

# Selections from a Genesis Commentary

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## Genesis 2:18–24

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא־טוֹב הָיְתָה הָאָדָם לְבֶדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּן עֶזְרָא כְּנֶגְדּוֹ:<sup>18</sup>

18. And the LORD God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper corresponding to him.”

As we have already observed, Gn 2:4–25 is essentially topical. Throughout it shows us how the LORD God lavished his love upon *ha'adham*, his foremost creature. This is brought out also by the final portion which begins with v.18. It treats of the creation of woman and of the institution of marriage. It is introduced by God's own basic assertion: “It is not good for the man to be alone.”

Cassuto points out that *lo' tobh* is a more emphatic negation than *'en tobh* would be. The latter would merely deny concerning something that it can be considered good; *lo' tobh* definitely declares concerning something that it is the very opposite of good. God's assertion was not addressed to the man. It serves the purpose of revealing God's thoughts to us concerning the matter at hand. It informs us what prompted God to create woman and to institute marriage.

From chapter 1 we know that the animals were all there in great variety. Yet in God's judgment the man was still alone; and this was not good. Man was not just another animal; he was not just an animal of the highest order. The man was a unique creature of God. Only man was created in the image of God, and lived in conscious fellowship with God. Only another creative act of God could give him a suitable helper, one like him, a human companion corresponding to him. Again we see how utterly impossible it is to harmonize God's own creation account with evolutionary theory which thinks of man as having gradually developed from the animals.

If God had given us only his revelation of Gn 1, we might have concluded that God made mankind male and female in one creative act. There we hear that both alike were created in God's image. To both together God assigned dominion over the earth and all of its creatures for this earthly life. Yet the supplementary revelation of ch. 2 informs us that for the exercise of this joint human dominion God at creation at the same time established a specific relationship between the two sexes. He assigned distinctive roles to man and woman for this earthly life.

The LORD God first formed the man, *ha'adham*, the human male. God placed him into the Garden of Eden, put him in charge of it to work it and take care of it. God directly instructed him with reference to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By all these actions God marked him for human headship, for the leadership role.

Not until God had done all these things are we introduced to the divine assertion: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper corresponding to him.” We do well to note the article used with *'adham*. The term is not yet used exclusively as a personal name. While *ha'adham* does refer to the first human individual, who later bore the name Adam, it also refers to the whole class of human males whom Adam is representing. The LORD God here expresses a double concern: 1) What would not be good for Adam as an individual, 2) What would not be good for the whole class of human males represented by this first human individual. From the whole account of Gn 2:18–25 the latter concern of God appears to be the greater one.

To meet the double concern the LORD God now promised to make a helper for the man. The woman whom God determined to make for man was to be an *'ezer keneghdo*, one like man, one corresponding to him physically, mentally, and spiritually, a fitting, suitable counterpart. Still in her relation to the man the woman

would be a helper already by virtue of her creation, even before she would become his wife. Some have maintained that being a helper does not in itself imply a subordinate position. This is correct, for in Holy Scripture God himself urges us to turn above all to him as our helper (Ps 46:1; He 13:6). In exercising his headship over his wife in self-sacrificing love the man, too, is to be a helper to her. It is quite a different matter, however, when we are told that God specifically *made* woman to be a helper for man. Being made a helper for the man can only be understood as being made for a role subordinate to that of the man. Being subordinate should, however, not be equated with being of lesser quality, value or importance. The woman's subordination to the man is a unity-subordination.<sup>1</sup> It involves a divine assignment of distinctive responsibilities to the woman in the interest of marriage and the family, upon which human society in this earthly life is basically structured. Yet Eve was a helper by the manner in which she was made by God and by virtue of what she was like through God's creative act. Yet what was true of Eve is true of all womankind inasmuch as they, too, are what they were made to be through her creation.

That this is the correct understanding of Gn 2:18, 21–22 is fully substantiated in the NT, especially in I Cor 11:3–16; 14:33b–36; 1 Tm 2:12–15.<sup>2</sup> In 1 Cor 11:8–9 St. Paul says: "For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man." When in 1 Tm 2:11–15 the same apostle states that woman is "not to exercise authority over a man," he bases this on the creation fact that "God formed Adam first, then Eve." That here in Gn 2 we are made aware of the God-assigned roles of man and woman prepares for the account of the fall. For when Eve and Adam gave up their trust in the LORD and disobeyed his will, they at the same time both fell out of their God-assigned roles.

