

5. Length of the days. There has been much discussion about the length of the days in Genesis 1. However, the Bible gives us no definite answer to this question. The Hebrew word translated "day" like the corresponding Greek word in the N. T., is used in various senses. We have no right to read back modern astronomical concepts or discoveries into the meaning of words as used when the Bible was written, but must determine the meaning of each word from its usage in the Bible itself.

The first use of "day" (v.5) is probably its commonest use. Generally it indicates ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> period of light, preceded and followed by a period of darkness. This period varies in length in different parts of the world and at different times of the year. At the North Pole it may last for six months. In most countries <sup>(2)</sup> in summer <sup>(1)</sup> it is far longer <sup>(3)</sup> than in winter.

A second usage of the word is to indicate a ~~succession of a~~ <sup>period consisting of one</sup> period of light <sup>plus one</sup> and a period of darkness. In Hebrew usage this began at sunset and ran until sunset the next day. Even today the Jewish Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday. Such a period would be approximately, but never exactly, 24 hours in length.

A third usage of the term, that is by no means infrequent, occurs in Gen. 2:4, where the word "day" includes the creative activity of the entire 6 days of Chapter 1. The word is frequently used to describe a period of <sup>undefined</sup> length, sometimes very great. Thus the O. T. frequently speaks of "the Day of the Lord." Jesus said, "Abraham saw my day and was glad." Peter says, "A day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The Bible nowhere states which of these three uses of the term is involved in the creative days of Gen. 1.

There is <sup>Certainly</sup> ~~though no question that~~ God could have performed the work of any one of the "days" in 24 hours if He chose. He could equally well have done it in periods of 24 minutes or of 24 seconds. The question is not what God could have done but what