

sixth day He did not say, "Let the earth be covered with tigers, elephants, etc." He said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind," etc. All of these statements strongly suggest a long process, rather than an immediate instantaneous establishment of a completed situation. God certainly could have caused everything described in Genesis 1 to happen in one instant if he chose. He would not need six days of twenty-four hours. On the other hand, He could spread it over as long a period as He wished. It is entirely up to Him.

The account of the third day shows the trees and plants beginning to grow, and growing up out of the earth, until the earth was covered with them. If He chose, God could have speeded up the process so that a tree would grow as much in twenty-four hours as it normally does in a hundred years. For that matter, He could make it grow as much in five minutes as in a hundred years, if He chose. But there is nothing in the passage to suggest that things were done in a manner so different from the usual situation. The natural interpretation of the passage is a process which might easily have consumed thousands or millions of years.

Thus the usage in the account of the third, fifth and sixth days, suggests very strongly that these were long periods, rather than that they were periods of only twenty-four hours.

We notice that in the course of these days there are very clear evidences of certain sharp, sudden changes, constituting definite divine interventions in the course of events. This is noticeable in many places, but is most evident in connection with the creation of man. Here God made something that was sharply differentiated from anything that had existed before. Patterns of some similarity might have been used, but a distinct divine act is described, and man becomes animate only after he is man.

Thus at various places there is evidence of a new divine beginning, and the statement that the new element is to bring forth "after its kind." We are not told how much development there may be within each of these sections. There is development, growth, and progress in every phase of life, but there are also definite demarcations between the "kinds" that God has made. The Bible has not stated just how wide these "kinds" may be. Our information is not complete on this point. To deny the presence in the universe of development, progress, and change would be absurd and without any scriptural warrant. On the other hand, to assert that everything developed by natural process from one simple source is directly contrary to what is clearly stated in this portion of God's Word. Thus we must not read into the narrative, nor assume that it is meant to be complete, but we must see what is clearly stated and stand steadfastly upon it.

There is a sixth principle that we should note:

6. WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE WRITER HAD NORMAL INTELLIGENCE, AND INTERPRET HIS WORK AS FITTING TOGETHER.

In almost any writing it is possible to interpret sentences or even paragraphs in somewhat different ways. Verbal contradictions are easy to find in even the most coherent of works. Unless it is completely proven that two sections of what appears to be a unified writing come from different sources, one should first make the attempt to interpret them in such a way as to fit them together reasonably.

This particular principle comes into sharp relief when we note the relationship between Genesis 1:1-2:4, and Genesis 2:4 to the end of the chapter.

It is very common today for unbelievers when told that a person believes the Genesis account of creation to say: "Which account of creation do you believe? After all, we know that Genesis starts with two contradictory accounts of creation."

Of course if this is so it immediately destroys all possibility of believing that Genesis was written by one author, whether he had sources or not. It also destroys the