וַיִּצְרֵם יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־חַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֶל־הָאָדָם לְרֹאוֹת מֶה־יִקְרָא־לָן  
 וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא־לָן הָאָדָם נִפְשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׂמוֹ:  
 וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שְׁמוֹת לְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה וְלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל חַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה וְלֹא־מָצָא עֹזֵר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ:<sup>19</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>

19. Now the LORD God formed from the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air and brought (them) to the man to see what he would call them; and whatsoever the man proceeded to call the individual creatures, that was its name. 20. And the man gave names to all the domestic animals and to the birds of the air and to all the beasts of the field; but as far as man was concerned, he did not find a helper corresponding to him.

The subject matter which God had broached is not temporarily pushed aside for another topic, the creation of the animals, in v. 19. Rather we now hear how the LORD God proceeded in his determination to furnish man with the helper which he needed.<sup>3</sup> God simply made all the animals male and female with one

<sup>1</sup> Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ*, An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences. (Servant Books, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1980), p. 41. Clark makes a discerning distinction between oppressive subordination, care-subordination, and unity-subordination. The latter "occurs in a relationship that is carried on for the sake of a unity or a higher cause."

<sup>2</sup> David Kuske, *Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:3-16*, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 2, pp. 83-103. Richard Balge, *An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36*; Armin Panning, *AYQENTEIN—A Word Study*, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 3. David Kuske, *Exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:11-15*, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Many commentators, especially those who are strongly influenced by the theory that ch. 2 offers a second divergent creation account, generally insist that the *waw* consecutive imperfect *wayyitzer* at the beginning of v. 19 must be translated as a simple past. On this basis they then contend that in contrast to ch. 1 this verse asserts that the animals were all made after man's creation. But this understanding of v. 19 is too simplistic even from the source critic's viewpoint. It overlooks a number of important considerations. How could such a glaring contradiction have escaped the notice of the supposed redactor, who is otherwise credited with great skill in fusing multiple source material into a harmonious whole? Moreover, v. 19 hardly qualified as a creation account of all animal life. It names only two animal types which were formed and brought to the man, the beasts of the field, *hayyath hazzadheh*, and the birds of the air, *'oph hazhzhamayim*. No mention is made of the creeping things, *remes*, or of all the marine animals, *deghath hayyam*. What we have is an obvious limitation of the number of creatures which were brought to the man to see what he would name them. God chose only those animals that might be considered closest to man, though they were still essentially different. It should also not be

divine fiat. But God was not pleased to proceed that way with his foremost creature whom he had made in his own image and to whom he had given a free will. He did not simply foist a helper and companion upon the man. Before extending his gift of a helper God first gave the man an opportunity to share his thoughts. God took steps to make man keenly aware of the fact that he was still all alone. He followed a course that would awaken a deep longing in the man's heart for a companion who would be like him.

The fact that God had given the man dominion over all the animals provided such an opportunity. All that is said is that God brought the animals that he had formed to the man "to see what he would call them." It wasn't necessary for God to tell him to name them. The LORD knew that if he brought the animals to the man in the garden he would be deeply interested in becoming acquainted with them. Having been appointed to be their lord and master, the man would carefully study each creature's nature so that he might give each a name that was in keeping with its divinely endowed characteristics.

Just this is what happened. Whatsoever the man called the individual creature, that was its name. The apposition *nephesh hayyah* limits the *le'*, which is used generically, to the living beings over which the man was given dominion. Here we get a glimpse of the facility with which Adam's mind, heart and will functioned while he still bore God's image. He was able to follow God's creative thoughts as they had been expressed in the forming of the individual beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the domestic animals. For we are told that he gave names to all of them; and whatsoever he called the individual living creature, that was its name. Each name really expressed what was specially characteristic concerning the animal involved. During this process he must have noticed that they were all paired, male and female; each had a fitting counterpart. But as far as man was concerned he—the man is the subject—did not find a helper corresponding to him.

