

in that their cell walls contain a high percentage of silicon dioxide (the main component of glass). The glasslike walls of these organisms are extremely thin, but so durable that they are not appreciably affected by the chemicals of the ocean, nor by the digestive fluids of the animals which eat them. Because of this durability great masses of diatom shells are found in most parts of the sea floor,⁷ and also in some marine sediments now exposed on land. Since these organisms are one of the very most abundant of the living things on the earth, it would seem that they should be found at nearly all levels of any stratigraphic column formed by marine deposition. However, such is not at all the case. In fact, they are never found earlier than the Triassic Period, which in many series of strata is rather near the top, with many thousands of feet of non-diatomaceous layers beneath. This distribution seems all the more remarkable when one considers the fact that the radiolarians (a kind of marine Protozoa, related to the amoeba) are extremely abundant in many marine sediments, even as early as the beginning of the Cambrian Period.⁸ The shells of the radiolarians are composed of silicon dioxide, just as are the shells of diatoms, so it is practically certain that if diatoms had been living during the earlier geological ages, their shells would have been preserved, just as were those of the radiolarians. So this indicates that there were long periods of time when life flourished on the earth, before the appearance of diatoms.

When we come to the flowering plants we find a similar situation. The remains of many kinds of simpler plants appear in the early strata of the fossil record, but we do not find the flowering plants which produce an enclosed seed (Class Angiospermae) until Jurassic times. The lower marine strata contain the remains of numerous kinds of lime-secreting algae, and early terrestrial coal deposits contain an abundance of ferns and other lower land plants; but in none of these strata are the higher flowering plants found. There are at the present time approximately 200,000 species of these higher flowering plants known (more than all other known kinds of plants combined). So the absence of these higher plants in the early strata, contrasted with their abundance in the later deposits, seems to tell us that God created the flowering plants much later than the algae and other lower forms of plant life.⁹

In the case of the vertebrate animals we have much the same arrangement as with the flowering plants. There is no trace of vertebrate fossils in the strata of the Cambrian Period, and no vertebrates other than fishes until the last part of the Devonian Period. There is a great abundance of fossils representing most of the types of invertebrate animals in the Cambrian deposits, and later, but not even fishes until the middle of the next Period. In other words, there were long periods of time when the oceans were teeming with many kinds of animals and plants, but the vertebrates had not yet appeared. If someone suggests, as mentioned in a footnote above, that all the kinds of animals lived together from the beginning, and that the fossils were all buried and formed within a short period of time, then why are there no remains of vertebrate animals, higher plants, and diatoms in the Cambrian