

Grand Canyon. Most of the young-earth creationists accept the following widely disseminated hypothesis: The Canyon is said to have been formed by "relatively rapid deposition out of the sediment-laden water of the Flood. Following the Flood, while the rocks were still comparatively soft and unconsolidated, the great canyons were rapidly scoured out as the waters rushed down from the newly uplifted peneplains to the newly enlarged ocean basins."³⁵ This idea has continued to gain popularity during the past decade, in spite of the fact that most of the rock layers of the Grand Canyon are of types which could not have been formed rapidly. This fact concerning their types is easily demonstrated by even routine studies of the microscopic texture and chemical nature of samples from the layers.³⁶ One must remember that strata of shales, and of various types of limestones and dolostones, are not so simple in their make-up that they can be rapidly spread down like concrete and asphalt road pavings, or like peanut butter and jelly on a piece of bread.

In order to avoid such misunderstandings as these, we should discipline ourselves to put forth new hypotheses only with great caution. In the use of the scientific method of research, the hypothesis is not formed as a wild, initial guess, but is based upon a sizeable amount of previous investigation of the topic or problem. Even after the hypothesis has been formulated, and circulated among other scientists, it is well understood that more research is to be done before it is to be regarded as a true answer.

6. The expectation that some new chemical test, a magnetic or astronomical calculation, or a newly discovered deficiency of some mineral in the oceans, can suddenly nullify practically all the facts and principles which are known concerning the sedimentary deposits of the earth. (The reports of such tests and calculations are constantly causing excitement among fundamentalists.)³⁷ To believe that the painstaking and systematic geologic studies of the past 200 years could suddenly be brought to naught by some laboratory test or mathematical calculation is to entirely misunderstand the methods and content of those studies.

A belief that the facts and principles of sedimentary geology could be refuted so easily is comparable to the claim of a quack doctor who might suddenly begin to announce that he has proved carbohydrates to have no food value. He may support his claim with isolated examples of "evidence," but the fact that the people of the earth have been deriving most of their energy from carbohydrates for thousands of years remains in spite of the isolated examples. The quack doctor needs to go back and learn the real background which lies behind his pieces of evidence, before he tries to overthrow well-known principles. It is also important to remember that laboratory tests are not infallible. The tests that are made with the aid of complex instruments are especially subject to error. And arguments based on deficiencies of certain minerals in the oceans are of no more value than an "argument from silence" in human relations or in archaeology. So, one should never expect firmly established principles to be suddenly invalidated by one or a few pieces of seemingly contrasting evidence.