God's procedure had served its purpose. It had caused the man to realize that he was unique among God's earthly creatures. As he observed the various animals brought to him and summed up their nature and characteristics in fitting names, he noted how in many ways God had made them all for his benefit; but he also perceived that none of them was a real counterpart for him with whom he could share his thoughts and feelings and jointly serve and praise his gracious God. As we see from v. 23 a conscious longing for such a helpmate was awakened in his heart. Also while he was still in his original sinless state the man grew in knowledge by the exercise of his God-given faculties. Only God is omniscient and possesses all knowledge as something inherent in his very essence and being.

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overlooked that while in v. 19 only two animal types are listed, which were brought to the man for naming, v. 20 mentions an additional class to which Adam gave names, the domestic animals, *habbehemah*. H. C. Leupold's comment "that they must have been included in the *hayyath hassadheh* of v. 19" does not fully satisfy. It doesn't explain why they are mentioned first in v. 20. The *habbehemah* are practically antonyms of the *hayyath hassadheh*. (Cf. Lv 17:13). If v. 19 meant to assert that all the animals were at this time created by God, the domestic animals would certainly have had to be mentioned. Cassuto in his Genesis commentary (p. 129) may be offering a better explanation why they are not mentioned in v. 19. Only the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, who were not all staying with man in the garden, needed to be brought to him by the LORD God. The domestic animals were undoubtedly with him in the garden.

It is true, of course, that the *waw* consecutive imperfect generally expresses the temporal sequence of actions. But this is not necessarily true in subordinate clauses. Because of the Hebrew preference for coordination a subordinate clause is often not apparent from its structure. The reader must recognize it as such from the context. This is part of the problem in v. 19. One would expect an English writer to indicate the subordination which is apparent from the context by saying: "The LORD God brought to the man the beasts of the field and the birds of the air which he had formed from the ground." Writing Hebrew style, Moses, however, simply coordinates; he begins with the subordinate thought, then follows with the main thought, and in both clauses uses a *waw* consecutive imperfect. The whole context shows that 19a is a subordinate clause and that 19b is the main clause. The main thought presented is clearly this that the LORD God brought the specified animals to the man. That they had all been made prior to the creation of man was so clearly stated in ch. 1 as not to require any precise restatement. What is added to the main thought of v. 19, in the subordinate clause (19b) is not even the fact itself that the LORD made the creatures mentioned but the manner in which he made them, that he had formed them like man from the ground with care, interest and wisdom. That is what the man was to note and discern as he studied them for proper naming. Each had its own characteristics, each was wonderfully formed from the ground, yet none was like man himself. For similar subordinate clauses with *waw* consecutive imperfect, which do not express temporal sequence of actions and are best rendered by a pluperfect (note Jdg 2:6 and 1 Kgs 7:13).

וַיִּפֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | תְּרַדְמָה עַל־הָאָדָם | וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצְלָעֹתָיו | וַיִּסְגֵר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתָּנָה:<sup>21</sup>  
 וַיִּבֹר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הַצֶּלַע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם | לְאִשָּׁה | וַיְבָאָהּ אֶל־הָאָדָם:<sup>22</sup>

21. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man; and while he slept, he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22. Then the LORD God fashioned the rib, which he had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.

Having made the man receptive for his intended gift, the LORD God now proceeds to prepare the gift itself and to present it. In typical Hebrew narrative style the procedure is portrayed by four coordinated *waw* consecutive imperfects, the first and the last *hiphil* causatives, the other two simple active *qal* forms. Only one subject for the verbs is expressly mentioned in v. 21; that the second verb has a different subject is so obvious that the writer is sure that the matter will present no difficulty to the reader. This freedom of leaving such obvious things to the reader to supply himself is also characteristic of Hebrew narrative. The masoretes put the *'athna*, the main sentence divider, after the second verb. Yet joined with the first clause, *wayyishan* would appear to express a redundant thought. It seems more likely therefore that the writer meant *wayyishan* to serve the rest of the sentence as a preceding subordinate temporal clause: “and while he (the man) slept, he (the LORD God) took one of the ribs and closed up its place with flesh.” What is here stated is not a mere symbolic way of expressing the closeness of man and woman and the mystery of creation which man cannot apprehend; rather it is to be understood as reporting what actually happened. This is verified by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor 11:8. It is undoubtedly the meaning of the text that with the bone the Lord took also the flesh attached to it. We find confirmation for this later in the man’s joyful exclamation: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” The almighty God immediately closed up with flesh the place in man’s body from which the bone and the flesh attached to it had been taken. Thereby Adam’s body became well and whole again as before.

