

creates the new heaven and the new earth. It is here used as an example for us, since God made us with a constitution that needs to follow a similar progression. As the seventh day of Genesis is almost certainly a long period, this might suggest that the same is true regarding the first six as well. However, it would be only a suggestion, not a proof. God could have created the world in six periods of activity of 5 minutes each or of 6 hours each or of 24 hours each, or of three billion years each. We are not told how long the periods were. The Bible leaves us free to guess if we desire, but we should be charitable toward others who make a different guess.

Whether God created the world in a period that would be equivalent to six present 24-hour days, or whether a process involving millions of years is involved, has nothing to do with the question of evolution. The theory of evolution is that all things have developed from a very simple beginning into their present complex state by purely natural forces. Such a theory is definitely contrary to Christian teaching, and to many Biblical statements.

There are many details about the way that God created the world that He has not revealed to us, just as there is a great deal about its present condition that the Bible tells us nothing about. If a man is driving on a wide mountain road with a steep drop on one side and a big cliff on the other he does not increase his safety by hugging the inside of the road so tightly that he constantly brushes against the side of the cliff. It is important that he keep away from the edge of the steep drop, but to say that 6 feet away is more dangerous than 12 feet away is rather stupid. In fleeing from error, we gain nothing by going beyond the Scripture -- in fact we sometimes make it easier for our opponents when we do so.

The Biblical account of the creation of man implies that he was created full-grown. It is not impossible that God created the earth with fossils in it at different levels so constituted that they would look as if they had been formed from the decay of the bodies of animals or plants. Yet to many people it would seem more reasonable to think that such animals actually had lived during one or more of the creative days. If so, this does not prove evolution, nor is it a step in that direction. The Bible says nothing about fossils and gives us no definite statement as to how long ago the creation occurred or how rapidly it went. We know that it was not all instantaneous, since we are told that it was divided into six