

earth, but the wickedness of mankind led to a catastrophe in which the sun's rays split open the crust of the earth, and allowed the central abyss of waters to burst forth and overwhelm the inhabited lands.

William Whiston in his *New Theory of the Earth* (1696) propounded almost more extravagant speculations. He supposed that at the time of the Creation the earth did not rotate on its axis, but that after the Fall of Man it began to do so. When the years had passed until the time of Noah, a comet on 18th November B.C. 2349 sent its tail over the equator, and caused a gigantic downpour of rain, while at the same time the internal abyss of waters broke forth and inundated the land. It was from the "chaotic sediment of the flood" that the various stratified formations of the earth's crust were deposited.

Another English writer who attributed similar important effects to the Deluge was John Woodward, familiarly remembered by the bequest of his collection of specimens to the University of Cambridge, and by the Professorship of Geology there which perpetuates his name. He had an intimate acquaintance with the stratified formations of a large part of England and with their characteristic fossils. While firmly convinced that these fossils were really the remains of once living plants and animals, he could not free himself from the incubus of the prevailing theological prejudice. In his *Essay towards a Natural History of the Earth* (1695) he ranged himself with those who maintained that the shells in the rocks were relics of Noah's Flood. He held a common belief of his day that the interior of the earth was once full of water, which at the time