

CHAPTER 2

REVELATION AND SCIENCE

There are different ways by which man obtains information. Revelation and science are two of these ways or methods. In God's revelation of himself to man He has informed us of certain truths concerning Himself, man, and the universe. Science, as we have already seen, obtains information about the universe by making observations of things, processes, and events within the universe. There is no necessary conflict or disagreement between revelation and science.

Types of Revelation

The Bible contains many statements declaring the reality and objectivity of revelation. We have a simple statement of God revealing himself in Psalm 103:7, "He (God) made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel." In the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy we find many very explicit statements concerning God's revelation of himself and of his message to Moses (Exodus 3:1-4:17; 19:1-31:18; etc.). In other parts of the Bible we have numerous equally explicit statements that God revealed himself to David, the prophets, Peter, Paul, John, and others; and divinely inspired them to accurately record the message.

In each of the cases we have cited, the revelation was communicated in human language. This is what is sometimes called "special revelation," and is by far the most precise and understandable form of God's communication to man. However, it is true that many things about God and his works are also revealed in nature. The Bible itself refers to the reality of a revelation of God's power, beauty, and orderliness in nature (Isaiah 40:21-26; Psalms 19:2-6; 94:8-10; and Romans 1:19-20). Thus we accept the validity of both of these forms of divine revelation, and rejoice in knowing both the Revealer and his message. Man sometimes has trouble properly interpreting and understanding both the written revelation of God and the revelation in nature, but this does not make these communications from God imperfect or inaccurate in themselves.

Since we are blessed in having such a "double revelation," we should respect and use both forms of it, and recognize both forms as meaningful. In doing this we should recognize the reliability of human language as a medium of communication, and consider the entire Biblical record to be meaningful. We should therefore never consider a part of the Bible to be allegorical or figurative unless there is some definite indication in the text to show that it is of this nature. The first chapter of Genesis is an example of a Scripture portion which has often been wrongly taken as poetry, and thus mistakenly thought to be largely figurative. Actually the chapter has only a very small amount of poetic form, and in this respect contrasts sharply with the poetic descriptions of creation which are found in Job 38:8-11 and Psalm 104:5-9.¹