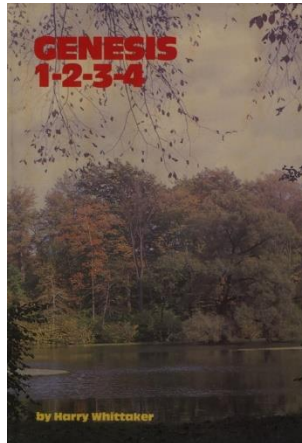


# GENESIS

## 1-2-3-4



by Harry Whittaker

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### **Dedication**

The young people at a West Coast Bible School heard bits and pieces of this exposition. I hope that in days to come they will learn to love and marvel at these wonderful chapters of Holy Scripture.

### **Acknowledgement**

My warmest thanks to Elsie Bramhill the indefatigable, who so efficiently typed and indexed.

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## Foreword

There are those who treat the early chapters of Genesis as though they are mythical survivals of a dim past. The compiler of these comments thinks differently. He is convinced that there are few parts of Holy Scripture more profound, more compressed, more important for good religious comprehension than these. Always there seems to be more to be learned from fresh study of these chapters.

The very compression of the record means that in not a few places more than one interpretation of the same details is possible. This explains why it has been deemed wise to include alternative readings now and then. But even where this has not been done, even when there may appear to be a certain dogmatism or confidence of interpretation, the writer still remains aware of his own fallibility.

The Creation versus Evolution controversy has gone almost without mention. This present author protests that he has not the vivid imagination (nor the gullibility) to take modern evolution theory seriously. On the other hand, he has tremendous confidence in the commentary on Genesis 1-4 which has been provided, more copiously than is usually believed, by the Lord Jesus Christ and the writers of the New Testament.

Finally, an apology for the irritating discontinuities in the text. It would have been possible to paper over most of these cracks, but only at the expense of greater verbosity and with no great increase in lucidity. One of the aims has been conciseness. The text is long enough as it is.

Harry Whittaker

## Commentary on Genesis, Ch. 1

### **1:1 *In the beginning God***

There is no indication here in Genesis, or elsewhere, as to *when* this Beginning was, nor whether any part of the material universe had existed in any form before the time now spoken of. Speculations and theories about long ages of formative development are not wonderfully satisfying or helpful. The fact is: Men simply do not *know* much about Earth's beginning, and regarding *the* Beginning Genesis 1 reveals nothing except that God was there and was in control:

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou didst form the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God" (Ps. 90:2). Here the word "world" (Heb: *tēvel*) is perhaps put for all the rest of the universe besides this earth. It is also worth observing that if

the mountains were made a mere six thousand years ago, this passage loses most of its point. They must be much older than that.

There would seem to be a familiar reference in Heb. 11:3 which, from the order of development of ideas there must surely refer to Gen. 1 or before that:

“Through faith we understand that the worlds (or, ages) were framed (and are still maintained: Gk. perf. tense) by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

The precise meaning here is very uncertain. But some details are easily overlooked: (a) “The word of God” means “the spoken word” - a fairly clear allusion to: “And God said ...” (b) “Of things which do appear” could be read as a masculine, instead of neuter; and the Greek middle voice of the verb supports this, thus giving the meaning: “were not made by those who manifest themselves,” i.e. by angels. If this is correct, the implication seems to be: Angels (Elohim) may have been the medium of creation, but the ultimate plan was framed by the Almighty; and faith believes this.

The Greek perfect tense referred to, and the alternative reading proposed here, both support AV: *worlds*, rather than *ages*. Yet in Heb. 1:2, “ages” is certainly right, for Jesus did not make the worlds, but it is by him that the ages of God’s Purpose have been marked out: his first and second advents and the end of the millenium very emphatically separate off the various phases of the redeeming work of God.

It is not certain that 2 Pet. 3:4 is a reference to the Beginning of Gen. 1:1: “Since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” If the reference is to that, then the argument of these “scoffers” is that all Nature is dominated by an invariable scientific uniformity - the rule of “law”. From the earliest days of human philosophy this has been a tempting interpretation of the God-made world. The way God has framed it almost seems to encourage this outlook.

“Nature and Nature’s laws lay deep in night - God said: Let Newton be - and all was light.”

That familiar couplet glorifies human intellect in a way that Newton himself probably would have resented. Unless kept on a tight leash, the uniformitarianism implied here is an enemy to faith, “Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God” (Ps 55:19).

There is no verse in Gen. 1 which does not proclaim the atheistic uniformitarian a fool. And the sardonic spirit of Ecc. 1:4-13 reinforces that mockery: “This sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith” - as who should say: These “laws” of nature are the toys God has given to His clever children to keep them out of worse mischief.

As already intimated, there is no indication at all *when* the Genesis beginning was. Scientists enjoy making their guesses. Isn’t 30m. years, give or take 5m., a popular estimate for the age of

the earth? Why cannot they resist the temptation to play with this problem? Why are they not content to leave well alone? In this field all is futile speculation.

The Hebrew word *b'rēshith* has been pointed to read: "In a beginning," not "In the beginning." In this the former reading is fully confirmed by the designed allusion in Jn. 1:1: *en archē*, no article.

Thus, "In a beginning" might imply that Gen. 1 is to be read as a series of "beginnings," 1:1 being the first of a sequence, the six "days" of creation; or, it might imply that there had been other earlier "beginnings" inaugurating long geological eras such as the findings of science seem to demand but about which Gen. 1 says nothing.

The rabbinic schools have used up a lot of mental energy in trying to explain why the Torah begins with the letter Beth and not with Aleph. They have calculated that the real beginning of the Torah is in Ex. 20:2, which does begin with Aleph!

It is possible that Heb. 3:4 has a sidelong allusion to this problem, making a play on the fact that Beth in *B'reshith* also means a house: "For every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God."

The words of Genesis could well mean creation in the sense of a new beginning, a fresh start with the raw material God already had on hand. Paul not infrequently uses "create, creation" in just this sense of re-constituting what was already in existence (2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 1:15,16; Rom. 8:20; Eph. 2:10,15; 3:9; 4:24). But of course Paul's usage has reference, in all these places, to the New Creation. But would he have used *ktisis* in this sense, if he had not read Gen. 1 in the same sort of way?

The idea is very popular with many that such a re-creation actually needs to be read into the middle of Gen. 1:1,2, but the Hebrew text certainly does not *require* this.

The name of God here - *Elohim* - is commonly taken to imply the creative activity of angels, the Creator's "mighty ones." This interpretation receives reinforcement from "the spoken word of God" (Heb. 11:3; *rhēma*, not *logos*). For if the creative word was spoken, to whom was it spoken if not to angels? (More on this in comment on 1:26). Certainly angels were present at creation, rejoicing in the work of God (Job 38:7), as they also did when present at the beginning of God's New Creation. Lk. 2:15 (Gk. text) implies that not only shepherds but also angels went to see and rejoice over the baby in the manger.

Isaiah speaks of God "declaring the end from the beginning" (46:10). The words seem to imply that the earliest revelation - Genesis 1 - is also to be read as a prophecy of the entire divine Purpose. The End of Creation in Genesis is a picture of a unique Man and his Bride, without fault and in perfect harmony in a completed uncursed creation.

Time after time the New Testament bids its reader see the redeeming work of Christ as a New Creation of God, picking up the fragments of the fallen cursed world with which Gen. 3 ends and bringing them to a happy ending - redemption through Christ. In many a place the New Testament uses the language of Genesis to illustrate this noble idea.

Thus in the New Testament “the beginning” is often the beginning of the gospel, or the beginning of discipleship or the resurrection of Jesus as the Firstborn of a New Creation; e.g. Acts 11:15; Phil. 4:15; 2 Th. 2:13; Heb. 2:3; Col. 1:18; and especially in John’s gospel and epistles (see *concordance*), was leading to the satisfying idea that Jn. 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word,” is not to be read as *equivalent* to Gen. 1:1, but as a *parallel* to it, with reference to Jesus, the Beginning of the New Creation. (For fuller development of this important idea see “Studies in the Gospels,” H.A.W., chapter 3). Wordsworth expresses it very well thus: “John 1:1 leads us to consider the *analogies* of the creation of Adam and the New Creation in Christ” - but then he spoils it by trying to insist on a *personal* participation in the Mosaic creation by “God the Son.”

The parallel between Genesis 1 and John 1 is made more pointed not only by the impressive passage about Light and Darkness (Jn. 1:5-9) but also by what seems to be a designed sequence of seven days in the first chapter of the Gospel; there, after Day 1 (v. 19-28), the days of that important week are carefully identified: 1:29,35,39,43 and 2:1.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending” (Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13) likewise emphasizes Jesus as the Beginning of the New Creation. The End is the consummation of the great redemptive Purpose in the Second Coming (Mt. 13:49; Heb. 3:6,14; 6:11; 1 Pet. 1:9; Rev. 2:26) and in the ultimate perfecting of everything in this world (1 Cor. 15:24).

In the beginning of all four (five) gospels there is satisfying emphasis on Jesus as the real Beginning of the work of God: Mt. 4:17; Mk. 1:1; Lk. 1:2; 3:23; Acts 1:1. Of these, Lk. 3:23 is bungled in the AV. Instead it should read: “And Jesus himself, about thirty years old, was making a beginning ...”

### **1:1 God created**

The word *bara* is generally recognized as carrying a more specific and expressive idea than *asah*, a more general word, usually rendered “made.” Indeed, *bara* seems to be used exclusively with regard to a *divine* work, something quite new.

Here, in Gen. 1, *bara* comes three times - with reference to creation of heavens and earth (v.1), great whales (v.21), and man (v.27). The second and third of these will be considered later.

After v.1, the heavens are hardly mentioned here. The emphasis is decidedly on *earth*. There is clearly no intention to provide here a cosmogony.

But there is repeated emphasis on the awesome might and wisdom that can bring Creation into being: "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:4,5). "Lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind (the Spirit of Gen. 1:27), and declareth unto man what is his (His?) thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth on the high places of the earth. The Lord, the God of hosts is his name" (Am. 4:13). There is no missing these reminiscences of the Genesis Creation story.

But, remarkably enough, most of the Biblical allusions to Gen. 1:1; using this distinctive word *bara*, lift the Creation idea on to a higher level. For these later men of God the really important idea is *the New Creation*, designed by the wisdom of God to replace the Old Creation which failed and fell into curse. This theme will be found not just to crop up now and then but to dominate the Bible's handling of Genesis 1. A few examples, to illustrate this:

"Thus saith God the Lord, he that created (*bara*) the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it (Gen. 1:11,24); he that giveth breath to the people upon it (Gen. 2:7), and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee (Messiah) in righteousness ..." (Is. 42:5,6).

"I form the light, and create (*bara*) darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. Drop down, ye heavens, from above ... let the earth open ... and bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created (*bara*) it" (Is. 45:7,8). Here is the growth of God's Seed in the earth.

"For thus saith the Lord that created (*bōrē*) the heavens: God himself that formed the earth, and made it; he established it, he created it not in vain (*tohu, bara*; Gen. 1:1a,2a), he formed it to be inhabited" (Is. 45:18).

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind" (Is. 65:17 - followed by allusions to early Genesis in v.20c,22bc,23ab,25b).

"Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment..." (Ps. 102:25,26). Note that the word *bara* is not used here. The reason is clear - it has been assigned to the New Creation: "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be *created* shall praise the Lord" (v.18).

"Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust (Gen. 3:19 - the old creation a failure). Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are *created* (this is the New Creation): The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works (the New Creation, not the old)" (Ps. 104:29-31).

The One who created was God, *Elohim*. The word means "mighty ones." There is a tendency with some to give the word this plural meaning whenever possible, and often when it is not



possible. The fact is that nearly always it is used with a singular verb, and with reference to God Himself.

Then why the plural form? Not, definitely not, as a plural of majesty, for it is doubtful if this usage occurs at all in the Bible. Possibly, as an intensive plural: “the One of great might.” Indeed, this is most likely, for intensive plurals are common enough in the Old Testament. Can it be that the plural is intended to remind readers of angels at work, fulfilling the will of the Lord God? This is possible, as in 1:26, but such passages are relatively few.

What may be very confidently discounted is the notion, popular with many an orthodox commentator, that here *Elohim* refers to creation by the Holy Trinity. Why a plural should be taken to imply three, when it might as easily imply thirty-three, is difficult to understand. Only those desperate for support for an ill-proven idea would fall back on this kind of interpretation.

It is noteworthy, that whereas the New Testament refers only rarely to the material creation being made by God (Acts 17:24; where else?), the same language, transferred to the New Creation, comes fairly frequently. Examples:

- a. “... God, who created all things (in the church) by Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:9). Note: To read here “because of Jesus Christ” is *wrong*.
- b. “For by him (Jesus) were all things created ... all things were created by him and for him” (Col. 1:16). Here, certainly, the New Creation (note v.18).
- c. “For of him (the Father), and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever” (Rom. 11:36). That phrase: “To him” plainly means ‘from the redeemed.’
- d. “These things saith the Amen ... the beginning of the creation of God” (Rev. 3:14).
- e. “For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11). Here reference to anything but the New Creation is utterly out of place.
- f. “New heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:13).

### **1:1 *The heavens and the earth***

Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22), yet he did not bequeath to later generations an Egyptian cosmogony, nor a Babylonian (as from Abraham).

The Hebrew word for ‘heavens’ (*shamayim*) probably, though not certainly, links with *shamah*, meaning (a) desolation, the great empty space of the sky, or (b) astonishment, as *the* sight in Nature which never ceases to put a man in awe. Young’s Concordance meaning - “heaved up things” - can be ignored.

It has to do with the English word, not the Hebrew. *Shamayim* is plural in form, that is, an intensive plural to suggest the greatness of heaven; or dual, with double reference to the sky men can see, and to the unknowable (fourth dimension?) dwelling of God. See also on 1:8.

Once again a key phrase in Gen. 1 is picked up in the rest of Scripture and used with extended meaning.

Ps. 89 has both usages: “the heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them” (v.11). But also: “*Mercy* shall be built up for ever: thy *faithfulness* shalt thou establish in the very heavens (v.2; these key words refer to the covenants of promise - see the rest of the psalm). Yet verse 5 seems to refer to angels celebrating the wonders of God’s purpose.

Isaiah 45 also switches from literal to figurative: “I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (v.12). Yet there is no doubt about the further meaning to these words: “I form the light, and I create darkness ... Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation” (v.7,8).

As a figure of Israel, its Law and Covenant, this expression is much made use of:

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth” (Is. 1:2) is an appeal to Israel as a nation (but can a distinction between rulers and people be insisted on?)

“The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment ... but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished” (Is. 51:6). This foretells the passing of the Mosaic order, and the bringing in of a New Covenant. There is the same idea, in contrast, in Is. 50:3; 49:13. And Ps. 19, with its wonderful picture of the glory of God in the heavens invites an additional interpretation besides the literal by its sudden switch to the glory of God in His Word (cp. also how v.4 is interpreted in Rom. 10:18).

Signs in heaven and earth betoken dire trouble for Israel: “The heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel” (Jl. 3:16). “For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it... and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it” (Jer. 4:28).

Dt. 32:1,2 is another “heavens and earth” passage about Israel which is picked up (from LXX version) in 2 Pet. 3:13 and applied to the “new heavens and earth” of a New Israel in the kingdom. But in that same chapter there seems to be stark *literal* judgement manifest in a *literal* (old) heaven and earth (3:5,7,10,12). The inspired writers swing between literal and figurative with an ease that can be bewildering to a prosaic western mind (which is it in Ps. 50:4-6? in Is. 51:15,16?).

### **1:2 And the earth was without form and void**

The Hebrew words are very expressive. *Tohu* means “waste, a wilderness”, and also “vanity.” It is used several times of the futility of idols; eg. 1 Sam. 12:21; Is. 44:9. *Bohu* (3 occurrences only) means “empty.” So together the words imply a pointless useless chaos. LXX, groping not too successfully for a precise idea, offers “invisible and unprepared.”

Linguistically there is no real justification for insisting that “the earth *became* without form and void,” as though implying the ruin of an earlier civilisation. Only *very* exceptionally does the Hebrew word require “became.”

But Jeremiah’s use of these Genesis words suggests the idea of an ordered creation which has come to ruin: “I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void: and the heavens, and they had no light....” (4:23-26). The prophet is using the Genesis pattern as a picture of how Judah’s ordered civilisation was soon to come to ruin. The same phrase - “emptiness” - in Is. 34:12 has something of the same idea regarding Edom.

Yet in 1 Cor. 14:33 Paul insists that “God is not the author of confusion” (cp. *tohu*). This presents a contradiction with the Genesis picture of a Creator completely in charge of affairs who has nevertheless produced a chaos (in 1:2). But Paul’s present tense: “is”, sets the matter straight. It is as though the apostle is saying: “You believers are part of God’s New Creation in which confusion has no part, even though confusion and curse came on what He fashioned earlier.”

### **1:2 And darkness was upon the face of the deep.**

According to Berosus the ancient Babylonian creation began with Darkness and Water. It is the first of a number of similarities between Genesis and the Babylonian myth. Many, with gusto, have argued for the derivation of the former from the latter - which is silly, for “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” It is much more conceivable that the true tradition represented by Genesis was corrupted into crudity by the Sumerians.

It is not said here that God created this darkness, yet He did: “I form the light, and create darkness” (Is. 45:7). “The day is thine, the night also is thine” (Ps. 74:16). “Thou makest darkness, and it is night” (104:20).

And also in the spiritual world. God has His angels of evil (Ps. 78:49) who do His will as much as the angels of His Providence do. “The prince of the power of the air (*aera* = also, darkness; Eph. 2:2)” is at the Almighty’s beck and call as much as any other. The only alternative to this concept is belief in a personal superhuman Devil.

Yet there is no inconsistency with such statements as: "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5), even though at Sinai and in the crossing of the Red Sea and at the crucifixion He manifested Himself in an awe-inspiring darkness, and will in the judgements of the last days (Ex. 20:21; 14:20; Mt. 27:45; Ps. 18:9,11; Joel 2:2,31).

The unusual word "deep" (*t'hōm*) is either a combination of *tohu-yam*, the wilderness of sea; or it derives from *hum*, which means "a great noise" (e.g. Ps. 55:2; Mic. 2:12). LXX has the word "abyss".

### **1:2 And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.**

In Proverbs 8 the Spirit is personified as Wisdom, represented as a woman because wisdom is a feminine noun in Hebrew:

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old .... When there were no depths, I was brought forth ... While as yet he had not made the earth ... when he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass on the face of the deep (*t'hom*) ..." (8:22-26).

An ancient Phoenician cosmogony (another distorted crib from the tradition of truth) asserts that in the beginning all was brought into being by the Wind and his wife Bohu. Since Hebrew for Spirit is the same as for Wind (cp. 8:1; Ex. 14:21; 15:8,10), there is distinct similarity with Genesis. But clearly in Genesis the correct reading is Spirit, and not wind, in spite of some modern versions. Isaiah 40:12,13 requires such a conclusion. So also the word "moved," for here the idea is that of motion to and fro, even in the sense of vibration. One of its few occurrences reads: "As an eagle ... fluttereth over her young ... (Dt. 32:11). "Passover" is a quite different Hebrew word, but the idea behind it is remarkably similar (see Is. 31:5; Ex. 12:13). The idea of vibration has led some to suggest that spirit = electricity, but this is going further than the text warrants. The Talmud, remarkably enough, explains "moved" with reference not to an eagle but to a dove over its young - thus unconsciously preparing the way for the New Testament account of the beginning of the New Creation in the baptism of Jesus (Mk. 1:10) and in those who belong to his New Creation (Jn. 3:5; Acts 2:2).

### **1:3 And God said...**

This expression comes ten times in this chapter, as though to anticipate the Ten Words at Sinai. Here the first "word of God" brings light. There the first "word" forbids Darkness.

It is not irrelevant to ask: To whom did God say this? And the only possible answer is: The angels, God's ministers in Creation; cp. v.26; Job 38:7.

### **1:3 Let there be Light: and there was Light**

It does not say that Light was *made*. This suggests that the meaning is: Let there be Light *in the earth*, where hitherto there was only darkness.

The problem arises: How could there be Light before the sun (v.16)? Scripture goes further and implies that there will be Light after the sun also (Rev. 22:5).

This suggests, and other Scripture supports, that this Light in v.3 is the Shekinah Glory of God, in contrast with the “natural” light in v.15-18. Consider Ps. 4:6; 27:1; 43:3; 104:2; Is. 2:5; 58:8,10 (the Day of Atonement Glory); 60:1,3,19,20 (with v.1 compare Lk. 2:9); 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Jn. 2:8; 1:5.

Jn. 1:4-9,14, with its palpable reference to Gen. 1, uses the Greek word *phaino*, which in the New Testament normally refers to the Glory of the Lord.

There can be no doubt that in Jn. 1 a parallel with Gen. 1 is being expounded. As light was God’s first great work in that Genesis creation, so also Christ, the Light which shineth in darkness, is the Beginning of God’s New Creation. John’s gospel goes on to tell how the Light shone in the darkness of Judaism, and “the darkness did not overcome,” but the Light did. It is the very nature of light to vanquish darkness.

The idea is picked up in several places by Paul. “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts (the natural darkness!) to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” far more than in the face of Moses (2 Cor. 4:6). “Jesus Christ... abolished death (darkness), and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10).

### **1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.**

This expression: “saw the light” is a strange one - pointless, in fact, unless it carries the idea of inspection of a finished work. If this is correct, then there is the further implication that the light was brought into being by angels, and then approved by the Almighty.

The subject of Light in Scripture is too full and too complex to allow of detailed review here.

But the problem immediately arises: Does light need to be divided from darkness, for where light exists darkness is not possible? The next verse supplies an answer: the division spoken of is an *alternation* of Light and Darkness - Day and Night. Cp. Is. 45:7.

It almost seems as though, right from the start, this word “divided, separated” is demanding a spiritual interpretation of a concise factual account of material creation, for there is a strong New Testament emphasis in this direction: “What fellowship hath light with darkness? ... Christ,

Belial ... wherefore come out from *among* them, and be ye *separate* ..." (2 Cor. 6:14,17 = Gen. 1:4:LXX.) "All things in the New Creation) were made by him (Jesus; literally true!) ... And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness overcame it not... The true Light, which lighteth every man (i.e. all kinds of men), was coming into the world" (Jn. 1:3,5,9).

This New Testament demand for "spiritualising" (a bad word, that) the factual record will prove inescapable all through these early chapters of Genesis.

There is a school of thought which likes to insist that, whatever the specific meaning of a Biblical term in its first occurrence, this may be taken as an infallible pointer to its meaning in every other place throughout the Book. It is a principle which the Bible itself nowhere enunciates. And indeed there are so many palpable exceptions that all real value as a mainstay of interpretation is lost.

Yet this word "divided" provides a cracking example in favour of the idea, for there seems to be hardly an instance where its use does not imply a dividing between light and darkness. It makes a splendid exercise in concordance work. Just a few examples:

- a. Certain of the Gadites "*separated* themselves unto David" during his outlaw days. They forsook Saul (Sheol - no difference in Hebrew), to give loyalty to the Lord's true Anointed; 1 Chr. 12:8.
- b. "*Separate* yourselves from among this congregation" of Korah (Num. 16:21), for these latter were soon to plunge into darkness.
- c. The food laws of Lev. 11 were "*to make a difference* between the unclean and the clean" (v.47), that is, between darkness and light (v.44). Rules which in themselves were rough and ready, and without intrinsic spiritual value, taught Israel the virtue of separateness.
- d. "Your iniquities have *separated* between you and your God" (Is. 59:2). Darkness cannot co-exist with Light (see v.9,10); and God "clothes Himself with Light as with a garment" (Ps. 104:2).

There are many such examples of *badal* (Ni.Hi.) being used in this way.

And so also in a number of New Testament occurrences.

- a. The LXX word for "divided" in Gen. 1:4 comes in only one New Testament passage-the Transfiguration: "As they (Moses and Elijah) *departed* from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here" (Lk. 9:33) - and then the Shekinah Glory came *from* the Law and the Prophets (v.30,31) to associate itself with Jesus and his apostles (v.34). Clearly, Law and Prophets have a lower status.

- b. A cognate word describes Jesus as the high priest who is “*separate* from sinners” (Heb. 7:26).
- c. “What communion hath light with darkness? ... Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye *separate*, saith the Lord” (2 Cor. 6:14,17).
- d. Paul did just this at Ephesus. When some “spake evil of the Way ... he departed from them, and separated the disciples” (Acts 19:9).
- e. “The Word of God (the Bible? Jesus?) divides asunder between soul (what belongs to the natural man) and spirit (the character of the New Man in Christ)” (Heb. 4:12).
- f. Alas, separation and division take place in the wrong way also. At Antioch Peter “separated himself, fearing them of the circumcision” and thus provoked the worthy indignation of Paul (Gal. 2:12).
- g. Much more reprehensible were those whom Jude censured: “they who separate themselves, sensual (soulish, the natural man), having not the Spirit (no true regeneration)” (Jude 19).
- h. The final division between Light and Darkness will come when “the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory,” for then “he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Mt. 25:31,32). All these ideas are implicit in Gen. 1:4.

**1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.**

This Hebrew verb is commonly used for naming someone, and also (just as commonly) for calling out audibly. LXX could have used a word which specifically means the former, but instead it opted for a different word which in the New Testament nearly always has the latter meaning. Then, is there here yet another hint of angels being involved in the work of Creation?

Here (and in v.14) the word “day” is used in the sense of “daylight” by contrast with darkness. In the second half of the verse it means the whole 24 hours. Yet in 2:4 it is used more generally to cover the entire week of Creation. So there is hardly room for dogmatism about any particular usage in other places.

The problem of light before the sun is usually explained with the assumption that, as on a foggy day light percolates through the mist, so also in this primeval time the earth was wrapped in cloud which obscured the sun but yet allowed light to penetrate. It cannot be taken as certain that this is the true explanation.

Wordsworth comments that light is described as being created in this world before the sun to teach foolish men the absurdity of worshipping the sun as the source of light.

The derivation and basic meaning of the Hebrew word for “day” is very dubious. Gesenius links it with a root meaning “heat”. Another suggestion is “stir, busyness.” And the word for “night” most probably derives from the verb describing the howling of wild beasts (at night-time). And these names were given there were no men to stir nor beasts to howl! Remarkable!

**1:5 *And the evening and the morning were the first day.***

The root idea behind “evening” is that of mixture - the mingling of light and darkness? The same word provides the name Arabs, the mingled people.

And the word for “morning” most likely comes from amalgamation of two words signifying “the breaking forth of light.” The night of this first day would, presumably, be the primeval darkness already described in verse 2 - a very long first night?

Evening/morning (and not the reverse order) is the proper view of Day. This is made clear not only by this repetition in Gen. 1 but also by Lev. 23:32: “From even unto even ye shall celebrate your sabbath.”

Paul has a poignant reference to his “night and day in the deep” (2 Cor. 11:25). As he was floating about, hanging on to wreckage (whenever this was), did he find reassurance from his intimate knowledge that in Gen. 1 after an endless first night and day in a seemingly boundless deep, on Day 2 the dry land was made to appear (v.9)?

There is now the endlessly-discussed problem of identification of the Genesis days of creation. So many possibilities have been suggested:

- a. Literal days of 24 hours - perfectly possible, of course, to the omnipotence of the Creator. But this leaves unexplained the existence of fossils and other evidences of an inhabited earth.
- b. Six days of 1000 years each; this on the basis of Ps. 90:4. Here the same difficulty still exists.
- c. Six long undefined epochs. This harmonizes well enough with the “settled conclusions” of geology and other sciences. But then there is the problem of assigning a suitable meaning to: “the evening and the morning were ...”
- d. Six days of divine creative command interspersed with long ages during which the outworking of God’s will took place. This is distinctly possible, but it must be admitted that Gen. 1 hardly reads like this.
- e. Six daily visions revealed to Moses or Adam or some primeval prophet.



The last of these seems to be the most likely.

f. It is surely obvious that if in this Creation account God's omniscience had described to the last detail just how this amazingly complex world, animate and inanimate, came into being, then *no-one* - neither ancient Israelite nor clever sophisticated modern scientist - would have made much sense of it. So God has said in His Word: This is how I want you to think of Creation. This is the concept of origins that is best for you. Be content to think of things as happening like this.'

The Hebrew phrase for "the first day" is, literally, "day one" - different from v.8 etc: "the second day," where the usual ordinals are used. This idiom is picked up in Jn. 20:1 in describing the resurrection of Jesus, "Day One" of the New Creation.

This Hebrew word *echad* is also used idiomatically for something important or special; e.g. 3:22; 19:9 (foremost citizen?); 22:2 (*the* outstanding mountain); 27:38 (the special blessing) etc; there are many such examples.

**1:6,7: "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.**

The Hebrew verb from which "firmament" derives means "to beat metal out flat;" e.g. "they did beat the gold into thin plates" (Ex. 39:3; cp. Num. 16:39; Is. 40:19; Jer. 10:9). It is used also, more generally, in the sense of "spread out;" e.g. Ps. 136:6; Is. 42:5; 44:24, with reference to the earth.

