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PHYSICAL DEATH IN GENESIS 2 AND 3
An Exegetical and Theological Study

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

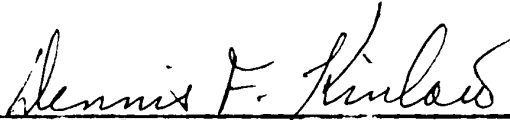
by
Melvin H. Shoemaker
April 1967

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First Reader


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by

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PREFACE

This thesis began in a classroom dialogue where more questions were raised than the participants were able to answer concerning the Genesis account of death. That original motivation has led to the investment of many weeks of research and organization of materials. From these we have drawn conclusions which may not fully agree with the traditional interpretation, but they have seemed to this writer to be more fully in agreement with Genesis 2 and 3. Therefore, the following thesis is presented with a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

The writer would like to express his appreciation to Dr. Ivan C. Howard for the original motivation of this thesis. Professor Dennis F. Kinlaw and Dr. William M. Arnett have assisted in the execution of the study with their helpful guidance as it developed and in their patient scrutiny as they read the finished materials.

A special word of gratitude goes to the sacrificial typist, Glenna Shoemaker, who has skillfully set this sometimes difficult manuscript in print.

M.H.S.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Ges. -- Kautzsch, E. (ed.). Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.
Second English edition. Oxford: Clarendon
Press, 1910. 531 pp.
- BDB -- Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs.
A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old
Testament. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.
1127 pp.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM OF DEATH IN GENESIS 2 AND 3	1
The Purpose of This Study	1
The Definition of the Terms	2
The Statement of the Problem	3
The Importance of This Study	6
The Procedure of This Study	11
II. THE EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 2 AND 3	17
Genesis 2:7	18
Genesis 2:8	25
Genesis 2:9	26
Genesis 2:16,17	44
Genesis 3:2,3	50
Genesis 3:4,5	52
Genesis 3:6	53
Genesis 3:7	55
Genesis 3:17-19	58
Genesis 3:22	63
Genesis 3:23,24	67
III. THE EXPOSITION OF GENESIS 2 AND 3	68
Man as Created	69
Man as Commanded	75

CHAPTER	PAGE
Man as Cursed	83
IV. CONCLUSIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF DEATH IN	
GENESIS 2 AND 3	91
BIBLIOGRAPHY	93

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF DEATH IN GENESIS 2 AND 3

חַיִּים וְמוֹת --as the Pentateuch begins, so also it ends. "Life and death" is the choice, bearing the weight of all posterity, which is set before the edenic pair (Gen. 2,3), and again it is the choice before the children of Israel in the plains of Moab (Deut. 30:15,19). These are decisions of destiny, and carry the exhortation, "Therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live" (Deut. 30:19). But Adam chose to disobey, and all men since that historic day have suffered the pains of death.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

It is the purpose of this inquiry to ascertain the Sitz im Leben of that first choice in Genesis 2 and 3, to raise the question concerning the problem of death, and to attempt a satisfactory solution to that problem on the basis of the transmitted text of Genesis 2 and 3.

II. THE DEFINITION OF THE TERMS

"Death is not an entity, but an event; not a force, but a state."¹ In general terms "death" signifies the cessation, deprivation, or absence of life.² For the purpose of this study it is necessary that further distinctions be made, and that the foregoing definition be applied to man in relation to the several aspects of his nature: physical, spiritual and eternal. Physical death may be defined as the organic dissolution or decay of man. It is the total and permanent stoppage of the functions of vital actions of an organism. This cessation represents both a process and an event, which signifies the separation of the soul from the body. Spiritual death is the negation of the Divine-human relation or the separation of man from God (Rom. 8:6), whereas, eternal death is the final judgment of God upon sin, the permanent separation of the soul from God, and the total negation of all life's potentialities. The latter would not include non-existence in the sense of complete annihilation. The first of these three aspects makes reference to death

¹William Rounseville Alger, A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1864), p. 17.

²New "Standard" Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1952), p. 659f.

in a biological sense; the second and third, in a theological sense; and the third, in a philosophical sense.

One cannot speak of death as it relates to Genesis 2 and 3 without also using the terms "mortal" and "immortal." To refer to man as being "mortal" means that he is subject to death. "Immortal" then refers to its opposite, "not subject to death." Two factors become involved in immortality: the immortality of the body and the immortality of the soul. The latter has elicited dialogue among both philosophers and theologians since the days of Socrates,³ but it will not greatly concern us in this present study. The crux of this inquiry will focus upon the mortal or immortal nature of the physical organism of man before the Fall.

III. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The New Testament, or more specifically Pauline theology, states that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and that "sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Christian theologians have traditionally taught upon this basis that death was inevitably the consequence of the Fall in Genesis 3.⁴ However, the inclusion of human mortality

³F. J. Church (trans.), Plato's Phaedo (Vol. XXX of the Library of Liberal Arts, edited by Oskar Piest. New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1951), pp. 19, 60-61.

⁴J. W. C. Wand (trans.), St. Augustine's City of God (Abridged edition; London: Oxford University Press, 1963),

as a mark of the fall has always had its challengers, and the twentieth century is no exception. The problem is created by certain aspects of our narrative and we will only suggest some of them at this point so as to set forth the problem.

A. The Breath of Life (2:7). The narrative states that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," which some take to mean that man was created immortal in his original state. But the statement that animals possess "the breath of life" as much as man (7:22) and the evident inclusion of both man and animals in the pre-flood statement of God's intention "to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life" (6:17), presents a problem to those who hold to original immortality on the basis of the divine inbreathing.

B. The Tree of Life (2:9; 3:22,24). The author has some purpose in calling the presence of this tree to our attention. The fruits of this tree were accessible to man before the Fall, but he was forbidden any approach to it after the Fall (3:24).

p. 221f; Ewald M. Plass, What Luther Says (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), I, 366; John Calvin, Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis, trans. by John King (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), I, 179; Henry Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1943), II, 91.

C. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (2:9, 17; 3:3; cf. 3:11,17). This tree itself is not as much related to the problem of death as the commandment issued forbidding man to consume its fruits (2:17).

D. The Command (2:16-17). The command had two aspects: the first, positive, and the second, negative. Man was commanded to "freely eat of every tree of the garden" (2:16) with the exception that he was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The latter prohibition carried the death penalty for it is stated "in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (2:17b). The fact that Adam did not die when he ate the fruit, but lived a total of 930 years raises the question concerning what God meant by this penalty. Longevity over an extended number of years proved to be not the exception, but the rule, according to present standards. Simple mathematics reveals that the ten descendants representing the generations from Adam to Noah had an average life-span of 858 years.

These facts have puzzled theologians across the years. Note what Wesley has said concerning the prohibition contained in this command of God:

To affirm this [That it "refers temporal death and that alone, to the death of the body only"] is flatly and palpably to make God a liar; to aver that the God of truth positively affirmed a thing contrary to truth. For it is evident, Adam did not die in this sense, "in the day that he ate thereof." He lived in the sense opposite to this death, above nine hundred

years after. So that this cannot possibly be understood of the death of the body, without impeaching the veracity of God.⁵

Thus, this command raises a problem with respect to death.

E. You Will Not Die (3:4). In what sense is the bold challenge of the serpent a lie? a truth? or a half-truth?

F. Till You Return to the Ground (3:19). If death was the primary penalty set forth in the command (2:17), why would it only be suggested in the judgment of God upon the man in a secondary clause, which focuses primary attention upon the life that shall continue to be?

These are some of the more important aspects which are involved in what we have called "the problem of death in Genesis 2 and 3."

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

This study is important for theological, philosophical, and practical reasons.

A. First, it is vital to theology for death is at the heart of the doctrine of the Fall and original sin. It is traditionally cited as a proof for the universality

⁵John Wesley, The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, (New York: Lane and Scott, 1831), I, 401.

of sin.⁶ Hence, it is at the foundation of all subsequent doctrines concerning the nature of man. With the advent of critical science in theology the story of the Fall has repeatedly been the subject for thorough analysis.

The results of this research, recorded in many monographs and articles, were complex, to be sure, and often mutually contradictory; but they agreed, nevertheless, on one point: that they vigorously contradicted the traditional exposition of the church.⁷

Thus, rationalism has taken a heavy toll. To human experience, the death of the body appears to be the natural end of man, and in perfect harmony with the created order of the universe. Such an understanding of the transient character of all material beings has led scholars of the past century to conclude that death has no particular religious significance.⁸ Current thought goes only a step further and challenges any concept of existence beyond death,⁹ and concludes that death must be final.¹⁰ For these and other reasons it is imperative that biblical theology be based

⁶Karl Rahner, On the Theology of Death (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961), p. 22; John Tulloch, The Christian Doctrine of Sin (New York: Scribner, Armstrong and Co., 1876), p. 187; Wiley, Christian Theology, II, 97.

⁷Gerhard von Rad, Genesis, trans. John H. Marks (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), p. 72.

⁸Hermann Schultz, Old Testament Theology, trans. J. A. Paterson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898), II, 313.

⁹J. Rodman Williams, Contemporary Existentialism and Christian Faith (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 72.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 100.

upon a sound interpretation of the concept of death, if it is to meet the challenge of our age. Such an understanding must begin at the fountain head.

B. Philosophy has been concerned with death since its origin and development in early Greek thought. Greek philosophy began with an inquiry into the essence of the objective world. From external nature it turned its attention to center upon man and more particularly upon ethics. Thus, the chief question became: "What is the highest good, what is the end and aim of life?"¹¹ "Death asks us for our identity. Confronted by death, man is compelled to provide in some form a response to the question: Who am I?"¹² The Genesis account supplies that identity. Such an approach to anthropology is a reversal of contemporary subjective philosophy, which is man centered. But be assured, it presents a fresh breath of realism to the existential mood of our times. It is true that death in the Genesis account may appear as a final dissonant chord in the symphony of life, but a proper understanding of the account opens the way for the New Testament movement in a triumphal major mode to complete a hitherto unfinished symphony.

¹¹Frank Thilly, A History of Philosophy, rev. Ledger Wood (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), p. 16.

¹²Robert Lester Fulton (ed.), Death and Identity (New York: Wiley, 1965), p. 3.

C. In Western culture the problem of death has traditionally been answered within the context of the church and its theology. The general acceptance of the doctrines of Genesis 2 and 3 has caused man in preceding decades to stand secure in the knowledge that death was a personal matter between God and himself. This gave death a purpose and reminded him that he was the pinnacle of creation and created to have dominion over all the other creatures. As a part of the Creator's handiwork, "death was the brother to life and as such could be confronted openly, spoken of freely, and treated as a natural phenomenon."¹³ Thus death was accepted as a fact of life.

As it has been suggested above, theology has broken from its moorings in the past century. Thus, the institution--the church-- which at one time gave honest expression to the meaning of death, is now failing to communicate. Her ceremony for the dead, which served to link God, man, and society, is seeing a social reaction that is beginning to challenge the very rites for disposing of the dead.¹⁴ "In fact in America today we have come to a point in our history when we are beginning to react to death as we would to a

¹³Ibid., p. 3f.

¹⁴Jessica Mitford, The American Way of Death (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963).

communicable disease."¹⁵ Death is no longer understood as the consequence of sin or as the result of divine wrath. "Rather, in our modern secular world, death is coming to be seen as the consequence of personal neglect or untoward accident."¹⁶ Death thus falls into the category of a disease--like cancer or syphilis--and becomes a personal tragedy. "Death is an utterly individual matter,"¹⁷ and is no longer exclusively a matter of religious concern. Medical and social science have explicitly and implicitly challenged the theological explanations of the nature and purpose of death, but they have only created a vacuum. One may superficially think that the explanation of death as being the natural conclusion of life would cause man to be unconcerned about it. Instead, it has made life meaningless and filled it with disillusionment and hopelessness.¹⁸ Contrary to the present situation, it has been found that death is regarded as natural and preordained to the extent that theological or sacred doctrines prevail within a society.¹⁹

¹⁵Fulton, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Williams, Contemporary Existentialism, p. 88.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁹Robert Fulton and Gilbert Geis, "Death and Social Values," Death and Identity, ed. Robert Fulton (New York: Wiley, 1965), p. 67.