The Hebrew verb for building, *banah*, is used for God’s fashioning of the tender and delicate form of the woman from the raw materials taken from the man’s body. As an able and resourceful builder constructs elegant, graceful buildings from the raw materials of stone, wood and metal, so the all-wise and almighty God made the most beautiful of his creatures from a rib and the flesh attached to it taken from the man.

Objects of verbs which are obvious and self-evident from the context are frequently omitted in Hebrew narrative. When we meet with this practice, we have to supply the omitted noun or pronoun in an English translation. Thus we supplied the pronoun “them” as the intended object of *wayyabhe'* in v. 19. As this same verb is used here in v. 22, the pronominal object referring to the woman, very obvious also here from the context, is nevertheless expressed in *wayyabhie'ha'elha'adham*. It is as though God were saying: “See, the helper I have prepared for you to be your wife.” With deep interest and joy the LORD God presented his precious gift to the man.

וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הַפֶּעַם עָצָם מִעֲצָמֵי וּבָשָׂר מִבָּשָׂרִי | לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה | כִּי מֵאִישׁ לָקַחָהּ זֹאת:<sup>23</sup>

23. And the man said: “This one this time is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called woman, for out of man was this one taken.”

The LORD God had indeed showed himself concerned about what was good for Adam as the first human individual. The man acknowledged this. When God brought the woman to him, he acknowledged that in contrast to all the animals which God had previously brought to him, and which he had carefully examined and named, this woman was just the kind of helper which he as an individual needed and which he had deeply desired. With amazement and joy the man received her from God’s hand, exclaiming: “This one this time is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” The demonstrative pronoun *z'oth* refers to the woman. *Pa'am* means time; *happa'am*, this time.

The man, i.e. Adam, at the same time indicated that he realized full well that it was not merely out of concern for him as an individual that God formed this new person out of his rib. The man indicated it by his additional exclamation: “This one shall be called woman, *'ishshah*, for from the man, *'ish*, was this one taken.” Here Adam is not speaking of a personal proper name which he intends to give to this new person because she was formed from him to be helper to him. We will hear later (Gn 3:20) how he gives her also a personal name. Here he declares with an impersonal passive construction (*yiqqare*, she shall be called) that a class name will be given to her and to all who through her and with her will constitute this class. And why will she receive this class name? Because of the manner in which she was created. Because she was taken out of man, *'ish*, the human male. From this statement it is evident that Adam realized that the new human person whom God had made represented a class, *'ishshah*, woman, the female sex, a class especially created out of man, *'ish*, the class of human males to which he himself belonged. Adam realized that by the creation of the first woman womankind as such was created as a fitting helper for man as such, who was brought into existence by his own earlier creation on the same sixth day as the first human male.

Adam gave testimony to the unity of the human race and paid joyful tribute to the dignity of the woman as being like him. He acknowledged that she was not inferior, yet also not identical, but fashioned from his bones and his flesh to be a fitting complement and helper.

עַל-כֵּן יַעֲזֹב-אִישׁ אֶת-אָבִיו וְאֶת-אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד:

24. For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will cling to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

In Mt 19:4–5 Jesus ascribes these words to God: “Haven’t you read, he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?’” Jesus distinguished, even as the Genesis text, between the creation of the two sexes “at the beginning” in the creation of Adam and Eve and the joining of the first man and woman in marriage. Yet by quoting “for this reason, *'alken*,” Jesus also pointed out that the creation of the sexes was principally to serve marriage and the family as the basic God-ordained ordinance for human society in this life.

