically all, sedimentary deposits formed in the past were formed rapidly by the Flood.³⁴ But since rapid burial of many such organisms occurs regularly today during under-water landslides, hurricanes, and other natural disturbances, it is reasonable to assume that such burials also occurred in pre-Flood times.

One of the most commonly cited examples of relatively rapid burial of fossil materials is that of partially upright tree trunks in certain coal beds in the European area. Some of the trunks lie at a sharp slope, and penetrate up through several layers of coal, indicating that the entire mass was buried before the wood had opportunity to decay. It is therefore reasonable to believe that this is a true example of relatively rapid deposition, with perhaps not more than one hundred years being required for producing the series of layers with their "polystrate" fossil tree trunks. However, the existence of the few coal beds which have this characteristic is taken to mean that there are no slowly formed coal deposits, and that the many careful descriptions of slowly formed coal layers in various parts of the world are erroneous. The fact that there are numerous kinds of coal, and a variety of circumstances under which it can be formed is practically disregarded.

Other examples of rapidly buried materials which are mistakenly taken as representative of nearly all sedimentary processes are the fossilized skeletons of fishes, preserved with fins extended, and the fresh-frozen carcasses of mammoths in Siberia. Some of these could well be genuine examples of the action of the Biblical Flood; but the existence of a few such cases, in strata near the surface, is not an indication that the entire, vast array of fossiliferous strata of the earth was formed rapidly. Also, in the case of fossilized marine animals, it must be remembered that under-water landslides, caused by earthquakes, very often bring about sudden smothering and burial of large numbers of organisms.

5. The practice of setting aside certain geologic observations by proposing a new, untested hypothesis as a substitute for the generally accepted explanations. We of course recognize that there is nothing wrong with suggesting an alternate explanation for a particular structure or process, so long as the new hypothesis has been backed by a considerable amount of serious research on the topic. But it has become customary in several of the young-earth groups to quickly propose the hypothesis, and then hope that research can be begun later. However, in nearly all instances the fundamentalist Christian community immediately accepts the hypothesis as a valid substitute for the classic explanation which was based upon elaborate research. This has happened in many, many cases having to do with rock layers and with radiometric dating.

One of the best known examples of such an acceptance of a hastily formulated hypothesis is the young-earth view of the formation of the