Therefore, this inquiry has practical importance in the sense that it confronts the sin-death problem where it has its origin--in Genesis 2 and 3. Whereas, the works of Tennant,²⁰ Williams,²¹ and Bultmann²² reflect the emerging secular attitudes, it has been our purpose to analyze the problem of death with as much objectivity as possible and to reaffirm the biblical conception of death.

Even though this study has value in each of these three foregoing areas, our primary concern is the first. We approach this study from the standpoint of biblical theology.

V. THE PROCEDURE OF THIS STUDY

It is evident that no one undertakes an inquiry such as this without having certain underlying presuppositions. For the reader's benefit we would suggest the more basic of these assumptions.

²⁰F. R. Tennant, The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin (Cambridge: The University Press, 1903), p. 77f.

²¹Norman Powell Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1927), p. 41f.

²²Rudolf Bultmann, "Life and Death," Bible Key Words (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), V, ii, 3f.

1. God is a Spirit, holy in nature and attributes, absolute in reality, infinite in efficiency, perfect in personality, and thereby the ultimate ground, adequate cause and sufficient reason for all finite existence.²³

2. The Holy Scripture is the authoritative word of God, which is not dependent upon the testimony of any man or Church; but wholly dependent upon God the author thereof.²⁴

3. The Revelation is progressively recorded in the Holy Scripture: even though God is the same, yesterday, today, forever, man's understanding of Him has progressively increased; but always in harmony with the former framework.

It is seen from these presuppositions that we approach this study with a great respect for the transmitted text of Genesis 2 and 3.

The critical approach to the study of the Old Testament during the past century has led to almost complete anarchy. Almost every conceivable division of the material has been suggested, and Genesis 2 and 3 has not been exempted from the "scholar's" literary knife. Most of these scholars consider Genesis 2:4b-3:24 as one connected

²³Wiley, Christian Theology, I, p. 218.

²⁴H. Bettenson, "Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647," Documents of the Christian Church (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), p. 347.

section,²⁵ and acknowledge it to be a "complete and closely articulated narrative";²⁶ but either regard it to be the composite union of two Paradise story recensions,²⁷ or the original work of an author, who has been supplied information from the representations and legends current among his fellow-countrymen.²⁸ Skinner,²⁹ Simpson³⁰ and others seek for the ultimate source of this biblical narrative in Babylonian mythology, and suggest the probability of such tales as the "saga of Eden" and the "garden of God" to have been current in Jerusalem and the vicinity during the period in which they suggest that this narrative was composed. But they are forced to admit that a "Babylonian version of the Fall of man (if any such existed) has not yet been

²⁵August Dillmann, Genesis, trans. Wm. B. Stevenson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), p. 94; John Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis (The International Critical Commentary, ed. Samuel R. Driver, Alfred Plummer, and Charles A. Briggs. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 51; S. R. Driver, The Book of Genesis. (Westminster Commentaries, ed. Walter Lock and D. C. Simpson. Fifteenth edition; London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1948), p. 35.

²⁶Skinner, loc. cit.

²⁷Skinner, op. cit., p. 53.

²⁸Dillmann, op. cit., pp. 107, 111.

²⁹Skinner, op. cit., pp. 90f.

³⁰Guthbert A. Simpson, "The Book of Genesis," The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), I, 445b.

discovered."³¹ The diversity of opinion and the subjectivity of the critical approach to Old Testament materials leads to the conclusion that the projected hypotheses are doomed to remain in the realm of conjecture until some actual documents used by Old Testament writers are discovered. This is an extremely unlikely possibility.³² Thus, the burden of proof remains the responsibility of the critic.

One is not too surprised to find a current reaction to the futility of the critical approach and its literary analysis of the biblical text, when one considers the chaotic disagreements among such scholars. In 1948, Pritchard summarized this reaction.

In 1933, P. Volz and W. Rudolph objected to the dissection of the literary critics on the grounds that it was an unnatural method, that it worked with inaccurate means, that there were better means available, and that the method of source analysis. . . often destroyed the actual unity and artistic beauty of the narrative. In the following year there appeared the commentary of B. Jacob on the assumption that "Genesis is a unified work, designed, thought over, and worked out in one mind."³³

Umberto Cassuto contributed to this reaction against the critical approach by publishing his commentary on the book of Genesis in 1944 in Hebrew. This scholarly work was

³¹Skinner, loc. cit.

³²James B. Pritchard, "Man's Predicament in Eden," The Review of Religion, 13:11, November, 1948.

³³Ibid., pp. 10f.

published in an English translation in 1961³⁴ and is now available to a much wider circle of biblical students. Thus, the circle of reaction may be widening.

This study is based primarily upon the Masoretic text, as found in Kittel's Biblia Hebraica.³⁵ The Hebrew text for Genesis 2 and 3 has been well preserved, when compared with other sections of the Bible,³⁶ and has been considered more reliable than the Septuagint, the Targums, the Peshitto, or the Samaritan Pentateuch.³⁷ The Septuagint³⁸ will be referred to when it is able to contribute a bit of material that has value from the standpoint of textual criticism. The Samaritan Pentateuch is in agreement with the Masoretic text on all except one of the passages which are of importance to this study (in 3:19 it reads, כִּי עָפַר אֶתֶּה וְאֵל עָפַרְךָ חָשׁוּב), and that

³⁴Umberto Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1961), 307pp.

³⁵Rudolf Kittel (ed.), Biblia Hebraica (thirteenth edition; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1937), 1434pp.

³⁶Pritchard, op. cit., p. 8.

³⁷Herbert Carl Leupold, Exposition of Genesis (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), I, 9f.

³⁸Alfred Rahlfs (ed.), Septuaginta (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935).

difference is not of any consequent value to this study. In reference to the text of Genesis in general Leupold states that:

The traditional Masoretic text is in a good state of preservation and deserves far more confidence than is usually accorded to it.³⁹

More specifically, ". . . in very few are there any grammatical difficulties [in the Masoretic text of Genesis 2:4b-3:24],” says Pritchard, and adds:

Nor do the ancient versions differ radically from the Masoretic text. On the whole, textual criticism has little to offer by way of an improved or emended text. Texts and versions agree--except for minor details--that the text as it appears is essentially the story as it was last edited.⁴⁰

Thus, we proceed with a critical study of the transmitted Hebrew text. We have avoided questions of literary and form criticism, and have sought, as much as it is possible, to arrive at the simple meaning of the biblical text as it was originally intended to be understood.

³⁹Leupold, loc. cit.

⁴⁰Pritchard, loc. cit.

CHAPTER II
THE EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 2 AND 3

The purpose of this inquiry can best be achieved if it begins at the point of a systematic exegesis of those portions of Genesis 2 and 3 which are especially relevant to the problem of death. Thus, it is not the purpose of this chapter to present a theological conclusion. Instead, this chapter will focus primarily upon the philological data and suggest a general survey of the various interpretations at several points.

I. THEN THE LORD GOD FORMED MAN OF DUST FROM THE GROUND, AND BREATHED INTO HIS NOSTRILS THE BREATH OF LIFE; AND MAN BECAME A LIVING BEING (2:7).

A. The Lord God formed man. The verb 7Y'7 means "formed" or "fashioned". Its participle form means "potter," when it refers to human activity (Jer. 18:4,6). Thus, the divine activity of God is "like a potter" in forming Adam out of the dust of the ground. God's activity as it relates to man is not peculiar, for the same form appears again in 2:19 when "the Lord God formed every beast of the field." Note the repetition in 2:8--"the man whom he had formed." To explain this as a pluperfect ("had already formed"), which is given by some commentators, is an unsuccessful attempt at harmonization.¹

"Man" is here used as a common noun with reference to one particular man. Earlier in 1:26 it was used in a generic, collective sense applying to the whole class of "mankind," or "the human race." But this meaning has been restricted here to the created man. Lussier summarizes the use of this noun in Genesis 1:1-4:24 thus:

Most recent translators and commentators of Gen., basing their conclusion solidly on Hebrew syntax and on MT, are agreed that 'adam appears as a proper noun

¹Umberto Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1961), p. 104.

for the first time in Gen. 4:25. Grammarians state that the proper nouns are not used with the article; in MT, twenty-two of the twenty-seven occurrences of 'adam in the chapters under discussion have the article and are evidently considered as a common noun. The five exceptions, 1:26; 2:5,20; 3:17,21, are most probably to be interpreted in the same way. In 1:26 'adam is used in a generic sense, and in 2:5 it is indefinite.²

B. Of dust from the ground. עֶפֶר is a second accusative of the material which is used along with the object proper. Thus, it specifies or defines the material used in the formation of man (cf. I Kings 18:32).³ The literal meaning is "dry, loose earth, or dust." עֶפֶר occurs twice more in the narrative: in the curse upon the serpent, "dust you shall eat" (3:14), and in the judgment upon the man, "you are dust" (3:19). אֶדְמָה is added to indicate the source from where the dust was taken.

אֶדְמָה-מִן-הָאֲדָמָה עֶפֶר contains a point not reproducible in the English. In the Hebrew "ground" is, in form, the feminine of "man," and, according to one view, is so called to indicate his belonging to the earth.⁴ "Man" could

²Ernest Lussier, "'Adam in Genesis 1,1-4,24," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 18:137, April, 1956.

³E. Kantsch (ed.), Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar (Second English edition; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), par. 117ii. This standard reference work will hereafter be referred to by the standard abbreviation, Ges., par. ____.

⁴S. R. Driver, The Book of Genesis (Westminster Commentaries, ed. Walter Lock and D. C. Simpson. Fifteenth edition; London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1948), p. 37.

also be a derivation of the verb meaning "to be red," but the former seems more plausible.⁵

C. And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. לְפָנָיו נִשְׁנָה expresses a manner of imparting the breath of life that is peculiar to man. It expresses original immediacy in the God-man relationship, and is the distinguishing mark of man's creation. Hence, it indicates the dignity and glory of this one who was created to have dominion,⁶ and denotes that the source of man's vitality is in God.

God created the other living creatures by fiat. On the fifth day He decreed, "Let the waters bring forth. . ." and "let the birds fly. . ." (1:20). Then, again on the sixth day, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures. . ." (1:24). The work of the sixth day is again repeated as our author focuses his attention upon the creation of man in chapter 2.⁷ Here again we read, "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of

⁵Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), pp. 9-10. This lexicon will henceforth be referred to as BDB.

⁶Herbert Carl Leupold, Exposition of Genesis (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), p. 116f.

⁷E. J. Young, "The Days of Genesis," The Westminster Theological Journal, 25:18, November, 1962.

the air" (2:19). The creative act of God breathing into man's nostrils is an honor bestowed upon none of the lesser creatures.⁸

נְשָׁמָה פִּי אֱלֹהִים simply means that God enabled this inanimate body, which he had formed, to breathe the air, and thus it gives a clear indication of life. That this "breath of life" was given only to man seems to be a difficult interpretation. In the flood narrative "all flesh died that moved upon the earth. . . and every man; everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died" (נְשָׁמַת-רוּחַ חַיִּים), 7:21,22). רוּחַ is here used as a genitive following נְשָׁמָה "in what appears to be a descriptive connection, in order to refer to the animal creation as that which has breath (now further defined as a 'life-giving, wind-like breath') in his nostrils."⁹ Johnson states that in post-exilic writings it was common to find נְשָׁמָה used interchangeably with רוּחַ and suggests that possibility here.¹⁰ If this is the case, then נְשָׁמָה רוּחַ is a parallel phrase (6:17; 7:15),¹¹

⁸Leupold, op. cit., p. 116.

