

In like fashion, I Tim. 2:13,14 deals with specific details about the story of Adam and Eve. These early chapters of the Old Testament are vital foundation to all the Biblical teaching.

The third principle to note is as follows:

### 3. WE MUST INTERPRET TO SOME EXTENT IN THE LIGHT OF PURPOSE AND LITERARY FORM.

This is a principle that can be of great importance in relation to many parts of the Bible. It is not nearly as important in relation to these particular chapters as to many others. We mention it here only for the sake of completeness. Let us look briefly at each of the two elements mentioned in it.

a) Purpose. What is the purpose of these chapters? It is quite evident from their position, from the general context, and from the New Testament references, that they are here in order to tell us how our whole present situation began, how the world started, how it comes about that redemption is needed. Their purpose is a factual purpose. It is a vital purpose, introductory to everything that follows in the Scripture. There is nothing in their purpose which entitles us to deal lightly or allegorically with anything in these chapters.

b) Literary Form. As with any other section of the Bible, we ask the question, is this allegory? Is it figure? Is it poetry?

The distinctive marks of Hebrew poetry are not found in these chapters. There is no more reason to take them as allegory than to take the story of the life of Christ as an allegory. If the account of Jesus is factual, there is no reason to believe that the account of creation and of Adam is not equally factual.

I don't quite like the way I worded the question: "Is it figurative?" We can not interpret a whole section as figurative. To do so would be to reduce it to nonsense. Figures of speech are scattered here and there throughout the Bible as throughout all literature. As a rule they add to our understanding, rather than detract from it. When we say, the man was a lion in the fight, no one thinks that we mean that he chewed the enemy with his teeth or clawed them with his fingernails. It is obvious to everyone that we mean that he fought with bravery, with tenacity, with courage. It is just as clear as literal language could possibly make it. In fact, it is probably clearer. Figures of speech do not necessarily bring obscurity. Used sparingly they add clarity as well as beauty.

It is always possible in a passage of Scripture to raise the question whether certain expressions are meant to be taken as figurative or as literal. But there is very little in the chapters under consideration that could raise the question as to whether figurative language is involved. The passage is about as factual and as literal as any section anywhere in the Bible.

### 4. WE MUST REALIZE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND RESULTS.

The question where Moses got the information he included in these chapters is an interesting one. Some would hold that God gave him a vision and that he describes what he saw in this vision. Others would believe that the vision came to Abraham, or perhaps even to Adam and that its content was passed on until it reached Moses. It is not particularly important to our doctrine of inspiration to ascertain when the knowledge was received, or how it was received. The important thing is that Moses wrote the book of Genesis under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who was keeping him from error. If Moses had erroneous ideas in his mind, the Spirit kept him from putting them down in writing. The Spirit guided Moses in the selection of words from his own vocabulary in order to use them to express the truth that God wished