"Firmament," as meaning something solid, has reference to the sky looking like a solid expanse or dome. The idea, without the actual word, is unmistakable in Job 38:18; Pr. 8:28 RV.

The sky is repeatedly described as though it were the firm floor of heaven, above which God is enthroned: "There was under his feet as it were the paved work of a sapphire stone" (Ex. 24:10). This is called "the firmament" in Ez. 1:22-25 - an expanse underneath the heavenly throne, and stretched out over the wings of the cherubim-chariot. In Rev. 4:6 the same appearance is called "a sea of glass in the presence of (not: before) the throne." The idea common to all these passages is that of the unreachable sky as a barrier or separation between God and His world.

Thus "there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1) is a prophecy of abolition of all separation between God and man: "God himself shall dwell with them, and be their God" (21:3).

In the natural sense, there are “lights in the firmament of heaven” (Gen. 1:14) so that “the firmament sheweth his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). “The brightness of the firmament” (Dan. 12:3) is a poetic expression for the sun; it is so interpreted in Mt. 13:43.

The Fifth Day’s work (1:20 RVm) includes birds that “fly on the face of the expanse (firmament) of heaven;” that is, when flying they are seen against the sky.

Yet in 1:6 “firmament” is surely used in a somewhat different sense, with reference to the space between the waters on the surface of the earth and those in suspension in the clouds. Alternatively, the latter waters are the enfolding canopy of water vapour which (as is plausibly supposed) shrouded the entire globe at that time - though indeed there is no scientific evidence pro or con regarding that.

Ps. 150:1 presents an interesting question. Does “Praise him in the firmament of his power” refer to angels or the stars or the birds or to saints now or in a glorious future? The picture itself suggests the first of these; but the context points to one of the last two alternatives.

The phrase: “let it divide ...” is literally: “let it be a dividing of...” or “the dividing” (Massoretic text). Either way, there seems to be implied a gradual or continuous process. Does this support the long-period theory?

A very closely-related word comes in Heb. 7:26, describing Jesus as “separated from sinners.” Here again is a pointed distinction between light and darkness.

The concluding expression: “and it was so” comes, rather remarkably, six times in the creative week; but there are two of these six in Day 3, and none in Day 1. It is an arrangement which calls for explanation.

LXX transfers the phrase from v.7 to v.6, and this seems right, for in all the other instances “and it was so” comes immediately after the divine fiat and before accomplishment of the work is described, as though signifying: “and this is how it happened.”

**1:8: *And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.***

The Hebrew word for Heaven presents a problem, for the only other word it can be linked with means “desolation.” A connection has been involved with an Arabic root meaning “to be high.” If correct, this still leaves the problem as to why *shamaim* should always be plural or dual in form. Is it perhaps possible that two Hebrew words have been concertina-ed. The meaning would then be: “there (are) the waters,” which fits this Genesis context perfectly and also explains the plural.

“Heaven” is used in several senses in Scripture. Besides its most literal meaning: “the sky,” there is, of course, its frequent reference to the dwelling-place of God, and even to the Holy of Holies, as God’s dwelling-place on earth; 1 Kgs. 8:30; Ps. 20:6,2; 11:4; 2 Chr. 30:27; Heb. 7:26. The symbolic sense, that “heavens” = rulers, needs further documentation. It needs better support than a possibly misapplied Is. 1:2.

There are problems about the “evening and morning” rubric, for after its occurrence in v.8, verses 9,10 continue the narrative from v.6,7 about *waters*. Also, the second day is the only one of the six which has no refrain: “And God saw that it was good;” but the third day has it twice over (v. 10,12). This suggests that at some early time a dislocation of the text may have come in. If the second half of v.8 were to be transferred to the end of v. 10, both problems are resolved - the organization of the waters is all concentrated in Day 2, and each of the six days now has its “it was good.”

The two-fold pattern of the six days goes some way to confirm this suggestion:

- |                       |                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Light and Darkness | 4. The lights of Day and Night.    |
| 2. Sea and Sky.       | 5. The creatures of Water and Air. |
| 3. A fertile Earth.   | 6. The creatures of the Land.      |

Orthodox Jews, believing that no kind of corruption has ever overtaken the Hebrew text, concentrate on the Massoretic omission of “God saw that it was good” from Day 2 and make it a rule never to transact any business of importance on a Monday!

**1:9,10. “And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth: and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.”**

It is assumed here (see note on 1:8) that v.8b really belongs at the end of v. 10, thus making v 9,10 part of Day 2.

It seems not unlikely that v. 7 is describing a mighty precipitation of water as a means of bringing into existence the expanse, the “firmament”, between the waters above and those below.

Appropriately, v. 9 describes the precipitated waters now running off to be “gathered into one place,” leaving land exposed. By implication, there is here the formation of mountain ranges. The commentary on Day 2 to be found in several later Scriptures lends support to this idea. From this point of view Psalm 104 (a commentary on Is. 6:3 RVm?) is of fascinating interest:

## ***Psalm 104***

- Day 1      Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment. (This might support the suggestion made regarding 1:3 that the Light was the Shekinah Glory).
- Who maketh the clouds his chariot: who goeth upon the wings of the Spirit. (A reference to the Cherubim Chariot of the Lord, and to 1:2:
- 1:2c      The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters).
- Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire. (In this context it is implied that angels were active in Creation, and that the Light involved also Fire).
- 1:2b      Thou coveredst it (the earth) with the deep as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains. (Are these the waters above the firmament, or the deep before formation of seas?)
- Day 2      At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. (Allusion to the Voice of God: "and God said"? Cp. Ps. 29; Jn. 12:28,29). The mountains rose, the valleys sank down (RVm). (Here is more specific explanation of Gen. 1:9).
- Day 6      Every east of the field.
- Day 5      The fowls of the heaven.
- Day 3,6      Grass for the cattle, and herb for the service of man.
- Day 3      The trees of the Lord ... the cedars of Lebanon, which he
- Day 5      hath planted; where the birds make their nests.
- Day 4      He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.
- Day 1      Thou makest darkness, and it is
- Day 6      night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth ... O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

## ***Creation in other Scriptures***

The work of Day 2 is also delightfully described in Psalm 95:4,5. In the hollow of one divine hand are the mighty deeps filled with the oceans. With the other hand God shapes the dry land into plains and mountains.

So also in Psalm 33:6,7: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made (Gen. 1:1); and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth (Day 4; the Milky Way is the condensation of God's breath on a cold day!). He gathereth the waters together as an heap (the tides?): he layeth up the depth in storehouses (arctic ice-cap?)."

Psalm 136:5-9 is more concise, but in a way more impressive: "Give thanks ... to him that by wisdom made the heavens (Gen 1:1); to him that stretched out the earth above the waters (Day 2); to him that made great lights (Day 4): the sun to rule by day; the moon and the stars to rule by night." But then the Psalm switches abruptly to the other great marvel of God's Creation - the fashioning of Israel as His Chosen Race (v. 10-25; cp. the shape of Ps. 19).

The Book of Job also has impressive pictures of Creation; e.g. chapter 26:7ff: "He hangeth the earth upon nothing (Gen. 1:1). He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds (Day 2). He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it (Day 2; clouds between the earth and God's throne in heaven). He hath compassed the waters with bounds (Day 2), until day and night (Day 1) come to an end. The pillars of heaven tremble (is this the formation of mountains?) ... By his understanding he smiteth through Rahab (Egypt, the crocodile; Day 5). By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens (again, God's breath making the Milky Way?); his hand hath formed the crooked serpent (Day 4; the constellation of Draco, the Snake)."

One more example. Job 38:4ff speaks of earth's creation "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy (angels joining in the creative work). Or who shut up the sea with doors (Day 2)... and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" Here LXX includes what is a palpable reference to the creation of man (Day 6): "Or didst thou take clay of the ground, and form a living creature, and set him with the power of speech upon the earth?" (v. 14).

From these impressive passages two important conclusions are to be remembered:

1. The Genesis record was familiar to later writers. They are content to re-state in superb poetry what they have learned there. Hardly any additional details creep in.
2. There is not the slightest hint of what today would be called Science. Throughout, *God* is in control. It is *His* work. *He* did it - and *He* still does.

A rather remarkable secondary meaning of Gen. 1:9,10 positively insists on having consideration. In plenty of places where a figurative meaning is clearly intended Seas stand for Gentile nations; e.g. Ps. 65:7; 89:9; 93:3,4; Is. 5:30; 17:12; Jer. 6:22,23. It is an idea which leads

on to luminous interpretations in a fair number of other passages; e.g. Is. 60:5; Jer. 31:35; Dan. 7:2,3; Rev. 13:1; 11:7; 10:2; Mt. 21:21; Lk. 17:6; Jn. 6:19; Jude 13.

Now consider other details:

- a. "Let the waters be gathered together." The Hebrew could be pointed to read: "Let the waters gather together." The verb, a very common one, *very* frequently means "to wait upon God," anticipating His action or looking for His blessing.
- b. "Unto one place." This Hebrew word *maqōm* nearly always means "a holy place, a sanctuary, an altar." Is the word used here because "the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters"? A prophecy of the future of the nations?
- c. "The waters under heaven" (literally, from under) suggests a figure of uncontrolled Gentile nations away from God who are now disciplined and subdued.
- d. "Earth" (*eretz*) is also, in hundreds of places, "the Land (of Israel)."
- e. "Let the dry land appear" is, strictly, "let it be seen" - by whom? To this question the only intelligible answer is: By angels. Thus there is here a further hint of angels at work in Creation - and also in the consummation of the New Creation.

Thus, somewhat unexpectedly, there is presented a symbolic prophecy of the nations of the world instructed and redeemed, with the religion of Israel as the binding influence, bringing them together to one place (Is. 2:3).

Now consider Psalm 24:1,2:

"The earth (*eretz*) is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." Verse 2 is not true in the world of nature. But in the world of symbol it speaks eloquently of the reign of God established. The King of Glory has come in, after battle, to his holy city.

**1:11-13 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.**

Of course, grass and food crops must come before animals and men: "He caused grass to grow for the cattle (so God does take care for oxen!) and herb for the service of man ... food out of the earth" (Ps. 104:14). And the herb came before the seed (the hen before the egg!) "Each after his kind" establishes the principle for all growing things and living creatures, that there is

to be no over-stepping the bounds of the species. Evolutionists know right well that this is true, but have to pretend that it is not.

Grass is a commonplace symbol for the brevity and worthlessness of human life: “All flesh (*all of it!*), and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit (wind!) of the Lord bloweth upon it... but the word of our God (“and God said”) shall stand for ever” (Is. 40:6-8). James quotes this trenchant basic truth, interpreting “goodliness” as riches (1:10,11). Peter also (1 Pet. 1:23-25), but he interprets the Word of God as Jesus “who lives and abides for ever.” Doubtless Isaiah meant this, for his Hebrew could read: “the Word of our God shall rise up (in resurrection) for ever.”

James’s emphasis on grass being shrivelled by the sun is derived from his Lord’s teaching: “If God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven (the fierce heat of summer), shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” (Mt. 6:30). If a man has only a little faith he qualifies for a better fate than that of the grass. The vivid picture is drawn from Ps. 103:15: “As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone: and the place thereof knoweth it no more.”

Specially are evildoers likened unto grass (Ps. 37:2; 92:7; Is. 51:12).

By contrast with this emphasis on human weakness, frailty, and mortality, the fruit-bearing tree is a figure of the man with whom God is well-pleased. The man who eschews evil associations is “like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Ps. 1:3).

Again, “the fruit of the righteous is (grows on?) a tree of life” (Pr. 11:30).

Jesus chose his disciples that they should “go and bring forth fruit (converts), and that their joy should be full” (Jn. 15:16).

Paul looked to seeing God so influencing the generosity of his Corinthian converts as to “increase the fruits of their righteousness” (2 Cor. 9:10).

And the Lord Jesus was careful to harness the principle of the permanence of the species to the spiritual life also: “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Mt. 7:17,18).

**1:14,15: And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.**

In Day 1 God had already “divided the light from the darkness,” and now the lights of heaven were appointed for this purpose. The suggestion was made earlier (see on v. 3) that the first Light was the Shekinah Glory. Now, that function of illumination is taken over by created lights. Some support for this idea comes from the final picture of redemption in the Apocalypse: “The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon: for the Glory of God did lighten it” (so also Is. 60:19,20). As in so many other respects at the end of Revelation, there is reversion to God’s arrangement at the Beginning.

It should be noted also that there is a distinction in the Hebrew words. In v 3,4 “light” is *or*; in v. 14-16 “lights” is *m’ōrōth*.

The “scientific” approach to Gen. 1 poses the problem: How is it that the heavenly bodies appear only on Day 4, when it is a pretty firm astrophysical conclusion that the earth is no older than the sun, but (in a sense) “younger” than it? In answer the conjecture has been made that the “great lights” were there from the beginning but not visible in the sky because the earth was, in its early phases, shrouded in mist. But this is conjecture - a sop to the scientists. There is no obligation to find an answer to all the questions which a reading of Gen. 1 provokes.

It is easy to see in what way sun and moon are “for days, and years.” But how are they for “signs”? Certainly not for God’s people to worship, nor for omens or astrological prognostication. Dt. 4:19 sardonically emphasizes that for such purposes God has handed over the heavenly bodies to the Gentiles. God’s Israel (and His New Israel!) are to keep away from such superstition.

Is. 47:13b: “Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.”

Yet the Sun is appointed as a superb figure of the Messiah. Psalm 19 proposes the Sun in the heavens as a type of Messiah set in the teaching of the Scriptures: “In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chambers, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” The setting and rising of the sun is to be seen as a constant reminder of Messiah’s death and resurrection. So also, just as vividly, in 2 Sam. 23:4; Mal. 4:1-3.

The idea that the sun represents ruling powers, the moon ecclesiastical powers, and the stars sundry lesser authorities has been too uncritically adopted. For the second of these items there is *NO* Bible evidence whatever; and the third is so vague as to be useless.

On the other hand there is abundant evidence that sun, moon and stars are to be read as figurative of Israel, with a correspondence between the twelve signs of the Zodiac and the twelve tribes of Israel. Of these the four main signs are not difficult to identify from Scripture:



Taurus (the Bull):

Ephraim (Dt. 33:17)

Leo (the Lion):

Judah (Gen. 49:5; Rev. 5:5)

Aquila (the Eagle) with Scorpio (the Serpent): Dan (Gen. 49:17)

Aquarius (the Man):

Reuben (Dt. 33:6)

More generally, consider Jer. 31:35,36; Gen. 37:9,10; Joel 2:10; 3:15; Gen. 22:17; Dan. 8:10; Am. 8:9; Is. 30:26; and apply to Mt. 24:29; Lk. 21:25 (= Jer. 31:35); Rev. 6:12; 8:12. In his "Astronomy of the Bible" Maunder develops this star symbolism very persuasively.

Very often the word "sign" is used with reference to a miracle with a meaning (e.g. 2 Kgs. 19:29). This leaves room for the possibility of signs in the sky in the Last Days. But let it be remembered that "signs are for them that believe not, not for them that believe" (1 Cor. 14:22).

In Phil. 2:15 Paul appropriates this symbolism to the New Israel: "a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights (luminaries) in the world."

The great lights of heaven are for "seasons" also. This word *mo'ed*, from a Hebrew root meaning "to fix", almost always refers to feasts and other religious appointments of the Lord. In this respect the moon is dominant, for all the religious observances of Israel were decided (fixed) by phases of the moon: "He appointed the moon for seasons" (Ps. 104:19). In the sense of the four seasons of the year, this is not true; they are marked out by the sun. But in the religious sense just indicated the words are precisely correct. *Mo'ed* merits a good deal of concordance investigation.

Three functions of the great lights are indicated:

1. To divide the day from the night. There is a quaint rabbinic comment: "God said, The night is required for studying the Torah, for people are quiet then and one can well study (i.e. without interruption)."
2. To fix the year and the religious calendar.
3. "To give light upon the earth - as though the earth is unique and all-important.

This last item is eloquently developed in Ps. 19:1-4: "The heavens declare the glory of God ... Day unto day uttereth speech (about his glory), and night unto night sheweth knowledge (of his handiwork). There is no speech or language (to *listen* to), their voice is not heard. Their line (their simple teaching; Is. 28:10) is gone out into all the earth, and their spoken words (of his praise and purpose) to the end of the world." Paul says the last sentence is a prophecy of the

preaching of the gospel (Rom. 10:18). The psalm continues, in the next two verses, with a prophecy of Messiah.

**1:16-19 *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from darkness: and God saw that it was good.***

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

These two great lights are specially mentioned in Psalm 136:7-9 as mighty works of God, and then the psalm goes on immediately to recite God's mighty acts in saving and guiding Israel, thus providing incidental support for the symbolism expounded under v. 14,15.

The Hebrew text seems to favour the reading: "two of the great lights," as though implying knowledge of other *great* lights - the stars.

"And the stars" seems to come in as a superb afterthought. Yet consider what is comprehended in that very brief phrase! Again, there is emphasis on the earth as the centre of God's Creation. All is done for this Earth and the life on it.

Yet for all there are so many heavenly bodies and they are spoken of here so casually, the omnipotence of God controls each separate one, right to the furthest recesses of space - and there is recent claim of identification of a quasar at a distance of 13,000 million light years, and one light-second is seven times the circumference of the earth. "He bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his power" (Is. 40:26).

No wonder that David, considering God's heavens, gasped at the contrast: "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. 8:3-5).

The Babylonian Marduk epic of creation, from which (say many moderns) the Genesis record is derived, has a good deal to say about this Day 4 of Creation because, of course, the Babylonian religion was entirely astrological. Moses bluntly warns against this with his almost curt phrase: "and the stars."

Here the narrative reads almost as though God made the great lights and *then* appointed that they should fulfil the functions now assigned to them.

**1:20 *“And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.”***

Here is the first occurrence of “living soul.” The phrase means any living creature. Here, fishes; in v.30, all living things; in 2:7, man.

Jacob applied the figure of fishes multiplying to foretell the prosperity of Joseph’s descendants, thus foreshadowing a multitude of Gentiles in the gospel net: “Let them grow (lit: swarm as fishes; AVmg.) into a multitude ... a multitude of nations” (48:16,19), which last phrase Paul applies to “the fulness of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:25).

The same idea is continued in the Lord’s two fishing miracles. The first of these (Lk. 5:1ff) is to be interpreted in its symbolism of the great catch of all kinds of fishes in the gospel net. The latter, coming after the resurrection, prefigures the ultimate “catch” of “great fishes” brought to Christ in the new day when the disciples cease from their fishing. In both miracles all the details need to be examined for special significance.

Some commentators try to insist that this verse 20 teaches the origin of birds from the water. In this they may be influenced by (a) the Babylonian myth which has great flying creatures emerging from the waters; (b) the evolution dogma that birds did so originate. However such a conclusion is not readily traceable in the text even if “and” be read as “even”.

The Hebrew is literally: “And let bird (collective noun) fly upon the earth upon the face of the firmament of the heavens.” This is clearly the language of appearance - birds seen flying against the backcloth of the sky. So perhaps such other verses as v.14 are also to be read as the language of appearance.

**1:21: *“And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and a every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.”***

The Hebrew word *tanninim* does not refer to whales exclusively but covers all large creatures associated with the water; e.g. Job 40:15ff: the hippopotamus; 41:1ff: the crocodile. These great creatures are repeatedly presented as symbols of impressive human empires. In Is. 27:1: Assyria and Egypt. In 51:9, Egypt. In Jer. 51:34, Babylon. In Ps. 74:13, Egypt (probably). In Ps. 8:8 these creatures are less directly referred to as “whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea” (but why this phrase when the sea is utterly trackless, ocean currents? fish migrations?) All of these are to be subject to Messiah, “the Son of man” (v.4-6).

The 153 “great fishes” in the last sign of John’s gospel (21:11) seem to be a designed allusion to this fifth day of Creation, and help to explain why the word *bara’* should be used, somewhat unexpectedly, here; for, unquestionably, Jn 21:1-14 foreshadows the New Creation when Christ appears again to his disciples. (On this, see “He is risen indeed,” ch.16.)

Ps. 104:26 is intriguing, with its possible meaning: “leviathan, whom thou hast formed to play with him” - a lovely picture of angels playing games with mighty sea creatures, and with the empires they symbolize!

The only New Testament reference is to Jonah’s whale (Mt. 12:40), a figure of the strongest empire of all, the last enemy to be destroyed.

These creatures, like all the rest, are to multiply, but only “after their kind.” Here is laid down the continuing law of life on earth - the permanence of the species. Here are boundaries which no amount of scientific research and contrivance can overpass. All cross-breeds go sterile or revert to type. So evolution is an impossibility.

**1:22,23 *“And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.*”**

There is a blessing on all living creatures, that they might multiply; but no blessing on the heavenly bodies. Already there are enough of them!

**1:24,25 *“And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*”**

This creation of land creatures is summarised under three headings:

- (a) Cattle - animals suitable for domestication; the Hebrew word derives from a root meaning “dumb”. In the plural form (an intensive plural surely, meaning “the great dumb beast”); *behemoth* is used in Job 40:15ff to describe the hippopotamus.
- (b) Creeping things. These “creepy-crawlies” are the creatures with many legs. Basically the Hebrew word means “trampler.”
- (c) Beasts of the earth; that is, the vast number of animals that live wild and are normally untameable.

A problem arises as to the different order of these classes, as listed in these two verses. It is a problem which is accentuated by attention to v. 26,28,30 - and also 2:4ab. There is no known explanation of these variants.

These verses present other problems also.

“Let the earth bring forth” is followed by “And God made ...” Are these two ways of saying the same thing? Or is it that first the creatures were fashioned and thereafter the process of generation on the earth took over? But if so, why the unexpected order?

Also, by contrast with v. 22,28, there is no divine blessing on their continuing to multiply. For what reason should there be such an omission? Is it just taken for granted here?

The question has also been raised as to whether Day 3 included the growth of poisonous plants and, in Day 5, the creation of carnivorous beasts preying on each other. This last is a considerable question, for a vast proportion of nature, from the smallest insects to the largest beasts, seems to involve predatorial needs and instincts.

The prophetic pictures of Paradise restored (e.g. Is. 11:6-9; 65:25) suggests that the present order in which one species preys on another is the result of curse and degeneration from a more idyllic system. If it be argued (as it could be) that Isaiah’s prophetic pictures are symbolic, then can it not also be argued that a symbol which has no factual reality behind it is evacuated of meaning?

**1:26: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”**

Here the word “man” is singular, not because only one man was being made (for it was the Almighty’s intention that man should multiply), but because such a singular is the Hebrew way of expressing the collective idea; e.g. “the fruit tree” (v. 11) means ‘all kinds of fruit trees;’ compare also Gen. 5:2.

The Hebrew word for “man” - *adam* - has unmistakable links with a variety of other words in the Old Testament: *adamah*, the red ground, the clay soil, as distinct from black alluvium; *adōm*, red; *Edom*, the red man living in the country of red rock; *dam*, blood etc.

The words “image” and “likeness” have a variety of very suggestive associations, especially in the New Testament:

- (a) “Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew” (Ps. 39:6; literally: “in an image”, of his own devising? or in an image not of his Creator but of his fallen forefather? “Adam begat a son in *his own* likeness, after *his* image” (5:3). Likeness to Elohim must not be over-stressed at the expense of man’s kinship with the beasts. He was made out of dust on the same day as they; like theirs, his “multiplying” was blessed; and he was appointed the same food (v. 29,30). At the same time, “in our image” utterly denies man’s evolution from a lower state.
- (b) When Jesus was challenged about the problem of paying tribute to Caesar, it was Caesar’s coin that gave the decisive answer: “Whose is this *image*? - Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s” (Mt. 22:20). Then, if man is stamped

with the image and likeness of God must he not give himself back to God, wholly, fully, and without reserve? Compare Ps. 100:3: "It is he that hath made us, and we are his" (this is how the Hebrew text should read; King James's men missed the confusion here between *lo* and *lo'* in Hebrew).

- (c) "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his Head (i.e. Christ) - For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. 7:4,7). But how untrue it is that any man - except Christ! - is the image and glory of God. Only because the believer is in Christ and has the great worth of Christ imputed to himself can these words of Paul be said to have any real truth.
- (d) "As we have borne the image of the earthy, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49). This is the last of a sequence of antitheses:

The first Adam	The last Adam
A living soul	A quickening spirit.
First, that which is natural.	Afterward, that which is spiritual.
The first man is of the earth, earthy.	The second man is the Lord from heaven.
As we have borne the image of the earthy ...	We shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Here the second column plainly refers to Christ, but not to Christ in the days of his flesh. Every detail requires reference to the Lord returning in power.

About the first column there is some ambiguity. Does it refer to the fallen Adam and those who inherit his characteristics? Or is it to be read with reference to *Christ* as a member of this fallen race? In favour of this latter reading is the consideration that by no means all who bear the image of the earthy Adam will come to bear the image of the heavenly Lord. But all who truly bear the image of the earthy Christ (the Lord in his human weakness) will assuredly be made like him in his glory.

- (e) "The light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4) presents the Lord as the beginning of a New Creation. The ensuing reference to "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (v. 6) encourages the idea that as heavenly glory was seen in the face of the Lord on more than one occasion during his ministry, so also the first Adam's intimate association with angels and the glory of his Creator would mean that in *his* face also was a radiant reflected glory, only to be lost through disobedience.

- (f) There is another unmistakeable allusion to Genesis 1 when Christ is described in Col. 1:15 as the Beginning of a New Creation: "He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all (the New) Creation." The rest of that complex passage is consonant with this allusion, but further exposition of it is too far away from the present topic.
- (g) Just as fallen Adam begat sons "in his own likeness, after his image" (5:3), so also Christ, the second Adam: "Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10).
- (h) Rev. 13:14,15 has a superb dramatic antithesis to the foregoing. Men make an image of the Beast, the false Christ. And those who do not worship this image are slain.
- (i) On Mars' Hill Paul could hardly quote Genesis as the authority for his message, for his intellectual and learned audience knew nothing of the Hebrew Scriptures. But it is easy to trace the revealed truth of Genesis 1 as the backbone of part of that noble oration: "God that made the world and all things therein - giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one (man) all nations of men - that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him - for in him we live, and move, and have our being - we are the offspring of God . . ." (Acts 17:24-29).

It is difficult to be sure just what difference of meaning is to be understood between the words "image" (*tzélem*) and "like-ness" (*d'muth*), for they seem to be used interchangeably; e.g. 1:26; 5:3. There is, apparently, a difference of emphasis in the prepositions, but although this distinction is not too clear in the Hebrew text, the intention in the New Testament allusions is not to be mistaken (as will be seen by and by). Thus, anticipating the trend of passages to be examined, "in our image" would appear to refer to physical resemblance, and "after our likeness" to imply growth into a spiritual imitation of the divine character.

- (a) The mordant difference between 1:26 and 5:3 is caustically summed up in Ecc. 7:29: "God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."
- (b) Another biting contrast with 1:26 is in Ps. 58:3,4: "The wicked go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is after the likeness of a serpent." Here three separate phrases look back to Genesis.
- (c) "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Is. 40:18). Then follows a withering exposure of how men prefer to produce an imitation of God - not in their own characters (the intention expressed in Genesis), but by making a debasing graven image. God must be content to be made like fallen man in his perversity and sin! "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Ps. 50:21). "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an *image* made *like* to corruptible man" (Rom. 1:23). Paul has both words here. Another man's perverted idea of the imitation of God was to make himself into a brutal despot over all the world that he knew. Said the king of Babylon: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Is. 14:14).

- (d) Yet even the angels of heaven fail in their imitation of the Almighty: "Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?" (Ps. 89:6). "Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight" (Job 15:15 and context).
- (e) Nevertheless the ideal is set before frail mortal man: "Put ye on *the new man*, which *after God is created* in righteousness and holiness of *truth*." The Genesis background to these words is not to be missed - and also in the context: "Put off ... the old man which is corrupt according the *deceitful lusts*. ... put away *lying* ... neither give place to *the devil*" (Eph. 4:22-27).
- (f) James seems to make very inappropriate appropriation of God's words in Genesis: "With the tongue curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God" (3:9). But when it is realised that the apostle writes concerning strife in the ecclesia amongst men who are supposed to be newborn into the likeness of God in Christ, the words are apt enough.
- (g) The reaction of men of Lystra to the message and marvels of Paul and Barnabas is usually referred to a local legend about a visitation of Zeus and Hermes: "The gods are come down to us in the *likeness* of men." But the context encourages a belief that Paul had been preaching the true story of Creation: "The living God which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein - he gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:11,15,17).
- (h) In several impressive passages Paul underlines that the only way in which fallen man can be made after the likeness of God is through the Son of God being "made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7 - at least four other allusions to Genesis in the immediate context!). "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3).

The plural verb: "Let us make", is the Trinitarian's vain attempt to get to first base. Why should this be read as implying three and not more? John Calvin, himself a rigid Trinitarian, had to admit: "From this place many Christians infer the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead, but I fear the argument is not valid." It might surely be argued more cogently that Man is a trinity, for the next verse uses the word "create" three times regarding him!