⁹Aubrey R. Johnson, The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1949), p. 31.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 31f.

¹¹Ibid., p. 32.

and the ד'י'ן תנש does not distinguish man from animals, but indicates only the life-breath.¹²

D. And man became a living being. לנפש חיה is always used with respect to animals except for this one occurrence (1:20,24; 2:19). However, it appears to include both man and animals in 9:12,15,16.¹³ This, therefore, is not a difficult western abstraction, but rather a personification of that vital principle which is common to both man and animal.

The נש is personified as a living being whose life resides in the blood (9:4-6). This requires that all blood be sacred to God,¹⁴ and hence prohibits the using of blood for any other purpose than for sacrifices to God.¹⁵ From this standpoint, then, the נש may be distinguished from its bodily vehicle, the שר or "flesh" (Deut. 12:23; Isa. 10:18). The presence of the נש reveals itself in the form of conscious life and its departure or disappearance comes at death (35:18). There is no biblical authorization for the

¹²C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. James Martin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1864), I, 78.

¹³BDB, p. 659b.

¹⁴Johnson, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁵BDB, p. 659.

statement that the נַפְשׁ is separated from the נֶפֶשׁ at the moment of death.¹⁶ As it is the נִיָּן which makes man a נַפְשׁ, it is the נִיָּן which man loses at death, when it returns to God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7). The נַפְשׁ is the essential nature of man and often stands for the man himself.¹⁷ Such is its use in Genesis 49:6, "O my soul, come not into their council." But it represents the "I" only by synecdoche, for it is not the whole. In the Psalms this word occurs 144 times, 105 of which are in the form, "my soul."¹⁸ It is used with obvious reference to what is a comprehensive and unified manifestation of sentient life, for it is the seat of hunger and thirst (Ps. 107:9), and appetite in general (Prov. 23:2). Qohelet uses נַפְשׁ only in respect to its being the seat of the appetites (Eccl. 2:24; 4:8; 6:2,3,7,9; 7:28).¹⁹ Added to this, it is used as the seat of the emotions and passions, and is subject to various forms of attraction through the stimulation of desire (II Sam. 3:21).

¹⁶Edmond Jacob, "Death," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, 802b.

¹⁷BDB, p. 660a.

¹⁸Ludwig Koehler, Old Testament Theology (London: Lutterworth Press, 1957), p. 144.

¹⁹BDB, p. 660b.

It is evident from this somewhat extended study of WDJ that the Old Testament does not distinguish body and "soul" but more realistically body and life. When the divine breath of life unites with the body formed from the dust, the union makes man a "living soul," both from the physical as well as the psychical side.²⁰ Thus, the body-soul dualism does not occur, but rather, the presence of the "soul" (WDJ) always presupposes the body.²¹

According to Cassuto, the biblical account of transforming a lifeless body into a "living being" is apparently a traditional concept in other early Middle East cultures. He cites two examples:

Berossus the Babylonian relates that human beings and animals capable of breathing air were formed of divine blood mixed with the clay of the ground; and the Egyptians, according to their custom, used to depict the god Khnum sitting before the potter's wheel and making human beings, and next to him his consort Heket putting to the noses of the created people the sign of life.²²

Herein, also, the "living being" is related to the blood and to the means of breathing--the nose.

²⁰Gerhard von Rad, Genesis, trans. John H. Marks (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), p. 75.

²¹Koehler, op. cit., p. 145.

²²Cassuto, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 106.

II. AND THE LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN
IN EDEN, IN THE EAST; AND THERE HE
PUT THE MAN WHOM HE HAD FORMED (2:8).

"Eden" comes from a Hebrew root meaning "luxury delight," and the etymological meaning is "a place that is well watered throughout" (cf. 13:10). This truly depicts the conditions. The vegetation was luxurious (2:9), and the fig tree indigenous (3:7). All kinds of animals, including cattle, beasts of the field and birds were found there (2:19,20). The climate was such that clothing was not needed for warmth (2:25). With such delights as these it is no wonder that Eden became a synonym for Paradise and was translated in the Septuagint (παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδέμ). Actually Eden is a more general territory in which the garden was situated and the definition of the location by "in the east," is a subjective identification, that is, east of the land of Israel.

III. AND OUT OF THE GROUND THE LORD GOD
MADE TO GROW EVERY TREE THAT IS
PLEASANT TO THE SIGHT AND GOOD FOR
FOOD, THE TREE OF LIFE ALSO IN THE
MIDST OF THE GARDEN, AND THE TREE
OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL
(2:9).

After the general statement, "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden" (2:8), there now follows a detailed account of what he made to grow.

A. The tree of life also in the midst of the garden.

Most of those who take a critical view of Genesis 2 and 3, find the introduction of two trees to present somewhat of a problem to the narrative. Skinner concludes, "So far as the main narrative is concerned, the tree of life is an irrelevance,"²³ and adds moreover, "where it does enter into the story is precisely the part where signs of redaction or dual authorship accumulate."²⁴ Von Rad develops a similar argument and concludes that the duality of trees "is only the result of a subsequent combination of two traditions."²⁵ Likewise, because Speiser finds the phrase, "the tree of

²³John Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis (The International Critical Commentary, ed. Samuel R. Briggs, Alfred Plummer, and Charles A. Briggs. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 52.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Von Rad, Genesis, p. 76.

life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," to be extremely awkward syntactically, especially in a writer who is otherwise a matchless stylist," he sees much in favor of the critical conjecture that "and in the midst of the garden the tree of knowledge" was all that occurred in the original text.²⁶

The brief mention here of the "tree of life" presents a problem to the critical scholar for its seeming "irrelevance" to the narrative and for syntactical reasons. First, we recognize that the tree of life does not re-enter the narrative until 3:22 and 24. It is plain that it was not included in the prohibition of 2:17, but was evidently (an argument from silence) included among those trees sanctioned for human consumption (2:16). When the tree of life re-appears in the narrative, it is clearly involved in the execution of divine judgment upon man. That it represents more than a sign or a seal of life²⁷ seems to be quite evident in this narrative of concrete description.²⁸ The basic reason for the expulsion of man from the garden seems

²⁶E. A. Speiser, Genesis (Vol. I of The Anchor Bible. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), p. 20.

²⁷John Wesley, Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament (Bristol: William Pine, 1765), I, 12.

²⁸Cassuto, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 12.

to center upon the miraculous fruit which is produced by the tree of life (to be considered at a later time). Also, one needs to bear in mind that the tree of life is mentioned first in our present account, which seems to further indicate its place of importance.

That this tree is mentioned here with the definite article indicates that it was well known to the reader. "Apparently," says Cassuto, "the concept was widely current among the Israelites, as may be deduced also from the fact that the expression tree of life serves as a common simile for things from which the power of life flows."²⁹ The Proverbs support this thesis: "Wisdom is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her" (Prov. 3:18), "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life" (Prov. 11:30), ". . . a desire fulfilled is a tree of life" (Prov. 13:12), and "A gentle tongue is a tree of life" (Prov. 15:4).

One also finds the mention of a tree of life, or more properly, a "plant of life" in Babylonian literature, which dates back to the age of Hammurapi (1792-1750 B.C.) or earlier. The Gilgamesh Epic relates the attempt of a mythological hero to penetrate the holy region of the gods so as to live forever. The object of his search is a magical plant that has been restricted and is accessible to only the gods.

²⁹Ibid., p. 109.

Siduri the barmaid advises the searching Gilgamesh in

Tablet X:

The life which thou seekest thou wilt not find;
 (For) when the gods created mankind,
 They allotted death to mankind,
 (But) life they retained in their keeping.³⁰

But Utnapishtim the Distant reveals the "hidden thing" which was a secret of the gods in Gilgamesh:

There is a plant like a thorn [. . .]
 Like a rose (?) its thorn(s) will prick thy hands].
 If thy hand will obtain that plant, [thou wilt find
 new life].³¹

Immediately, when Gilgamesh heard this, he tied heavy stones to his feet so that he would be pulled down to the bottom of the ocean, where the coveted plant was found. Upon his return, having obtained the prickly plant, he describes the plant's powers:

. . . this plant is a wondrous (?) plant,
 Whereby a man may obtain his former strength(?)

 Its name is the 'The old man becomes young as the
 man (in his prime).³²

The Genesis account clearly stands in contrast to the concept within the Gilgamesh Epic. In the Epic the "plant of life" is restricted for the use of the gods who

³⁰Alexander Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 70, lines 2-5.

³¹Ibid., p. 91, Tablet XI, lines 268-270.

³²Ibid., lines 278-279, 281.

are dependent upon an extrinsic source for immortality. In the biblical account man is offered free access to every tree, excepting the tree of knowledge, and thereby, is given opportunity to "live forever" by eating from the tree of life. The biblical account in no way restricts the garden for the use of God who has no need of the garden nor the trees in it. This garden was made for man.

Vriezen arrives at the conclusion that an actual tree of life has not yet been found among other Semitic peoples, although many pictorial designs have been interpreted as representations of this tree. But Vriezen may be overly cautious as Cassuto concludes:

The fact that the idea of the tree of life was widespread among the Israelites and is alluded to frequently in the Book of Proverbs, which belongs to the international type of Wisdom Literature, inclines one to believe that this concept was also international.³³

The tree of life then becomes relevant to the Paradise history because of its significant role of primary importance to the total narrative; its familiarity to the readers, which is inferred by the use of the article; and its presence in Israelitish wisdom literature; and the seeming parallels in other Semitic literature.

Secondly, some scholars find it difficult to accept both trees as being in the original narrative for

³³Cassuto, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 109f.

syntactical reasons. In 3:3 the woman refers to the forbidden tree as "the tree which is in the midst of the garden." Certain scholars find it difficult to have more than one tree in the midst of the garden and thus give no place to the tree of life.³⁴ But to yield to such scholarship seems to be letting an unknown redactor serve as the scapegoat, and it sacrifices a very essential element of the narrative. For these reasons it seems to be a reasonable responsibility that a grammatical solution be sought as the narrative now stands. First, by what we have suggested above it is necessary to apply $\text{בְּתוֹךְ הַיַּרְדֵּן}$ to both of the trees which are joined by the conjunction in 2:9. Secondly, there are two possible interpretations of "in the midst of the garden": (a) a general meaning comparable to the phrase, "among the trees of the garden" (3:8), which literally means, "in the midst of the tree of the garden"; or (b) in the middle region of the garden. Against the first interpretation is the fact that all of the trees mentioned were in the garden, but these two were singled out to be peculiar for their location and the phrase is thus used in 3:3 to define the position of the tree.³⁵ Against the second interpretation is the

³⁴Cuthbert A. Simpson, "The Book of Genesis," The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), I, 494.

³⁵Cassuto, op. cit., p. 110.

literalist's objection that it is impossible for both trees to occupy exactly the same spot. But are there grounds here to say that the author intended "mathematical exactitude"?³⁶ Onkelos didn't regard it thus and chose the translation: "in the middle of the garden."³⁷ This would mean that he regarded the tree of life and the tree of knowledge to both be in the middle of the garden. Thus, it would be preferable to conclude that the 'middle' must be an approximate without regard to "the exact point."³⁸

Two reasons have been suggested for accepting the present word order. First, if an interpolator had Genesis 3:3 before him, he would scarcely have chosen its present position for the insertion of וְעֵץ הַיָּדָע.³⁹ Secondly, the word order has been dictated "by the rhythmic requirements of the verse; it would have been unthinkable to write: also the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden."⁴⁰

³⁶Ibid., p. 111.