Did God speak the words of v. 24 directly? Did he speak them through a comment of his inspired author? Did he speak them through Adam? There is nothing that indicates that God spoke them directly. Yet whenever God spoke directly in chapters two and three, this is always clearly indicated: Gn 2:16, 19; 3:9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17–18. The commentators and translators who understand v. 24 as a comment of the divine author generally point to Gn 10:9; 11:9; 19:22; 32:22. But these comments, though they are all likewise introduced by *'alken*, are of a different nature from the passage under discussion. They are all etiological explanations: of two city names, of a proverbial saying and of a prevailing custom. In each sentence they were a result of something that had just been related. Of course, when commentators and the NEB analyze *ya'azobh* as a present tense and translate: “That is why a man leaves his father and mother ...,” they also take v. 24 to be an etiological observation. Yet Jesus in Mt 19:5–6; Mk 12:7–8, and St. Paul in Eph 5:31 translate *ya'azobh* as a future tense (*kataleipsei*), and establish v. 24 as the divine institution of marriage at creation. This is confirmed by Christ’s addition: “Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” With Luther we therefore take v. 24 to be spoken by God through Adam.

Marriage is not a product of human progress or social development. Neither does it lie within man’s option to modify marriage, to terminate it at will, and to develop different life-styles to take its place. No, marriage is bound up with the very creation of mankind. “For this reason, *'alken*,” namely for the reason that God specially made man and woman for each other, a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. Marriage continues to be established before God just as the first marriage was established. The latter was established when Adam joyfully received Eve whom God had made and brought to him, and Eve in turn was willing to be thus received by him. Marriage is established before God by an unconditional mutual commitment

of a man and a woman to each other to become husband and wife. According to the order of creation the man is specifically mentioned as taking the initiative; but the woman's unconditional consent is just as clearly implied. How otherwise would the man know that she is his woman to whom he is determined to cling until God parts them by the death of either spouse?

While a man or a woman is single they form a part of their parents' family. But when a man takes a wife and she consents to it, they found a new family. The love which they formerly devoted principally to their parents they now devote above all to each other.

Of those thus joined together in marriage God says: "And they shall be one flesh." Through sexual intercourse, sanctified in marriage and only in marriage by the will of God (Gn 1:28), husband and wife are joined together in a union uniquely intimate. The bodily members of the one become the members of the other. 1 Cor 7:4 states: "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife" (Cf. also 1 Cor 6:5).

Yet being one flesh in marriage does not refer solely to sexual relations. This is already shown by the fact that a man's entering into marriage and his clinging to his wife is spoken of as an antithesis to the intimate bond of love in which he was thus far united with his parents. Marriage is meant to involve a community of interests and pursuits, mutual companionship, caring and sharing in love. A man loving his wife loves himself (Eph 5:25), his own flesh (Eph 5:30). Of course, their individual existence does not cease. Each retains his or her own responsibility before God. Still they are joined together, in a mysterious manner made one in a unique union.

### Genesis 3:9–20

וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל-הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֵךְ אֵיכָּה:

9. And the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

The LORD did not abandon his fallen creatures to their just deserts. In solicitous love he sought them out to lay bare their guilt and to make them fully aware of it. In this way he meant to prepare them for the announcement of the new program of his faithful love. God did this though there was nothing to compel him to do so except the love of his own heart. God's question is not for information; it is pedagogical to bring Adam to a full realization of his plight of sin.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת-קוֹלִי שָׁמַעְתִּי בְּגֶן וָאֵרָא כִּי-עֵירַם אָנֹכִי וָאֶחְבֵּאתִי:

10. And he said: "I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked and I hid myself."

With this answer the man betrayed his sin and his sinfulness. He betrayed it by admitting that he was afraid of God, that he was disturbed that he was naked. Adam knew full well what had brought about this fear and why he was suddenly troubled about his nakedness. Yet the very sinfulness which he was amply revealing did not let him make an open confession of it. Vainly he sought refuge in half-truths, deceit and evasion. Though he knew how he had come to be disturbed about his nakedness, namely through his fall into sin, he still sought to cover up. He sought to make his nakedness a plausible excuse for his hiding. He did not confess how he and Eve scurried for cover when the sound of God's approach in the garden had come to his ears. We noted Moses' use of a *hithpa'el* in reporting it. Moses, however, used a *niphal* form, the simple reflexive, when he set forth Adam's own statement concerning his hiding. Adam sought to make it appear as a very proper and innocent action. It is as though he were saying: Surely I could not appear in your presence in my naked condition. So I stepped aside and hid behind whatever tree was at hand.