That plural: "Let us make," has been explained in various other ways. A great favourite - the royal "we" - is quite without Bible support. Jewish exposition - Philo, Targum, Josephus, Rashi - has always been in favour of reference to angels co-operating with the Almighty in the great work, and there is no lack of evidence in support of this:

- (a) "The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (3:22).
- (b) "Let us go down, and there confound their language" (11:7).



(c) "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us (the seraphim)?" (Is. 6:8).

The picture of heavenly counsel and co-operation, in 1 Kgs. 22:19ff.

It is true that "And God said" uses a singular verb, but this is quite in harmony with items (c) (d) just mentioned.

It is not to be supposed that the divine name Elohim *normally* means angels, God's mighty ones, for in most places it is simply an intensive plural for "The Mighty One" (such intensive plurals are common in the Old Testament). But there are some instances worth noting:

(a) "Thou madest him a little lower than (the) Elohim" (Ps. 8:5) is certainly given reference to angels in Heb. 2:8.

(b) "As a prince hast thou had power with Elohim" (Jacob's wrestling with the angel; Gen. 32:28). "I have seen Elohim face to face" (32:30).

(c) "She (Hagar) called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me" (Gen. 16:13).

That angels were involved in the work of Creation is intimated in a number of places. Some in the list now given have already been mentioned incidentally.

(a) "And God *said*...", implies communication - with whom? So also: "God called . . .," not "God named".

(b) "Let the dry land be seen ..." (v.9). Seen by whom?

(c) "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth - when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God (Dan. 10:6) shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7).

(d) "Praise ye him, all ye his angels" (Ps. 148:2), coming at the beginning of a long recapitulation of Genesis 1, implies angels both working and praising.

(e) The first half of Ps. 104 has copious references to the Creation. Almost at the beginning there is this: "Who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire: who laid the foundations of the earth ..." (v. 4,5), as though implying angelic participation.

Over against these hints are the explicit declarations: "I am the Lord - that stretcheth forth the heavens above; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself" (Is. 44:24). "With whom took he counsel?" (40:14). But these statements are readily explained by their context: The Almighty needed no co-operation from the futile gods of the Gentile nations. It is a deliberate repudiation of the creation myths centering round Assyrian and Babylonian deities.

**1:26: *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*”**

Here the text does not include “over all the beasts of the earth,” but has “over all the earth.” The Syriac text has the former reading. But it may be that “over all the earth” was intended to be read commonsensically as meaning just that (Ps. 8:7). It is a detail of relatively small importance, except perhaps as reflecting on the possibility of textual corruption (see on v.8).

Man’s dominion over the rest of Creation was not intended to be a reign of terror, but the Almighty foresaw (9:2) that because of man’s fallen nature that is what it would become. Next to man’s wholesale corruption and destruction of his fellows, the devastation of the world of nature has become one of the greatest of man-made evils (Jas. 3:7 is a very mild statement).

As a result of the Fall, the true fulfilment of this divine mandate devolves on Christ, the true Son of man: “Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thine hands: thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea” (Ps. 8:5-8). Messianic fulfilment is insisted on in Heb. 2:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:27,28.

During the Lord’s ministry there were clear tokens of his qualification to fulfil this Scripture. In his cleansing of the temple he asserted his authority over not only men of wealth (Ps. 49:6,7,12,14) but also over sheep and oxen and birds (Jn. 2:14,15; Mt. 21:7) - and other dumb beasts (Mk. 5:13); in the wilderness, over wild beasts also (Mk. 1:13); in his miracles of plentiful catches (Lk. 5:6; Jn. 21:6), and, in his provision of the atonement shekel (Mt. 17:27), over the fish of the sea; walking on the water (Mt. 14:25,26) he was at ease in the paths of the sea; he was even the master of greater than the greatest whales (Mt. 12:40); serpents and scorpions he could give into the hand of unconfident disciples (Lk. 10:19,21).

Payne Smith’s Genesis contribution in the Ellicott Commentary is a poor affair, but the following is worth quoting:

“There is in this first book a vast array of figures, types, indications, yearnings, hopes, fears, promises and express predictions, which advance on words like an ever-deepening river, and when they all find a logical fulfilment in one way, the conclusion is that that fulfilment is not only true, but was intended.”

**1:27 *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.***

The repetitious phrasing here - "created ... in his image" - seems designed to emphasize something more than physical resemblance to angels. It is intended surely to stress also the spiritual possibilities of this latest creation of God. The same thing is underlined, too, by the contrast between "let the earth bring forth ... cattle etc." (v.24) and the repeated "God created" (v.26,27). Very evidently, even if it were possible to read the evolution of the lower orders into the record up to this point, the marked change of phrasing here disallows such a possibility regarding man.

South has an admirable comment on man as he was first made and as he is now: "We may collect the excellence of the understanding *then* (that is, of the first man) by the glorious remainders of it now, and guess at the stateliness of the building by the magnificence of its ruins ... And certainly that must needs have been very glorious, the decays of which are so admirable. He that is comely when old and decrepit, surely was very beautiful when he was young! An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam; and Athens but the rudiments of Paradise."

And yet the creation of man is assigned to the same day as the creation of the beasts; and whereas it is said about them "and God saw that it was good," it is not so said about man! - presumably because of what was, from the first, possible in his experience but not in theirs: the Fall!

With the characteristic ability of the moderns for getting things the wrong way round, the Century Bible observes:

"In order to enhance the importance of the creative act and the dignity of man, God invites the co-operation of His heavenly ministers in this supreme work."

But of course, as has been seen already, the angels were busy in Creation from the beginning. And here there comes in a possible explanation of the not inconsiderable finds by palaeontologists of remains of earlier man-like beings - Cro-Magnon man, and so on. It seems unlikely, because of physiological differences and indications of a greater age than the human race, that these are genuine ancestors of man.

But Scripture teaches that the angels, although immortal, have certain limitations in their physical and mental powers (Gen. 32:26; 22:12; 18:21; 2:2,3; Ex. 31:17; 23:12; Dan. 10:13; 12:6; 8:13; 9:21 RVm; Zech. 1:12; Mt. 24:36; 1 Cor. 4:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:12; Eph. 3:10; Lk. 19:25; Job 4:18; 15:15; 1:9,10; 38:7).

It is consistent with this teaching about angels to assume that in Creation they would need to *learn* their job, and would by degrees work up to higher standards of accomplishment. Hence

earlier less suitable man-forms (and indeed of much else in Creation). This seems to be a possibility; but only the foolish would feel justified in dogmatism regarding it.

Remarkably, the phrase: "male and female created he them," is used about the human race, but not about the lower creatures. Can it be that this is said only about man because the propagative union of the animals is not marriage as God sees and designs it regarding man and woman? Yet in the story of the Flood this detail is repeated regarding the creatures (7:3,9,16) - another indication that fallen man has brought himself nearer to the level of the beasts?

It is not difficult to see why the Hebrew word for "female" should be cognate with "belly" and possibly the word for "pierce." But why should "male" be practically identical with the word for "remember"?

In his doctrine of marriage Jesus quoted this Genesis passage as the unimpugnable foundation: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female?" - the point of the argument being that the words "male" and "female" are singular; then if at first God made only one man and one woman, did He intend divorce to be part of that social order?

Malachi, inveighing against a fast-and-loose attitude to marriage, used the same argument from Genesis: "Yet is she ... the wife of thy covenant. And did not he (the Almighty) make (husband and wife) one? ... And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed" (2:14,15). Alas, in so many instances, the broken family practically guarantees an ungodly seed.

**1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.**

In modern English, the word "bless" whilst palpably a good word is very elusive of definition. In the Old Testament there are three main ideas:

- a. Fruitfulness and increase, emphasized here by "Be fruitful and multiply." In this sense "bless" comes often in the Promises to the Fathers; e.g. Gen. 12:2; 17:16; 24:1,35; 26:12; and especially 22:17; 28:3; Jer. 23:3 RV. In the natural sense: Dt. 15:4,6,10,14,18. When Jesus blessed the loaves and fishes they were multiplied (Mt. 14:19). Mary, with her baby, was blessed as the one who should herself enjoy a large family and in due time a much larger spiritual family (Lk. 1:42). Is there a similar meaning in Eph. 1:3? And in Mt. 26:26 is the emphasis to go on the forgiveness of sins (as in v.28 and (b) here), or is the Lord's prayer of blessing an indirect instruction to succeeding generations of the need for constant repetition of this sacrament?
- b. The forgiveness of sins, and the happiness this brings; Ps. 62:4; 109:28; 118:26. The great promise to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed" (22:18) is

expounded by both Peter and Paul as meaning the forgiveness of sins: Acts 3:26; Gal. 3:26; Gal. 3:8 (“justify”!). See also this meaning in 1 Cor. 4:12; 10:16; 1 Pet. 3:9.

c. Ascribing to God all such benefits, as coming from Him. See concordance for an abundance of examples, especially in the Psalms; e.g. 103:1.

“Be fruitful and multiply” was repeated in Gen. 9:1,7 when creation and the human race started again after the Flood. But the real force of these words belongs to the New Creation: Acts 6:1,7; Is. 51:2,3. But all through history men have perverted this natural fertility. Itself a created thing, they have made it a god, the deity of many a foul religion - and not least in the 20th century.

Man’s dominion over the lower creation has been signified not only by his power to slay but also by his power to tame. But, James adds (3:7,8), in the New Creation there is one animal that no one can tame, until Messiah comes; the wayward undisciplined teacher in the ecclesia (note 3:1 RV, 13-18). But this does not mean that in the New Creation no effort should be made to restrain this untamable force.

***1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.***

There are two noteworthy omissions here. Grasses, the third category of growing things mentioned in v. 11, and all kinds of flesh. It has been argued from the emphasis on man’s dominion (v.28) that animal flesh may be inferred as part of human food, but this seems doubtful. Remarkably, the next verse fails to mention seeds and fruit as being food for birds and animals. If these can be taken for granted, then why not flesh for man? On the other hand it may be that after the Fall there was a general change in the eating habits of all living things, men turning to flesh, birds to seeds and fruit, and all nature becoming red in tooth and claw, predatory on other species. Not enough is told about these things to build up a clear picture.

The words “I have given you” plainly imply instruction of the first pair by the angels.

And Paul’s allusion to this place becomes the ground for an exhortation that, since God gave last year’s seed for this year’s sowing and its ensuing abundant harvest, the man of faith, confidently depending on God’s generosity for the future, will emulate his Maker’s kindness by his generosity to others: “Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness” (2 Cor. 9:10).

One writer has observed that the foods assigned for man mostly need preparation, and thus by divine sign there has come into being the family meal and the family spirit inseparable from it.

It makes an interesting question whether “every tree” specified here was intended at first to include the two special trees (2:9), or was the prohibition in 2:17 an exception brought in later and only made necessary because of the special planting of a special garden in Eden?

The word “meat” in this passage is, of course, old English for “food.” The LXX word here is that used by Jesus in John 6:27: “Labour not for the food which perisheth, but for that food which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you” - fruit of the Tree on which he was crucified.

**1:30 *“And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.*”**

There is no mention here of cattle or fishes. The former are doubtless intended to be included with “every beast of the earth,” although v.24 makes a distinction. Are fishes not mentioned because their food was unknown to man or of little concern to him?

All living things are spoken of as “soul of life.” This word *nephesh*, one of the commonest in the Old Testament, means “a principle or faculty common to animals and man, the animal life” (Century Bible). Its different shades of meaning all share this main idea. It might be the life of a man (1:24,30; 2:7,19), by contrast with a soul of death (i.e. a corpse; Num. 6:6); the appetites and thinking of the natural man (Is. 29:8; Num. 11:6; Pr. 25:25; Job 24:12; 6:11); self (Ps. 3:3; 9:4); any kind of animal or living thing (Gen. 2:19; 9:10).

“I have given” (AV italics) needs to be supplied to carry on the meaning from v.29.

Whereas seeds and fruits were assigned for the food of man, to wild and domestic animals grasses were appointed. Thus man and creatures were all vegetarian - until the Fall or the Flood? “He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth” (Ps. 104:14 - a psalm full of allusions to Creation). But “whosoever the carcase is, thither will the vultures be gathered together” (Lk. 17:37).

In the present dispensation “every creature of God is good (for food), and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:3,4).

In the age to come “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ... the lion shall eat straw like the ox ... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain” (Is. 11:6-9) - or is this language merely symbolic?

Either way, certain details in the feeding of the five thousand suggest an anticipation of the Messianic age: “He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the *green grass* (s.w. Gen. 1:30) ... and they did all eat, and were filled (grassed, foddered; same root as ‘grass’)” (Mk. 6:39,42).

**1:31. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.**

Days 1 to 5 have: "God saw that it was good." Now, because Creation has come to its climax with the making of man, "very good." In the Hebrew text there is also a further emphasis, for unlike Days 1 to 5 here there is a definite article in the phrase: "the sixth day."

Yet how could God see this creation of man as a thing in which to rejoice (Ps. 104:31), since He knew of all the wreck and ruin that human sin was to bring into the world? The place where those words come in Ps. 104 explains. Most of the psalm describes the Creation of Genesis 1. Then: "Thou hidest thy face; they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust" (v.29). This is the Fall of Genesis

Then: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are (re-) created: and thou makest new the face of the earth (*adamah*; cp. Adam - fallen man)." Then: "The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works."

It seems possible that Mk. 7:37 makes reference to Gen. 1:31, but again with the idea of a New Creation. After Jesus had made "the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (and the blind to see; 8:25), that is, as life was given to the deaf, dumb, blind Adam made from dust of the ground, so now Jesus symbolically demonstrated his powers to bring fallen men to a New Creation; and the discerning, seeing the force of this, said: "He hath done all things well." They, as well as God, saw that it was good.

## **Commentary on Genesis, Ch. 2**

**2:1. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.**

This new chapter begins in the wrong place. The proper new beginning is at verse 4.

The word for "finished" has the intensive idea of *all done* (Heb: *kalah.*, *Pu.*, linking with the common word for "all"). Normally "the host of heaven" means the stars; but here, with reference to the earth as well, the host of living things is included.

There is, however, a completely different way of reading this verse. Out of 250 occurrences (approximately) of "finished," there is only one other example (and that doubtful) of this Pual pointing. The Masoretes may have been wrong here. The alternative presents itself: "And they, even the host of them (i.e. the angels; as in 1 Kgs. 22:19). finished the heavens and the earth."

On the cross, on the sixth day, the Lord Jesus exulted with head uplifted that “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30). And, in the sixth vial, in the time of his second coming, “a great voice from the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, it is done” (Rev. 16:17).

**2:2a. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made.**

The implication behind the first phrase here is that some work was done on the seventh day. (Would a man who is fired on Friday say that he finished that employment on Saturday?). Then, what work on this seventh day? The only possible answer seems to be: The making of Eve during Adam’s sleep in the hours of darkness inaugurating the seventh day. Very differently, the great rabbi Rashi (11th C.) explained that after six days’ work the only thing lacking was Rest, so God made this on the seventh day. This is hardly Rashi at his best.

However, Septuagint and Samaritan and Syriac versions all read here, “the sixth day.” This sounds right; note v.1. and that this also eliminates the seeming repetition of v.2a in v.2b.

This phraseology about the finish of God’s work is echoed in the accounts of the completion of the Tabernacle (Ex. 39:43; 40:33) and the Temple (1 Chr. 28:20; 2 Chr. 5:1). Indeed nearly every Old Testament occurrence of this word “work” is associated with the building of Tabernacle or Temple or City - or with the community of God’s redeemed. This last is worth further investigation:

- a. Psalm 104 has a long recapitulation of God’s work of Creation: v.1-28. The psalm goes on: “Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.” This is the Fall: Gen. 3. But then a New Creation: “Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: *the Lord shall rejoice in his works.*”
- b. Psalm 145: “I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works” (v.5). What wondrous works? “Thy great goodness ... thy righteousness ... his tender mercies are over all his works” (v.7-9) - which last phrase shows clearly that the “works” specially under consideration are God’s New Creation of redeemed men and women. Hence: “All thy *works* shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy *saints* shall bless thee (note the parallelism). They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power” (v.10,11). In all this psalm the emphasis is on God’s works, His saints. They are the Creation that really matters.
- c. Compare also Ps. 77:11-20 (the making of Israel); 111:2-9.
- d. In John’s gospel Jesus repeatedly speaks of his work as being that of the Father. Just as the first creation is spoken of as the work of God and His angels (His “sons;” Job 38:7), so now the Father and the Son together fashion a New Creation. “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (4:34). “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work ... the



works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me" (5:17,36). "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day" (9:4). "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (17:4ff).

e. Luke's introduction to Acts refers to his gospel as "all that Jesus *began to do* ...", using the very phrase of Gen. 2:3 LXX, but with a significant change from aorist to continuous infinitive.

f. There is also the unexpected commentary on v.3 in Heb. 4:4,9,10 (see below on this).

Once again it becomes evident that in Genesis the New Creation is more important than the old material creation.

### **2:2b. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work**

In what sense is the phrase: "God rested," to be understood, for "he fainteth not, neither is weary" (Is. 40:28)? To explain it, some have coined a grandiloquent polysyllable: anthropopatheticism, which means 'speaking of God as though He has all the feelings of a man.' Certainly there are other examples of this; e.g. "my fury shall come up in my face" (Ez. 38:18); "I will look upon it (the bow in the cloud) that I may remember the everlasting covenant ..." (Gen. 9:16).

The only alternative to this thoroughly Biblical explanation is to read these words with reference to the creative work of *angels*, bearing in mind what has already been shown (see on 1:27) regarding the limited powers of the angels.

This view finds support from various sabbath references:

"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, *and was refreshed*" (Ex. 31:17).

"Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox (etc.) ... may be *refreshed*" (Ex. 23:12; cp. 20:11).

It might be of some significance that the Hebrew words for "work" and "angel" are almost identical. And the rather unusual shape of sentence in v.3 here, with the word *elohim* inserted where it appears to be unnecessary, might also suggest a distinction between the Almighty and His angels.

This rest of God not only has reference to what is long past; it also looks forward. After a superb picture of the Messianic age (65:17-25), Isaiah represents the Lord as seeking His own rest after the perfecting of this New Creation: "The *heaven* is my throne, and the *earth* is my footstool, where is the house (sanctuary) that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my *rest*?"

(66:1). What can then be given to God which is not His already? - “for all those things hath mine hand made.”

There is only one exception, specified in the next verse: “the man that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my Word.” God’s best resting-place in the age to come is in the free will of a man who has learned to submit himself wholly to the will of his Maker.

**2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.**

What was the nature of this blessing on the seventh day? In 1:22,28 the blessing is defined by the words: “Be fruitful and multiply.” Can the same sense apply here? Yes, if the words be read with reference to knowledge and instruction in the ways of God: “that ye may *know* that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you” (Ex. 31:13). God sanctified the day, and He sanctified the people who kept it - provided they observed it in the right spirit and not with the soulless formality and punctilious attention to a hundred man-made (rabbinic) scrupulosities, “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mk. 2:27); when Jesus said that, was he arguing from the fact that man was made on the sixth day and the sabbath on the seventh?

The common explanation of “sanctify” as meaning “to make separate” (and of “holy” - same root in Hebrew - as meaning “separate”) can be quite misleading if the emphasis is on “separate *from* (the world and its way)”. Essentially the idea is that of “separated to,” i.e. devoted to God and His service. Hence the word “sign” (Heb: *mo’ed*) in Ex. 31:13: “the sabbath a sign between me and you throughout your generations” - it is a word which always signifies a holy day, a time of special religious observance.

The spirit of the sabbath is well defined by Isaiah: “If thou ... call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words ...” (58:13), the promised reward is: “then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord ...” In other words, the blessing for finding pleasure in a special sabbath service of God will be an increasing pleasure in the holiness God asks for! Thus, “Be fruitful and multiply” applies in a very real spiritual sense.

Sabbath observance is first found as an explicit requirement in the Ten Commandments, but there are clear signs before Exodus 20 that it was part of the patriarchal law:

- a. “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8) seems to imply an existing familiarity with the sabbath before Israel came to Sinai.
- b. The strong emphasis on the sabbath in the account of the first giving of manna (Ex. 16:23,26,29,30) - again, before Israel came to Sinai - requires familiarity with this institution.

c. "Ye make the people rest (lit: sabbath) from their labours," Pharaoh roughly complained (Ex. 5:5).

d. In a remarkable analysis, based on the one assumption that months alternated between 29 and 30 days, John William Burgon established that all the nine significant events in connection with the Flood fell on the same day of the week, which - he surmised plausibly - was a sabbath:

1. Noah and his family entered the ark.
2. The Flood began.
3. The ark rested on Ararat.
4. The waters ceased to prevail.
5. The raven and dove were sent out.
6. The dove was sent out again and returned.
7. The dove was sent out yet again.
8. Dry ground. The covering of the ark removed.
9. Noah and his family came out of the ark.

After mention of the seventh day there is no sign of the "evening and morning" rubric which comes in all the other six. So far as the primary creation is concerned this seems not at all appropriate, but regarding further reference to the New Creation this omission is fitting enough, for "there shall be no night there" (Rev. 21:25), only an endless day.

In harmony with this is the fact that our Lord finished his work on the sixth day (Good Friday) and rested in the tomb on the seventh (Easter Saturday).

The last phrase: "which God *created to make*" also seems to imply a further purpose, further activity, a new and better work. (But there is a problem here in the different LXX reading which derives confirmation from Lk. 1:1. This problem of varying LXX readings used in the New Testament seems never to have been squarely tackled).

It is not inappropriate here to consider the symbolic significance of the seven creative periods of Genesis 1. The idea that each day is to be seen as representing one thousand years (Ps. 90:4) is very popular, even to the point of dogmatism. But there are difficulties:

- a. By the most conservative estimates archaeological evidence points to more than four thousand years B.C.
- b. On this thesis the end of each thousand years should provide a well-defined turning point. But the end of the first and the fifth provide nothing of the sort; and in this respect the second also is doubtful.
- c. The starting-point of this theory is the one thousand years of Rev. 20. But it is not at all certain that that period is to be read literally.

An alternative approach which is free from all these difficulties looks for seven creative periods in the purpose of God working towards the new Creation. Thus:

1. Adam to Noah.
2. Noah to Abraham.
3. Abraham to Moses.
4. Moses to David.
5. David to Jesus.
6. Jesus to Christ (the Second Coming).
7. Christ to God (the Kingdom; 1 Cor. 15:28).

**2:4 *These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created.***

Here LXX has “the book of Genesis of ...,” and hence the name of this first part of the Pentateuch; it comes in 5:1 also.

This is also the first occurrence of the rubric which meets the reader of Genesis - no less than eleven times: “These are the generations of ....”

The suggestion has been advanced by Wiseman that in accordance with Babylonian practice this expression marks the *conclusion* of a section of the history. He observes that each section could have been compiled by the one whose name is mentioned; thus, for example, there is nothing in “the generations of Jacob” (37:2) which would not be known to Jacob. There follows the easy idea that a collection of these records could have been inherited by Moses and put together to make Genesis, with a minimum of editing.

The idea is attractive, and has indeed been too readily and uncritically received by many. It needs to be recognized that there are difficulties still unexplained. For instance, “the generations of Ishmael” (25:12) are all about Isaac, and “the generations of Isaac” are all about Ishmael. “The generations of Esau” comes twice (36:1,9), the first time as subscript to a section all about Jacob, and the second time in the *middle* of a section about Esau; and “the generations of Jacob” is also all about Esau. Mysteriously there is no “generations of Abraham.” When this formula occurs at the end of the Book of Ruth (4:18), it clearly does not refer *back* but *forward*. And so also, but not necessarily, in Mk. 1:1.

It is clear that a new account of creation begins at verse 4, not at variance with what has already been told, although this is often glibly asserted, but certainly with a different emphasis. Now, in what amounts to an expansion of the Day 6 revelation in chapter 1, man, in his relation to his Maker, is the centre of the picture. It is not impossible that here Moses was guided to make use of some other source of information for his record. There are so many signs in the Old Testament of historical compilation and editing that it would be futile to assert dogmatically that nothing of the kind happened but that all was, so to speak, given by direct

divine dictation. Always it needs to be recognized that not enough is known about this aspect of Holy Scripture for confidence in any theory.

***2:4 In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.***

Appropriately the divine name changes at this point from God to Lord God, the name which emphasizes the Almighty as a God of Purpose and Promise and Covenant.

This Name YHWH is confidently asserted to be Yahweh, meaning “He who will be.” But indeed there is more of confidence than of strong Biblical evidence for such dogmatism. The meaning of the Name is undoubtedly “He who is and was and will be” (Rev. 1:8). There is no lack of evidence in support of this reading. And Biblical names such as Jehoshaphat and Elihu (there are many more) support the conclusion that the Name should be read as Y’-ho-wah, with plainly implied meaning to any Israelite: “Shall-is-was,” a simple equivalent of “which is, and was, and is to come.”

There are a number of places in the Old Testament where the text swings from Elohim to Y’howah with special significance, as in Genesis 22:1,8,11ff and in Psalm 19 which first extols the glory of God (Elohim) in creation and then the grace of God (Y’howah) in His Word and His redeeming Purpose.

If verse 4a belongs to the preceding narrative (and this seems to be required), then re-punctuation of the AV is called for, so as to read: “In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, also every plant ...,” this being the beginning of the new and fuller account.

It is difficult to see why the usual phrase is here reversed to “the earth and the heavens” (and also in Ps. 148:13). Is it perhaps another “New Creation” hint that the Purpose of God is to culminate in redeemed men and women of earth who in Christ achieve a higher status than that of angels in heaven?

***2:5a. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew:***

From this point on there is a marked difference of emphasis between this renewed account of creation and what has gone before. Now the emphasis is on man and his relationship to all that God has made.

The assertion is constantly made (by those who reject the divine authority of Genesis) that there is a sustained disharmony between the details of chapter 1 and those in chapter 2. The following five items are the main grounds for this over-confident pronouncement. It makes a useful exercise in careful Bible reading to seek out the answers provided by the text to these confident assertions.

1. Plants were created spontaneously (1:11). No, they grew out of the ground (2:5,9).
2. Man and woman were created together (1:27). No - in chapter 2 first the man and then the woman.
3. Man was appointed to "have dominion" (1:28). No, he was to till (Heb: serve) the ground (2:5).
4. Birds and beasts came before man (1:20,24). No, after man (2:19).
5. Birds emerged from the water (1:20). No, they were formed out of the ground (2:19).

In verse 5, an ambiguity regarding one Hebrew word presents the possibility of two translations quite different in meaning. AV follows LXX in reading "before" (as in 27:4; Ex. 1:19; Jer. 1:5). In that case verse 5a is a continuation of verse 4: "in the day that the Lord God created the earth and the heavens and every plant of the field before it was in the earth ....."

The other meaning is "not yet" (as in 1 Sam. 3:7; Ex. 10:7). In that case RV is correct: "And no plant was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up;,"

**2:5b. *For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.***

Since there was no *man* to till the ground, at first the angels did it - and there was a remarkable crop: first, man, and then the garden (v.7,8); in the New Creation "Christ the firstfruits." The idea is extended to those in Christ: "We (the apostles) are labourers together with God: ye (the believers) are God's husbandry (i.e. tillage)" (1 Cor. 3:9). "He (Timothy) *worketh* the work of the Lord, as I also do" (16:10). "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have *wrought*" (2 Jn. 8). These passages use the same LXX Greek word as in the verse under review. It is important for those in the New Creation to note that it was primarily for this purpose that the Man was made - to make things grow well, to the glory of God for his own sustenance and satisfaction.

"For we are his *workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10).

**2:6. *But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.***

Precise explanation of this apparently simple verse is difficult because of a double problem: (a) the meaning of the word "mist;" (b) the question whether or not there should be a carry over of the negative from verse 5.

The Hebrew word *‘ed* comes in only one other place, where certainly it means ‘mist’ or ‘cloud’. But over against this not very considerable support is the fact that the identical word in Assyrian means a flood or inundation (see RSV margin); it is the technical term for the overflow of the waters of Euphrates (because of the melting of the Armenian snows).

The idea of a mist fits the physical geography of the Holy Land, where that has always been a summer phenomenon. But the idea of a river overflowing its banks fits Mesopotamia, where (as will be seen on v. 10-14) the Garden of Eden was most probably sited.

On the other hand, LXX has a word which means a well or a fountain, as in 2 Pet. 2:17; Jn 4:14; Rev. 21:6. This last passage - “the fountain of the water of life” - coming near the end of Revelation where there are copious allusions to Genesis 1-3, may well be intended as an allusion back to this place, thus interpreting it.

Next, the question of the possibility of an implied negative: “there went (not) up ...” This grammatical phenomenon of the word “not” carried over from the preceding sentence, crops up often enough in the Old Testament; e.g. Ps. 9:18 (note the italics); 75:5; Is. 38:18; Pr. 24:12; 25:27; 1 Sam. 2:3; and in the Heb. text: Ps. 26:9; Ex. 20:17; Dt. 7:25. So it is quite possible for the negative of Gen. 1:5 to carry over to v.6.

The most likely resolution of these ambiguities is, disallowing this negative: “there went up an inundation from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.” If “mist” were to be insisted on, could it be said that it goes up from the earth? In a country like England, yes; but not from the dry soil of a Middle Eastern country. The negative probably has to be rejected, for otherwise there would be no means of subsistence for the creatures already made.