³⁷Jacob Newman, The Commentary of Nahmanides on Genesis Chapters 1-6 (Vol. IV of Pretoria Oriental Series, ed. A. Van Selms. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), p. 68.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹August Dillmann, Genesis, trans. Wm. B. Stevenson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), I, 123.

⁴⁰Cassuto, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 111.

Therefore, it must be concluded by the weight of evidence that both trees are from the very beginning organically at home in the narrative.⁴¹

B. And the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Peculiarly enough, it is the tree of life that is threatened in this narrative by the critical scholar, when it is the tree of knowledge that is mentioned nowhere else in the Old Testament,⁴² or in any other Semitic literature.⁴³

What was the nature of this tree? Almost all commentators agree that it is an allegory, but they are greatly divided as to the nature of its significance. On the one hand, Luther was opposed to seeing any allegorical significance in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and stated that to do such was to be led astray by the authority of the fathers.⁴⁴ But he is not thoroughly consistent for

⁴¹I. Engell, "'Knowledge' and 'Life' in the Creation Story," Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East (Presented to Professor Harold Henry Rowley by the Society for Old Testament Study in association with the Editorial Board of Vetus Testamentum. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955), p. 110.

⁴²Von Rad, Genesis, p. 76.

⁴³Lester J. Kuyper, "Interpretation of Gen. 2-3," The Reformed Review, 13:2:8, December, 1959; Cassuto, loc. cit.

⁴⁴Martin Luther, Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5, trans. George V. Schick (Vol. I of Luther's Works, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 93.

he asserts, on the other hand, that the church was established with the institution of the divine command (2:16,17) concerning the two trees.⁴⁵

1. The metaphysical nature of both trees is as difficult to understand as the nature of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which was instituted in the New Testament. It may be said that if the Christian exegete is consistent, then his conclusions concerning both will be very similar.⁴⁶ Both trees possess the characteristics of symbols:

a. They point beyond themselves, beyond their physical fruit to the express purpose of God concerning them.

b. They participate in and are necessarily involved in the command to which they point.

c. They open up truth to us concerning sin and death that cannot be explained scientifically.

d. They unlock dimensions and elements to the soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of existential reality.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 103ff.

⁴⁶Charles Edward Smith, "The Way of the Tree of Life," Bibliotheca Sacra, 85:462, October, 1928. This Roman Catholic writer asserts that the tree of life held some "antiseptic virtue" of itself.

e. They are not human inventions, but divine institutions.⁴⁷ Thus, these trees had no virtue in and of themselves, but the plain statement of fact reveals a characteristic power that is remarkable. If a man ate of the one tree he would receive a virtue causing him to live forever (3:22). If he chose to dine at the second tree (as the text records that he did), then the man would receive the knowledge of good and evil with death for a dessert. The powers related to the trees were not by their inherent natural qualities, but "by virtue of the power of the word of God, who was pleased to ordain that such should be the effect of partaking of the fruit" of these two trees.⁴⁸ Therefore these two trees are the divinely appointed symbols of life and death to the first edenic pair in a book that does not, as a rule, make use of allegorical devices to any great extent.

2. Turning to the significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, one is faced with a wide divergence of opinion. Martin Buber has summarized the orb of

⁴⁷Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), pp. 41-43.

⁴⁸Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, p. 181.

opinion under three interpretations: (a) acquisition of sexual desire, (b) cognition in general, and (c) moral consciousness.⁴⁹

Roman Catholic scholars on the whole interpret the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to be related to the acquisition of sexual desire. LeFrois⁵⁰ and Hartman⁵¹ may be cited as examples of this interpretation from the Catholic viewpoint. To this view may be added the names of Ibn Ezra; Gunkel⁵² and Simpson⁵³ who represent the modern non-Catholic writers; and Milton, the seventeenth century poet, who composed the classical epic, Paradise Lost. Typical of this view would be the words of Reicke:

The fruit of the prohibited tree opens their eyes to sex: that must not be forgotten. Accordingly 'good and evil,' while properly meaning 'everything,' is here used as a euphemism for the secret of sex. It follows that the tree carries a sort of aphrodisiac on its branches.⁵⁴

⁴⁹Martin Buber, Good and Evil (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 71.

⁵⁰Bernard J. LeFrois, "The Forbidden Fruit," The American Ecclesiastical Review, 136:175-183, March, 1957.

⁵¹Louis F. Hartman, "Sin in Paradise," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 20:26-40, January, 1958.

⁵²Cassuto, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 111.

⁵³Simpson, "Genesis," The Interpreter's Bible, I, 494, 496f.

⁵⁴Bo Reicke, "The Knowledge Hidden in the Tree of Paradise," Journal of Semitic Studies, 1:196, July, 1956.

The leading generalization is not at all intended to be a universal statement classifying all Roman Catholic theologians. One may cite Porúbčan, who is a good example of an exception.

The strangest, most extravagant, interpretation of the first sin, in my view, is the sexual interpretation. This disregards completely the text and context, i.e. the spirit of our narrative.⁵⁵

Several objections may be raised to interpreting the significance of the tree of knowledge as being the acquisition of sexual desire.

(1) The command (2:17) was given before the creation of the woman (2:21-25).

(2) God blessed man commanding them to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (1:28).

(3) The man and woman became one flesh; were naked, but unashamed (2:24,25).

(4) The ambition to be like God is not a sexual one (3:5,22).⁵⁶

(5) It is not in harmony with the description of the transgression given in 3:6. As Porúbčan states: "The woman 'sins' by herself, first--with whom? with the tree? or with the serpent? Then the man 'sins'--

⁵⁵Stefan Porúbčan, Sin in the Old Testament (Rome: Herder, 1963), p. 419, cf. p. 430.

⁵⁶Newman, Commentary of Nahmanides, p. 69.

with whom? with the tree? or serpent."⁵⁷

This interpretation has been superimposed upon the narrative as the result of comparing certain elements of this narrative with other similar elements or symbols existing in quite different mythological writings or inscriptions of other oriental peoples.⁵⁸

Secondly, the significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is said to be cognition in general. The variations within this group of commentators are quite numerous; but Wellhausen, Driver,⁵⁹ Tennant,⁶⁰ Williams⁶¹ and Buber⁶² may be considered as representative of those taking a critical approach to the scripture; and Cassuto,⁶³ who states that the significance is an "objective awareness," may be considered as one who seeks the rational, simple meaning of the text as it stands.

⁵⁷Porúbčan, loc. cit.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Driver, Genesis, p. 41.

⁶⁰F. R. Tennant, The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin (Cambridge: The University Press, 1903), pp. 12-15.

⁶¹Norman Powell Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1927), pp. 43, 44.

⁶²Buber, op. cit., p. 73f.

⁶³Cassuto, op. cit., p. 112f.

It is not pertinent to this present study to develop a full polemic against this second interpretation just as we do not deem it necessary to develop a full apology for the third. Let us note, however, a few objections that may be raised from the context of the narrative:

(1) God created a man (2:7) and placed a man in the garden (2:9,15). It would appear to be an unlikely possibility that an example can be cited where אָדָם was used to refer to a youth or child of any age below manhood or the age of maturity.

(2) The man was of an age that he could carry on the responsibilities of tilling and keeping the garden (2:15). The motivation for creating the woman was in part so that she could be a helper (2:18).

(3) The man was the possessor of sufficient rational abilities that he was able to name the animals (2:19,20), and was capable of being held responsible for observing a divine command (2:16,17).

Wellhausen notes that the phrase is not הַטוֹב וְהָרָע, but טוֹב וְרָע. From this he concludes that the allusion is to the knowledge of what is wholesome and hurtful with respect to mundane matters, which, according to their nature, bring benefit or harm to man, and of the possibility of using them for the advancement of the practical civilization of

mankind. But Dillmann has rightly pointed out: "What kind of advance in respect of culture could man have made by eating of the tree! or what could a phrase of this kind mean when uttered by God!" (3:5,22).⁶⁴ The significance of this knowledge when attributed to God would be beyond comprehension.

It seems evident to this writer that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has more significance than merely obtaining a new perception or awareness in a general sense. This tree has relevance to more than just things. "In truth," says Dillmann, "לדע and ידע are from the first used not merely of things, but also of actions and of acting subjects."⁶⁵ Therefore, the writer would stand with the great host who say that the crux of the entire narrative of Genesis 2 and 3 is that of man's learning the importance of a right or wrong action. This is to say that moral consciousness cannot be dismissed from the narrative.

The most common view held at least among non-Roman Catholics, is to interpret the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to signify a moral test for the edenic pair.

⁶⁴Dillmann, Genesis, p. 138f.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 139.

Here we may include Luther,⁶⁶ Wesley,⁶⁷ Henry,⁶⁸ Dods⁶⁹ and a host of others. Let us examine this interpretation in the light of the principles related in the narrative. Pleasure and pain, good and evil are very subjective concerns until a standard is established by which values may be determined. Our narrative plainly indicates that God has the plumb line in his hand and it is He who establishes the objective good and evil (2:16,17). This is set before the man in the form of a command and made an existential reality in the form of a tree. The knowledge of good and evil confronts man in his peculiarity. It confronts man wherein he differs with the animal world.⁷⁰ Genesis sets this forth in the words, "God created man in his own image" (1:27). It is not our purpose to discuss what all was included in this image, but to affirm that the man is capable of making a free, rational choice,

⁶⁶Luther, Lectures on Genesis, p. 109.

⁶⁷Wesley, Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament, p. 12.

⁶⁸Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, [n.d.]), p. 16.

⁶⁹Marcus Dods, The Book of Genesis (Handbooks for Bible Classes and Private Students, ed. Marcus Dods and Alexander Whyte. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, [n.d.]), p. 11.

⁷⁰Herold S. Stern, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," Vetus Testamentum, 8:418, October, 1958; cf. Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Judg. 20:5; II Sam. 21:5.

for which he alone may be held responsible. To say that he is other than free makes God the author of evil; to say that he is other than rational places him at one with the animals; and to say that he is not responsible contradicts the plain fact of God's judgment (3:17,23,24). Thus, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil confronts the man with the responsibility of a free, rational choice. Satan's approach to Eve confirms this logic, for he makes his appeal, not with animal enticement, but with a rational argument (cf. 3:1-5).

The moral interpretation takes into full consideration the code and the resulting judgment upon evil. It recognizes that at the time of his creation man was a responsible being standing on a very high plane of perfection. It takes into account that the giving of a code implies more than the natural "coming of age" for the first pair. Knowing good and evil is more than passing from adolescence to maturity,⁷¹ and it is used here without reference to age (I Kings 3:9; II Sam. 14:17; cf. Num. 14:29,30; Deut. 1:39). To know good and evil means, therefore, to understand the value of things and actions according to their ultimate

⁷¹George W. Buchanan, "The Old Testament Meaning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," Journal of Biblical Literature, 75:114-120, June, 1956.

moral worth. The presence and prohibition relative to this tree presented the ultimates of moral worth: obedience and life, or disobedience and death.

IV. AND THE LORD GOD COMMANDED THE MAN SAYING, "YOU MAY FREELY EAT OF EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN: BUT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL YOU SHALL NOT EAT, FOR IN THE DAY THAT YOU EAT OF IT YOU SHALL DIE" (2:16,17).

Everything preceding in this chapter has paved the way for the water-shed that now confronts the man by way of a double-command. Here we have the crux of Genesis 2 and 3.

