

## INTRODUCTION

The western region of the United States is well known for its dramatic scenery and an unusual abundance of National and State Parks. The region has the additional benefit of a sparse vegetation cover that provides extensive exposure of the colorful geological layers. These exposures are accentuated by dramatic fault scarps, elongated monoclines and deep canyons such as the Grand Canyon. Furthermore, the colorful geological sequence of the region is quite simple and serves as an easy preamble to the study of geology, which can at times be very complex. There are few places, if any, on the surface of our planet where one can get a better introduction to the geologic past of our Earth.

You will encounter many new terms in this brief treatise. In order to facilitate your reading, we have provided: 1) a glossary of geological terms; 2) a listing and description of the important geologic formations of the region; 3) a standard stratigraphic column to help you identify which part of the geologic column you are in; and 4) a brief introduction to petrology (the study of rocks) to give you some idea of the nature of the rocks encountered. You will find these resources appended at the end of the descriptive section of this guide. You should refer to these whenever you run into an unknown term. It is suggested that these four study aids be examined carefully ahead of time so that you will know where to turn for help.

For two centuries there has been an ongoing conflict between science and the Bible. This has been one of the greatest intellectual battles of all time. The Bible, with its recent creation by God in six days a few thousand years ago, and science with its theory of evolutionary development over billions of years, stand in stark contrast to each other. The Bible, with a publication record which is 17 times that of any secular book, is highly respected. Science, with dramatic accomplishments such as space exploration and genetic engineering, is also highly respected and many are perplexed as to which is correct. This field guide addresses itself especially to issues related to both sides of this controversy.

Very pertinent to the Biblical account of beginnings is the Genesis flood, which reconciles the geologic layers of the Earth and their enclosed fossils to a recent creation by God. Without a worldwide flood, as described in Genesis, it is not possible to explain the fossiliferous geologic layers found on all the continents of the Earth in the context of Biblical history. Without that flood one cannot reconcile the uniqueness of the various fossiliferous layers of the Earth with the six day creation event given by God in the fourth commandment and in the Genesis account of beginnings. At stake here are questions about the integrity of Scripture. This is not a question that can be easily dismissed. The question of the Genesis flood is paramount to the question of the integrity of the Biblical model of origins and of the Bible as a whole. Hence special attention will be given in this treatise to geologic questions about that horrendous event.