**2:7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul.**

In place of “created,” this record has “formed.” The Hebrew word described the action of a potter shaping clay. In what can only be regarded as a sustained allusion to Gen. 1:27; 2:7, Isaiah 45 repeats these key words: “I *form* the light, and *create* darkness ... I the Lord have *created* it. Woe to him that striveth with his *Maker* ... Shall the *clay* say to him that *fashioneth* it, What makest thou? ... I have made the earth, and *created* man upon it ...” (45:7-12); cp. also 64:8; 29:16. This figure of speech of the Almighty as “the former, the shaper, the potter” appealed to Isaiah. He passed it on to later prophets (Jer. 18:6; Zech. 12:1) and to Paul (Rom. 9:20-23). Zech. 12:1 makes direct allusion back to Genesis: “... the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth, and *formeth* the spirit of man within him.”

Man was not formed out of rock nor even out of the black fertile alluvial soil but from fine dry unstable useless red dust. Thus his feebleness was emphasized: Adam out of *adamah*. In fact, the emphasis is yet more strong, for the AV margin is correct here: “formed man, dust of the

ground” - even when fashioned he was still basically dust, as was grimly emphasized yet again in the curse after the Fall (3:19). The other living creatures were made of the same material (2:19), but in their case there was no point in stressing the fact. But with Man, yes: “He knoweth our frame (our fashioning; s.w. Gen. 2:7); he remembereth that we are dust” (Ps. 103:14; cp. 119:25). So also Isaiah: “Cease ye from *man*, whose *breath* is in his *nostrils*, for wherein is he to be accounted of” (2:22).

This expression is used only with reference to Man. Even Genesis 7:21,22 is no exception: “All flesh died ... fowl, cattle, beast, creeping thing, and every man (all in whose nostrils was the breath of life), of all that was in the dry land, died.”

There can be no manner of doubt that the encounter of the Lord Jesus with his disciples after the resurrection was designed to recall and repeat the creation of Adam, for “he breathed on them, and said, Ye are receiving the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 20:22). The divine kiss of life which made Adam into a living man was now imparted to the New Man in Christ. In him the Twelve were the beginning of God’s New Creation (cp. also Acts 2:2).

Is there also the same idea in the Lord’s making clay and anointing the eyes of the blind man with it? (Jn. 9:6,7). Was he intimating by acted parable that in his blindness the man was as one dead, and needing Christ to bring him the Light of Life?

*N’shamah*, breath of life, is very commonly associated with the power of God in action (Job 4:9; 33:4; 37:10; Ps. 18:15; Is. 30:33; 57:16). It is doubtful if any distinction is to be made between “breath” and “spirit,” for in a clear allusion to this place Ecclesiastes 12:7 uses the second term in place of the first: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit (*ruach*) shall return to God who gave it.” The key to an understanding of this last phrase lies in the word “return,” which clearly means going back to the original place. But no man has any memory of an earlier existence in heaven before his birth. Then the spirit, the life-power in man, can and does return to God without any continuation of *conscious* existence in heaven.

Kidner (Tyndale Commentary) bids his reader “note that man neither *has a* soul, nor *has a* body.” He *is* both. But it needs always to be remembered that “living soul” describes both man and animal (1:30 margin). The expression simply means “a living creature,” nothing more.

In the New Testament the broad distinction between “soul” and “spirit” is that “soul” has reference to the natural man and his natural inclinations, whereas “spirit” describes the new man in Christ and the outlook which characterizes his new life (e.g. Heb. 4:12; 1 Th. 5:23; Lk. 12:19,20; Jn. 12:27; Gal. 3:2,3,5; 5:16-22).

The question is often raised: Was Adam created mortal or immortal? Important theological conclusions have rather foolishly been made to depend on the answer supplied. (As though an incorrect answer to such a question could invalidate a man’s Christian baptism!).



Clearly Adam was not immortal, or he would still be alive. The glib answer not infrequently heard: "Neither mortal nor immortal, but very good" is meaningless, for (a) "very good" is far too vague to be useful, without further definition; (b) every living being in the universe is either mortal or immortal, for the two states are mutually exclusive. "Mortal" means "subject to death" (OED), and Paul's handling of this passage in 1 Corinthians 15 declares emphatically that Adam was created mortal (but of course with an opportunity of being sustained in being indefinitely until his Maker either made him immortal or condemned him to the grave. More on this on 2:16).

Paul's sustained antithesis (in 1 Cor. 15:42-49) between the natural man and the resurrection life is very striking:

Sown in corruption.	Raised in glory.
Sown in weakness.	Raised in power.
Sown a natural body.	Raised a spiritual body.
The first man Adam was made a living soul.	The last Adam was made a quickening spirit.
The first man is of the earth, earthy (lit. of dust; 2:6).	The second man is the Lord from heaven.
As we have borne the image of the earthy.	We shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Here every phrase in the first column describes the weakness of mortality, and one of its expressions is the statement of Genesis 2:7 about Adam when he was created. Then what did Paul understand about Adam's primeval condition?

The conclusion just reached is strongly supported by the simple fact that both animals and Adam are described as "living souls" - and there is no possibility of doubt that the animals were created mortal, dying creatures. (But by all means see the further comment on 2:16,17).

***2:8. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden: and there he put the man whom he had formed.***

The words are often read as though the name of the garden was Eden, but in fact the language requires that Eden be a larger area, *part* of which was made into a garden of the Lord (see v.10). The actual site of the garden will be discussed later (v.10-14).

“Eastward in Eden” might mean “in the eastern part of Eden,” but more probably it means “to the east, from the point of view of the compiler of this record.” If Moses was busy on this when he was in Midian or Sinai, then there is support here for the common identification with the plain of south Mesopotamia, and difficulty for the also popular suggestion that Eden was in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Eden is a Hebrew word meaning delight, and for this reason it crops up as a Biblical name related to more than one area; e.g. near Damascus (Amos 1:5), Lebanon (Ez. 31:16,18), and somewhere unidentified in Mesopotamia (2 Kgs. 19:12).

In support of an identification of Eden with part of southern Mesopotamia, Eden is equated with a Sumerian word which describes that plain (HBD).

The garden was later called Paradise, a name which has been confidently derived from a Persian word for a park (Neh. 2:8; Ecc. 2:5; S:S.4:13), but it could with equal probability be seen as a combination of two Hebrew words meaning fruitful of herbs.

The New Testament occurrences of the word are interesting. Rev. 2:7 is straightforward: ‘the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.’ But why, when the dying malefactor asked to be remembered in Christ’s kingdom, was he promised paradise? The two are obviously intended as equivalents. But why the change?

If, as seems almost certain, the malefactor was a renegade disciple, one of those who had wanted to make Jesus king after the feeding of the five thousand, mention of paradise would remind him of how, like Adam, he had lost his paradise (Jesus, the tree of life), but would yet know its joy much more fully. It is perhaps relevant also to mention that at the feeding of the multitude the people are described as “garden plots” (companies; Mk. 6:39).

Paul’s mysterious reminiscence of how he was “caught up (away) to the third heaven ... to paradise” (2 Cor. 12:2,4) is more difficult. A hint comes from his allusion to the sanctuary of the Lord: “that the power of Christ may tabernacle upon me” (v.9), for in several places the temple appears to be referred to as heaven (1 Kgs. 8:30; 2 Chr. 30:27; Ps. 20:6,2; 11:4; Heb. 7:26), with the Holy of Holies, the third and innermost part of the Sanctuary, as “the third heaven.”

The clear implication of the text of verse 8 is that Adam was made from the red unfertile soil, and was then installed in the supra-fertile garden (of black soil). What symbolism is intended by this?

“The man whom he had formed” is in sharp contrast with the next verse: “And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree ...,” and also: “Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind ...” (1:24). Thus in advance Genesis anticipates and disallows evolution.

**2:9 *“And out of the ground made the Lord God 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 knowledge of good and evil.*”**

The trees mentioned here were probably a fresh creation, special for the garden. Certainly the two specified trees were; and it is easier to read this verse as additional to 1:12, not merely a repetition of it.

Both trees were “in the midst of the garden,” and therefore, probably, within a short distance of each other - one of them forbidden, and the other (as will be argued from v.16) permitted along with the rest. Their proximity would make the test of obedience all the more explicit: This tree, but not that one! “The tree of life was designed to sustain and refresh the life infused into man at his creation” (Wordsworth).

Peter refers to our Lord as being “hanged on a tree” (Acts 10:39; 1 Pet. 2:24). But it wasn’t a tree, it was dead wood - but dead wood now become a tree of life, with flowers and fruit, like Aaron’s rod. And whereas Adam was forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge, those in Christ are commanded to eat of the tree of life. “Do this in remembrance of me” - “Take, eat; this is my body” (Mt. 26:26).

Scripture encourages its reader to think of the tree of life as an almond tree, for the candlestick in the sanctuary of the Lord (Ex. 25:31ff) was clearly intended to be seen as a tree - the tree of life. It had a trunk, branches, buds, flowers, calyxes, and fruit - and its fruits were almonds. Also, Aaron’s rod that budded, a dead stick come to life again (and thus obviously a branch of the Tree of Life), “bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds” (Num. 17:8). Is it for natural reasons or because of Aaron’s rod that the almond is called “the awakener” (*shōqēd*)? - no true life without resurrection.

But if the tree of life in Eden was an almond, it was a very special almond, for in the creation of fruit trees (1:12) almonds were certainly included.

In the rest of Genesis a surprising prominence is given to trees (12:6RV; 13:18; 18:1; 21:33; 35:4,8). Was an effort being made by the patriarchs to keep alive the ancient tradition about the tree of life, and the hope of renewed access to it? 35:8 is specially significant from this angle.

The rabbis identified the tree of knowledge as a vine, which more than any other tree has certainly been fruitful of a vast amount of both good and evil. And there seem to be Biblical reasons to support this conclusion.

But the phrase: “knowledge of good and evil” requires more far-reaching reference than this. All kinds of guesses have been made; e.g.

- a. A figure of speech (called oxymoron) for 'the seeming good which is really evil.' But even allowing this, there is still a lack of definition.
- b. An idiom for "the tree of all knowledge"; cp. 2 Sam. 14:17,20. This helps to explain reference of the same phrase to the angels (3:22). There are similar comprehensive expressions in Dt. 29:15; 32:36.
- c. Or is there here a 'genitive of relation,' meaning: a tree about which there was a law of obedience and disobedience. But in that case, use of the same expression regarding the angels (3:22) would strongly imply that they too had been earlier subjects of a similar probation to that of Adam. *If* that possibility can be accepted, this could be the simplest and most satisfactory of the suggestions listed here.
- d. Dr. Thomas had the definite opinion (Elpis. 68,93) that sexual knowledge is referred to. Certainly, both good and evil. In that case, eating of the tree of knowledge offered a different kind of immortality from that of the tree of life - living on in succeeding generations. This became the belief of the Sadducees (Mt. 22:24 uses the word for 'resurrection'). The difficulty about this view is that the place of sex in human life was blessed by God when man and woman were made (1:28). And repeatedly the New Testament sanctifies Christian marriage as a holy thing, a sacrament. Yet, would not sex as the fruit of the first sin imply the opposite?
- e. Knowledge from Nature and experiment rather than from God - good knowledge which is evil because of its mode of acquisition and its effects on the human mind. The pursuit of science has been precisely this. Eve followed this method - "after observation and reasoning, try it and see" (3:5,6).

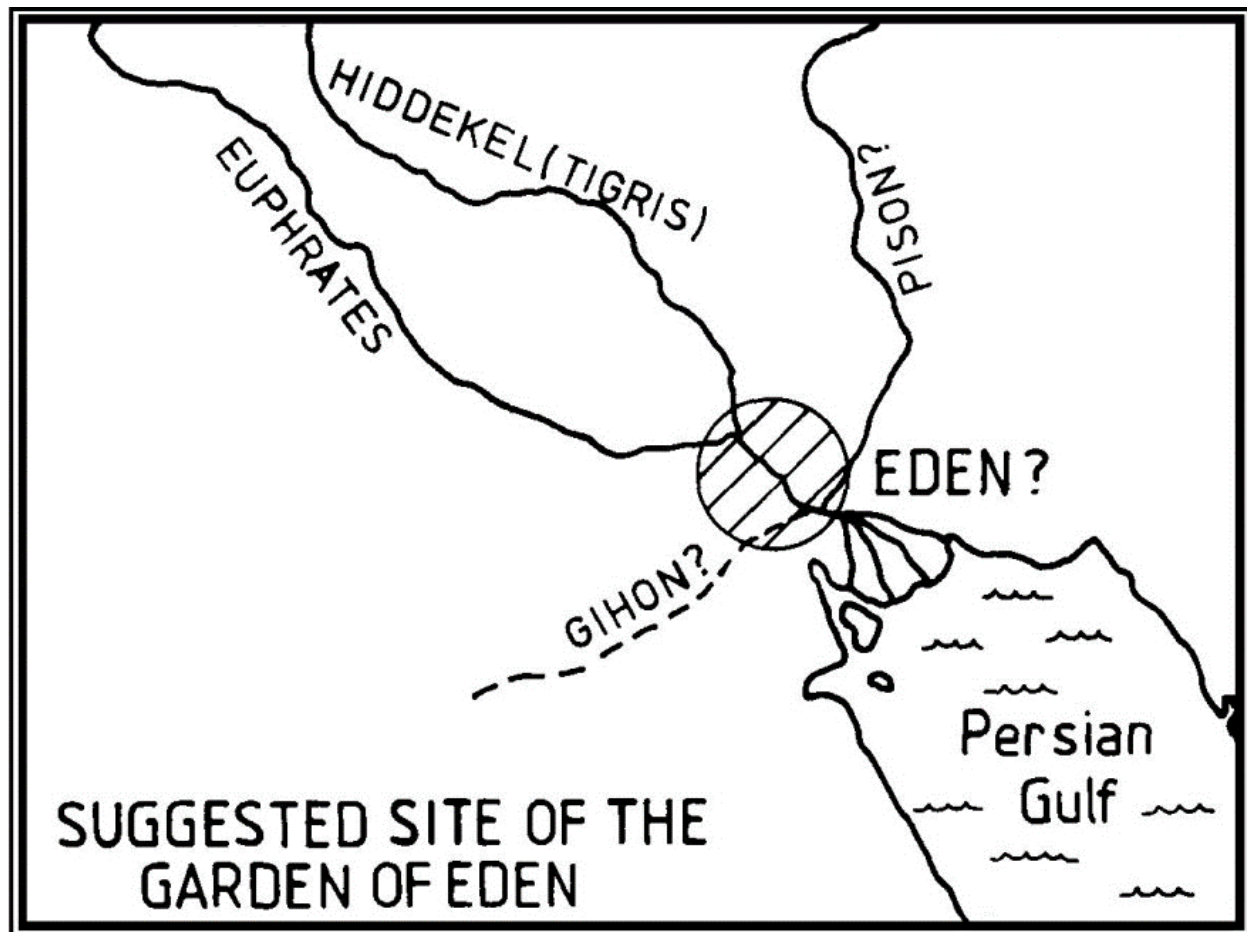
**2:10-14 *"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon; the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.***

There is, then, a river of life as well as a tree of life. But it is not so called here because it is more specifically a river of life for the garden rather than for the people in it. This theme of a river in Paradise Restored is much emphasized in the prophecies: Rev. 22:1; Zech. 14:8; Ez. 47:1ff; Ps. 36:8; 46:4.

This river (the place of its rising is not specified) flows through the Eden territory surrounding the garden, and so through the garden itself. The phrasing seems to require that after leaving the garden it sub-divides into four branches ("heads"). This suggests the idea of a delta.

Since two of the four streams are given the names of specific well-known rivers - Euphrates and Tigris (*Hiddekel*) - location of the garden must be in lower Mesopotamia.

There have been determined, but ill-judged, attempts to site Eden and the garden in the vicinity of Jerusalem. When it is pointed out that Tigris and Euphrates are hundreds of miles from the Holy Land, the rejoinder is made: "But the Flood would later bring all kinds of alterations in geographical configuration." Maybe! But such an argument, with its vast importation of unknown quantities, is not argument or evidence but pure supposition. Would not Moses write of the rivers as he knew them to be in his own time? It is suggested, then, that the most likely - though not certain - identification of Eden is as in the sub-joined diagram:



It is true that Babylonian legend concurs in this location of the garden. But in this instance it is to be expected. So no special weight is to be attached to such a fact, pro or con.

The four branches of the delta would naturally enough take their names from the four rivers. It is known that through silting up the delta has moved some 70 or 80 miles further to the south-east from where it once was. (Ur of the Chaldees, now a long way inland, was once a seaport).

The early church was fond of comparing the four rivers of Eden to the four gospels, four sources of fertility, making the garden nurtured by Christ marvellously fruitful. In view of the many examples already encountered (and with more to come) of New Testament insistence on deeper meanings in the details of the creation story, who shall say that this instance is far-fetched?

The details given about the rivers are full of interest but by no means without uncertainty. However, none of them seems to conflict with the identification suggested.

The purpose of “watering the garden” is not easy to harmonize with earlier mention (v.6) of a mist watering the ground. If that passage is intended to have a negative carried over from the previous verse, as suggested earlier, then the implication would be: In Eden there was no night mist as in Israel, but there was a river and its branches.

Pison and Gihon are unidentifiable with any degree of certainty. The former, “compassing the whole land of the Havilah” was probably a river flowing (in the rainy seasons) out of N. Arabia, being a recognized boundary of “the sandy land.” Pison may mean “spreading out,” possibly in the sense of getting lost at times in the sand. Havilah occurs more than once as a geographical term (Gen. 10:7; 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7) appropriate to several “sandy lands.” There is Bible evidence of some sources of gold in N. Arabia (Num. 31:52; Jud. 8:26; Josh. 7:21) in ancient days. Evidently it was found in nuggets: “the gold of that land is good.”

“Authorities” differ markedly about the identification of bdellium. Josephus (Ant. 3.1.6) says it was an aromatic gum from N. Arabia; and it is argued that the Hebrew text, carefully attaching the word “stone” to “onyx,” by that very fact implies that bdellium was not a precious stone. Even so, LXX took it to be a black or crystalline precious stone. The alternative “beryl” (RVm) could well be correct, for it needs only the (very frequent) confusion between D and R in Hebrew to give the word for beryl. Another suggestion is that “pearls” are intended.

The fact that Gihon “borders the whole land of Ethiopia” has led to dogmatic equation with the Nile. This is an absurd conclusion, for how could the Nile have any confluence with Euphrates and Tigris? Also, there is the oversight that the original name Cush (=black) applies in Scripture not only to Ethiopia, the land of black people, but also to Midian, the land of black tents (Hab. 3:7), and to Elam, the land of black mountains (Is. 11:11), where the Kassites lived. AV has been influenced by LXX which, made in Egypt, naturally took Cush to be Ethiopia. Almost certainly, a river flowing from Elam is intended. Gihon means “bursting forth,” so probably one should look for a river which emerges from a gorge between the mountains.

Hiddekel, “the great river” (Dan. 10:4) is certainly the Tigris, as the mention of Asshur shows. *Hid* is said to be a Babylonian word for “river”, but an attempt at Hebrew significance would make the name mean “the great thorn river” (with reference to some of the territory it flows through?).

“Towards the east of Assyria” (AV) is an impossible reading. But “that which goeth east, or in front of, Asshur (the ancient capital of Assyria)” is quite likely.

It is noteworthy that no details at all are given about Euphrates - for the very simple reason that in the time of Moses there was familiar knowledge of that great river, even in Egypt.

**2:15 *“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”***

There is further indication here that Adam was made of sterile red clay outside the garden (v.8; 3:23). It is implied that the angel of the Lord (or, angels) led Adam (whom he had formed; LXX) into the garden to introduce him to a life of unalloyed pleasure there. The garden was already in superb condition - Adam inherited it from angelic gardeners!

Although this verse is practically a repetition of verse 8, the Hebrew word for “put” is different. There it means just that: “put”. But here the meaning is: “comforted, cause to rest” (cp. 5:29).

So, although words meaning “serve, work” (3:23) and also “guard” are used, there is no suggestion of servitude or hard drudgery. LXX neatly turns the first word to imply: “work for his own benefit or pleasure.” And since “garden” implies cultivation, it would be necessary to protect the garden plots from invasion by birds or animals intent (naturally enough) on using the garden as *their* paradise.

Even so, although the garden was Adam’s, it was not his simply for indolence or self-indulgence. So also in Christ: those who “labour to enter into his rest” (as a present experience) do so by recognizing that there is useful work to be done, and due vigilance necessary, and all of it satisfying: 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:14 (4:15).

**2:16,17 *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.***

Adam was the first creature God had made endowed with a will of his own, with the power of choice to do this or that. A test of obedience was necessary, to show that Adam purposed fully to submit himself to the will of his Maker: “To this man will I look, even to him ... that trembleth at my word” (Is. 66:2).

Of course, God could have made a remarkably clever robot, more clever than the electronic chess-players man has himself devised. But what glory would there have been to God in that, compared with the honour given Him through devout and humble obedience rendered by a being with a mind and will of his own?

The law imposed on Adam was a very simple trial by abstinence - from which it may surely be inferred that it is a good thing for a man to learn to say "no" to his natural inclinations, including also those about which there is no law.

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat," except the tree of knowledge, fairly plainly implies that eating of the tree of life was not forbidden. This consideration leads to an interesting sequence of ideas:

- a. Adam was made mortal:
  - (i) for he was certainly not made immortal;
  - (ii) like the animal she was made "a living soul" (1:30; 2:7);
  - (iii) the sequence of antitheses in 1 Cor. 15:42-50 (see p.33) makes Gen. 2:7 (v45) equivalent to "natural body"
- b. Since, in Rev. 22:2, "the leaves of the tree (of life) are for the healing of the (mortal) nations," it is reasonable to suppose that during his probation Adam's mortality was kept in abeyance by his eating of the leaves of that tree.
- c. But if there had been fruit, since he had license to eat of that tree he would have eaten it also.
- d. But this would have endowed him with immortality (Rev. 2:7).
- e. Therefore it may be inferred that during his probation there was no fruit on the tree.
- f. But, according to the picture of paradise restored (in Rev. 22:2), there was a monthly fruit-bearing.
- g. Therefore Eve and Adam broke the commandment within the first month of their probation. (For reasons not known, the rabbis somehow deduced within six hours).

Since God said: "Of every *tree* thou mayest freely eat," it may perhaps be inferred that in this state of primeval innocence there was no need for the growing and processing of crops. That was to come later (3:18,19).

It is interesting to note that apparently the law imposed on Adam came before he was provided with "a help meet for him." So it would seem that from the beginning the man was intended to be the teacher and guide of his wife. And this he evidently did very faithfully (3:2,3).

Indeed, it ought to be inferred from Eve's first response to the serpent that the prohibition here in verse 17 was accompanied also by an angelic word of warning: "neither shall ye touch it, lest you die." The assumption often made, that Eve set herself on the slippery slope by distorting the original divine command, is really not warranted.



There was, of course, wisdom in this added warning, for assuredly the best way to defeat temptation is to keep as far away from it as possible. If needful for Adam, who had no fallen nature to incline him to disobedience, how much more needful for his descendants who have?

Also, by this commandment Adam was being taught to mistrust his own intelligence, for he might well have reasoned: This garden has been prepared for *me*. It is all very good. Then why should I not eat of that tree also?' And the only reason was that, whether Adam understood or he didn't, God forbade it.

LXX turns the singular pronouns in this passage into plurals - with reference to the man and the woman. Was the change made in order to emphasize that the woman also was a sinner and not her husband only?

The command was quite explicit: "Thou shalt not;" and so also was the enunciation of the penalty: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

The words mean just what they say in the AV text. And the word "die" would be clearly understood, for from the very first, the cycle of life and death in the lower creatures (Ps. 49:20) would be part of Adam's experience and comprehension (and angelic education).

But when the sin was committed, Adam and his wife did not die in the very day in which they ate. Quite a variety of explanations have been advanced to cope with this problem:

- a. They died spiritually. If by this is meant that their essential nature was changed, this is true. From the time of the Fall human nature has been sullied with a humanly incurable bent towards evil. Every innocent little baby grows up to be a naughty child, a self-willed teenager, a chronic moribund sinner.

But is this what the words meant? They seem to be intended in a strictly literal sense.

- b. In 'Elpis Israel,' p.69, 4th ed., Dr. Thomas translates the Hebrew words literally: "dying thou shalt die" (see AV mg.), and reads this as meaning that a gradual process of dying began from the moment of disobedience. However, this misses the force of the Hebrew idiom, for this form of expression, very common in Old Testament Hebrew, is simply an emphatic way of saying, as AV: "thou shalt surely die;" e.g. in v.16: "eating thou shalt eat;" and in 3:16: "multiplying I will multiply." Accordingly C.C.W. has added a footnote of correction on that p.69.
- c. The rabbis have gone in for some characteristic juggling.

One school of thought speculates: 'In mercy God submitted one of his own days (1000 years; Ps. 90:4) for one man's. But when it was revealed to Adam that in years to come

David would die in the day of his birth, he gladly gave up 70 of his 1000 years. So Adam died at 930, and David 70!

Alternatively: “‘In the day’ has reference to the day of the week. Adam was created on Friday, and sinned on Friday (the same?), and died, 930 years later, on Friday.’ Judaism was capable of even such childishness.

- d. The penalty was conditional. Adam repented, and therefore the punishment was modified.

*This* is the correct explanation as will be shown later in this commentary (see on 3:20,21).

Jonah’s message was: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (3:4). But because of repentance this apparently unconditional threat was not fulfilled. Nineveh lasted for more than a century after Jonah.

There are *many* examples of this principle at work (see Appendix in “Revelation: a Biblical approach,” by H.A.W.)

**2:18 “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him”.**

In the midst of a wonderful creation Adam was palpably alone and lonely, a state that is not good for any man. So, as in 1:26, there was a carefully thought-out plan to provide him with the society he needed. “Let us make” here becomes “I will make.” But three of the ancient versions repeat the plural form of 1:26. And since this is the only place in these early chapters where the divine pronoun is singular, it looks very much as though the versions are to be followed.

There seems to be a studied vagueness about the AV: “help meet for him” (there is no reason to hyphenate into “help-meet” or “help-mate”). But there is ambiguity about the Hebrew also: before him, in the front of him, close to him, corresponding to him; all of these are possible. But if there is here any hint of sex, it is fairly well hidden.

It has been argued from these words, and a careful ignoring of 1 Cor. 7:32,33, that all men ought to marry (and presumably, all women). But can it be truly said of a man *in Christ* that he is ever alone, even when without a wife (or the woman without a husband)?

God carefully provided that the second Adam should not be alone: “He that hath sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me *alone*” (Jn. 8:29). Just as the prime function of Eve was to be a *help* to her husband, so also during the Lord’s ministry there were women who gladly “ministered unto him of their substance” (Lk. 8:3), and also in the end of his ministry Martha

provided practical help in the hospitality of her home, and Mary gave the understanding and encouragement which Jesus valued even more (Lk. 10:38-42; Jn. 12:2,3).

A none-too-easy problem arises as to how the record here (v. 18-23) is to be reconciled with 1:26-28. If indeed the “days” of chapter 1 are meant to be longer periods, there is of course no difficulty. But how to include the whole of 2:7-23 in the space of 24 hours is not easy, but neither is it outrageously impossible.

***2:19-20 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field: but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.***

The natural way to read this text is as signifying that the animals were made after Adam, and LXX supports this. But it is agreed that the meaning could be: “the Lord God had already made ....” Is it possible that there was a further creation of animals, as of trees, special for the garden?

Naturally there is no mention of fishes or creeping things, for the point of this exercise was, in the main, to demonstrate to Adam that there was as yet nothing in all God’s wonderful creation with which he could share fellowship. A man can find pleasure in making a pet of an animal or a bird but not of a fish or a creepy-crawly. With hindsight, and fuller knowledge of God’s purpose in Christ it is possible to recognize that *the* main intention behind creation was fellowship. Barriers to fellowship are therefore to be erected only when God demands such action, as in the expulsion from Eden, and from the Holy Land.

Is it necessary to assume that the angels led (LXX) to Adam *all* the enormous variety of creatures already made? A wide and diverse selection, those living in the garden, would surely suffice to demonstrate to Adam’s high intelligence (no Neanderthal low-brow!) that amidst them all he was really alone (apart from his occasional fellowship with the angels). The animals learned that Adam was their master, made to have dominion (Ps. 8:6), and in turn he was impressed with their essential inferiority. Thus, one of Adam’s first school subjects (though not *the* first) was zoology.

The names were given (in Hebrew? v.20) according to the character of each. It makes an interesting exercise to trace correspondences between the Hebrew names for various animals and the meaning of their Hebrew roots.

God Himself had named Day and Night, Heaven and Earth and the stars (Is. 40:26), and Man. But those specifically under man’s dominion were to be named by him (including v.23). In the New Creation the Second Adam is content to concentrate his attention on sheep - “he calleth his own sheep by name” (Jn. 10:3).