A. מכל עץ-הגן אכל תאכל = literally, "From every tree of the garden you may freely eat, (but)." The infinitive absolute is employed here before the verb to give emphasis to the antithesis of 2:17. Hence, it denotes a permission on the part of God to allow the man to eat of every, or any, tree in the garden with only one exception.⁷²

B. ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו = literally, ". . . but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it." This is the antithesis. The waw has been used to connect two contrasted ideas, and in the English idiom it demands the translation, "but." The antithesis follows immediately after the conjunction to give prominence to it.⁷³ To express the most emphatic form of prohibition, the author has used the words לא תאכל. Unlike

⁷²Ges., par. 113p.

⁷³BDB, p. 252b.

לֹא with the jussive, which has a meaning of depreciation-- "do not. . . , let not. . . ," the use here of the negative with the imperfect corresponds to our "Thou shalt not do it!" with the strongest expectation of obedience. This is the same form that is employed in the divine commands of the law (cf. Exod. 20:3ff).⁷⁴ So as to not make this command grievous, God has placed it within the framework of a generous permission.

C. כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכַלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ = literally, ". . . for in the day of your eating from it. . ." This phrase has a parallel in 3:5, having only a deviation in the pronominal suffix: in 2:17 it is singular, whereas, in 3:5 it is plural. The difficulty arising from these words rests not so much here as it does in the fact that physical death did not immediately follow after the fall. In fact, Adam's genealogy states that he lived upwards of nine hundred years (5:5).

Syntactically, אֲכַלְךָ (nomen regens) is in the construct state with אֲכַלְךָ (nomen rectum), which is a nomen verbale acting as a genitive.⁷⁵ "Your eating" is considered to be definite in itself, since it has a pronominal suffix, and when it is joined with אֲכַלְךָ in a genitival relation, the

⁷⁴BDB, p. 518b; Ges., par. 107.

⁷⁵Ges., pars. 128a, 114b.

entire phrase becomes definite. It can either be taken literally, "In the day of your eating," or in a more general sense, "in the time of your eating." But still the later would represent "the act vividly as that of a single day."⁷⁶ "Day" can be used to indicate time expressing a general sense. This general meaning can be clearly seen in a few instances: "Like the cold snow in the time of harvest. . ." (Prov. 25:13); and "David said in his heart, 'I shall now perish one day (meaning, 'some day') by the hand of Saul" (I Sam. 27:1). Such instances as these are limited, and it can be seen in the above that a specific time or season is ultimately in view.

Two parallel narratives may be sighted outside of Genesis that will contribute to our understanding here. The first is the solemn admonition of Solomon to Shimei. Shimei was instructed to build himself a house in Jerusalem and to dwell there. If he departed, it would be at the expense of his life-- וְהָיָה כִּי יֵצֵא וְעָבַר אֶת-נַחַל קִדְרוֹן יָדַע תְּדַע כִּי מוֹת תָּמוּת = "For on the day you go forth and cross the Kidron, know for certain that you shall die" (I Kings 2:37). Here, as in Genesis 2:17, the command rests upon the determining fact of a specific time--"on the day of your going out." As the narrative continues, Shimei did go out

⁷⁶BDB, p. 400a.

(I Kings 2:40) after the command had been in effect for three years. Immediately, when Solomon received the word, Shimei was killed (I Kings 2:46).

The second narrative concerns the false prophet Hananiah. Jeremiah pronounces the curse of the Lord upon the rebellious prophet, "Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you shall die'" (Jer. 28:16). The outcome was as certain as the pronouncement, "In the same year, in the seventh month, the prophet Hananiah died" (Jer. 28:17).

The foregoing narratives and an examination of the occurrences of "day" in a construct relation with verbs seems to confirm the certitude of the command in Genesis 2:17 (cf. 2:4; 5:1; 35:3; I Kings 2:8; Exod. 32:34).

D. תָּמוּתָּ תָּמוּת = literally, "dying you shall die" or it is best expressed in the English idiom by a corresponding adverb, "you shall certainly die, you must die." The Septuagint--θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε --expresses the penalty, "you shall die the death," or "because of death you shall die" (cf. John 12:33; 18:32), indicating the instrumental or causal aspect. In the Hebrew the infinitive absolute is used before the verb to strengthen the verbal idea. In this instance it emphasizes the certainty and completeness of the penalty, namely death.⁷⁷

⁷⁷Ges., par. 113n.

This same Hebrew construction occurs only a limited number of times referring to the certainty of natural death: "We must all die, we are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again" (II Sam. 14:14). In most occurrences it refers to the certainty of death as capital punishment either inflicted by man or God.

1. Death as a penalty inflicted by man:

Though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die (I Sam. 14:39, cf. 44).

And the king said, "You shall surely die, Abimelech, you and all your father's house" (I Sam. 22:16).

For on the day you (Shimei) go forth, and cross the brook Kidron, know for certain that you shall die (I Kings 2:37, cf. 42).

. . . all the people laid hold of him (Jeremiah), saying, "You shall die!" (Jer. 26:8).

. . . the Lord has shown me that he (Benhadad) shall certainly die (II Kings 8:10).

2. Death as a penalty inflicted by God:

But if you (Abimelech) do not restore her (Sarah), know that you shall surely die (Gen. 20:7).

And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God" (Judg. 13:22).

. . . the child that is born to you shall die (II Sam. 12:14).

They shall die in the wilderness (Num. 26:65).

(Note also II Kings 1:4,6,16; Ezek. 3:8; 33:8,14)

It may be concluded from the above that, as a rule, this phrase indicates premature physical death, which is

inflicted upon a man for a punishment. A further conclusion may also be drawn. When the Lord commands the penalty, there is a certainty in its literal fulfillment. We would then conclude with Cassuto:

A simple expression like you shall die must be understood strictly; it is not possible to regard it merely as an allusion to severe afflictions or to a diminution Nor is it conceivable that the Bible attributed to the Lord God an extravagant utterance that did not correspond to his true intention.⁷⁸

⁷⁸Cassuto, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 125.

- V. AND THE WOMAN SAID TO THE SERPENT,
 "WE MAY EAT OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREES
 OF THE GARDEN; BUT GOD SAID, 'YOU
 SHALL NOT EAT OF THE FRUIT OF THE
 TREE WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE
 GARDEN, NEITHER SHALL YOU TOUCH IT,
 LEST YOU DIE" (3:2,3).

These two verses present a connected parallel to 2:16,17, and contain the same general meaning: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden we may not eat. As the woman corrects the serpent, she shows how fully aware she is of the strictness of the prohibition.

The Hebrew word order indicates that the woman is placing emphasis upon the forbidden tree and the place of prominence given it in the garden. The literal word order of verse three goes something like this: "But of the fruit of the tree which (is) in the midst of the garden, God said, 'You shall not eat from it, nor shall you touch it, lest you shall die.'" That the tree was given the most important place and should be prohibited seems to be grievous in her thoughts. Although the tree of life was also in the center of the garden, and possibly other trees as well, she focused her interest at the moment upon the forbidden tree, "and for her it is the tree--with the definite article--in the centre of the garden."⁷⁹

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 145.

"Neither shall you touch it" is not a part of the command given by the Lord (2:17), and for this reason has given rise to various interpretations. We note in particular the following Rabbinic interpretation:

Thus it is written, Add not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Prov. xxx, 6). R. Hiyya taught: That means that you must not make the fence more than the principal thing, lest it fall and destroy the plants. Thus, the Holy One, blessed be He, had said, For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. II, 17); whereas she did not say thus, but, God hath said: Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it; when he /the serpent/ saw her thus lying, he took and thrust her against it. 'Have you then died?' he said to her; 'just as you were not stricken through touching it, so will you not die when you eat it...'⁸⁰

But contrary to the teachings of Rabbinic literature it seems more proper that the clause is simply a synonymous parallel with the preceding clause "You shall not eat" (20:6; 26:11).⁸¹

⁸⁰H. Freedman and Isidore Epstein (eds.), Midrash Rabbah (10 vols; London: The Socino Press, 1939), I, 150.

⁸¹Cassuto, loc. cit.

VI. BUT THE SERPENT SAID TO THE WOMAN,
 "YOU WILL NOT DIE. FOR GOD KNOWS
 THAT WHEN YOU EAT OF IT YOUR EYES
 WILL BE OPENED, AND YOU WILL BE
 LIKE GOD, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL"
 (3:4,5).

The woman had given in essence the prohibition of God in verse three. God had said, "You shall die." The serpent now gives the rebuttal, לא-מרת תמות, "You will not die." Gesenius states that "the regular place of the negative is between the intensifying infinitive absolute and the finite verb,"⁸² but this phrase is an exception. Instead of the serpent's words being an antithesis to the command of God in 2:17,⁸³ they are instead opposed to the woman's words in 3:3 (the thesis = וְעַתָּה תִּמְתּוּן; the antithesis = וְעַתָּה תִּמְתּוּן לא-מרת תמות).

To the superficial reader the serpent may appear to be right in his rebuttal, but it is the verdict rendered at the end of the narrative that determines the case.

⁸²Ges., par. 113v.

⁸³Ibid.,

VII. SO WHEN THE WOMAN SAW THAT THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD, AND THAT IT WAS A DELIGHT TO THE EYES, AND THAT THE TREE WAS TO BE DESIRED TO MAKE ONE WISE, SHE TOOK OF ITS FRUIT AND ATE; AND SHE ALSO GAVE SOME TO HER HUSBAND, AND HE ATE (3:6).

The text indicates only the actual eating of the fruit from the forbidden tree in the literal sense. There is no basis in this verse for calling it a sexual sin. The enticement of the woman came through the natural material qualities of the tree. In 1:12 God created the trees and saw that they were good. When He planted the garden of Eden, He "made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (1:9). This tree was no different--the fruit was good for food and the appearance was beautiful to behold--and yet, in every way it was different. The great attraction was the mystery that was as much a part of it as the very sap flowing its veins and trunk. לְהַשְׁכִּיל was to make one like God, knowing good and evil (3:5,22), and the magnified attraction was an illusion. She beheld only the good. "You shall not eat,"--the no trespassing sign--remained intact, but the meaning of its message was deemed of no value.

The brevity of the narrative at this point would suggest that the woman's perception, passion and pride

led to immediate decision and execution. The extreme brevity continues as we are told that the man also ate, without suggesting his motives for eating.

VIII. THEN THE EYES OF BOTH WERE OPENED,
AND THEY KNEW THAT THEY WERE NAKED;
AND THEY SEWED FIG LEAVES TOGETHER
AND MADE THEMSELVES APRONS (3:7).

"Then the eyes of both were opened." They experienced an immediate reaction to their act of transgression, and it recalls the words of the serpent, "when you eat of it your eyes will be opened" (3:5). This is more than an ordinary experience of the transition "from the innocence of childhood into the knowledge which belongs to adult age." ⁸⁴ One cannot help but notice the abrupt change that enters here.

They ate of the fruit desiring knowledge, but what were their eyes opened to know?--that they were naked. The remainder of the verse relates their concentrated efforts to cover their shame. It suddenly becomes evident to the reader as to why the author made a special notation concerning the pair's nakedness at the conclusion of the last paragraph (2:25). There the pair was unashamed of their nakedness, but now they are filled with shame. To say that their sin has involved a sexual act is to miss the author's point.

The generation of children was a most sacred responsibility in the Old Testament. The responsibility

⁸⁴Driver, Genesis, p. 46.

was placed upon man by the specific blessing of God: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (1:28). In fact, this was the first command given to man. Genesis 2 progresses toward and ends with its attention focused upon God's plan of cohabitation--"and they became one flesh" (1:24). Again our attention is called to the responsibility of procreation with the opening words of chapter four, "Now Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived and bore Cain." Mixed marriages in chapter six are given as the primary reason for degeneration in pre-flood society (6:1-3). When Noah had disembarked from the ark and offered burnt offerings, we are told that "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth'" (9:1). To further illustrate the sacredness of the line of descent in the Old Testament, one need only to note that within the first eleven chapters of Genesis sixty-one verses, or one-fifth of the total, are given to recording genealogies (4:17-22; 5:1-32; 11:10-32).

