

He has left us to observe his creation and to use our reasoning power in a responsible way for understanding it.

We do not propose to assert the correctness of any one of the usual methods of "finding" sufficient time in the Bible for life in the past, but surely the Bible does encourage us to find such. In Genesis 1:1 we have God telling us that the heavens and the earth were created "in the beginning," but not definitely when that was. In Psalm 90:1-4 we hear the author (probably Moses) speaking to God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit saying:

Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.
Before the mountains were born,
Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Thou dost turn man back into dust,
And dost say, "Return, O children of men."
For a thousand years in Thy sight
Are like yesterday when it passes by,
Or as a watch in the night.

In II Peter 3:3-4 and 8-9 the suffering Christians are reminded that, even though God's persecuted people are inclined to think that the events in God's program should proceed rapidly, God does not always work as fast as man visualizes. Christians are to realize that God does carry out his works in due time, and that Christ will finally return, even though it may seem to be an unreasonably long time. Thus this passage gives us the realization that in the Bible a "day" can be a longer period of time than 24 hours. Similarly in Genesis 2:4 we find the expression "the day" (yom) being used of the entire period of creation of the "earth and heaven."²⁰ Also, most conservative Bible scholars admit that the period of time designated by the word "day" in the expression "day of the Lord," and "day of Christ" is much longer than an ordinary day. So, it may be that at least some of the days of creation of Genesis chapter one were long periods of time. At least there seems to be nothing to prevent our taking them as long periods and assuming that the fossil record of earlier plants and animals was formed during the third, fourth, fifth, and early sixth "days."²¹

Evolution and Time

In a chapter on the recognition of time in nature, it is probably necessary to mention the frequently encountered suggestion that one can not recognize large amounts of time without adopting an evolutionary position. This idea is false on two counts. First, there is no necessary or logical reason that the two must be associated. Why should a belief that God created numerous kinds of animals and plants, and let them live for a long time "to fill the earth," be an evolutionary concept? It is false logic to say that this demands an evolutionary origin for the groups of animals and plants involved. Second, a belief in long periods of time was held by most of the founders of fundamentalism in America during the