The angels led the creatures to Adam “to see what he would call them.” Always in the early chapters of Genesis, and indeed in nearly every occurrence (out of hundreds) of this Hebrew word, the meaning is ‘to see with the naked eye’ not ‘to perceive, with the understanding.’ So it seems scarcely outrageous to read this passage as implying that Adam not only invented names for the animals but also wrote them down.

In harmony with this is the literal reading of the Hebrew text: “But for Adam he (i.e. God) did not find a help meet for him.” The exercise was fully successful. Not only did Adam recognize that he was without a true partner, but his Maker also took knowledge of his human consciousness of a great loneliness.

***2:21,22 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, he made a woman, and brought her unto the man.***

Jeremiah had a vision of paradise restored, and as part of it “the Lord created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man. Upon this I awakened, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me” (31:22,24-26). This, assuredly, was Adam’s experience in and after his “deep sleep.”

And why was Eve made from a rib? Because a rib is the only bone (strictly, cartilage) which when removed will grow again. So Adam was not thereafter a man with an uneven number of ribs. Christ also lost nothing by his sacrifice and saving work.

And she was made from a rib taken from Adam’s side, not from his head that she might be his superior, nor from his feet that she might be trampled on at will, but that she might be his equal - and taken from near his heart that she might be cherished.

An interesting rabbinic comment is the following: “Woman is strong by nature, because she was created of bone; but man is weak by nature, because he was created of earth, and earth is weak.” But how correct?

The word “rib” means also “side,” and that is where a man’s wife is always to be. Out of forty occurrences (approx.) of the Hebrew word well over thirty of them refer to the side of the sanctuary of the Lord.

This was appropriate, for Jesus was “the Sanctuary which the Lord pitched, and not man”; and in death his side (Jn. 19:34, s.w. LXX) was pierced, to become the symbol of life (“blood and water”) for those whom the Lord God brings to him.

Also, it is implied that with the rib the Creator also took flesh adhering to it, for Adam said: “This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.” This too is appropriate, for in the New

Testament there is much emphasis on our Lord truly sharing human nature - "flesh" - with all its weakness and propensities to self-will.

The New Testament also makes much of this fact that Adam was created first, and Eve from him: "For the man is not out of the woman, but the woman out of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." The relative status of man and woman in the ecclesia is made to depend on this argument (but not on this only).

Again, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over her husband ... For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Tim. 2:12,13) - and again this is reinforced by the ensuing verses.

This essential difference notwithstanding, marriage is for fellowship, and specially fellowship in godliness. There is no word said here about the woman's sex or her bearing of children. She is valued for her own self. "Whoso findeth a wife, such a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord" (Pr. 18:22).

It is only such a wife who can fulfil the type woven so sensitively into this narrative.

Yet, with all these designed resemblances, there is one marked contrast: "The Lord hath created (*bará*) a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man (*gibbōr* Is. 9:6)" (Jer. 31:22). God's New Creation begins with a Redeemer brought forth out of a woman (Gen. 3:15), and not conversely, as before.

Adam's rib was not made but "built" (Heb.) into a woman, as though she were to be not only a human being but also a temple: "In him all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:21,22). "Then had the churches rest ... and were edified, built up (s.w. LXX)" (Acts 9:31).

Paul surely thought of the early church in just this way: "Ye are God's husbandry (Adam), ye are God's building (Eve)" (1 Cor. 3:9).

The fashioning of Eve was not done there in Adam's presence, but in his absence whilst he communed with angels, for "the Lord God (this is God's Covenant Name, the Name which enshrines His Purpose) *brought* her unto the man." Here was the Father giving away the Bride. "She (the Bride of Christ) shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework" (Ps. 45:14) - not in the nakedness of innocence, because this Bride has not been accepted by her Lord *in* paradise but as one at first alien to it, so she must needs be clothed with garments of righteousness. The holy city, the new Jerusalem, comes down *from God*, brought by Him, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2). "Behold, the Bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him" (Mt. 25:6). "And them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring (to him to be) with him" (1 Th. 4:14).

And now (a sharp contrast of a different sort) consider the supposed resemblances of this Genesis story to the Assyrian-Babylonian creation epic:

There is a watery chaos. The sun, moon, and stars are made after light, but before plants and animals. There is a paradise naturally irrigated.

So far the details are right. But then:

Man is made of clay and blood (soul?). His wife is called Nin-ti (which is said to mean 'lady of the rib' or else 'lady who makes alive; cp. Eve). A curse follows the eating of a plant, but thereafter child birth is without pain or travail.

Which account, one wonders, is the original, and which the distortion?

**2:23 *"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."***

There is almost a gasp of relief between "there was formed a help meet for him" and this use of "now." After increasing conviction that there was no creature yet made to match himself, Adam is able to say: "At last! (RSV) this (fem.) is now bone of my bones." The Hebrew phrase might even imply: "a step forward!"

Since the fashioning of the rib was done whilst Adam was in a deep sleep, and away from him, he would only know that she was made out of himself when angels of the Lord told him. It is another hint that he did not need a tree of knowledge.

From this earliest time "my bone and my flesh" became a well-established idiom for the closest possible relationship - used, for example, by the as yet unaffiliated tribes of Israel when they asked David to be king over them all (2 Sam. 5:1).

It is another hint of the type so vividly presented in Genesis where the Bride of the Second Adam comes into existence only through his experience of the sleep of death and a fashioning out of the same "flesh and bones as ye see me have" (Lk. 24:39). No passage emphasizes this essential, vitally essential, truth more than does Hebrews 2:14.

Some pernickety grammarians try to insist that there is no connection between the Hebrew words for Man and Woman, but this verse positively insists on the link between the two words being recognized. But the blithe assumption that *Ishah* means 'out of *Ish*' simply cannot be sustained, for it has in it no hint of "out of."

There are two possibilities:

- a. that the - *ah* is just an ordinary feminine suffix, just as "this" also is feminine;

- b. that this is an example of what is known as *He* locale; e.g. Hebrew for Egypt is *Mitzraim*, and *Mitzaimah* means “into or towards Egypt;” thus, *Ishah* means the very opposite of “out of Man”? and was it not intended that her whole life should be devoted to his well-being? The type of Christ and his Bride fills out the idea.

But why did Adam call himself *Ish* and not Adam (the one who was made from *adamah* and was destined to return to it)? It is difficult to be sure. But one possibility is through connection with the word *yesh*, a kind of emphatic positive, as though meaning, when applied to Adam “I very definitely am.” If this is correct, it is an expression of a newly-dawned conviction (after his systematic inspection of the animals) that he and he only possessed personality and self-consciousness; by contrast they were entirely creatures of instinct.

**2:24 *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.***

Clearly these are not Adam’s words. Jesus says explicitly that they are God’s words (Mt. 19:4,5). There could be no better vindication of the inspiration of the creation record. This verse must be part of a divine revelation made after the birth of children, for until then the mention of father and mother would be meaningless.

In all generations this truth about marriage must stand. In modern times it is not at all unknown for parents to be so possessive (usually a mother for her son) as to create strains in a marriage which needs no added problems.

The spiritual meaning of this forsaking of parents is both simple and eloquent. All who become affianced to Christ must be ever ready to give first loyalty to this divine Husband. Yet just as the commandment to honour father and mother still stands for the married as for the unmarried, the one joined to Christ is not called upon to live a hermit life without any kind of physical contact with the world. The dissociation from the old life is essentially an attitude of mind. It is thus that a man can be “in the world,” but not “of the world.”

The Bride of Christ is commanded: “Forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord” (Ps. 45:10,11).

The man is bidden “cleave” to his wife, and of course she to him. In Eden it would be unnatural not to do so. And so always, argued Jesus when asked by the Pharisees about divorce: “Have ye not read (here is a brusque ‘Go home and read your Bible!’), that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female” (Mt. 19:4, i.e. *one* man and *one* woman - then was divorce and re-marriage part of the divine intention when God first made our race?

And the word “cleave” (Mt. 19:5) means, very literally, to be glued together. So when the psalmist declares fervently: “I have stuck (s.w.) unto thy testimonies” (Ps. 119:31), he means:

“Lord, I am wedded to thy Word.” And when Solomon “clave in love” to his many women he was debasing the true idea of marriage and also himself (1 Kgs. 11:2). It is not easy to reconcile with this stark fact about him the many contemptuous references in Proverbs to “the strange woman.” Every woman who is not a true wife is to be reckoned a stranger. Adam had other ribs, but there was no move in Eden to provide him with other women, not even after Eve had failed him.

In this passage the Hebrew text seems to be definitely defective, for LXX reads: “they *twain* shall be one flesh.” Other versions also have this reading. But what is utterly decisive is that both Jesus and Paul quote the passage thus (Mt. 19:5; 1 Cor. 6:16) the former using the words as a final authority against divorce, and the latter in an equally strong passage against fornication. And to this day that word “*twain*” forbids multiple marriages, even though spiritual giants like Abraham and Jacob and David took more than one wife. Such saints must all have known the divine principle in Genesis: one man, one woman. The unprotesting grace of God regarding this is something to marvel at.

The emphasis on “*one flesh*” stresses that marriage without a physical union is not a marriage. But also, by implication it disallows any kind of promiscuity. Can a man or a woman be “one flesh” with more than one other? The logic of the situation requires that an act of fornication automatically puts marriage with any other out of question, except by the grace of God - “for the hardness of your hearts”, He suffers it. This is the main point of the Lord’s “permissive clause” regarding divorce: “except it be for fornication” (Mt. 19:9). There the careful distinction between “fornication” and “adultery” (as in Mt. 15:19; Gal. 5:19 also) requires that Jesus be understood as legislating for the case of a newly-married man finding that his wife has earlier had a promiscuous relation with another man, so that (ideally) she has been thenceforward qualified to marry only the one she had earlier illicitly accepted. (Yet even in such an instance, the marriage of Hosea shows God’s mind on this problem).

It remains to consider the force of the “therefore” with which this highly important passage is introduced.

In effect it declares that since Adam and Eve had no parents, the union with wife or husband is to come first before that of duty to parents. As it was first in time - marriage before generation - so it is first in importance. Also, as marriage came in the time of Edenic innocence it is superior to generation (and therefore sonship) which belongs to the Fall. This is Paul’s argument in Eph. 5:30,31, that “for this cause” one who is joined to Christ is to forego as fully as he knows how his natural relationship to the old Adam from whom he has sprung.

It is surely not without significance that in a passage about the family rejoicing before the Lord (Dt. 16:11) there is no mention of the wife - not that her participation is unimportant but that her being “glued” to her husband, in this as in all family matters, is taken for granted.



**2:25 “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”**

This word “naked” is remarkable, for in Hebrew it is identical with the word “subtle” in the next verse. The two usages are both very common. Is it possible that the connection between them is via the fact that the crafty man usually appears to be bland, frank, and honest, with nothing to hide?

This stress on Adam’s and Eve’s childlike innocence prepares the way for the success of the serpent’s beguiling. What a dramatic change in tone between this chapter and the next. The chapter division, is superbly chosen.

As might be expected, this passage has become the focus of a number of incisive New Testament comments:

a. Hebrews 4:10-13:

“For he that is entered into his (God’s) rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his (Gen. 2:2). Let us labour therefore ... lest any man fall (as Adam did) after the same example of disobedience. For the Word of God (the voice of the Lord God in the midst of the garden) is ... sharper than any two-edged sword (the flaming sword which turned every way), piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit (outside and inside the garden), and of the joints and marrow (the sacrifice offered), and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Adam, hast thou eaten ...?). Neither is there any *creation* that is not manifest in his sight (even though hiding amidst the trees): but all things are naked and opened (and ashamed) before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

b. Revelation 3:18:

“I counsel thee to buy of me ... white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.”

c. Romans 5:5:

In a chapter packed with allusions to the Fall: “hope maketh not ashamed.” What hope? “Hope of the glory of God” - the cherubim of Gen 3:24. Hence “he that believeth shall not be ashamed” (10:11), with the last word deliberately altered from Isaiah 28:16.

## Commentary on Genesis, Chapter Three

**3:1 *Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?***

The narrative now to be examined is by far the most important in the book of Genesis. Just how important may be judged from the fact that the impressive and fascinating details of chapters 1 and 2 are a mere curtain-raiser to what is coming.

With his great drama “Paradise Lost,” John Milton is probably more responsible than any one individual for the common, almost universal, assumption that the serpent in Eden was the Devil in disguise. Which is somewhat remarkable, for a careful reader of “Paradise Lost” can hardly escape the conclusion that John Milton (whose theology was almost 100% Christadelphian) certainly did not intend the readers of his fine poetic drama to take his purple plot literally.

However, there it is. Most readers of Genesis 3 (and most non-readers of it!) blithely assume that a malign Satan, disguised as a snake, set himself to bring about the downfall of Eve.

Yet this first verse should be sufficient to set the record straight: “*more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.*” What point in comparing a rebellious immortal archangel with a created beast?

And later the penalty pronounced on the serpent requires reference to a *serpent*: “Thou art cursed *above all cattle, and above every beast of the field*; upon thy belly shalt thou go” (v.14). How palpably unfair, and indeed absurd, to lay such a curse on the inferior animal, a mere tool, and to let the rebel-spirit, the real culprit, go scot-free! Compare also the phrase “all the days of thy life” (v.14). Addressed to a serpent these words hold no difficulty, but spoken to a superhuman Devil what do they mean?

And if it be argued that in Revelation 12:9 the serpent-dragon is called the Devil and Satan, the simple answer is that, even apart from all the complex symbolism of that chapter, this name merely sums up the adversary character of the serpent in Eden, just as Peter was called Satan (Mt. 16:23) when he unwittingly became his Lord’s adversary. The allusions in Revelation 12 to Genesis 3, however they be interpreted, are quite unmistakable - the woman and her seed, and the enmity between the woman and the serpent.

It has been very plausibly argued that since Adam was appointed “to dress and to keep (guard)” the garden, then he was at fault in allowing the serpent into the garden at all. In the apocalyptic picture of paradise restored there is only blunt exclusion for “whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev. 21:27; 22:14,15). And in a passage which (as will be shown later) is full of allusions to the serpent in Genesis 3, Paul exhorts that “them which cause divisions and offences” be excluded from the ecclesia.

But these arguments overlook two very simple considerations - that the serpent was part of the creation which was pronounced "very good" (1:31); also, until Eve had been seduced into disobedience, how was Adam to know that there was an evil influence?

Another problem - a great favourite with the unbeliever - is the question why God allowed the temptation at all, since the serpent's success meant such disaster for the human pair and for all their progeny.

To this a three-fold answer may be offered:

- a. Men have no right to challenge the wisdom of God in this way. Since God's thoughts are so much higher than man's thoughts, even a puzzling uncomprehended act of God is to be accepted in faith, and not argued against.
- b. Temptation may be a good thing, a test demonstrating inner worth, as in the experience of Abraham (Gen. 22:1); and so it would have been in Eve's experience, had she come through it successfully. Temptation in the sense of an intention to bring to ruin is an evil thing (Jas. 1:13,14). God attempts that with no man. "He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" (1 Cor. 10:13).
- c. The ultimate outcome - salvation and glory in Christ - is the final vindication of God's counsel in creating a tempting serpent and a temptable man, and thus allowing Adam to fall and suffer. Christ may be a stumbling block and foolishness to some, but to those who know his salvation he is "the Wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23,24).

Why should the serpent be "more subtle than any beast of the field"? Why a talking serpent, so unique among the creatures God had made? Was it endowed with this remarkable power so as to make it an efficient tempter? The parallel of Balaam's ass (a favourite illustration) is no parallel at all, and if it were, it would not answer, but only intensify, the problem.

Explanation is available on different lines. There is evidence that the serpent itself ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge and thus acquired powers above its normal endowment. The possibility was certainly there. "Had the serpent, or any other animal, eaten of it (the tree of knowledge) he would not have transgressed, because the eating, or touching, of the tree was only prohibited to man" (Eureka 3.51).

This eating of knowledge-fruit by the serpent seems to be implied in an impressive sequence of details:

- a. Its power of speech is thus readily explained as having been imparted by the fruit of the tree of knowledge.
- b. Its subtlety is likewise explained. No other serpent has had this cleverness.

- c. "Ye shall not surely die" seems to read as just a bald statement, a flat denial of the word of God. What subtlety was there in this? But if the serpent was able to say: "See, I'm eating it, and no harm comes to me," there would be real cogency and persuasiveness.
- d. "Ye shall be as Elohim" is now seen to be an argument of considerable power, as who should say: 'I am only a beast of the field over whom you were given power, but eating of this fruit enables me to talk and puts me on level terms with yourself. So if you eat of it, will not you likewise be upgraded to be equal to the angels of God?'
- e. "the woman saw that the tree was good for food." How did she *see* this? The attractive appearance of the fruit would hardly prove this. There are plenty of berries and fruits which are a delight to the eye but which are definitely harmful as food. But seeing the serpent eat of the fruit would be demonstration enough.
- f. The curse on the serpent now takes on a special fitness: "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat" - an eloquent contrast with climbing the tree of knowledge and eating its fruit.
- g. Paul evidently read his Genesis 3 in this way, for in the middle of a series of comparisons between false teachers and the serpent comes this censure: "They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own *belly*" (Rom. 16:18). This can hardly be an allusion to the *curse* on the serpent, but it is very appropriate to its self-indulgence.

The serpent's gambit: "Yea, hath God said ...?" was not really a gambit, for its very first word (a word always charged with emotion) implies that this is the summary of an earlier discussion. Nor does the Hebrew sentence carry the usual mark of interrogation. It seems likely, then, that it should read as a sardonic sceptical affirmative: 'So, God has said, has he, Ye shall not eat ...'.

The spirit of the argument was bad from the start. It began, as all false Christianity does, by casting doubt on the veracity of the Word of God (cp. 2 Pet. 2:1; Acts 20:30,32) and by assuming the right of the creature to question what God has said or done. LXX pointedly suggests this: "Wherefore hath God said ...?"

And the sudden switch from "Lord God" to "God" may well have implied: 'It is only an angel who has said this to you, and not the Almighty himself!'

There is some ambiguity about the serpent's quotation of the divine prohibition: "Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden." This might hint at some unfairness or over-strictness on God's part. But the alternative (as RV, or RSV): "ye shall not eat of *any* tree of the garden" accuses the Almighty of downright injustice: 'The garden's yours, isn't it? Why can't you enjoy what is your own?' The serpent was proclaiming what men have believed ever since, that the earth is not the Lord's, nor the fulness thereof.

Allusions in the rest of Scripture back to the serpent in Eden are amazingly numerous - no, not amazingly, they are to be expected. But what is specially impressive is that in so many places the purpose of the reference is to expose the evil intentions of the nefarious Judaistic schemers who came into the early ecclesia with the specific intention of wrecking the entire new movement from within (on this, see "The Jewish Plot", in "Acts of the Apostles" by H.A.W.).

1. "but I fear, lest by any means, *as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety*, so your minds should be *corrupted from the simplicity* that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3; see also v.4,13-15,22). And the same sort of language was evidently being used by these evil men against Paul himself (12:16).
2. "But we have spoken out against the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully (as did the serpent)" (2 Cor. 4:2).
3. "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity they allure through the lusts of the flesh ... While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption" (2 Pet. 2:18,19).
4. "And then shall that Wicked One be revealed ... whose coming is *after the working of Satan* ... with all *deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that are perishing*; because they received not the love of *the truth* (the promise about the Seed of the woman), *that they might be saved* ... *strong delusion* that they should *believe a lie* ..." (2 Th. 2:8-11), a passage which makes much more sense when given a Judaistic rather than a papal reference).
5. It is about these Judaists that Paul quotes Psalm 140:3: "*adders' poison* is under their lips" (Rom. 3:13; see v.8).
6. "... for *the edifying* (Gen. 2:22 mg) of *the body of Christ*: till we all come ... unto a *perfect man* ... that we henceforth be *no more children*, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by *the sleight of men*. and *cunning craftiness*, whereby *they lie wait to deceive*: but speaking *the truth* in love ..." (Eph. 4:12-15, and v.16?).
7. "Put off... *the old man* which is *corrupt* according to *the deceitful lusts* ... put on *the new man* which *after God* (Gen. 1:26) is *created in righteousness* and true holiness. Wherefore *putting away lying*, speak every man *truth* with his neighbour: for we are *members one of another* ... neither give place to *the devil* (Eph. 4:22-27).
8. Paul's indignant apostrophe to Elymas the sorcerer: "O full of all *subtlety* and all mischief, *thou child* of the devil (seed of the serpent), wilt thou not cease to *pervert the right ways of the Lord*?" (Acts 13:10).

Passages such as these (and the longer catalogue listed below against verse 15), trenchant in themselves, acquire yet added force when the allusions back to Genesis are perceived.

**3:2,3 *“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*”**

It is noteworthy that in these six verses the woman was alone. Away from her husband she was the more susceptible to temptation (cp. the spirit of Mt. 5:32: “causeth her to commit adultery”).

Clearly, by “the tree which is in the midst of the garden” Eve meant the tree of knowledge. But why no mention, either in the way of permission or prohibition, of the tree of life? Was this because at this time it had as yet borne no fruit? (see on 2:17).

It has often been said, with but little justification, that in her words: “neither shall ye touch it,” Eve was unwarrantably adding to the word of God. This is surely an unfair judgement, for the emphasis of many a scripture is on the wisdom of keeping as far away from temptation as possible (Pr. 4:15; Ps. 1:1; Mt. 6:13; Mk. 9:43). It is much more likely that the original prohibition (2:17) included this additional warning. Certainly it is to Eve’s credit that she answered the serpent with plural pronouns, thus expressing her sense of unity with her husband. At this moment she was unwilling to act without his collaboration.

**3:4 *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:***

Now was the moment when the serpent should have been excluded from the garden, and - had Adam been present - it very probably would have been.

In “Paradise Lost” Milton neatly suggests that the serpent was insinuating the doctrine of the immortality of the soul:

“So shall ye die perhaps, by putting off.  
Human to put on Gods - death to be wished.”

Kidner makes the curt observation: “The first doctrine to be denied is judgement.”

**3:5 *“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”***

At Taanach in Israel there has been found an ancient altar which shows in relief a serpent and what is probably the tree of knowledge.

From the plural pronouns it is possible to infer that part of the temptation was that Eve could count on being joined in the transgression by her husband: “Ye shall be as Elohim ...”

The serpent's lie made God into the deceiver - just as the false prophets represented Jeremiah as being a false prophet (20:7,8), and Jesus was called Baal-zebub (Mt. 12:24), and Paul was said to catch his converts by craft and guile (2 Cor. 12:16).

There might also be the implication that 'God knows you can be His equal, but He wants to exclude you from this which is yours by right! Compare growing children asserting themselves against their parents and turning a blind eye to the permanent validity of the Fifth Commandment.

"Eyes opened"! This indeed happened, in one sense; but in another sense there came a blindness which turned out to be a family characteristic only to be cured by personal contact with Christ (Is. 61:1, where RV is certainly correct; Lk. 4:18), which blindness will be finally taken away in Messiah's Kingdom (Is. 35:5).

Another part of the deceit may have been: 'Angels eat of the fruit of that tree (v.22), then why should not you' - "ye shall be as Elohim knowing good and evil" (reference to angels, and not to the Almighty, is required by the plural form of "knowing"; the rabbis also interpret in this way).

In 1 Timothy, following an explicit reference to the Fall in Eden (2:12-15), Paul continues to write with his eye on the temptation of Eve: among the qualifications of an elder, he requires that he be 'not a novice (cp. the innocence of Eve), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil (the censure incurred by the serpent: Gen. 3:14). Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (the serpent's trap)" (1 Tim. 3:6,7 - and note "double-tongued" in v.8).

In Philippians 2 there is a sustained contrast between the temptation and fall in Eden and the complete conquest of temptation by Jesus: "... who, being *originally* in the form of God ('let us make man in our image'), thought it not a thing to be grasped after (as Eve and Adam took the forbidden fruit) to be equal with God ('ye shall be as gods'). But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (this is Gen. 5:3) ... and became obedient (not disobedient, as Adam) unto death (Gen. 2:17), even the death of the cross (contrast the tree of life)" (Phil. 2:6-8; there are several other allusions in the context).

**3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.**

In every man the power of the eyes (and through the eyes the imagination) to excite evil desires surpasses their owner's sense of awareness and (usually) powers of self-discipline. "When I saw ... then I coveted ...," confessed Achan at Jericho; "and they raised over him a great heap of stones" (Josh. 7:21,26). By contrast, Moses looked away from the allurements of treasure and power in Egypt, "for he had respect (LXX s.w. 3:6) unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11:26).

The serpent doubtless commended craftily the woman's "lust of the flesh, and lust of the eyes, and pride of life" (1 Jn. 2:16). But it was only when personal inclination chimed in with the external incitement from the serpent that Eve's downfall began. Temptation is no temptation until there resonates an answering chord in the mind of the individual. And when that happens, as with Eve, the battle usually becomes a rout.

It is noteworthy that there was many another tree that was "pleasant to the eyes" (2:9), but this was the only one that was pleasant to the eyes and forbidden, which made it all the more alluring.

"She saw ... she took ... she ate" - these are verbs of ruin. The separate stages are well-marked in the narrative. Even when the fruit was in her hand Eve need not have eaten; but already it was much harder to say "No."

These words are also verbs of salvation, for Jesus says: "Take ... eat." Jn. 6:50-54 points a mighty contrast. There may be a Biblical link between eating and sin (e.g. Mt. 4:3), but there is a much more emphatic link between eating and resurrection life: Lk. 24:41-43; Mk. 5:43; Jn. 12:1,2; Acts 1:4; 10:41; Mt. 26:29; Lk. 22:15; Rev. 3:20; 19:9; 2:7.

It cannot be assumed that Adam was present at the time of the temptation, for in that case his failure to exclude the serpent from the garden, as soon as that beast said: "Yea, hath God said ...," would have constituted an earlier sin than the eating of the fruit - for was he not put in the garden to "keep" it?

But as soon as he was "with her" *his* temptation began and was far stronger than hers. "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife" (v.17) certainly suggests that Adam needed some persuading.

The apostolic comments on this disobedience in Eden are in a different vein and of a different quality from those of the rabbis who say that Eve reasoned: "If I am to die, let my husband die also, that he take not another wife." They also infer, quite foolishly, that Eve also gave the forbidden fruit to all the living creatures in the garden so that death came on them also! (see note on 2:17).

Now contrast Paul:

"I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man (or, possibly, over her husband; Gk, *anēr*) ... For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And *Adam was not deceived*, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:12-14).

It is implied here that there was some excuse for Eve because she faced a barrage of deceit from the serpent, but Adam sinned with his eyes wide open - 'he was not deceived', but knew precisely what he was doing and what the consequences would be. It follows, then, that in



sharing the forbidden fruit with Eve he was making a deliberate choice, preferring to be with his wife, even in condemnation, rather than with his Maker in purity.

This explains why New Testament emphasis makes Adam, and not Eve, the first sinner: “As by one *man* sin entered into the world ... by one *man*’s offence death reigned ... by one *man*’s disobedience many were made sinners” (Rom. 5:12,17,18) “by *man* came death ... as in *Adam* all die (1 Cor. 15:21,22).

Even so, it is a legacy and lesson of Eden that a man must be prepared to “hate his wife” (Lk. 14:26) as well as others close to him. “If the wife of thy bosom ... entice thee” (Dt. 13:6) is a very pointed warning in the Law of Moses.

***3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.***

The serpent had promised enlightenment (v.5), and in this he spoke truth - and yet was a deceiver, for their eyes were opened not to a wonderful new world of knowledge such as angels shared, but to a shattering self-knowledge of their own degradation.

How different in Christ! His cross was a tree of death which has yet become a gracious means of opening the eyes, not only to guilt and subjection to a curse, but also to divine truth about an undeserved salvation. At Emmaus another man and wife ate, and their eyes were opened (Lk. 24:31,35), but for them it was an incomparable blessing. And so also for all in Christ who have “the eyes of their understanding enlightened ... in the knowledge of him” (Eph. 1:17,18).

Adam and Eve “knew that they were naked.” But of course this was already familiar knowledge, Nor can it be assumed that the eating of the forbidden fruit brought sexual instincts to life, for already it had been said to them in blessing: “Be fruitful and multiply.”

But the fact that their immediate reaction was to cover their nakedness does suggest an intensification of sexual inclinations (as v.10,16 seem to imply). Is there justification, though, for putting together three verses in this order?: “And Eve gave unto her husband, and he did eat with her (3:6; sic!). And Adam knew his wife, and she conceived (4:1). And the eyes of them were both opened, and they knew that they were naked (3:7)” (Elpis Israel, p.93).

It would seem that the ecclesia at Laodicea was in even worse plight than Adam and Eve: “Thou knowest not that thou art ... blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17). Yet, such is the grace of Christ, there is here no expulsion, but only a grim warning and exhortation to repentance.

It has been well observed that the fig-leaf garments were an eloquent figure of the sinners who wore them - fine and glossy, but nevertheless death had set in because they were severed from the source of their life; soon they would be withered and dead. Contrast the character and power of the leaves of the tree of life: Rev. 22:2.