The concept of the solidarity between fathers and sons⁸⁵ becomes a famous principle which is frequently repeated in the Old Testament:

The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving

⁸⁵Porúbčan, Sin in the Old Testament, p. 388.

iniquity and transgressions and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation (Exod. 34:6,7; cf. 20:5f; Deut. 5:9f; Joel 2:13; Jer. 32:18; and others).

This principle is further established in the making of a covenant. A covenant is made between God and Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:7), or between God and Noah and his descendants (9:9). And so the principle continues and even has social applications (cf. Deut. 22:8).

What then is indicated by the author of Genesis when he says, "and they knew that they were naked"? The eyes of the fallen pair were opened to the realization that they had sinned. Yea, but the sin was not theirs alone. The consequences of this act of disobedience was to be upon Adam and his descendants according to the Old Testament principle of solidarity. Thus, in that moment the full weight of their guilt focused upon their nakedness--their organs of procreation. Only this interpretation befits the context and explains the open shame of Adam, when he had incurred inward guilt by his disobedience to God.

IX. AND TO ADAM HE SAID,
 "BECAUSE YOU . . .
 . . . HAVE EATEN OF THE TREE
 CURSED IS THE GROUND BECAUSE OF YOU;
 IN TOIL YOU SHALL EAT OF IT ALL THE
 DAYS OF YOUR LIFE;
 TILL YOU RETURN TO THE GROUND,
 FOR OUT OF IT YOU WERE TAKEN;
 YOU ARE DUST,
 AND TO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN" (3:17-19).

There are two very significant aspects in the judgment which God pronounced upon the man that enter into the problem of death. The first concerns the "curse" and the second focuses upon the total emphasis of the pronouncement.

A. Twice within the total pronouncement upon the serpent, the woman and the man (3:14-19), a "curse" is decreed. The parallelism and contrast of these can be clearly seen in the Hebrew:

כי עשית זאת
 ארור אתה (3:14)
 כי שמעת . . . ותאכל . . .
 ארורה האדמה בעבורך (3:17)

God curses the serpent--"Cursed are you"-- but God curses not the man; instead, He curses the ground because of the man--"Cursed is the ground on your account" (literally rendered).⁸⁶ The alternatives of the command (2:17) were not obey and live / disobey and toil! No, they were rather,

⁸⁶Young, The Days of Genesis," p. 21.

obey and live / disobey and die! The curse in Genesis 3:17-19 is not, first of all, a declaration of man's death, nor, secondly, does it affect man in an intrinsic sense. The curse is upon the ground and it afflicts man as he is related to the ground. As the man had disobeyed by eating, so also, he is afflicted in his eating--"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (3:19). To interpret these verses to mean more than this would seem a little precarious. A similar, but stronger, curse was placed upon the ground as the judgment against Cain for slaying his brother (4:11f). However, with the appearance of Noah comes a contrast. He was called Noah for "Out of the ground which the Lord has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands" (5:29). From all indications after the flood this seems to be fulfilled for God said, "I will never again curse the ground because of man" (8:21f). At most, the curse upon the ground in 3:17 is only the preliminary sentence to be decreed as the consequence of man's disobedience. With the greatest of literary skill, the author is building the whole narrative toward the climax in 3:24.

B. What then is the emphasis of this present judgment upon man? The emphasis here is life--life under a curse. As Leupold states, "This part of the penalty

emphasizes primarily the life-long continuance of the toil imposed on man."⁸⁷ The serpent was cursed to a life of reproach and to continually be at enmity with the seed of the woman (3:14,15). The woman was to have a life of pain in subjection to her husband (3:16). The man was to have a life of toil as he performed that which was most basic to him--the gathering of food (3:17-19). Thus, God is saying, "You will live, but the curse upon the ground will be a life-long reminder--every time you eat--that I have desired your obedience."

עַד שׁוֹכֵךְ אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה (etc.) continues the theme of life even though it points to the fact of man's return to dust. This is expressed by the syntax, poetic parallelism, and in the etymological meaning of the preposition.

"Until" introduces a secondary adverbial clause, which defines what has gone before with a temporal limitation.⁸⁸ It is a definition of the life which has been imposed upon the man, and in no way pretends to be the announcement of the primary curse upon man.

Not only is this phrase a secondary clause, but it is a significant part of the poetic parallelism and

⁸⁷Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, p. 175.

⁸⁸Ges., par. 164.

symmetry of the narrative.⁸⁹ Three such parallel phrases occur and each bears the same meaning:

" . . . all the days of your life" (3:14);

" . . . all the days of your life" (3:17); and

" . . . till you return to the ground" (3:19).

The first two of these statements are more general in their statement of duration, and the latter defines the expression more closely. More than this the latter of the statements links up with what has been said earlier: "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground" (2:7). As the end of the narrative approaches, we begin to hear echoes of the beginning.⁹⁰

Finally, let us consider the etymology of the preposition with which the temporal clause begins. J. A. Thompson demonstrates that there are good grounds for believing that γ is related to a significant family of Hebrew roots, which can all be traced to this bilateral. Their original semantic connotation, as he would suggest it, is that of "recurrence."⁹¹ Upon this basis, the preposition, as it is used here suggests the idea of "advancing in time,"

⁸⁹Cassuto, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 169.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹J. A. Thompson, "Expansion of the γ Root," Journal of Semitic Studies, 10:223, Autumn, 1965.

or "continuation" up to a specified point in time.⁹² Also, the emphasis is more upon the period of duration, than upon the end.

Therefore, this clause incidentally suggests the continuation of a natural, inevitable return to dust of the ground, but primarily contributes to the theme that they shall "live until they die."⁹³

⁹²Ibid., pp. 227f; Ges., par. 103o.

⁹³Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, pp. 175.

X. THEN THE LORD GOD SAID, "BEHOLD, THE MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL: AND NOW, LEST HE PUT FORTH HIS HAND AND TAKE ALSO OF THE TREE OF LIFE, AND EAT, AND LIVE FOR EVER" (3:22).

The narrative comes to a climax in this and the following two verses. Suddenly, all that has gone before focuses upon the tree of life.

Immediately, one notes that man had become like God, and yet, he was still unlike God. Man had asserted himself and by disobedience had come to know the meaning of good and evil. But one thing man still lacked. He was dependent upon the tree of life for immortality. Thus, we can assuredly say that man was not immortal at this point in our narrative.

Dillmann,⁹⁴ Vos,⁹⁵ Keil and Delitzsch,⁹⁶ and nearly all students⁹⁷ suppose from this verse that the man had not eaten of the tree of life, although it had not been

⁹⁴Dillmann, Genesis, p. 169.

⁹⁵Geerhardus Vos, Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), p. 38.

⁹⁶Keil, Biblical Commentary, p. 107.

⁹⁷H. Th. Obbink, "The Tree of Life in Eden," Old Testament Essays (Papers read before the Society for Old Testament Study at its Eighteenth Meeting, held at Keble College, Oxford, September 27th to 30th, 1927. London: Charles Griffin and Company, Limited, 1927), p. 25.

forbidden him. The basis of their supposition comes from three Hebrew words: . . . -ןפ ןעחל.

The word ןעחל is an adverb of time meaning "now," or in a phrase such as this, it indicates the drawing of a conclusion. The word was used by God when He appeared to Abimelech in a dream revealing that Sarah, whom Abimelech had taken for his wife, was actually the wife of Abraham. God said in conclusion, "Now then restore the man's wife . . ." (20:7). Again, "Now therefore swear to me here by God. . ." (21:23). Cassuto suggests that the word ןעחל (and now) is usually, as here, the correlative of ןה (behold), which heads the previous clause. "The clause beginning with ןה, "says Cassuto, "sets out the premise, whilst the clause commencing with ןעחל conveys the inference to be drawn from it."⁹⁸ It is as if to say, "And now (since man has been disobedient), lest he put forth his hand. . ." ⁹⁹

Most generally ןפ (lest) is interpreted in the sense that the fact has not yet happened: ". . . save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me, lest like a lion they rend me" (Ps. 7:3, Heb.); "the angels urged Lot, saying, 'Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who

⁹⁸Cassuto, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 172.

⁹⁹BDB, p. 774a.

are here, lest you be consumed. . ." (19:15). But the above is not always the case. "Pen," as Obbink states, "is used also for a fact which has happened, but which may not happen again. ׀ in that case has the meaning of 'lest further,' 'lest more.'¹⁰⁰ Two examples are notably thus:

But the descendants of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong; so that the land was filled with them (Exod. 1:7).

Then note the pharaoh's words--

Come let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply. . . (Exod. 1:10).

The second example is I Samuel 13:19--

Now there was no smith to be found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears."

In these instances ׀ is clearly, "lest further."¹⁰¹ In these occurrences ׀ puts a period to that which is happening so that it does not continue. Thus Obbink would conclude that the interpretation here does not require the sense of "not yet," and can just as well be "lest further."¹⁰²

The verbs that follow, 'שָׁלַח ... וַלְקַח ... וְאָמַל', also connote Obbink's interpretation, although he does not cite this. The first, "put forth" is in the imperfect

¹⁰⁰Obbink, loc. cit.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

tense, which, in a general sense, represents actions "regarded by the speaker at any moment as still continuing, or in process of accomplishment, or even as just taking place."¹⁰³ Or more specifically, it is used, as it seems to be here, to denote an action which may be repeated at any time, including therefore the present, or is customarily repeated on a given occasion.¹⁰⁴ "Take" and "eat" are in the perfect tense with the waw consecutive. As Gesenius suggest in citing this particular reference, the perfect is used here after the imperfect in the sense of simple future to express the actions as the temporal and logical consequence of that announced by the preceding imperfect verb.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, it could be concluded from the tenses used, that God is placing a period to what has been customary, namely, by the expulsion of the man from Eden.

At this point there is a sudden breaking off (aposiopesis) as if measures were already being taken to prevent that which is suggested. Thus, we have reached the climactic point of the expulsion from the garden.

¹⁰³Ges., par. 107a.

¹⁰⁴Ges., par. 107g.

¹⁰⁵Ges., par. 112p.

XI. THEREFORE THE LORD GOD SENT HIM FORTH FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN, TO TILL THE GROUND FROM WHICH HE WAS TAKEN. HE DROVE OUT THE MAN: AND AT THE EAST OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN HE PLACED THE CHERUBIM, AND A FLAMING SWORD WHICH TURNED EVERY WAY, TO GUARD THE WAY TO THE TREE OF LIFE (3:23,24).

The narrative rises to its climax in these two verses. The execution of the judgment upon the pair for their sin is not only announced, but it is also executed.

There is some repetition in these two verses but not without good reason. In the first, the thought is directed upon that to which the man was sent. In the second, it is focused upon the garden and that from which man had departed and left behind. The former begins, "And the Lord God sent him forth," but the latter adds, "And He drove out the man." The second verb also very noticeably carries a stronger connotation with a suggestion of unwillingness to depart on the part of man. A parallel to these verses is found in Exodus 11:1--"When he lets you go (כשלחך), he will drive (גרש גרש) you away completely." Thus, here, as in Exodus, the two-fold expression is employed with the identical aim of achieving climax.¹⁰⁶ God not only sent man out, but he drove him out without any possibility of his returning to the tree of life.

¹⁰⁶Cassuto, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 173.