11 וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עִירַם אֶתֶּה הַמֶּוֹהֵעַז אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לִבְלֹתִי אֶכְלֵ-מִמֶּנּוּ אֶכְלֹתִי:  
 12 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאִשָּׁה הָאֲשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הִיא נָתַתָּה-לִּי מִן-הָעֵץ וָאֲכַל:

11. And he said: “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree concerning which I charged you not to eat of it?” 12. And the man said: “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave to me from the tree, and I ate.”

Patiently, earnestly God continued with his questioning. The LORD exposed Adam’s vain evasions. With two straightforward questions God faced Adam with the demand to give straightforward answers likewise. Still, a simple honest confession was not given. Adam sought to mitigate his sin. He sought to transfer the full responsibility for his sinful deed from himself, sought to transfer it to Eve, and finally to God who had given Eve to him as a companion. Why had God given him such a companion who had seduced him?

Excuses never satisfy. Eve’s fault was real, but did not excuse Adam. Adam, who should have exercised his headship over Eve, had yielded to her persuasion. Sin separates people from one another, though they may participate in the sin together. Man, the sinner, is essentially selfish. What a disgraceful confession Adam made as he tried to blame others, to blame Eve, and ultimately to blame God himself. Where trust in God is gone, there is also no love for God; and where there is no love of God, real unselfish love for the neighbor also fades away. What a contrast between Adam’s relation to Eve after the fall and his joyful exclamation when God brought Eve to him as a fitting helper and spouse. Then he exclaimed with a grateful heart: “This one this time is flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bones” (Gn 2:23). Now Eve became the butt of his excuses. And that in a vain attempt to excuse his sin he now blamed God for giving Eve to him showed base ingratitude for what he had once recognized as a bounteous gift of God.

13 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאִשָּׁה מַה-נָּעַמְתָּ עֲשִׂית וְתֹאמְרִי הָאִשָּׁה הִנָּחַשׁ הַשָּׂיֵאֲנִי וָאֲכַל:

13. And the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.”

A simple, honest, humble confession did not come forth from fallen Adam. It was the same with Eve, whom God addressed in a similar manner and for a similar purpose. Though she was forced to admit her sinful act, she did not assume the full responsibility for it. She blamed the serpent. During God’s pedagogical questioning both Adam and Eve revealed their totally depraved condition since the fall. Though they were not ready in their sinfulness and because of their sinfulness to acknowledge their guilt and to confess it in all humility, they had nevertheless become deeply aware of their guilt. By excuses they sought refuge and protection from God’s just wrath, which they felt in their conscience.

In the faithfulness of his great love for man God now extended the help which his fallen creatures could not supply themselves. According to vss. 14–15 the LORD God let them hear the new program of his faithful love. In v. 14 we, first of all, hear how God laid a curse upon the serpent, the instrument of temptation, and therewith cursed above all the tempter himself, namely Satan.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | אֶל-הַנָּחָשׁ כִּי עֲשִׂיתָ זֹאת אָרוּר אַתָּה מִכָּל-הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִכָּל-חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה עַל-גִּחְוֹנְךָ  
 תֵּלֵךְ וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:

14. And the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, cursed are you among all the cattle and among all the beasts of the field. Upon your belly you shall move and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.”

If we want to understand this verse we will have to cling to what we said in connection with v. 1. God was dealing with a serpent, but he was also dealing with more than a serpent.

