

when free oxygen began to accumulate in the atmosphere and waters of the Earth. By at least 700 million years ago, light from the Sun reaching the Earth had been transformed from lethal ultraviolet rays into a beneficial energy source for advanced life.

FIFTH DAY OR ERA OF CREATION

Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens (Gen. 1:20).

The curtain in the drama of animal life rose to reveal the waters of the Earth teeming with swarms of living creatures over 500 million years ago. All the major marine invertebrate phyla were present, and the fishes appeared relatively soon thereafter. Flying insects appeared during the Devonian age which began 400 million years ago. Current fossil evidence shows that birds occurred much later in geologic history.

The *Age of Marine Life* during which marine invertebrates and fish dominated history began with the Cambrian explosion 570 million years ago. It ended 350 million years ago when the *Age of Fishes* closed the Devonian Period (see figure 12.1). It was time for life on the land.

SIXTH DAY OR ERA OF CREATION

Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind (Gen. 1:24).

Amphibians crawled on the land, followed by reptiles and small primitive mammals. Giant dinosaurs ruled the Earth. Following their extinction, all the major forms of mammals appeared and spread throughout the Earth.

The *Age of Land Animals* began 350 million years ago. The dominance of animal life ended with the arrival of man.

Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness (Gen. 1:26).

We currently live in the *Age of Man*. One's understanding of when this era began depends on one's choice as to whether Neanderthal (100,000 years ago), Cro-Magnon (40,000 years ago), or Civilized man