CHAPTER III

THE EXPOSITION OF GENESIS 2 and 3

Physical immortality in man as originally created, has long been the prevailing interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3. Man, it is thus said, was immortal until he had sinned by eating the forbidden fruit. Since man did not suffer immediate physical death, it is then concluded, as does Wesley, that man suffered spiritual death, which meant "the loss of the life and image of God."¹ The physical immortality of man is included as an aspect of the divine image and therefore is included in man's loss.² But let us raise the question, "Why?" Why immortality rather than some other attribute of God? Omniscience? Omnipresence? Or immutability?

It will be the purpose of this chapter to present the thesis that physical immortality in man before the Fall has little to justify it in Genesis 2 and 3. The approach is not philosophical or theological, but, rather, the thesis will be established by textual study, that man was created mortal.

¹Edward H. Sugden (ed.). Wesley's Standard Sermons (Fifth annotated edition; London: The Epworth Press, 1964), II, 230.

²Ibid., p. 228.

I. MAN AS CREATED

A. The first glimpse of the creation of man in these two chapters appears in 2 :7. There it is expressed that God took the man, which he had formed of dust from the ground, and he breathed into his nostrils נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים ("the breath of life"). Murphy states that "the word נְשָׁמַת is invariably applied to God or man, never to any irrational creature."³ He thus states that נְשָׁמַת (breath) expresses the spiritual and principle element in man, and thus, Murphy concludes, it bears the image of God.⁴ But as Vollborn states, "Dagagen spricht schon Gen. 7,22."⁵ In the flood account "all flesh died that moved upon the earth. . . and every man; everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died" (7:22). Here two problems are created for those who would relate immortality to נְשָׁמַת . First, the נְשָׁמַת is still applied to mortal man after the fall. How then can immortality be said to be a part of the breath of life received in 2:7,

³J. G. Murphy, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1866), p. 84.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Werner Vollborn, "Das Problem des Todes in Gen. 2-3," Theologische Literaturzeitung, 77:710, 1952. "Over against it truly stands Gen. 7:22."

when the נפש continues to remain in man after man has become mortal? Secondly, the נפש in 7:22 is possessed by both man and animals without distinction,⁶ but one would hardly concede that animals inherited immortality with the breath of life. Thus, the נפש does not indicate a divine substance over against the material body, made of dust of the ground, as Matthew Henry would like to believe.⁷ It is not "a pity. . . that it should cleave to the earth, and mind earthly things," as Henry would further suggest,⁸ but it is a necessity that the inanimate body of both man and animals might become "living beings" (לְנִשְׁמֹת חַיִּים). The נפש thus becomes synonymous with life in reference to both man and animals. As Moses commanded the children of Israel beyond the Jordan to "utterly destroy" the cities of the people in Canaan and to "save alive nothing that breathes" (לֹא-תִשְׁמַח, Deut. 20:16), so it was fulfilled at Jericho: ". . . they utterly destroyed all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and asses

⁶Basil F. C. Atkinson, The Book of Genesis. (The Pocket Commentary of the Bible. Chicago: Moody Press, 1957, p. 32; August Dillmann, Genesis, trans. Wm. B. Stevenson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), I, 280; and most other commentators.

⁷Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, [n.d.]), I, 14b.

⁸Ibid.

with the edge of the sword" (Josh. 6:21). The fact that man became *לַחַיִּים* ("a living being") further denies this thesis, for this is the only occurrence where this phrase (*לַחַיִּים*) refers specifically to man. This phrase is always used with respect to animals, having only this exception. Man is also like the animals in this respect.⁹ Thus, the *רוּחַ* does not denote the spirit by which man is distinguished from the animals, or the soul of man from the beasts, but indicates only the breath that produces life.¹⁰

Some writers, like Kuyper, would stop here and conclude that "our author does not tell us" whether or not man was created immortal or mortal.¹¹ But to stop here would leave the problem of death unsolved, and much of the narrative would remain unexplained and unimportant. On the contrary the anthropology of Genesis 2 and 3 indicates that man was mortal by nature as he was originally created.¹²

⁹Paul Heinisch, Theology of the Old Testament, trans. William G. Heidt (St. Paul: The North Central Publishing Company, 1955), p. 169.

¹⁰C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch. Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. James Martin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1864), I, 78; cf. Exegesis, 2:7.

¹¹Lester J. Kuyper, "Interpretation of Genesis Two-Three," The Reformed Review, 13:3:27, March, 1960.

¹²Robert Martin-Achard, From Death to Life, trans. John Penney Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960), p. 19.

B. The first evidence for man's original mortality appears in 3:19b: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken." Because of Adam Clarke's presupposition of original immortality, he sees this as the fulfillment of the curse, "you shall die." Thus, to Clarke, the words, "you shall die" mean "you shall become mortal,"¹³ but to interpret these words thus is to miss the emphasis of the context. The emphasis from 3:14-19 is that of life under the curse. The serpent is cursed to a life of reproach and to continually be at enmity with the seed of the woman (3:14,15). The woman is cursed to a life of pain in subjection to her husband (3:16). The man is to live in continual toil for his daily bread (3:17-19a). God is here imposing a life of punishment. It shall continue until

The punishment stops with 3:19a, and the remainder of the verse is a secondary clause. "Till you return to the ground for (?) out of it you were taken," places a temporal limitation upon the duration of the foregoing punishment upon man. It continues to emphasize the fact that the man's life will be one of toil and hardship. The shadow of death, which is indicated here, is not

¹³Adam Clarke, The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testament, with a Commentary and Critical Notes (London: Ward, Lock & Co., [n.d.]), I, Genesis 3:19.

based on the fact that the man was disobedient in the light of the law of God in 2:17, but rather it is based on the fact that the man is created out of ארץ (the ground, 3:19b) and עפר (dust, 3:19c).¹⁴ Because (כי) the serpent caused the pair to disobey, he is punished accordingly (3:14a). Likewise, the man was punished because (כי) he had listened (3:17a). This causal expression also appears in the secondary clause of 3:19bc. It reads, ". . . till you return to the ground, for (כי) out of it you were taken; (כי) you are dust, and to dust you shall return." If the death, which is here indicated, is because of their sin, and, thus, the fulfillment of 2:17, then it should read, "till you return to the ground because of your sin." Instead, the author records the words of God to indicate, that as man was created, likewise, will he die. Man was formed of dust from the ground (2:7), and, he shall return to that from whence he came. As man's name indicates (אדם, man--ארץ, ground), he is of the ground, and because of this to the ground he shall return.

C. According to our exposition of this point (3:19), we have indicated that the curse of death in 2:17 has not yet been fulfilled, although God is proceeding to pronounce the punishment upon the man. If this is granted, then

¹⁴Vollborn, "Das Problem des Todes," p. 711.

3:22 bears out our thesis of the original mortality of man. In this verse God recognizes the newly acquired knowledge of man and more. Here it is clearly indicated that if fallen man is permitted access to the tree of life, he will live forever (לעלם). Thus, at this point to be in need of immortality indicates that one does not have it. Let it be granted, then, that man is mortal in 3:22 and in need of the tree of life.

II. MAN AS COMMANDED

If the former premises are accepted as cogent, then the command of God (2:16,17) can be understood in the context.

A. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die (2:17). Most commentators consider only the negative side of the command so it is there that we should open the examination.

The two trees (2:9) were both named according to their fruits. Contrary to Bonhoeffer's opinion, the tree of knowledge was not the tree of death.¹⁵ It was the tree of knowledge because it would confer knowledge on man, if he ate of its fruits. It was named for that which it would effect--knowledge. This tree did not confer death, if the evidence of the narrative is accepted as it is given.

There are at least six indications within the narrative that the tree was just that, which it was named--the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

1. The serpent told the woman, "You will not die," if you eat the fruit of the forbidden tree (3:4). This is

¹⁵Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1959), p. 54.

a true premise concerning the effects of the tree itself if one accepts the words of 3:22.

2. In 3:22 the Lord God said, "Behold the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil." He had not died, and God witnesses to the fact that the tree conferred only knowledge upon the man. Thus, they did gain knowledge when they ate of the forbidden fruit.

3. This, also, the serpent stated in 3:5, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." According to the words of God in 3:22, it was just as the serpent foretold. They had gained knowledge. To possess this new knowledge made one like God. This would seem to eliminate the possibility of the sin involving a sexual act. We will come back to this point in our consideration of man under the curse.

4. The tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as is indicated by the woman's choice (3:6). First, she saw that the tree was like the other trees of the garden. It was "good for food" (cf. 2:9), and it was a "delight to the eyes" (cf. 2:9). Secondly, she saw in this tree the special quality that would make her wise. Thus, in this aspect this tree was indicated as peculiar, because of its anticipated effects of wisdom.

5. The immediate effects of sin in the garden, appeared thus, "Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew. . ." (3:7). The serpent had said, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing. . ." (3:5), and the immediate effects were just as he had said.

6. One further witness concerning the nature of this tree appears in 3:11 as an indirect testimony. God immediately relates the man's new knowledge of his nakedness to have come from the forbidden tree of knowledge.

Thus, an open analysis of the narrative would clearly indicate that this tree in and of itself was not a tree of death. Neither does its fruit confer death upon the guilty pair. Its only effects pertain to knowledge.

B. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden" (2:16). Critical scholars have sought to purge the tree of life from this narrative, but our author gives it the place of primary importance--that is, if one grants the premise, that man was created mortal in his original nature.

The tree of life first appears in 2:9 and, perhaps strangely to some, it is given a place of primary importance, being mentioned first in the narrative before the

tree of knowledge.¹⁶ However, we would not grant with Bonhoeffer that as "no one desires it. . . no prohibition is attached to it."¹⁷ It is quite true that the tree of life is not restricted from the man in 2:17, but this does not indicate, as Bonhoeffer suggests, no one's desiring it. This is the escape taken by one who posits original immortality in man.

It seems only logical, that God, who created the world with the order and the plan as set forth in Genesis 1 and as we know the world experientially, would not have left things open to chance, when he commanded the man. Logic tells us that the permission of 2:16--"You may freely eat of every tree of the garden"--included eating from the tree of life. On this we all will agree, it was not forbidden. Then, if it were not forbidden, they could have eaten, even though, perhaps they didn't. But perhaps they did eat. Does the narrative suggest any ill effects for dining at this tree before the fall? As long as you answer from what is in these chapters, you must grant a "perhaps" to this logic.

As it has been suggested in the exegesis, most students and scholars suppose that the man had not eaten

¹⁶Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall, p. 57f.

¹⁷Ibid.

of the tree of life before his act of sin on the basis of 3:22. But as Obbink has suggested,¹⁸ the verse gives every indication that the man had been accustomed to eating of the tree of life before his fall. Obbink has stated that ׀ֿ (lest) "is used. . . for a fact which has happened, but which may not happen again."¹⁹ Thus, understood ׀ֿ has the meaning of "lest further"--and now lest he continue to put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life. . ."

The imperfect tense of the verb ׀ֿ (put forth) can denote continuation. The primary significance of the imperfect tense is that of expressing incompleted or continuing action.²⁰ It may, however, be used to express action that is "customarily repeated on given occasions."²¹ This interpretation seems more plausible than the future as it is commonly understood.²²

¹⁸H. Th. Obbink, "The Tree of Life in Eden," Old Testament Essays (Papers read before the Society for Old Testament Study at its Eighteenth Meeting, held at Keble College, Oxford, September 27th to 30th, 1927. London: Charles Griffin and Company, Limited, 1927), p. 25.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ges., par. 107a.

²¹Ges., par. 107g; cf. Exegesis, 3:22.

²²Ges., par. 107q.

Therefore, let it be assumed--as it is implied in the generous permission given in 2:16, and, also, by the words of God in 3:22--that man had eaten regularly of the tree of life. This would explain the place of importance given to the tree of life in the narrative. It also explains why the author mentions it first, and then centers the narrative about this one tree at the climax. Man was mortal and was in need of the tree of life in order that he might continue to live "forever" without seeing death. This is why God placed this tree "in the midst of the garden." He placed it there for the purpose of ready accessibility to man.