From another angle there is further point in this symbolism. In not a few places in the Bible the fig tree is a clearly recognizable figure of Jewry, especially in its attitude to justification by works (hence the peremptory instruction to Zaccheus to come down out of his fig tree; Lk. 19:5). Thus, from the first, men have sought to make themselves presentable in the sight of Almighty God, either through claiming merit by descent from Abraham (Jn. 8:33), or through their own acts of righteousness. And to this day they are unwilling to learn that they can be adequately clothed before God by accepting the garment He provides (3:21).

It is not easy to see why (from a practical angle) fig leaves should have been selected for the fashioning of garments. Would not banana leaves or some such have been of more practical value? It has been speculated that the choice was dictated by the fact (?) that the tree of knowledge was a fig tree, but there is no hint of evidence for this.

It stands as a permanent acknowledgement of human sin that all the priests of Israel were girt with girdles (Lev. 8:13; s.w. Gen. 3:7 aprons). But the high priest had also a heavenly girdle (Lev. 8:7), and Messiah is described as equipped with two girdles, thus being identified as Priest as well as King (Is. 11:5).

So also those in Christ, in their warfare against “the spiritual ones of wickedness”, are enabled to stand, having “loins girt about with truth (and not the lie of the serpent) and also having on the breastplate of righteousness (and with it the curious girdle of the ephod)” (Eph. 6:12-14).

But those who would follow a man-made religion of self-contrived works find that “their iniquities have separated between them and their God, and their sins have hid his face from them ... their hands are defiled with blood (which does not atone) ... their lips have spoken lies ... they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice eggs (begetting a serpent seed) ... Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works” (Is. 59:2ff).

Was it perhaps a sense of shame which made Peter gird his fisher’s coat about him before going to Jesus, not just because he was naked but because of a feeling of guilt in having gone back to his fishing (a futile fishing) when his Master had called him to be a shepherd (Jn. 21:3,7,15)?

***3:8 “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.***

Here most commentators read “the sound of the Lord God,” but this is not the normal meaning of the Hebrew word. It is probably better to read “Voice” as meaning the angelic spokesman of the Almighty. And, in view of the concatenation in Revelation 12 of Woman, Seed, Angel and Serpent, it is tempting to identify the Voice as the archangel Michael.

The word for “the cool of the day” is really “wind” or “Spirit.” There is no lack of examples of God manifesting Himself in the roar of a whirlwind (Job 38:1; Ps. 29; Is. 30:30,31), and who shall say that such manifestation was inappropriate to present circumstances?

Adam and Eve may have been given tenancy of the garden; but it was God’s garden, and if that tenancy had been abused was it not right that by some means the Owner should give a first indirect intimation of impending notice to quit?

In later days Israel was reminded that “the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp ... therefore shall thy camp be holy: that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee” (Dt. 23:14). So also in Eden. “There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid, that shall not be known” (Lk. 12:2).

The text reads literally: “And Adam hid himself and his wife from the face of the Lord God in the tree of the garden.” Here, “tree” may be used in the collective sense (a usage common enough in the Old Testament), or it may be that one specific tree - the tree of life? a fig tree? the tree of knowledge? - is intended.

In any case, here was recognition that fig leaves could not hide a bad conscience from the scrutiny of God, could not even hide the shame of nakedness from Him who can “bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts” (1 Cor. 4:5). The only way in which these sinners could save their souls from death and hide a multitude of sins was by being converted from the error of their way (Jas. 5:20). By and by that conversion would come. But at present there was only the horror of heaven’s disapprobation.

What a contrast between these sinners hiding from the Lord God, amidst the trees of the garden, and Jesus sought by his enemies in another garden. He stood forth, asking: “Whom seek ye?” and it was they who went backward and fell to the ground (Jn. 18:1,4,6). Thus began the reversal of the Fall, the restoring of paradise. And when that purpose in Christ comes to its climax, sinners who have arrogantly assumed that God’s world belongs to them will “hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains” in a day when “the fig tree is shaken of a mighty wind” (Rev. 6:13,15).

### ***3:9 “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”***

With this first question in the Old Testament contrast the first in the New Testament: “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” (Mt. 2:2).

It is Adam who is addressed. He is the real sinner (see again 1 Tim. 2:14). And suppose he had given a more direct answer, what would it have been?: “I am skulking amongst the trees, for - being a naked sinner - I fear Thy Glory.”

Of course the angel knew where Adam was. Then why trouble to ask? First, to bring home to Adam where he was, and why. And, more importantly, to lead him on to honest and open confession of his sin, so that the way to forgiveness might be opened, for until a man is honest about himself, the remission of sins is a plain impossibility.

Consider David after his sin regarding Bathsheba and Uriah: "When I kept silence (concerning my sin; v.1,2), my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" (Ps. 32:3,4).

But now note the dramatic change: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord: and (the immediate consequence!) thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (v.5; cp. 2 Sam. 12:9,13).

So also with the Prodigal. When he "came to himself" and made resolve to go home and confess his folly and his sin, all was immediately right. The wonderful welcome given him choked in his throat the intended petition: "Make me as one of thy hired servants." There is only one status for a confessed repentant sinner - that of being a son, brought home with a gladness too intense for words.

*This* was why the sinner was asked: "Where art thou? ... Hast thou eaten ...?... What is this that thou hast done?"

And Jesus learned it also from his Father: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" (Mt. 26:50) is only one example out of many. When the Son of God wished to rebuke and to lead to repentance, he asked a question. It makes an impressive and humiliating exercise in the study of the gospels to search out the many instances in which Jesus probed a man's conscience (or his blind ignorance) by asking a question.

**3:10 *"And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked: and I hid myself."***

This is the first mention of fear, and the explanation given was an evasion, Adam's euphemism for "because I know myself to be a sinner." Only a little while before, they were both naked and were not ashamed (2:25). The fact that shame was now their *natural* condition shows that their nature had been vitiated (this was one of Peter Watkins' insights). From now on "nakedness" (except in the sense of destitution) is a close associate of "shame" (Ex. 32:25; Jn. 19:23; Heb. 12:2).

Adam's past tense: "I hid myself," when a present continuous: "I am hiding," might well be expected, indicates that he had already come out into the full light of day, the full light of God. It was his first step towards redemption: "If we walk in the light ... the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7).

But why no mention of Eve: If indeed Adam was looking for an opportunity to unload the blame (as v.12 is so often explained), why did he wait until then, instead of grasping at the opportunity immediately? It rather looks as though he meant to cover up Eve's guilt if he could (and v.12 strongly supports this).

**3:11 *"And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"***

The divine interrogation explores the only two possibilities. Either Adam is now over-conscious of his nakedness because this and its meaning has been emphasized to him by an angel, or he has flouted the commandment and eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The important issue here is: Is there enough honesty in the man to make confession? or will he try to hide behind a lie?

The question saved up its crucially important word to the end: "From the tree which I commanded thee not to eat of, hast thou *eaten*?" Adam's answer, betraying consciousness of his nakedness, had already given him away.

**3:12 *"And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."***

Adam's words here are almost universally read as an attempt to unload the blame on to his wife, "a retreat into verbal hiding," implying either:

'It's her fault, she took the fruit first, and then egged me on;' or:

'The fault is really *yours*. You made me, and it is You who gave me such a wife as this.' (This latter is a philosophy wondrous popular in our discerning 20th century: Why should we be held accountable, since we are only what we are?)

Both ways of reading Adam's apologia are hopelessly wrong, for two reasons:

- a. If either excuse had been intended, is it conceivable that Adam would have been forgiven (as he certainly was; see comment on v.21)?
- b. Paul's comment in 1 Tim. 2:14 is irrefutable: "And Adam was *not deceived*, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Thus the reader is shut up to the only alternative reading, which is much more logical and satisfying anyway: Did You not appoint (the Hebrew for "gave" often has this idiomatic meaning: e.g. 1:29; 9:13; 41:41; 48:22) that we two should be one (Adam was as good as

quoting God's words back at Him: "cleave to his wife, they shall be one flesh"); then since my wife is involved in this transgression, must I not join her in it?

Seen in this light Adam's sin, done quite deliberately ("not deceived"), expressed his preference for being involved in sin along with his wife rather than continuing in innocent and rewarding fellowship with his Maker. What is this but the very mistake, the identical bad choice, which many another man has made since then and which to the present day continues to provoke heartache and to besmirch many an ecclesial Eden.

Paul is most insistent that his readers discern a close parallel between the first Adam and his counterpart, Christ, in the New Creation:

"As by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; *even so* by the righteousness of one the free gift (forgiveness) came upon all men (in the New Creation) unto justification of life."

"For *as* by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, *so* by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:18,19).

"The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45).

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:30-32).

In phrase after phrase the parallel between Adam and Christ is underlined in Phil. 2:5ff. Whoever reads this passage without allowing his mind to dart backwards and forwards between Adam and Christ misses much of the force of the words:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, *being originally in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be grasped* (as Adam did the forbidden fruit) *to be equal with God*: but ... he humbled himself, and *became obedient unto death*, even the death of the cross (the tree of death). Wherefore God also hath ... given him the Name which is above every name ('ye shall be as Elohim')... Jesus Christ is LORD".

Fuller details at the end of this chapter.

**3:13 "And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."**

The divine interrogation could refer to the eating of the forbidden fruit or to her persuading of Adam to join her in the transgression. Eve evidently understood the first of these.

There was no camouflage about her answer. What she stated was simple fact. The serpent had acted evilly; and, deceived, she ate. There was no attempt at excuse.

This beguiling (did Eve coin the word?) by the serpent is referred to very pungently in a number of places in the New Testament. These will be brought together in the notes on v.14,15.

**3:14 *“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:”***

The serpent went unquestioned. Apparently it was not regarded as a responsible creature, as Adam and Eve certainly were. And yet (v.14) it is cursed, primarily - it would seem - as an object lesson to the entire human family. Doth God take thought for serpents? When men come under the judgement of God, the lower creatures share in that judgement, as at the Flood (Gen. 6:5-7) and the destruction of the Gadarene swine (Mt. 8:31,32); cp. also Lev. 20:15.

There is ambiguity here in the Hebrew text. AV seems to be right in taking it as a commonplace comparative: “more than all cattle,” but RVm (nearly always dependable) follows LXX in reading “from among.”

This could imply that until the curse the serpent was one of the animals most useful to man - “cattle” suggests this - and the added punishment: “upon thy belly shalt thou go,” would then indicate that originally the serpent was a creature with legs.

However the New Testament does not concern itself with these physical details but uses the same word “cursed” with reference to “every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13), a scripture which inevitably links with the Son of man crucified, “as Moses lifted up (on a tree) the serpent in the wilderness” (Jn. 3:14).

“Dust shalt thou eat” is a puzzling phrase. Some commentators rather pathetically cite “ancient belief” that snakes actually eat dust. Was homo sapiens ever as silly and unobservant as that? And, anyway, these were God’s words. The expression, like the next verse about the serpent, is surely figurative, as meaning that all the pleasures of sin were to be like eating fruit which turns to dust in the mouth (cp. Dt. 32:32), or that sin would feed on men made dust of the ground.

This latter sense opens up possibilities regarding the familiar words in Is. 65:25 - in the Messianic kingdom “dust shall be the serpent’s meat.” This, usually taken (rather vaguely) to mean that then there will be a great abhorring of all sin, may on the other hand mean that the fruits of sin in human life will be more manifest than they have ever been: “The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed (like the serpent);” v.20.

Another prophecy of Messiah's coming has this: "They (the godless nations) shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the Lord our God." (Mic. 7:17). It is the final repudiation of human sin.

In the trial of the bitter waters there is made a close association between the unfaithful woman and the dust of the floor of the tabernacle (Num. 5:17). A connection with Genesis 3 may be intended, but is not very clear.

Much more definite and luminous is Paul's phraseology in Ephesians 6:

"Let no man *deceive* you with *vain words*: for because of these things cometh *the wrath of God* upon *the children of disobedience*. Be not ye therefore *partakers with them* (Is this another hint that the serpent ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge?) ... for *the fruit of the Spirit* is in all goodness and righteousness and *truth*. Proving what is *acceptable unto the Lord*. And have *no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*, but rather reprove them. For it is *a shame ...*" (v.6-12).

"We have renounced *the hidden things of dishonesty*, not walking in *craftiness*, nor *handling the word of God deceitfully*: but by manifestation of *the truth* commending ourselves to every man's conscience *in the sight of God*. But if our gospel be *hid*, it is hid to *them that are perishing*: in whom *the god of this world* hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is *the image of God*, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:2-4).

**3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."**

For centuries this verse has been called the Protevangelium, the first announcement of the gospel. It isn't the first, really, for - as has been indicated, in a number of places - various parts of chapters 1,2 are interpreted in the New Testament with reference to the New Creation in Christ. But as a pithy symbolic summary of the Atonement, Genesis 3:15 is in a class to itself.

Even the Jewish Targums interpret this passage as a prophecy of the Messiah; and LXX seems to imply the same idea also. But how remarkable that the first promise of a Redeemer should be made to the serpent, and not to the sinners! Does Ezekiel 36:22 explain?: "I do this not for your sakes ... but for mine holy name's sake."

How appropriate it is that as the serpent used the woman against the man, so God purposed to use the woman against the serpent. In the same way, so Wordsworth observes, the sea which, Pharaoh thought, had trapped escaping Israel destroyed his army instead. And Goliath, the invincible adversary, was beheaded with his own sword.



Roman Catholic versions of this verse read: “*she* shall bruise thy head,” and reference to the Virgin Mary is claimed. This is hopelessly wrong, for in the Hebrew text both verb and pronoun are masculine.

Somewhat remarkably, Dr. Thomas interprets the crushing of the head of the serpent as meaning the destruction of the great Gogian invasion in the Last Days (Exp. Dan. p.83; and cp. Eureka 3.59).

Doubts have been raised as to whether the reading “bruise” is correct, for neither of the other occurrences of this Hebrew word (Job 9:17, Ps. 139:11 only) very pointedly support AV here. However, as will be shown by and by, Paul (in Rom. 16:20) quite definitely understood the passage to mean “bruise.”

The distinction between a blow in the head and a blow in the heel is readily perceived. The latter means at worst partial or temporary disablement, whereas the former is a death wound. The Redeemer, the Seed of the woman, was to suffer to a limited extent in his conflict with the power of Sin, but in the process he was to win an outright victory. It is, of course, a picture of a man stamping on the serpent’s head to crush its life, and in the very act of so doing he is stung by the Enemy in the heel.

In the middle of this century there was found at Jerusalem a first-century grave of a man who had been crucified, and from his remains it was possible to infer that he had been fastened to his cross by a large nail through the Achilles tendon of both feet. So it seems likely that the death of Christ also involved a *literal* bruising of the heel.

Commentators have strangely neglected to note the dislocation of the balance of phrases in this important verse. After “enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed (the serpent’s seed) and her Seed,” one would naturally expect: “It (the Seed of the woman) shall bruise thy seed’s head;” but instead the text has: “He shall bruise *thy* head,” that is, the promised Saviour was to destroy not merely the seed of the serpent but the Edenic serpent itself. Thus there is foreshadowed here a profound and utterly necessary element of redemption - that the merits of Christ’s sacrifice are retrospective as well as prospective - right back through the old dispensation to Eden itself men of faith had forgiveness of their sins through the blood of Christ. Faith in the Redeemer shown by Daniel and David and Moses and Abraham and Noah *and Adam and Eve* was the means of their salvation. There is salvation no other way: “*No man cometh unto the Father but by me*” (Jn. 14:6).

Three highly important New Testament passages emphasize this retrospective power of Christ’s sacrifice:

1. “... the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiatory sacrifice (through faith in his blood), to declare his righteousness *for the remission of sins that are past*, through the forbearance of God ...” (Rom. 3:24,25).

2. "For this cause he (Christ) is the mediator of the New Covenant, that a death having taken place *for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant*, they which have been already called (Greek perfect tense) might receive the promise, i.e. eternal inheritance (genitive of apposition here)" (Heb. 9:15).
3. When Christ died on the cross, "the graves were opened (then!), and after his resurrection many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves, and went into the holy city ..." (Mt. 27:52,53). These recognized saints were probably disciples of the Lord who had died during his ministry believing in him. But, whoever they were, their resurrection then was an earnest of what the death and resurrection of Christ could achieve for faithful men who died before him and believing in him.

The same idea is implicit in the white robes given to the "souls under the altar" in the Fifth Seal (Rev. 6:9-11). This is expounded in full detail in "Revelation: a Biblical approach," chapter 13.

A consideration of this outstandingly important passage would be seriously incomplete without a review of the many passages, both Old Testament and New Testament, which allude to it. Some of these have already been touched on in connection with verses 1 and 6 and 14 (all of which, see), but there are many more, some of them casting a clearer light on the essential meaning.

1. Jesus himself identified the seed of the serpent when he denounced the Pharisees and scribes: "Ye serpents, ye generation (i.e. seed) of vipers, how can ye escape ...?" (Mt. 23:33, cp. 3:7). That same day "they consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety (s.w. Gen. 3:1), and kill him" (Mt. 26:4). Within 48 hours their condemnation was sealed by his death on the cross.
2. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth ..." (Jn. 3:14). Familiarity with these words can blind the mind to their startling implications. Apart from the impressiveness of the type (Num. 21:5-9), it is here declared that in the death of Christ sin itself was destroyed - "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14), yet another allusion to the serpent in Eden.
3. There can be no manner of doubt that when Paul wrote that "she (the woman) shall be saved through the childbearing" (1 Tim. 2:15), he was referring to the Seed of the woman. The alternative, that a woman achieves salvation through producing a large family may be good Catholic doctrine but Biblically it is hopelessly absurd.
4. "For he is our peace ... having abolished in his flesh *the enmity*, even the law of *commandments contained in ordinances*; for to make in himself of twain *one new man*, so making peace; and that he might *reconcile both unto God* in one body by the cross, having *slain the enmity* thereby" (Eph. 2:15,16). Is it possible that here Paul is hinting at a

correspondence between redeemed Jews and Gentiles, and Adam and Eve? (Or does the “parable” run differently?).

5. 1 John 3 has a sustained allusion to Genesis 3: “Little children, let no man *deceive* you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he (Jesus) is righteous. *He that committeth sin is of the devil* (seed of the serpent); for *the devil sinneth from the beginning*. For this purpose *the Son of God* was manifested, that he *might destroy the works of the devil*. Whosoever is *born of God* doth not go on committing sin; for his (God’s) seed abides in him: and he cannot go on sinning, because he (like the Seed of the woman) is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil” (3:7-10); then follows an allusion to Cain and Abel, as typical of the two classes.
6. Also, somewhat less obviously: “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not (does not go on sinning); but he that is begotten of God (Jesus, the Seed of the woman) keepeth him, and that wicked one toucheth him not” (1 Jn. 5:18). Here, with the word “keepeth” John seems to look back to the somewhat mysterious LXX reading of Gen. 3:16, which has “keep” for “bruise”.
7. “The *knowledge* of him that hath called us to glory and virtue (or, by his glory and virtue): whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises (Gen. 3:15 especially): that by these ye might be partakers (contrast Adam’s eating) of the divine nature (“ye shall be as Elohim”), having escaped the corruption (“thou shalt surely die”) that is in the world through lust (“when the woman saw ...”) (2 Pet. 1:3,4).
8. Peter’s denunciation of contemporary corrupters of the faith employs Genesis phraseology: “... them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government ... not afraid to *speak evil of dignities* ... But these, as natural *brute beasts* (the serpent!), made to be taken and *destroyed*, *speak evil of the things they understand not*; and shall *utterly perish* in their own *corruption* ... Spots are they, and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own *deceivings* while they *feast with you*” (2 Pet. 2:10-13; and see also v.18,19).
9. “... the acknowledging of *the truth* which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life which *God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*” (Tit. 1:2). What can this refer to, if not to Genesis 3:15?
10. Paul’s rebuke of Elymas the sorcerer is fairly explicit: “O full of all *subtlety* and all *mischief*, thou child of the devil (seed of the serpent), thou *enemy* of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to *pervert the right ways of the Lord*?” (Acts 13:10). Doubtless Paul used this kind of language because it had been used against him when he was an adversary of the truth:
11. “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:5; 26:14). The usual explanation - a stubborn animal having to be prodded into useful activity - suffers from the drawback of being unBiblical. Is it possible to believe that such a man as Jesus would reprove such a man as Saul without having recourse to the words of Holy Scripture? On the other hand, the

word for “kick” means more specifically “to kick with the heel.” And “pricks” actually describes the sting of a serpent (Rev. 9:10; 1 Cor. 15:55 only). “It is hard for thee to kick with thy heel against the sting of the serpent.” This puts the passage in a completely new light. Saul saw Jesus as being the serpent in Israel’s Eden and himself as the conqueror of a great power of evil! Within seconds he realised that the roles were just the reverse: as in –

12. Psalm 91:13: “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.” But there is here the problem: why mention of the lion?
13. “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me” (Ps. 41:9; Jn. 13:18). There is remarkable similarity here to Acts 9:5 as expounded in paragraph 11. Then, reading these words with reference to the serpent, is it possible that there is light here on the dramatic swing of loyalty made by Judas? - that, like Caiaphas (Jn. 11:50), he had come to the conclusion that the work of Jesus was going to mean destruction for the nation unless he, Judas, fulfilled the role of redeemer and crushed the threat before it became worse? - Jesus filling the part of the serpent, and Judas in the role of Redeemer!
14. Moses’ rod became a serpent. But, empowered by God, he made this symbol of sin harmless, turning it into a token of divine authority vested in himself (Ex. 4:4). But certain differences from Genesis 3:15 were essential to distinguish between the redeeming work of Moses and that of Christ. The other sign (4:6,7) foreshadows Christ afflicted with the consequences of the sin-disease and yet in his own bosom overcoming that sin-nature.
15. One of Isaiah’s lovely pictures of Messiah’s kingdom describes “the sucking child playing on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child putting his hand in the cockatrice den” (11:8), because the serpent is slain, his den is empty. Other rather less obvious Scriptures to consider are: Ps. 49:5: (applied to the death and resurrection of Jesus: Expos. of Daniel, J.T., p.14); Ps. 72:9; 74:13; Mt. 1:23; 10:16; Lk. 10:18,19; Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 15:25,26.

By contrast with the foregoing comments (OT and NT) on 3:15, the Century Bible (as a sample of modern commentaries) has this: “Part of the curse upon the serpent, is the constant feud between the serpent tribe and mankind.”

***3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.***

When first created, the man and his wife had been bidden: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” From the very first, procreation was an essential feature of the Creator’s purpose with them. Now, one of the fruits of transgression is to be an intensifying of the woman’s fecundity. Population explosion in the 20th century brings home the stark fact of the Fall. In ancient days they coped with this problem by passing their children through the fire to

Moloch (or his equivalent), and thus causing yet more sorrow and more conception for the woman. In these enlightened times, we have the pill and organized abortion in a determination to cancel out Genesis. LXX reads: “pains and groaning” (cp. Rev. 12:2 with its reference to this place). A woman’s travail has become the Bible’s most vivid figure for extreme agony and wretchedness (Ps. 48:6; Is. 13:8; 21:3).

But there has been one delightful exception: “Hail, thou that art *highly favoured*, the Lord is with thee: *blessed* art thou among women” (Lk. 1:28).

With this single exception, “a woman when she is in travail hath sorrow ... but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world” (Jn. 16:21). With this parable of his disciples’ distress over his suffering, and joy regarding his resurrection, Jesus expounded beforehand the enigmatic symbolism of the woman and man-child in Rev. 12:2,5.

Appropriately Eve was now bidden see as her lord the one whom she had lured into transgression. Suffering through her union with him, she would yet desire to be subject to him more than ever: “Thy desire shall be to thy husband.” Desire and domination take the place of love and cherishing.

No amount of strident emphasis on women’s lib. can set aside this abiding principle established by God, that *in the family* the man has the superior status: just as “the head of every man (in the church) is Christ,” so also “the head of the woman is the man” (1 Cor. 11:3). “Let your wives keep silence in the churches ... they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the Law (in Gen. 3:16)” (1 Cor. 14:34). “I suffer not a wife to teach, nor to usurp authority over her husband” (1 Tim. 2:12).

Even when the husband is an unbeliever, the principle still applies: “Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that, if any obey not the the word (of the gospel), they also may without the word be won by the demeanour, the way of life, of the wives” (1 Pet. 3:1).

Apart from this husband-wife relationship, in Christ “there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

There is a more fundamental reason than the one already advanced why a woman must be content to accept a lower status:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, *as unto the Lord*. For the husband is the head of the wife, *even as Christ is the head of the church ... Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ*, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything” (Eph. 5:22-24).

This highly important passage says the very opposite of what it is often taken to mean: *not* that the relationship of Christ and the church affords a useful illustration of man and wife, but that, immediately after the first promise of a Saviour (3:15), God appointed that the marriage bond

should illustrate on a small scale the big grand Divine Idea: Christ and his redeemed. Human marriage was henceforward intended by God to be a small-scale replica, a microcosm, of Christ and the Church.

When two people come together with this divine relationship as the dominating ideal of all that they hope to be to each other, then - and only then - is the marriage on a proper footing. The wife is dedicated to seek the well-being of her husband as completely as a true church aims at pleasing her Lord. And as Christ gave himself fully, completely, and utterly, in life and in death, for those he came to save, so will a true husband unselfishly care for his wife in everything at the expense of his own inclinations.

When a marriage is built on this God-appointed foundation, both partners making a conscious and sustained effort to turn this ideal into a living reality, all marriage difficulties evaporate - there is no problem that is not capable of sweet solution.

***3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;***

Again, there is an element of appropriateness about this curse. Man (Adam), made out of the ground (*adamah*) and eating of the forbidden tree growing out of it, finds himself chained as a slave to the ground. What was designed originally to be one of his highest pleasures (2:15,16,19), is to be a discouraging drudgery. "Vanity of vanities ... what profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun" (Ecc. 1:2,3). "The creation (Paul certainly means the New Creation of redeemed men and women) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth (Gen. 3:16) in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:21,22).

It is surely significant that only the serpent and the ground are cursed - the great enemies: sin and death.

The phrase: "cursed for thy sake" could well read: "by thy transgression," by the sin of the man taken out of the ground. Or, by the slightest possible change (because of the common confusion in Hebrew between R and D): "by, or in, thy works." LXX reads thus. If the last of these, then it is an anticipation of the grim pronouncements of v.18,19. The psalmist's allusion to "eating the bread of sorrows" probably looks back to this curse in Genesis (Ps. 127:2).

Yet the world is a very lovely place and in many considerable areas it is wonderfully fertile. Then, if so productive now, when the curse of God lies on it, and when men in their thoughtless selfishness plunder it to the top of their bent what can it be expected to be like when the whole earth becomes a paradise restored, "a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth (not curse, but) righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13)?

One of Isaiah's pictures of the age to come has frequent allusions back to Genesis:

"The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed ... they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them ... as the days of a tree (LXX: the tree of life) are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain (as Adam), nor (as Eve) bring forth for trouble (LXX: for the curse): for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord (the seed of the woman) ... dust shall be the serpent's meat ..." (Is. 65:20-25).

**3:18 *"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;"***

It is not by accident that the Hebrew word for "thorn" also means "that which is to be abhorred." From this time on "thorns and thistles" becomes one of Scripture's most pejorative terms (Num. 33:55; Mt. 7:16; Job 31:40; Heb. 6:8), an appropriate description for sons of Belial (2 Sam. 23:6). And some passages seem to imply an intensification of the curse of Eden (Hos. 10:8; Is. 34:13, with which contrast 35:1,2).

Adam had been given a mandate of mastery - to "replenish the earth and subdue it" (1:28). But here now is a reversal of those high powers. Here was a feature of nature which he would forever have to contend with and never win - until paradise is restored by Messiah: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree" (Is. 55:13).

It looks as though the principal of vegetarian diet was continued to the human race (1:29; contrast 9:3). But "herb for the service of man" (Ps. 104:14) was to be "herb of *the field*", that is, of the ground outside the garden. This red earth which had brought forth Adam was now to bring forth its curse for him.

Yet this very expression: "bring forth" became (in Hebrew) the source of one of the Old Testament's most lovely expressions associated with the Messiah: the Branch (Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; Ps. 85:11,12 - a strongly Messianic passage — and 132:17). The Man whose Name is The Branch was brought forth out of the cursed soil of the human race, a soil where spiritual thorns and thistles are prolific.

But on him, The Branch, came the curse of Eden in every detail - sorrow, sweat (Lk. 22:44 only), eating bread, thorns and thistles, a return to the ground. He was a man of sorrows (the gospels give no hint of a laugh or even of a smile on his face), in Gethsemane the perspiration on his brow (on a particularly cold night) was a sweat like great drops of blood; it was his food and drink to do the will of his Father; he was crucified crowned with thorns; and that day he returned to the ground from which the first Adam was taken.

**3:19 *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.***

Here the word for “face” is, literally, “nostrils.” The word is much used for “anger” - in this context it expresses a man’s dislike of drudgery.

Work is not a legacy of the Fall (2:15), but toil is. Wordsworth comments: “Here is mercy: for to fallen man labour is a preservative against sin” - it keeps a man out of mischief. How the twentieth century, over-endowed with leisure, underlines the truth of this!

