

We are, in this book, concerned mainly with God's revelation through nature, and with the ways by which we interpret and understand it. The person who neglects to use information from the study of nature is missing out on a great deal of the revelation of God. This is because the Bible gives us very little detail concerning nature or what we might call "the world of science." Instead, God has given us the privilege of investigating this for ourselves. In so doing we discover a great deal about his wisdom and works which the ancients were not privileged to know.

We should of course accept the numerous broad statements which the Bible makes concerning the natural world and God's works in nature, for they are true and reliable. The reason these statements are true and reliable is that they were given by divine inspiration, just as the rest of the Bible was (II Timothy 3:16). Furthermore, experience has shown that whatever the Bible teaches concerning the earth or other parts of the universe is reasonable and acceptable in the light of modern science. Many ancient writings contain a multitude of superstitious ideas concerning the earth and the heavenly bodies which are absurd, but God guided the Biblical authors in such a way that they did not assert the validity of these ideas. They did refer occasionally to some of the currently believed non-factual ideas concerning the earth and universe, especially in poetic sections such as the Psalms, but there is no effort to declare such ideas to be truth. It has often been claimed that the Bible contains scientific errors, but such claims are always based either on a misreading or a misunderstanding of what the text actually says. For example, an overliteral reading of certain passages such as Isaiah 11:12, which speak of "the four corners of the earth," resulted in much misunderstanding in earlier times.

Certain parts of the Biblical account of the creation of man obviously demand a literal interpretation, but even here one needs to avoid making extreme interpretations. Thus the fact that Genesis 2:8-23 gives the precise geographic location of the Garden of Eden, and describes Adam and Eve as real people, forces us to recognize this account as true history. But we must then guard against such extremes as that of saying that the Garden of Eden was arranged like Solomon's gardens. Likewise, to demand that the serpent in the Garden was turned into a certain species of snake with which the reader is personally familiar is a harmful extreme. These are some of the many aspects of the events of creation which are just not explained in the Bible. When they are not explained we must be careful not to read into the account more information than is there.

The Usefulness of Science in Investigating Nature

Since the primary method of science is the collecting of data by making objective observations, it is very useful in investigating nature. Thus science can provide a great benefit in helping to understand the other type of revelation--the revelation in nature--to which we referred above.

However, some Christians are fearful of using science as an aid