C. The choice that is given. To suggest a choice suggests something about the original nature of man. It is not the purpose of this thesis to analyze what was implied in the image of God, after which man is created (1:26,27). But contrary to the opinion of Luther, in that God confronts man with an either/or situation, it implies that the man is able to make a choice.²³ The fact that God could hold the man responsible for that choice also implies that man was the initiator of the response. The choice confronts man at a point wherein he is peculiar in

²³Martin Luther, Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5, trans. George V. Schick (Vol. I of Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 61, cf. 84f.

the animal world. Man, as seen in Genesis 2 and 3, toils and keeps the garden (2:15), names the animals (expressing his dominion over the animal world (2:19,20), makes rational dialogue (3:1-5), and is responsible for complying with the command of God. Contemporary anthropology has sometimes unconsciously colored our conception of Adam. This is not a cave man who has evolved from non-human ancestry, as Williams assumes.²⁴ This is the man who is created in the image of God, which qualifies him to have dominion over all the earth. The man, who is commanded, represents the apex of all creation.

The command of prohibition that was given to the man (2:17) was not intended to force him to a conscious decision for either good or evil. God only said that man should not eat from the tree of knowledge (2:17), nor should he touch it (3:3). He could eat from all the other trees in the garden, but this one was forbidden to man. This one tree--the tree of knowledge--was "holy" to God. It was set apart from the reach of man, and was fenced by a divine prohibition. The prohibition was in the form of a command: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it

²⁴Norman Powell Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and Original Sin (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1927), p. 77f.

You shall die" (2:17). Thus, here stands לֹא תֹאכַל (you shall not eat), the negation that forbids any contradiction. It is the same manner of prohibition as those contained within the Decalogue (Exod. 20). Just as we today do not find it necessary to make a conscious decision with regard to "You shall not kill" (Exod. 20:13), neither did Adam find a decision forced upon him. He could have eaten from every tree excepting one, and remained within the garden.

The capital punishment מוֹת תָּמוּת (you shall die) was related to the prohibition of God. The tree, as it was named, would grant a knowledge known to God (3:5,22), but the tree could not confer death to the man. This was the fulfillment of the plan of creation--"fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind upon the earth" (1:11). Just as the tree of life received its name from the way it affected man, so also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil opened the eyes of those who ate (3:7), and they became like God (3:22). Some have supposed, as K. Budde, that this forbidden tree bore a poisonous and death-bringing fruit.²⁵ But man is already mortal as we have concluded earlier. Thus, mortality was not the capital punishment, nor was it to be given by the tree of knowledge. We will consider capital punishment further under the next section, "Man as Cursed."

²⁵Vollborn, "Das Problem des Todes," p. 712.

III. MAN AS CURSED

A. Law and sin. Sin becomes known through the law, and by disregarding the law man incurs guilt. He stands guilty before the one who has given the law.

The prohibition לֹא תֹאכַל (you shall not eat) of 2:17 is an absolute prohibition that indicates the strongest expectation of obedience. It is the same in form as those prohibitions given in the Decalogue. Let us consider again the example that was cited earlier in the Decalogue: "You shall not kill" (Exod. 20:13). The Law states further, "Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death" (Exod. 21:12). When a man strikes and kills another, is he immediately recompensed for his crime by the law? The law says מוֹת יוֹמָת (he shall be put to death), but does the law carry out the punishment, or is the punishment meted out to the offender according to the law by the lawgiver? Solomon told Shimei, "For on the day you go forth, and cross the brook Kidron, know for certain that you shall die" (מוֹת תָּמוּת, I Kings 2:37). After three years Shimei disregarded the absolute prohibition of Solomon and left Jerusalem (I Kings 2:39f). The law set the Kidron for a boundary, but did Shimei die by the law at the moment of his crossing the Kidron? No! The law of itself was of no

effect. Shimei had to appear before the lawgiver and Solomon pronounced the punishment according to the law. Thus, Shimei was struck down by the king's servant, Jehoida (I Kings 2:46).

The law in Genesis 2:17 was given by God. He set the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as the boundary, and established the conditions of obedience and disobedience-- "in the day that you eat of it you shall die." It is true, as perhaps it was with Shimei, that man incurred guilt immediately upon his eating of the forbidden fruit, but guilt does not fulfill the law. The law said "you shall die" and this punishment was given by the lawgiver.

B. Nakedness and Fig Leaves. The serpent had said, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (3:4,5). Accordingly, we have a dual witness that this was the immediate effects of their eating (3:7,22). The immediate effect was new knowledge. They knew something that had been unknown to them in their innocence. Before the woman plucked the fruit of the tree, she saw that the tree was good for food, as were the other trees of the garden (3:6; cf. 2:9). She realized that its fruit was beautiful to behold as was the fruit of the other trees of the garden (3:6; cf. 2:9). Still further,

she knew before she ate of this forbidden tree, that it would make her wise (3:6). These aspects are not involved in what the guilty pair knew after they had sinned.

What then did they know? The nature of the death implied in the law and the gravity of their sin. This brought an enormous guilt upon the pair. Essentially they came to know themselves, what was later inferred in 3:19b,c. They knew that they were mortal--dust from the ground--doomed to die because of their sin.

Perhaps the fig-leaf aprons seem strangely out of place, or at least unexplicable, unless we suggest an Augustinian lust,²⁶ or a natural maturing to manhood on the part of the guilty pair. But this would be lowering the significance of their sin to animalism, and this is not in agreement with the nature of the narrative. Let us consider their nakedness and fig-leaves in the light of biblical principles as they pertain to the problem of death.

The Old Testament is permeated with a concept that has been called the "principle of solidarity between fathers and sons."²⁷ This principle is often repeated throughout

²⁶J. W. C. Wand, St. Augustine's City of God (An abridged edition; London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 221ff.

²⁷Stefan Porúbčan, Sin in the Old Testament (Rome: Herder, 1963), p. 388. For a more complete analysis of this principle, cf. Exegesis 2:7.

the Old Testament. Following a statement of adoration to God in this occurrence in Exodus, the children of Israel are reminded of their sacred tie in the line of descent:

. . . who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation (Exod. 34:7).

The principle of solidarity is witnessed even at the social level in Achan's sin. The entire nation suffered a defeat at the hand of Ai because of this one man. But ultimately, the principle of solidarity demands a just punishment for Achan's guilt. Thus, that which Achan had taken, "his sons and daughters, and his oxen and asses and sheep, and his tent, and all that he had" were taken out of the camp, stoned, and burned with fire (Josh. 7:22-26). This principle is also seen in the Old Testament blessings, for God told Noah, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you" (9:9), and Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant" (17:7).

A primary responsibility conferred upon Adam and Eve after their creation is the procreation of children: "God blessed them, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth'" (1:28). Thus, the generation of children becomes a sacred responsibility. The focal

point of Genesis 2 is found in the creation of the woman and in the establishment of "marriage" (1:24). Genesis 4 begins, "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain." One complete chapter is devoted to the sacred line of descent in Genesis 5. As the wickedness upon the face of the earth increased in Genesis 6, the author suggests that mixed marriage lies at its roots (6:1-7).

How then does the principle of solidarity explain the nakedness and fig leaves? Adam's eyes were opened and he knew that he had brought the curse of death, not only upon his own mortal flesh, but upon every member of posterity. This was knowledge that was known to God. Thus, immediately after his sin, Adam sought to hide his weight of guilt and shame by covering his nakedness--the organ of procreation. At the end of the preceding chapter, the author indicates the absence of guilt and sin by stating that man was unashamedly naked (2:25). Thus, also the woman's suffering is in the continuation of her God-given responsibility of childbearing (3:16).

Thus, as we come to understand the problem of death in Genesis 2 and 3, we also come to understand the significance of the "nakedness and fig leaves."

C. Toil and sweat. As man gained knowledge, he lost the garden. It was then that he came to know what he

was losing. The ground (ground) from which he came was now cursed by God (3:17). Instead of the green foliage of Eden (2:8-14), he would daily toil amidst the thorn and thistle (3:18). Thus, the man continued at the mercy of the ground: from whence he came, and would until he returned. Whereas, he toiled before his sin (2:15), he must continually toil knowing bitter frustration and blighted harvest. From this vantage point, the expression of Paul that the wages of sin is death, is truly correct.²⁸ Thus, man faced a life outside the garden, knowing he was mortal and because of his disobedience could only know the end of death.

D. Life and Death. As Vollborn has stated, "Die wesentliche Erkenntnis, die dem Menschen nach dem Essen von dem verbotenen Baum aufgegangen ist, ist das, . . . dass er nämlich sterben muss."²⁹ But it was more than simply coming to know of his mortality. He knew that he must die for the very reason of his sin and disobedience to God. Thus, ultimately, we come to the basic issue of this entire narrative--death.

In the prohibition God said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the

²⁸Vollborn, "Das Problem des Todes," p. 714.

²⁹Ibid., p. 712. "The essential enlightenment which became man's after the eating of the forbidden, tree is that. . . he must die."

day that you eat of it you shall die" (2:17). A foreshadowing of man's ultimate punishment appears in 3:19b,c, but the pronouncement and execution of the punishment comes at the climax of the narrative.

For a moment, let us reconsider the nature of the two trees. As we have stated earlier, the tree of knowledge is not a tree of death. The fact that Adam's sin has become shared by all of his posterity and has had eternal consequences upon the human race, a certain quality has subjectively attached itself to the tree of knowledge, somewhat like "guilt by association." At no point in Genesis 2 and 3 do we find any indications that the knowledge gained when man ate of the forbidden tree, gave eternal benefits to the human race, or lasting benefits to the first pair. It would seem quite clearly otherwise. Because commentators, such as Dillmann³⁰ and Leupold,³¹ have attached these eternal qualities to the two trees, they must force an assumption into their interpretation of 3:22: "It is assumed that he had not hitherto tasted of the tree of life, although he had not been forbidden it."³² But from our

³⁰August Dillmann, Genesis, trans. Wm. B. Stevenson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), I, 169f.

³¹Herbert Carl Leupold, Exposition of Genesis (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), p. 182.

³²Dillmann, loc. cit.

exegesis we have clearly indicated how the passage suggests otherwise. Thus, to remain in the garden with access to the tree of life would mean life, but expulsion from the garden and the tree of life would mean the opposite--death.

God sent man out of the garden to die as he lived. He expelled man from paradise, but most of all, he shut man away from the tree of life. Thus, man had no further source of life. He began to die the very day that he was separated from the tree of greatest importance--the tree of life.

Thus, as God commanded, ". . . in the day that you eat of it you shall die," so on that very day (ליום היום) God came and executed the punishment upon the man.

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden."

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF DEATH IN GENESIS 2 AND 3

Upon the basis of the foregoing exegetical and theological study into the problem of death in Genesis 2 and 3, the following conclusions may be set forth:

1. Adam was created mortal in his original physical nature.
2. The crux of the entire narrative focuses upon the tree of life.
3. The tree of life was freely accessible to Adam before his sin.
4. Adam's physical organism was maintained and dependent upon the accessibility of the tree of life.
5. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil gave knowledge to man, when he ate of its forbidden fruits, and not death.
6. The fig leaves indicate Adam's knowledge of the impending curse which he has brought upon all of his posterity.
7. God executed the curse of death upon Adam and not the fruits of the tree.
8. The penalty of the law (מרת תמות) was fulfilled on the day of the sin, when God drove Adam from the garden and deprived him of the fruit of the tree of life.

9. Death was Adam's guilt made visible.

Thus, the problem of death in Genesis 2 and 3 is solved when man is understood as created mortal, but is forced to die because of sin. For it is as the apostle has said, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

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