And what is true regarding ordinary bread stands true also about Bread of Life. The Bible does not yield its treasures to those who lack diligence, but “much food is in the tillage of the poor” - but tillage there must be.

“Dust thou art” told Adam of his origin, which he may not have known until now (2:7). There is no plainer declaration of man’s mortality. It is an abiding mystery that thousands of devout Bible readers miss the evident meaning of these words, and cling pathetically to the Greek philosophical futility of soul-immortality. It is, of course, taken for granted that the decree of mortality applied to the woman also.

It is noteworthy that even in this pronouncement of condemnation, death is not specifically mentioned - because of the hope of redemption already taught (v.15), and soon to be re-emphasized by the idea of sacrifice. “If a man keep my saying (i.e. hold on in faith to the saying about me), he shall never see death” (Jn. 8:51); for such a man does not die, he sleeps till the day of resurrection - this is the word Jesus uniformly used about the death of believers.

A surprising number of Old Testament passages look back to this fiat: “unto dust shalt thou return” 18:27; Ecc. 3:20; 12:7; Ps. 90:3; 22:15,29; 104:29.

**3:20 *And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.***

Formerly (2:23) her name was Ishah. Then why a new name so soon? In the Bible new names are always specially significant: Abraham, Sarah, Israel, Peter, Paul, Barnabas etc. And so here: “By this new name (wrote a Reformation commentator) Adam testifieth his faith in, and thankfulness for, God’s former promise in verse 15.” And by *his* assigning of the name, Adam also asserted the truth of verse 16: “and he shall rule over thee.”

The name Eve has come into the English Bible by a remarkable sequence of translator’s modifications from Hebrew: *chawwah*, which itself is closely connected with the word *chai* (= life, living being). There are linguistic problems regarding the name, because (a) the root is extremely irregular, and (b) it occurs nowhere else with this sense (except in one or two names, as Hivites: *dwellers*).



Modern scholars, eager to make Genesis dependent on pagan sources, try to establish that Eve is Aramaic for “serpent” (if true, what does it prove?), or else they point to the Sumerian creation story about Nin-ti, a double-meaning name: Lady of the rib, or Lady who makes to live. Couldn’t this show that the Sumerian story depends on the Hebrew?

“Eve” is perhaps best read as a Hebrew hiphil: “causing to live.” The emphasis on “mother” underlines Adam’s faith in the promised Redeemer, the seed of the woman. Death was come through the woman; so also life would come. Here was justification by faith - and so also with Eve (4:1).

**3:21 *“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”***

Viewed naturally, this divinely-appointed switch from fig leaves to garments of skin seems odd. In the climate of paradise, where hitherto they had gone naked without discomfort, would not the former clothing be much more suitable? Yes, of course. But not so from God’s point of view.

There can be no doubt that traditional exposition is correct in inferring that coats of skin meant the slaying of animals and the slaying of animals meant the inauguration of sacrifice: “without the shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).

And that there was remission of the sin may be inferred from the fact that the penalty was remitted: *“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (2:17). Adam lived nearly a thousand years after this. Just as “the soul that sinneth it shall die” has its fulfilment today for many in the rite of baptism, an act of faith, so also Adam and Eve died in the sacrifice which covered their sin.

Yet it also stands true that “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:4), either by curing the sinner or as adequate recompense. So there is a further inference that the real ground of Adam’s forgiveness was his faith in the promised Redeemer, the Seed of the woman, a better sacrifice. Thus his salvation was on precisely the same basis as that of any believer in Christ today. The only difference, and that negligible, is that those now in Christ look back, believing, to the merits of his sacrifice, whereas Adam (and all Old Testament saints) looked forward with the same conviction and faith.

As God provided the garments, so also He provided the covering of sin which they symbolized.

The sequence of ideas in the narrative is logical and complete: Sin, Confession, Promise of a Saviour, the Promise understood and believed, this Faith openly expressed, Sacrifice, and the covering of Sin by personal identification with the Sacrifice. All the essentials of the doctrine of the Atonement were there in Eden. The principles of Salvation are always the same.

A detail easily overlooked is that in the Hebrew text the word for “skins” is actually singular, thus clearly implying *one* Sacrifice to cover the sin of Adam and the sin of Eve, and of course the sin of all other true believers! Thus the picture is complete: over the centuries many animals slain, but only one true Sacrifice.

It has also been inferred that Adam was instructed and inaugurated into office as priest ministering the offering. But this is surely a mistake. Whilst it is true that the word for “coat” (Heb: *k’tōneth*; Gk: *chitōn*; Jn. 19:23) means a priestly robe (there *might* be two exceptions to this), the garment could not be made until the sin-offering was slain and its blood poured out before the Lord. So the more correct inference would be that once the sacrifice was offered (with the angel of the Lord as ministrant, thus teaching Adam his need of a priest also), holy garments - to be worn only on holy occasions? - were fashioned for Adam *and* for Eve. Thereafter, until a son of the family was equal to the responsibility, Adam would fulfil the office of priest.

For “coats of skins” the Targum of Onkelos has “clothing of honour,” and apparently Paul refers to this: “Those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour” (1 Cor. 12:23).

The sinful pair now knew the comforting truth of the later Scripture: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, *whose sin is covered*. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity” (Ps. 32:1,2).

This basic idea carries through many a Scripture. The Apocalypse emphasizes that the Book of Life can be opened only by a slain Lamb (5:6), and thereafter Old Testament saints (“souls under the altar”) are retrospectively granted white robes (6:11). Others who are now called out of Egypt, “the great tribulation,” also “wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:14). And when men like blind Bartimaeus come to Christ and find new sight, they cast away their (old) garments (Mk. 10:50). So also the restored prodigal (Lk. 15:18,22).

Ephesians 4:22-25, already quoted with reference to the Promise of 3:15, is worth quoting again to show that Paul’s exhortation took in the whole range of teaching from Genesis 3:

*“Put off concerning the former way of life the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on (s.w. Gen. 3:21) the new man, which after God (1:26) is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak ever man truth (O.T. idiom for the Promise) with his neighbour: for we are members one of another (2:23).”* And so also in Col. 3:10, Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor. 5:3; Rom. 13:14.

It has to be admitted that both Paul’s approach to this verse 21, and the present writer’s, differ somewhat from that of the modern commentators and the Jewish rabbis. The former educe that Adam was being taught the lesson of social service - the clothing of the poor, and so on. The latter go in for pure romance: “On these coats were painted all beasts and birds of the

world, and Adam gave these coats to Cain. When he was killed these coats came into the hands of Nimrod. Esau killed Nimrod, and got possession of them, and they were worn by Jacob when he went to Isaac to obtain the blessing." ("Fables and endless genealogies"?).

**3:22 *"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know 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:***

The plural pronoun here only makes sense when read with reference to the angels whose presence in these transactions is constantly implied. The phrase: "to know good and evil" might imply that the angels had earlier known an experience of probation such as provides an appropriate environment for saints today; for it is only "by reason of use that the senses are exercised to discern good and evil" (Heb. 5:14 - an allusion to Genesis?) But such a conclusion needs reinforcement from other and plainer Scriptures.

The alternative is to take the words as spoken in irony, as who should say: 'Well, he's now our equal, is he? Then shouldn't he be shown that he is not?'

That expression, "become as one of us" echoes (in a different irony, surely) the beguiling words of the serpent ([v.5), so in that respect the creature spoke truth.

If more precision is sought in the meaning of the phrase, then the "good" Adam now knew was the Promise of a Redeemer (v.15), and the "evil" was the curse of labour and mortality (v. 17-19).

It is tempting to read the text: "as the one among us," as though implying a fear of Adam's immortal superiority to themselves. But this cannot be pressed. Nor will such a higher status be fully achieved until paradise is restored (1 Cor. 6:3).

Eating of the fruit of the tree of life would certainly impart immortality. (Rev. 2:7 clearly implies this; and see also the comment on 2:16,17). But the objection may have referred to ready access to "the leaves of the tree for healing" (Rev. 22:2), so that by constant eating of them mortality would be kept in abeyance. Such a view would be possible only by taking the phrase "for ever" as governing all three verbs: "for ever take ... for ever eat ... for ever live."

The unfinished sentence in this verse expresses either the need for prompt action, or the angelic horror at the possibility of the world being peopled with immortal sinners: 'Just now he wants redemption. But will he always be of that mind?' And later experience with Cain (see notes on 4:13-16) show that the fear may not have been unfounded.

If it be asked: "What happened to the tree of life?" the answer would seem to be: Before ever it came to fruit-bearing, it withered and died, for now it grew in cursed ground (v.17).

**3:23 *“Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.”***

This passage plainly intimates that Adam was made from the red (*edom*) ground (*adamah*) outside the garden. God’s tillage there had brought forth thorns and thistles for Him! And so it has been for Adam also.

Here the rabbis have tacked another strange fancy on to the record. They speculate that God bade Adam cultivate the ground outside the garden just as he had already tilled the garden itself, giving as a reason: “Adam, you were taken from that soil outside the garden.” Adam did so. But when he turned to re-enter the garden he found that the Holy One, blessed be He!, had locked the garden-gate.

How is one to reconcile this immoral fantasy with the next verse?

**3:24 *“So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”***

The subject of the Cherubim is large, complex, and obscure. Here it is only possible to summarise a few ideas and suggestions.

1. The chief associations of the Cherubim are with the presence of God - in the Holy of Holies of Tabernacle and Temple (Ex. 25:18ff; 1 Kgs. 6:23ff); they are certainly to be identified with the Seraphim of Isaiah 6:2; the Lord in glory is described as sitting enthroned above the Cherubim (Ez. 1:26-28; Ps. 80:1). In the Holy of Holies Cherubim were everywhere - not only on the mercy-seat (Ex. 25:20), but also on the Veil (26:31) and also on the walls and ceiling provided by the inner curtain (Ex. 36:8). Hence in the Apocalypse, the Divine Presence is described as having Cherubim “in the midst of the throne and round about the throne” (Rev. 4:6,7).
2. Other Cherubim associations are definitely with a Chariot (1 Chr. 28:18). Ezekiel 1:10 describes the Chariot of the Lord (note 1:18-21). “He rode upon a cherub, and did fly” (Ps. 18:10). The four chariots go out from the presence of the Lord (Zech. 6:1), from between the two “mountains of brass” - the Jachin and Boaz of the new temple. Cp. Ps. 147:15; 2 Th. 3:1 RV. The Chariot is, of course, to be deemed to have an angel driver. Here is God going into action in His world, sometimes going to war.
3. The four distinctive faces appear to represent God’s activity in all His creation. On this, consider Genesis 9:9,10.
4. Traces of the cherubim tradition from Eden have been found in other ancient religions - the man-headed winged bulls or lions at Nineveh. So also, less markedly, in Egypt. And winged

“griffins” guarding a sacred tree (the tree of life?) have been found at more than one place in Syria.

5. In the Tabernacle, cherubim were also on the Candlestick (Arch of Titus) and on the incense altar (Josephus), and the horns of the brazen altar only make sense on the assumption of embossed ox-cherubim on the four brazen sides. These Tabernacle cherubim are to be thought of as having bodies of oxen, because of their special association with sacrifice (note Ez. 1:7). The golden calf (calves) of Exodus 32 was not Egyptian in origin, but a debased Cherub. So also the calves of Dan and Bethel were intended to persuade the ten tribes that the whole of their land was holy to the Lord and protected by Him - again, a subtle perverting of received religious truth (cp. Heb. 9:5). The artist’s depiction of a cherub as an innocent little child with tiny wings is derived from a rabbinic fancy.

6. The three essential ideas associated with Cherubim appear to be:

- a. The guarded holiness of God.
- b. God going into action (e.g. Ps. 18:6ff; 29; Zech. 6).
- c. Symbols of Israel, thus:

Ephraim:	Man
Judah:	Bull
Dan:	Eagle (or Serpent)
Reuben:	Man

These four signs are equally-spaced constellations in the Zodiac. After Genesis 2 and 9 all allusions to cherubim have an Israel context. See the end of par. 2 here.

7. Cherubim are not angels, but they symbolize angelic activity. Hence the emphasis on eyes and wings; e.g. Ps. 34:15,7.
8. There is remarkably little evidence for the idea that Cherubim are to be seen as symbolic of redeemed saints, the multitudinous Christ. This notion can be *read into* the details in a number of places, but it is doubtful if there is anything which points specifically to such an interpretation. Indeed, there are some places (e.g. Gen. 3:24; Rev. 5:9, 10) where there is marked difficulty.
9. The meaning of Cherub has become a focus of much speculation. Some examples: (a) Connection with a word for “hold,” thus giving the idea of being a guardian. But the form of

the word in Hebrew is rather against this, (b) Derivation from Q-R-B, describing one who is *near*; i.e. a close attendant on the majesty of God. (c) Compound K-ROB, like a multitude (Dan. 7:10?). (d) Association with a root meaning “to plough” (cp. ox figures in the Tabernacle).

Returning now to Genesis 3:24: From the later analogy in Tabernacle and Temple, the Eden Cherubim were at a centre of worship. And being sited at the east of the garden, when Adam came to offer sacrifice, he would necessarily approach from the east, precisely as did the Israelite when coming to the Tabernacle.

The word for “placed” is, strictly, “he caused to dwell.” There is close association with *mishkan*, dwelling, tabernacle, and with *Shekinah* Glory, the Glory that *dwelt* in the sanctuary. LXX has: “And he caused *him* (Adam) to dwell at the east of the garden” (see comments on 4:15,16).

The accompanying phrase has never been clearly explained: “the flame of the sword turning itself.” It is fairly likely that there is here an allusion to the vivid brightness of the Glory of the Lord by which God’s acceptance of sacrifice was intimated (e.g. Ps. 80:1), but why such an unusual expression should be used is not clear. In the word for “turning itself” there may be a hint of the wheels of the Cherubim chariot (Jud. 7:13 - “tumbled” - has just the same form of the same verb).

Almost universally the keeping of the way of the tree of life is taken to mean guarding, so as to prevent Adam’s access. But every other detail in this verse suggests the opposite idea: to *keep open* the way of the tree of life (Jn. 14:6), that is, to keep hope alive that one day paradise would be restored. The Tabernacle in the wilderness had a tree of life - the candlestick, with its trunk, branches, leaves, buds, flowers, fruit.

## ADAM AND CHRIST

The parallel is insisted on in these Scriptures:

Romans 5:18,19  
1 Corinthians 15:45  
Ephesians 5:30-32  
Philippians 2:5-8.

However, it is not easy to assemble the many details in a strictly correct order. And, inevitably, at times comparison becomes contrast. There are, of course, places where the correspondence is not exact. This is true to some extent in nearly all parables, prophecies and types. If *always* exact, would Christ our Lord be unique?

1. Birth announced	Genesis 1:26
beforehand by angels	Luke 2:13; 1:30
2. Made outside paradise	Genesis 2:15
3. In God's image	Genesis 1:26
	2 Corinthians 4:14
4. God 'tilled' the ground,	Genesis 2:7; 3:18
then Adam (Christ) did	1 Corinthians 3:9
	John 5:21,26
5. Adam came to a garden,	Genesis 2:15
Christ to a wilderness	Matthew 4:1
6. His commission was to	Genesis 2:15
'work' it and 'keep' it	John 4:34; 17:12
7. No fellowship was possible	Genesis 2:20
with 'beasts'	Psalms 49:20
8. A deep sleep, caused by	Genesis 2:21
God	Luke 23:46
9. Eve fashioned from his	Genesis 2:22
side	John 19:34
	1 John 5:8
10. A help meet for him, one	Genesis 2:18
like himself	
11. Eve "built"; a process	Genesis 2:22

	Ephesians 2:22
12. Eve brought to Adam by God	Genesis 2:22 John 6:44; 17:6,9,11,24
13. Woman called by the name of her Husband	Genesis 5:2 James 2:7
14. 'Ishah' means 'Man-ward, towards Man'	Genesis 2:23 Ephesians 4:15
15. "Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"	Genesis 2:23 John 17:23 1 Corinthians 6:17 Ephesians 5:30
16. The Man must leave Father and mother - and so must the woman	Genesis 2:24 Psalm 22:1 Philippians 2:6 Mark 3:33 John 19:26 Matthew 26:53
17. The Man to be the teacher	Genesis 2:16,22
18. "Not ashamed"	Genesis 2:25 1 John 2:28 (Hebrews 2:11)
19. Adam chose to join his wife in her fallen state	Genesis 3:6,12 1 Timothy 2:14



	1 John 4:2,3
	Ecclesiastes 4:10
20. Christ makes the Tree of Death into a Tree of Life	Acts 5:30 1 Peter 2:24
21. A tree now good for food,	Genesis 2:16
	Song of Songs 2:3
22. pleasant to the eyes,	John 12:21
23. to be desired to make one wise.	1 Corinthians 1:30
24. Descent from Abraham (fig leaves) in itself proves to be of no value	Matthew 3:9
25. The fruits of Adam's sin and Christ's obedience are entailed on their families	Genesis 5:3 Romans 5:14,17
26. Enmity between the Woman and the power of sin	Genesis 3:15 Romans 8:7
27. Adam hid himself and his wife	Genesis 3:8 (Hebrew) 1 Peter 4:8 (Greek)
28. The curse of sweat	Genesis 3:19 Luke 22:44

29. and thorns,	Genesis 3:18
	John 19:2
30. and the ground,	Genesis 3:17,19
	John 19:42
31. and thus he did eat bread	Genesis 3:19
	John 4:34
32. "Sorrow all the days of thy life"	Genesis 3:17
	Isaiah 53:3
33. Both the Man and his Wife clothed through the slaying of one sacrifice (Adam first, then Eve)	Genesis 3:21
	Hebrews 2:14
34. Salvation through the Child-bearing	Genesis 3:15
	1 Timothy 2:14
35. The curse encountered in the garden	Genesis 3:16-19
	Matthew 26:36
	John 19:41
36. Suffering outside the place of holiness	Genesis 3:24
	Hebrews 13:12,13
37. "Thy desire shall be to thy Husband, and He shall rule over thee"	Genesis 3:16
	Psalms 45:11

- |                              |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 38. Eve promised tribulation | Genesis 2:18; 3:16    |
| and many children            | John 16:1-4           |
|                              | Mark 16:15            |
| 39. The two beget a worthy   | Genesis 4:1-5         |
| and an unworthy seed         | Matthew 25:32         |
| 40. They are united in a     | Revelation 21:2; 22:2 |
| paradise                     |                       |
| 41. in a "sabbath" without   | Genesis 2:3           |
| night                        | Revelation 22:5       |
| 42. "Have dominion" was      | Genesis 1:26          |
| spoken to both               | Psalms 8:6            |
| 43. The seventh "day         | Genesis 2:3           |
| especially blessed           |                       |

### Commentary on Genesis, Chapter 4

**4:1 And Adam knew Eve his wife: and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.**

How wisely Scripture uses this word "know" in this context, for it is very true that man and wife do not really know each other until they know each other.

It is difficult to see how the translation can read: "a man *from* the Lord." The reading must be either "a man with the Lord," i.e. with the help of the Lord (cp. LXX: by means of the Lord), or "a man, even the Lord." The first of these is distinctly irregular. The usage is hard to match elsewhere. On the other hand, the immediate context strongly supports the second reading, for the very next verse has: "bare his brother, even Abel," (using the same Hebrew particle). So also in v.25,26; and 1:1: "In the beginning God created even the heaven and even the earth." In these places, "with" would be impossible.

There can, then, be little doubt that in naming her child (a responsibility she did not leave to Adam; contrast v.26) she was joyfully proclaiming her conviction that here was the promised Seed of the woman (3:15) who would redeem the family from sin and curse. Instead of referring to her baby as “son” or “child” she called him “Man.” Since *Ish* usually means a man of special consequence (contrast *adam*), there is perhaps a further hint here of Eve’s faith-full Hope of Salvation.

As Adam had openly proclaimed his faith in the Promise (3:20), so Eve also: “I have given birth to the divine Man,” and note the word “faith” in 1 Tim. 2:15. Both were justified by a firm faith in the Redeemer.

The little Hebrew word which is the crux of this understanding is the equivalent of AZ in English, and of Alpha-Omega in the New Testament, where it comes as the name of Jesus alongside “the LORD,” which is, and which was, and which is to come (Rev. 1:8). Nor can it be accident that when *he* was born the angel of God used the same verbal device: “a Saviour which is Christ - (even)-the-LORD” (Lk. 2:11). The Jewish Targum of Jonathan groped towards the right idea, but succeeded only in making nonsense of Eve’s words: “I have gotten as man the angel of the Lord.”

Her confession of faith also shows a familiarity with the Covenant Name, Jehovah. It is as though she said: ‘I, the mother of all Life, have gotten from the Ever-Living One the Man-Child who will bring Life in place of our curse of Death.’

The assertion is often made, on the basis of a misunderstood Exodus 6:3, that the Covenant Name was not revealed until the time of Moses. Only careless Bible reading can lead to such a conclusion as this, for there is ample evidence in the text that the patriarchs before Moses were familiar with the Covenant Name (9:26; 15:7,8; 18:14; 19:13; 22:14; 24:7,12,27,31). And didn’t they need to be? What use would God’s Covenant be to them without His Covenant Name as a reassurance of faith?

On the other hand what has been deemed to be decisive the other way is really no hindrance at all, for Exodus 6:3 can as easily be read as a rhetorical question: “I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty (*El Shaddai*), but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them?” - as who should say: “Of course I was.” This equally valid reading provides harmonization.

Some scholars insist that the name of Eve’s baby means “spear or javelin” - anything to insinuate disbelief of the Bible text! But there is an easy connection between the name Cain and the intensive form of the verb “to get.” So Eve was not attempting a bad pun when she triumphantly declared: “I have gotten.”

But this very *qanah* is a double-meaning word. It also means, very frequently: “to purchase,” and particularly in the sense of “redeem” (e.g. Ruth 4:5,9,10; Jer. 32:7-9). So this provides

further intimation of Eve's enthusiastic conviction: "Here is the promised Redeemer." Alas, later events were to infuse dramatic irony into her expectation! Indeed this name Cain could, with equal readiness, be linked with the common word for "jealousy." So, as verse 5 proves, Eve was no false prophetess.

**4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.**

The change in emphasis in the naming of this second son is most marked. "Cain" was Messianic in flavour. But by the time of his brother's birth (this must have been some years later, and probably with the birth of daughters intervening), it was already evident to the parents that evil propensities were now built not only into their own nature but into all their family. So with a despairing swing to the other extreme, the second son was called *Hebel*, vanity, worthlessness (in the English Bible the aspirate has got lost through adoption of LXX spelling - Greek has no letter H). Already it was easy to see that Adam was begetting sons "in his own likeness, after his image" (5:3).

Commentators seem eager to press for equation of Abel's name with a Sumerian word for "son," but is it not more likely that this Sumerian word was derived from "Abel" than conversely?

The occupations followed by the two sons - almost the only thing in which they are set in contrast - are mentioned first as though important as well as explanatory, and significantly Abel's is specified first. Yet it was Cain the husbandman who accepted the curse laid on Adam (3:17), whereas this was only indirectly true for Abel.

The older brother, being a tiller (literally, a slave) of the ground, subsisted by a very obvious dependence on his own works. But Abel was (literally) "an overseer of the flock" (LXX: a shepherd of the sheep; Heb. 13:20) - and not, be it noted, a herdsman of cattle (Heb: *baqar*). He concentrated on what would provide milk (1 Cor. 9:7); and sacrifice, and a covering such as God had given to his parents. Indeed, the sheep he tended were probably the flock of sanctuary sacrifices.

The shape of the Hebrew sentence sets these two in marked contrast. The one grew for the satisfying of his own appetites, and apart from that aim had no personal involvement with his plants. But the other lived a more outward-looking life, having concern for each individual animal (Jn. 10:3).

It is interesting to note that the charge laid upon the Rechabites by their forefather Jonathan bade them follow the way of Abel and eschew the life of Cain (Jer. 35:6,7). And they were commended for their faithfulness in adhering to this.

In what has been written here already about the two brothers it is not difficult to see that Abel is to be taken as a type of Christ and Cain as a type of the Jews who slew him. The relevant details will be brought together near the conclusion of the story.

**4:3-5a And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.**

“In process of time” surely misses the more precise force of the Hebrew idiom. Literally it is “at the end of days,” and since “days” is sometimes used to intimate a year (e.g. Jud. 11:40; 17:10; Num. 9:22 - Heb.), and “end of days” appears to signify the end-of-the-year religious festival (1 Sam. 1:3,20; 2:19, 1 Kgs. 17:7,11), it is not unreasonable to see these offerings by Cain and Abel as the primitive equivalent of the later Day of Atonement service associated with the Tabernacles harvest festival.

The traditional interpretation is almost certainly correct, that the basic reason for rejection of Cain’s offering was that he failed to bring a blood sacrifice, for “without shedding of blood is no remission.”

The age-old Jewish explanation, that “the best fruit he ate himself, and the worst fruit he brought for an offering,” although doubtless reasoned from Malachi 1:7,8, is very inferior. In fact, it is just the kind of explanation a doctrine of justification by works would evolve. In any case, the spirit behind Cain’s offering is suggested by the pointed omission of “firstfruits,” in contrast with Abel’s “firstlings.” The former was a *minchah*, a meal-offering (RV: Lev.2), whereas the mention of “the fat thereof” is a detail usually, though not invariably, associated with a sin-offering (Lev. 4:8-10).

Abel offered this “by faith” (Heb. 11:4). But since “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” it follows that the first family had received angelic instruction concerning sacrifice, its mode and meaning. All of this Cain evidently chose to ignore. The apostle John comments that Abel’s murder ensued because his works were righteous but Cain’s were evil (1 Jn. 3:12). Here is one sense in which they were evil. The comment on verse 7 will suggest another. “The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind” (Pr. 21:27).

The use of the word “brought” seems to imply an appointed sanctuary of the Lord, as does the mention of cherubim (3:24). By and by there are further indications of such an institution (v.7,15,16).

All the details regarding Abel are specially significant. The text does not say: “he brought,” but “he *also* brought of the firstlings.” Thus is implied that Abel brought of the fruit of the ground, as Cain did (hence the word *minchah* used about his offering; it would be quite inappropriate to

a blood sacrifice), but he brought a lamb or kid of the first year also. And the firstling would be offered first, and then the *minchah* afterwards, for in the Law of Moses this principle is insisted on that, until there has been expiation of sin by means of a sin-offering, no other sacrifice is appropriate (e.g. Num. 6:14-17).

There need be no difficulty over the plural “firstlings,” for one such as Abel would wish to offer not only sin-offering but also burnt-offering and peace-offering (and he had yet another purpose besides these; see below on v.7). This was evidently the understanding of the writer of “Hebrews,” for he refers to “God testifying of his gifts” (11:4). Such sacrifices would have been adequate for them all. Yet Cain incurred God’s displeasure. So it would seem that already there was a rift in the family, Cain refusing to join in religious fellowship with Abel (who no less than seven times in this chapter is called his “brother”). Should this be seen as the first example of the *odium theologicum* which with its block disfellowship has often been the plague of God’s people right up to the present day?

How did God “have respect unto” (Heb: look upon) Abel and his offering? It is surely right to see here an acceptance of the sacrifice by fire from heaven or from between the cherubim (3:24). The Biblical examples of this are sufficiently numerous to make such an idea eminently reasonable (Lev. 9:24; Jud. 6:21; 13:19; 1 Kgs. 18:38; 1 Chr. 21:26; 2 Chr. 7:1). A tolerable alternative to this view is that there was vivid manifestation of the Shekinah Glory, as apparently happened on the Day of Atonement (Ps. 80:1; Is. 58:8). Either of these would be implied by Hebrews 11:4: “God testifying (bearing witness) concerning his gifts.”

So Abel, a sinner like his parents, inevitably so, was accounted righteous. In fact, every other Biblical allusion to him says so - 1 Jn. 3:12, Mt. 23:35 and Heb. 11:4 explicitly and Heb. 12:24 by implication. There was also a “Brother Abel” - Apelles — in the ecclesia at Rome, and Paul, sending greetings to him, seems to have had his mind on the great prototype, as he wrote: “Salute Apelles *approved* in Christ” (Rom. 16:10).

**4:5b,6,7a And Cain was very wrath, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wrath? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.**

Millenniums later Jesus was to teach that anger with one’s brother is murder (Mt. 5:22), and, as the narrative goes on to show, Cain’s anger was against Abel, not with God, and certainly not with himself.

But there was chagrin *concerning* himself. That fallen countenance was the reaction from head uplifted. Cain had felt pleased with and sure of himself, without need of repentance before God or of atoning sacrifice.

Now came the insistent angelic “Why? ... Why?” Here, as in 3:9,11 and many other places in Scripture, rebuke was by direct questions designed to activate conscience, and so lead on to repentance and honest confession.

But also: “Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Is. 1:18). “If thou doest well, shall there not be an uplifting, an exalting” - an uplifting of his fallen countenance, or an exaltation in status (priesthood?), or the smile of the divine countenance (Num. 6:26).

“But if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.” This A.V. reading can hardly be correct, for - paraphrased - it merely says: ‘If you sin, there is a danger that you will sin.’ There is a much more meaningful alternative which is also more true to the text.

With hardly an exception, the word “lieth” is used of flocks and herds peacefully lying down. Also, the extremely common word for “sin” (169 occurrences) is a double-meaning word; it also signifies “sin-offering” (116 times). In Leviticus 4, the same word comes translated “sin” 8 times and “sin-offering” 10 times (In Dan. 9:24 A.V. has got the wrong meaning). Again, the word “door” (87 times) needs to be taken in a literal sense; the figurative usage of it has hardly a single parallel in Scripture.

Putting these details together, there is complete justification for the reading: “a sin-offering lieth at the door” - at the door of the place of meeting (3:24) where this was spoken. In other words, here was further rebuke that Cain could, if he would, find acceptance through the offering of a fitting sacrifice.

But if the votive animal was there, and Cain manifestly had not brought it, how did it come to be there? The answer lies in the word “firstling” (plural) describing Abel’s offering (v.4). In other words, Abel, understanding the need for animal sacrifice and knowing something of his brother’s intransigent frame of mind, had also brought the needful sacrifice for Cain to avail himself of - and this helpfulness had been scorned.

Yet a further detail seems to support this reading. With the rabbinic pointing of the Hebrew text there is a grammatical solecism in the phrase: “sin (a sin-offering) lieth at the door.” With either reading the verb “lieth” should be feminine in form to match the noun: *chattath*. But it is masculine. “The verse is unintelligible,” says one commentator. “This most difficult verse,” says another. “Sin is personified as masculine,” says a third. One Jewish paraphrase is: “By the door of hell shalt thou rest.”

There are two better alternatives. Either the masculine form is there to indicate a male animal for sin-offering (as in Lev. 4:23); or by simple re-pointing, to read:” he (Abel) has laid a sin-offering at the door.”



In this verse LXX is markedly different from the Hebrew text; and since there is very good reason to believe in the superiority of LXX in the next verse there is encouragement to take it seriously here, especially since it does not read as an invention:

“If thou didst bring a sacrifice rightly (correctly), but didst not rightly divide it, didst not thou sin? Hold thy peace.”

These words are capable of being read in more than one way. “Divide” may refer to the parting in two of a covenant sacrifice (as in Gen. 15:10). The Hebrew idiom is, consistently: “to *cut a covenant*.”

Or, the reference may be to a God-appointed sub-dividing of an animal sacrifice before it is set in order on the altar; compare the instruction about the burnt-offering in Lev. 1:12,17.

Another possibility (preferred here) is, by implication: ‘If thou hadst brought an animal sacrifice and yet not followed proper procedure of sacrifice, would not that be sin? Then how much more if heaven’s instruction is flouted, and no blood sacrifice offered at all.’

The first of these explanations implies a solemn divine appointment treated with indifference. They all imply self-will. And that peremptory “Hold thy peace!” suggests a Cain making angry violent protestation.

**4:7b *And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.***

In times later than this, until the appointment of a Levitical priesthood, this mediatorial office seems to have been the prerogative of the firstborn in the family (Ex. 13:2; Num. 3:12,13; Ex. 24:5; Gen. 27:15; 37:3; Dt. 33:16).

So the “rule” mentioned here could well be the priority of priesthood. Cain had been expecting to succeed his father in this office, but he now faced the likelihood of being superseded by Abel, and was bitter about it.

Such a conclusion is supported by the fact that the very rare Hebrew word for “desire” is derived from another which normally describes the choice right shoulder of a sacrifice, assigned to a priest; e.g. Lev. 7:32-34.

Thus, whereas Eve allowed herself to be talked into sin by the serpent, it seemed impossible for Cain to be talked out of sin by God.

**4:8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.**

There is something odd about the Hebrew text here. Strictly, it reads: "And Cain said unto Abel his brother...", but with no indication of what was said. RV attempts a solution of the difficulty thus: "And Cain told Abel ...," but this is hardly accurate; and it ignores the preposition "unto." LXX and several other versions have a small addition which makes all the difference: "And Cain said unto Abel his brother, Let us go into the field." This also serves to explain the next phrase: "and when they were in the field ..."

Two other inferences follow - that the murder of Abel was premeditated (as 1 Jn. 3:12 makes clear), and that Cain was loth to attempt the foul deed close by the sanctuary of the Lord.

The primary reference of Jn. 8:44 is undoubtedly to the serpent, but the phrase: "he was a manslayer from the beginning," was surely chosen to indicate Cain as the first of the serpent's seed murdering the one who so admirably foreshadowed the promised seed of the woman; see p.136f.

And how was the murder committed? Most probably by cutting Abel's throat (with a sharp stone knife; note 4:22) such as had already been used for a similar slaughter of animal sacrifices. Such a method would certainly be appropriate to the type.

Thus, whereas Adam broke only the First Commandment, Cain broke both the First and the Second (Mk. 12:29-31).

The "field" which figures so prominently in this story has interesting (and not accidental) associations. Almost the identical Greek word has its only occurrence in Luke's introduction to the sermon on the mount, called here "the plain, the field" (6:17). And the immediately preceding expression (v. 16) is: "Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor." And Peter, recalling Judas's defection, reminded the brethren how "this man purchased - literally: got (= Cain) a field" (Acts 1:18).

One could almost believe that the Book of Proverbs also was making deliberate commentary on this violent incident:

"He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; when he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart" (26:24,25). It makes an interesting exercise to identify Cain's seven.

There is a strange rabbinic fantasy about the murder of Abel: "The two brothers began to quarrel, and they said, 'Let us divide the world between us.' One said: 'The ground on which thou standest is *mine*.' And the other said: 'The ground on which *thou* standest is mine.' One said: 'The temple shall be situated on *my* portion of the ground,' and the other said the same; and thus they quarrelled together. And with Abel, the younger son, were born two daughters,

his sisters. With Cain was born only one sister. And Cain said: 'I will take thy second sister for a wife, because I am the firstborn.' Abel said: 'I will have her, for she was born with me.' As they thus quarrelled, Abel threw Cain to the ground, and sat upon him. Cain said to Abel: 'We are but two sons to our father; why wilt thou kill me? Abel had compassion on him and released him. Hence says the text: 'Cain rose up, and slew Abel.' (Hershon: Genesis). No wonder Paul inveighed against "fables and endless genealogies" and "vain jangling." It was this sort of rubbish that he was warning against.

**4:9 And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? and he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?**

As with his parents (3:9-13) so also now the goodness of God would fain lead Cain to repentance - and to confession, and so to forgiveness. But with a bald lie, Cain proved himself the seed of the serpent in yet another respect.

However his answering expostulation be read, it betrays a bad spirit:

'Do I have to shepherd the shepherd?' or:

'Is that my duty as firstborn? But I've been superseded, haven't I?' (with reference to v.7). or:

'Am I to be the keeper of his commandments? Does he have that authority over me?'

That every man is his brother's keeper is made plain by many a New Testament precept and example.

**4:10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.**

In the Hebrew text the word "blood" is plural (though not normally so). Various explanations have been offered - that in slaying Abel, Cain also slew his progeny; or, that Cain inflicted many wounds, a measure of his furious jealousy; but much more likely is the semitechnical explanation that this word "bloods" is an intensive plural, to be translated "murder" (cp. 2 Sam. 3:28 - another plural).

This idiom - using plural for singular, for the sake of emphasis - is commonplace in the Old Testament. A few examples:

Dan. 2:1,5:                "Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams" - it was one dream actually, but extra vivid, a nightmare, and he came out of it with a scream.

Num. 5:15,29:            (Heb.): intense jealousy.

- Ezra 10:9:                “the great rains” (Heb.) - incessant, drenching downpour.
- Zech. 6:11:              “Make crowns, and set *them* (it; note the italics) on the head of Joshua” - an impressive crown. This Joshua was no pope with triple tiara.
- Ps.42:5:                  “I shall yet praise him for the salvations of his countenance” - His great salvation.

There are scores of examples like these.

In the sight of God, if not in the sight of men, the shedding of human blood defiles the ground (Num. 35:33), hence Judah’s argument: “What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood” (37:26). Instead, Joseph’s brother hoped that the blood of a kid would conceal their somewhat less serious crime (v.31).

Did the angel’s words mean that Abel’s blood cried out the guilt of Cain or for the vengeance due against him? Probably the latter, for the text goes on to enunciate the principle of “the avenger of blood” (v. 12,14,15; Num. 35:12).

The same idea is associated with the blood of martyrs: “How long, O Lord ... dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:10). These are certainly Old Testament martyrs (see “Revelation,” by H.A.W, ch. 13), for New Testament saints have received emphatic instruction not to look for vengeance. The blood of sprinkling of the New Covenant “speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb. 12:24) - grace and forgiveness, not revenge.

The phrase: “crieth from the ground” may also suggest that Cain, well aware of his intense guilt, had buried the corpse (see the next verse).

**4:11 “And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand;”**

An alternative suggestion to that just made under 4:10 is that these words describe an earthquake. “The earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth” (Ps. 18:7, a prophecy of the crucifixion). This certainly happened when Christ died (Mt. 27:51 ). And LXX strongly implies the same thing about the death of Abel, for it translates “opened her mouth” with a word meaning “gape,” used in such phrases as “may the earth open, and swallow me” (L. and S.).

**4:12 “When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength: a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.”**

Here is intimation of another curse, specific to Cain and his serpent progeny, in addition to that already pronounced because of Adam’s sin (3:17). Presumably, this was the curse which was taken away after the Flood (8:21) - because the Cainites had been taken away. Was it because of this curse that there came in the Cainite line a marked change in living style (v.17) and in occupations (v.21,22? Contrast Lev. 26:3,4). Cain’s response chimes in with this: “Thou hast driven me out from the face of the *ground*” (RV; Heb: *adamah*).

The phrase: “a fugitive and a vagabond” seems to have been chosen not only for its dire meaning but also for its telling curtness in Hebrew, rather like the *tohu, bohu* in 1:2. The word for “fugitive” does not imply flight, but certainly wandering; whilst the other has in its usage a suggestion of misery. It is this word “vagabond” which gave its name to the land of Nod (v.16).

LXX has “groaning and trembling,” a phrase for which one would expect to find telling use in the New Testament, but apparently not.

**4:13,14 “And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth: and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.”**

This AV reading suggests a Cain who was a craven coward or drenched in self-pity. But RVm has a very different translation which there is every reason to accept as more correct: “*Mine iniquity is greater than can be forgiven*” (Ps. 32:5; 85:2 Heb. have the identical words “iniquity, forgiven”). The same Hebrew word which here and in ten places is translated “punishment” (e.g. 19:15; Lev. 26:41,43; 1 Sam. 28:10) reads “iniquity, sin” in no less than two hundred and twenty-two places. *This* is the normal meaning of the word. In Hebrew there are several examples of the same kind of thing - a word with another meaning which is either its consequence or even its opposite; e.g. sin and sin-offering (see note on v.7), work and wages (Is. 62:11), bless and curse (*barak*; Job 1:5 etc). And there are at least twenty instances of *nasa* (bear) also meaning “forgive.”

LXX and other versions (including Tindale) also line up with this RVm reading, though LXX, somewhat anachronistically reads “my *crime* is greater than can be forgiven,” using Pilate’s word regarding Jesus (Jn. 18:38; 19:4,6).

Accepting, then, this drastically different understanding of the Hebrew text, there is here a clear indication of repentance in the soul of Cain, albeit mixed with more concern for himself than for the honour of God (v. 14, 16).

Yet, such is God's grace, He is willing to accept a low-grade repentance rather than none at all. In the days of the Judges Israel's repeated turning to God nearly always sprang out of self-interest. Many would say that Simon the sorcerer could hardly have been a true convert, yet his baptism was evidently accepted as such. So also with the Judaists whose motives for conversion were anything but pure (Gal. 2:4; Phil. 1:16,18; see "Studies in Acts," H.A.W. App. 3). And in the parable the prodigal turned homeward in the first instance because he was starving and miserable (Lk. 15:17). So also not infrequently in modern times there has probably been more than one motive for giving loyalty to the Truth. Yet God knows, and is not unwilling, for He never despairs of human nature.

There is almost an Irishism about the AV reading: "Every one that findeth me shall slay me;" and the Revisers, scenting this, opted for "whosoever;" but in fact King James' men were correct. The language assumes a fast-growing human race (note v.17), and every one of them an "avenger of blood," horrified and resentful.

On this point other suggestions are: (a) that "every one" (Heb: all) includes also fierce animals (but will v.14,15 allow of this rabbinic explanation?); (b) that Cain expected to encounter other human families as he wandered abroad (but if there were such, why should they immediately seek to slay him?).

On the other hand, the situation here is marvellously like that described in Num. 35:19,27: "The avenger of blood shall slay the murderer when he meeteth him ... if the avenger of blood *find* him without the borders of his city of refuge ..."

The angel of the Lord evidently spoke with impressive wrath, and Cain cowered away. "Thou hast driven me out," he said, using the very term which had described the rejection of his parents (3:24). "And from thy face shall I hide myself," in terror of judgement (s.w. Dt. 7:20; Jer. 16:17).

**4:15 *"And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."***

For "therefore" LXX evidently had a slightly different Hebrew text reading: "Not so!" - and this, it must be conceded, follows on even better after Cain's expressed fear of a revenge killing.

Instead, because of his expressed repentance, protection is appointed, and a sevenfold judgement pronounced on any family, who might flout God's decree in this. Both aspects of the principle set out here still carried weight in the time of David - in the death of seven of Saul's house because of his slaying of the Gibeonites (2 Sam. 21:1,6,8), and in the clemency extended to Absalom the murderer (2 Sam. 14:14b).

This sign of protection appointed for Cain makes no sense at all except the earlier inference regarding his repentance be correct. But now there is a divine logic about this sequel.

The old idea that a mark (the sign of the cross!) was branded on Cain's forehead has no support in the Genesis text, but has to lean heavily on Ez. 9:4 and its deliberate echo in Rev. 7:3 (and compare Ex. 12:22). *If* there is any truth in this, then the mark was certainly for protection, and not as the brand of a murderer.

But the RV reading is more correct: "The Lord appointed a sign for Cain, lest ..." The remarkably close anticipations, already noted, of the later idea of a man-slayer finding refuge in an appointed place (Num. 35) encourages a like interpretation here. Before ever Israel came into the Land of Promise the principle of refuge for the manslayer was already in operation:

"He that smiteth a man ... I will appoint him a place whither he shall flee. But if a man ... slay him (his neighbour) with guile, thou shalt take him *from mine altar*, that he may die" (Ex. 21:12-14).

Thus, before and in addition to the six cities of refuge there was also a seventh (isn't this number to be expected?); compare 1 Kgs. 1:50; 2:28.

It seems likely, then (and v. 16,17 support the idea) that, just as a covering was appointed for repentant Adam and Eve, so now God appointed that Cain should dwell permanently at the altar of the sanctuary already in use. Such a punishment and such a forgiveness would very aptly fit the crime.

As it turned out, Cain tired of this life of restriction and godliness, tired of being a permanent witness to others against the evil of violence, and chose instead to be his own saviour. So, seven generations later, God Himself became the avenger of blood on the line of Cain, the more so because they "filled the earth with violence" (Gen. 6:11). And then, from the Flood till the time of Moses the principle of a manslayer's city of refuge seems to have been in abeyance (9:6).

**4:16,17 "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife: and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch."**

This part of the narrative is often read as though, as soon as his encounter with the angel of the Lord was concluded, Cain rushed away from the divine presence and forthwith went off into some remote country. But it is at least equally possible that an appreciable lapse of time took place between verses 15 and 16. Such chronological lacunae are by no means uncommon in the Bible narrative; e.g. there is an unspecified gap of forty years at Exodus 2:21; a gap of approximately a year exists between John, chapters 4 and 5, and again between chapters 5 and 6; the synoptic gospels supply plenty more examples.

The understanding of verse 15 developed here suggests that Cain would continue to find sanctuary at the altar of the Lord for some time; but then, tiring of the unpalatable holiness of the place and of the life there, he went out upon the face of the earth (v.16) not seriously daunted at being now finally estranged from the face of the Lord.

Where did he go? "Nod" means "wandering" - it is the word translated "vagabond" (v.12,14). Today it is not identifiable, but (with only the consonants to go on) the guess has been made that Cain went to India.

Wherever it was, there he built a city - for only himself and his wife and son? There is here a further intimation (as in the word "every one" - Hebrew: all; v.14) of a rapid growth of population which this highly selective narrative has not described. The words can even be read to imply that when Cain went forth to the land of Nod he was accompanied by an appreciable number of others who either sympathized with him or were impressed with his project. One could wish for fuller detail.

However, one thing is clear - that Cain, utterly self-dependent, as in the earlier matter of sacrifice, now had his own city of refuge in preference to the sanctuary appointed him by God.

And he called the city after the name of his firstborn, who at this time was almost certainly not a helpless baby but a grown man. Enoch means "dedicated" - in the rest of the Old Testament the word is used always in a holy context; so here is an indication of the establishment of a new religion, with Enoch as its priest. In the well-chosen phrase of one commentator, here is the beginning of "a self-sufficient society" - God no longer needed! How appropriate is the irony of Psalm 49: "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever ... they call their lands after their own names (v.11). Contrast God's "wanderers", who "have here no continuing city" (Heb. 13:14).

Cain means "getting," and here the emphasis is on that fulfilment: he got for himself wife, children, city, riches, arts and crafts, religion - and the renewed curse of God.

"Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men trod? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a Flood: which said unto God, Depart from us: and, What can the Almighty do for them. Yet he filled their houses with good things" (Job 22:15-18).

### **Cain and Abel as types of an unworthy Israel and a slain Christ**

As Cain was an unworthy firstborn of Adam, so also was Israel God's unworthy firstborn (Ex. 4:22), *gotten* out of Egypt (Ex. 15:16). Israel was a tiller (literally: a slave) of the cursed ground of the Law, thus seeking justification by their own human effort, and with little concern for the well-being of individual plants (by contrast with the aims of the dedicated modern amateur gardener!).



Abel's name (= vanity) proclaims the essential truth that he shared the cursed nature which is the inheritance of all the race. Seven times he is called Cain's brother. He is also called a prophet (Lk. 11:50,51), yet not one word of his is recorded; nevertheless "he, being dead, yet speaketh." As a type of Christ he is eloquent (Heb. 12:24).

He was a Shepherd of the sheep (Heb. 13:20), an overseer of the flock, and as such he showed unremitting concern for each individual animal (Jn. 10:3).

Devoutly he brought before God all needful sacrifices, not only for himself but also for his brother. This essential help was abruptly rejected. His brother deemed himself self-sufficient. Thus hostility crystallised out into planned murder which an all-seeing God condemned with frightening earthquake.

The priesthood was lost to Cain, and instead Abel was high-priest elect.

To this day the challenge to a Cainite Israel: "Where is thy brother?" receives still the same false answer: "I know not," with the added repudiation: "Am I the keeper of my brother's commandments?" The sacrifice to cover Israel's sins is still available, and is still scorned.

In the first century there came a repentance to match Cain's but like his there was no enduring (Jude 11; 1 Jn. 2:19). Cursed from the Land, Israel as a fugitive and a vagabond has faced persecution. And with the utter loss of a sanctuary of the Lord all personal satisfaction from a man's own religious works was utterly lost.

In place of the Law first given by God there is now a wholly man-made religion. Israel is dedicated to wrong thinking, away from the presence of the Lord. Yet still the voice of "Abel" cries from the ground, from an empty tomb.

## **The Law of Moses in Eden**

It is useful to note that not a few of the principles and practices enjoined upon Israel by the Law were anticipated in the early chapters of Genesis:

The Sabbath.

A Tree of Life.

Marriage - one man, one woman.

The higher status of the husband.

"The wages of sin is death."

Sacrifice.

The "covering" of sin (cp. Yom Kippur).

A flaming sword: the Shekinah Glory.

The way of life kept open.

Religious festival at the end of the year.  
Meal offering.  
Sin offering (and other sacrifices?).  
A central sanctuary.  
Priesthood.  
"Thou shalt not kill."  
The avenger of blood, and the city of refuge.

**4:18-22 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech. And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.**

*There is a vast amount of uncertainty about both details and name-meanings here. In attempts to derive the names from known Hebrew roots it is sometimes possible to go off in several different directions. But it is remarkable how in this Cainite line there are so many suggestions of a religious emphasis - a false religion - culminating in: "corrupt before God" (6:11); i.e. not just corrupt, but corrupt before the face of God, in religious practice.*

*Already it has been noted that Cain had his own city, a holy city, and in it a dedicated priest Enoch. Other name-hints chime in with these ideas. Irad may mean "Eternal City" - before even Jerusalem or Rome or Mecca were thought of.*

*Mehujael suggests "the Living One of God" - an allusion to the Cherubim?*

*Methusael might be: "He asked for death," or, more probably: "The wisdom of God" (a priest practising divination?).*

*Lamech was, apparently, the first to thrust aside the law given in Eden that in marriage there should be one man and one woman. It is remarkable that in this lawless line the temptation - one of the strongest in human nature - to tinker with the divine law of marriage (2:24) should have been held at bay until the sixth generation. Kidner comments: "The attempt to improve on God's marriage ordinance set a disastrous precedent, on which the rest of Genesis is comment enough" (the lives of the patriarchs!).*

*The names of Lamech's wives are interesting. Adah is usually taken to mean "attractive, adorned;" but this name is also the extremely common Hebrew word for the "congregation" of Israel. Again, there is a hint of religious emphasis.*

*Zillah means "shadow," perhaps in the sense of secondary wife, concubine.*

*Adah's sons Jabal and Jubal seem, on the face of it, to have gone off in different directions - dwelling in tents and rearing cattle, and developing musical talent: "them that handle (Handel!) the harp and the organ." The word translated "handle" could mean either "specialise in" or "keep for oneself; i.e. corner." It comes in a religious context in Daniel 3:5,10,15.*

*But Jabal may have been different. Literally, "he was the father (that is, the leader) of the dweller in the Tabernacle and of the animals (sacrifices)", and in that case Jubal's music would be specially for the orchestra and choir of the sanctuary.*

*If there is any truth in these suggestions, false religion was fast becoming highly organized.*

*Tubal-cain, as will be seen by and by, helped the process on yet further. His cognomen, obviously a proud inheritance from his forefather, became the Hebrew word for "blacksmith," and hence the Kenites. The Iron Age dates only from the time of the Judges. So it may be surmised that the secret of iron-smelting, known earlier, was lost at the time of the Flood.*

*There is a very close resemblance (not very evident in the English text) between the names Tubal-cain and Vulcan, the divine blacksmith of ancient paganism. And just as Tubal-cain married Naamah - "pretty one" - a name which the Phoenicians gave to Astarte, so also in the Greek mythology Vulcan is associated with Venus.*

*With Tubal-cain's skill there came in great advances in the arts of making idols (Is. 40:19; 2 Tim. 4:14) and weapons of war (v.23,24). The rabbis interpret his name as meaning "the improver on Cain," i.e. not one murder but many.*

*"Cain's family is a microcosm: its pattern of technical prowess and moral failure is that of humanity."*

*"God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Ecc. 7:29).*

*It has often been noted that there are marked similarities between the Cainite names and those of the line of Seth (ch.5):*

Adam	Adam
	Seth
	Enos
Cain	Cainan
Enoch	Mahalaleel
Irad	Jared

Mehujael	Enoch
Methusael	Methuselah
Lamech	Lamech
	Noah
Jabal/Jubal/Tubal-cain	Shem/Ham/Japheth

In these lists there is anticipated the resemblances which have always existed between false and true religion - as between tares and wheat. Jesus himself forewarned that two may be in one bed, yet one taken and the other left.

God's disapproval is hinted at in the omission of the ages of the Cainites (contrast ch.5), as though declaring: "The lives of these men, long or short, are unimportant in my sight."

**4:23,24 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.**

This first expression of poetry, like music, come from Cain's family. It is an expression of pride and ferocity. It threatens judgement (cp. Is. 32:9ff). There is some doubt as to how the Hebrew should be translated. AV (and RVm) suggests penitence for a violent act, but this reading is surely disallowed by the boastful tone of v.24. The only alternative is to follow RV etc: "I have slain a man for wounding me."

Most students take the references to "a man ... a young man" to be strict parallelism, making two references to the same individual. But the word for "young man" suggests a distinction - and certainly there are a great many examples where Old Testament parallelism develops a similar but not identical idea (e.g. Ps. 72:11; 89:36; Is. 55:4; 40:31; Hab. 3:5).

So Lamech's boast may have been that in revenge he had wiped out all that branch of the family.

But why?

Both AV and LXX (s.w. 1 Pet. 2:24) suggest retaliation for physical violence. But there is another possibility: "I have slain a young man for joining himself to me." The same word comes in Malachi 2:14: "Yet is she thy *companion*, and the wife of thy youth." Then, possibly, this unnamed young man had appropriated Naamah (Pretty One!) without parental consent - the first

elopement? This would explain the highly exceptional mention of Naamah (v.22) for no apparent reason, and would also supply a reason for Lamech addressing this revenge song to his *wives*.

Lamech's boast was that he was greater than God who pronounced a mere seven-fold judgement against any who sought vengeance on Cain (v.15). 'But I (crowed this man of might), I take vengeance, seventy and seven-fold if need be!'

Or it may be that he meant: 'My god is Force - he can deal out death and destruction more than the God the others worship!'

Lamech's behaviour is fully explained by the sensational developments introduced by his son Tubal-cain, the metal-worker. He now had at his disposal the world's first armaments factory, and like the modern warlords he called it his Ministry of *Defence*! Then and now man "imputes this his power unto his god (his weapons)" (Hab. 1:11; cp. Dan. 5:4). And dedicating himself to this glorious new religion, Lamech evidently (as with belief of the Truth; 3:20) took to himself this new name of violence: Lamech means "blotting out." Even so, apart from 6:2,4,13, this is the end of the line of Cain. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord." The name of the other Lamech (5:28) like that of Methuselah, foretold the end of that evil family - "blotting out."

Is it a coincidence that the seventy-seven-fold destruction threatened by the Cainite Lamech, is matched by a life-line of seventy-seven generations ending in Jesus, the Saviour?

But there is another possibility. The LXX reading is not seventy-seven but "seventy times seven." If this is correct there may be specific allusion to it (for LXX was the Bible most in use in the first century) in Christ's reply to Peter's somewhat self-righteous enquiry: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" The shattering answer was: "Until seventy times seven" (Mt. 18:21,22). In other words, let the gentle persistence of your forgiveness at least rival the murderous efficiency of power-drunk Lamech.

The explanation suggested here of Lamech's song differs vastly from the weird stupidity of the Talmud version. Never was a better example of how God has destroyed the wisdom of the wise and brought to nothing the understanding of the prudent (Is. 29:14; 1 Cor. 1:19).

***4:25 "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew."***

It is fairly clear that this is not to be read as happening after verse 24. The chronicle of the line of Cain has been terminated, and now the record goes back to the alternative - those who came to be called "the sons of God" (6:2), another and more wholesome branch of the family.

Seth was named by his mother, as Cain had been. Eve had been convinced that Cain would prove to be the Redeemer. Now the emphasis which clings to the name Seth (Ps. 11:3; Is.

19:10), and the fact of his being named by Eve, indicates as firm a conviction as ever. It is as though she said: "I thought Cain was the Redeemer, but he wasn't. Abel was the right sort, but he was murdered. Now Seth is the appointed Saviour - he's bound to be!" Alas, Eve, you are only a few thousand years out in your expectations. Those of the Lord's faithful remnant in these days who have had strong but disappointed expectations of Messiah's appearing in some recent year may take comfort from Eve's experience.

For the word "another" LXX used a word implying "a son better even than Abel;" and for "appointed" it chose the unusual word "raised up," which in Mark 12:19 signifies the Levirate law for a man raising up seed to his dead brother. There is here a suggestion that Eve, recalling that Abel died childless, may have seen in Enos one who should reckon as Abel's son.

**4:26 *"And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."***

"To Seth *also*" carries the meaning that as there had been a vigorous development in the line of Cain, so also in the more godly side of the family, as chapter 5 proceeds to emphasize.

But Seth did not share the irrepressible optimism and expectation that there was in his mother, for when in due time a son was born to him it was he, and not the boy's mother, who assigned the name Enos.

Thus he expressed his depressing but realistic loss of faith in human nature; for Enos means "frail mortal man, the being of incurable weakness" (Jer. 30:12,15; 15:18; Mic. 1:9; 2 Sam. 12:15). It was as though he had declared: 'By this time I have learned that like begets like (5:3). Then what hope that my son will be the promised Saviour from sin?'

There must be some connection between this discouraged outlook and the way in which man now began to call upon the name of the LORD. As with Eve (4:1) this divine Name was associated with the great Promise (3:15). So it may be that the faithful remnant, appalled at the sharp decline into false religion and violence, began to appeal persistently in prayer for the redemption which, they now at last realised, human nature could not achieve.

The common phrase: "to call on the name of the Lord" seems always to describe worship or an expression of utter dependence on God.

It is possible that the words should read: "began to call themselves by the name of the Lord" (as in 48:16; Am. 9:12; Jas. 2:7; Acts 22:16). In that case here was a separatist movement by which the faithful sought to dissociate themselves from the apostasy which was filling the world with corruption.

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