A serpent was certainly there, and God was dealing with it. The text says so. It not only states in so many words that God spoke to the serpent, but it also speaks of a curse which the serpent out of all the other beasts is henceforth to display as it moves about. It is to move, to crawl, on its belly. In doing so it will eat dust. This is not to say that dust itself will be its food, but that moving about as it will, close to the ground, it will invariably consume dust along with its food. Such a mode of moving about is a sign of defeat and humiliation. This creature exalted itself in its actions above man; ever after it is now to be degraded in man's eyes.

It is idle to speculate about the serpent's former mode of moving about, and to what extent it was different before the fall. What is said here is said for the benefit of man living after the fall. We are told what we are to see in the serpent's present manner of movement. We are to be reminded of the wicked fatal deed in which the serpent was involved as an instrument. At the same time we are to realize that this wickedness will end not in glory and success but in utter humiliation and defeat.

Nevertheless, we cannot stay with the serpent here. We need to face the fact that God spoke to the serpent. Addressing someone assumes that you are dealing with a rational creature. According to the creation account the serpent is not such a rational creature. Thus this speaking of the LORD God to the serpent is again evidence that he was dealing with more than a serpent, that he was dealing with the serpent as the instrument of the evil one.

The words spoken by God to the serpent strike out at this evil one, the tempter of mankind, Satan. This is brought out also by the first statement of the LORD: "Because you have done this ..." These are words that can properly be addressed only to an individual who has moral responsibility. It is Satan, rather than the serpent, that is held accountable for a wicked deed done. Likewise the announcement of humiliation and defeat which follows is therefore announced to Satan rather than to the serpent though outwardly the serpent is to bear the sign and symbol of defeat.

That actually a sign or symbol of defeat and humiliation is involved is evident from other passages of Scripture where the same language is employed and even a reference to this recorded incident is included. In Mic 7:17 we read, for example: "They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee" (AV). What Micah is here depicting is the ultimate triumph of God's people, God's church, and the utter defeat and humiliation of its enemies. Of similar import is v. 9 of Ps 72: "The desert tribes will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust." Noteworthy also is the fact that God asked the tempter, whom he was really addressing in the serpent, no pedagogical questions. He addressed such questions to Adam and Eve as evidence of his faithfulness toward them, as evidence of his intent to show them mercy. God holds out no mercy and grace to the tempter, to Satan, but only judgment, punishment as retribution for the violation of God's majesty, not punishment as a corrective chastening.

Ultimately these words are spoken to the tempter and to the serpent as his instrument for man's sake. Adam and Eve were to hear these words, were to hear that Satan would not permanently triumph in his wickedness, but rather suffer humiliation and defeat. All this is carried out more fully in v. 15, in the protevangelium.

It is for man's sake also that the serpent, the beast employed as Satan's instrument, is to serve as a constant reminder of Satan's ultimate and lasting defeat and humiliation. Elsewhere in Scripture we meet with instances likewise in which the irrational creature, which as such is not involved in moral responsibility, must nevertheless, not for its own sake but for man's sake, suffer punishment outwardly. We read in Gn 9:5 that the beast which is instrumental in the loss of human life is to be put to death, in order that man may be reminded of the inviolate sacredness of human life as sinful man's God-given time of grace. For a similar reason it was stipulated in the Mosaic Law, God's temporary discipline for his OT people, that the ox that had gored a man was to be stoned (Ex 21:18). Similarly the Mosaic Law prescribed that in cases of human acts of sexual perversion with a beast, the beast was to be put to death (Lv 20:15). Thereby man was to be reminded that such perversion was worthy of death. In the last analysis we know from the NT (Ro 8:19–22) that the entire creature



world, since the fall, must perform a function of this kind for fallen mankind as it groans under the bondage of vanity and corruption, not because of a sinful exercise of its own will, but by God's will, who wants the constant evidence of pain, struggle, futility and death in the creature world around us to be an ever present earnest reminder of the curse of human sin.

וַאֲיִבְהוּ אֶשְׂתִּית בֵּינֶךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זַרְעֶךָ וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ הוּא יְשׁוּפֶךָ רֵאשׁ וְאַתָּה תִּשׁוּפְנוּ עָקֵב: <sup>15</sup>

15. And enmity will I establish between you and between the woman, and between your seed and between her seed. He shall crush your head (crush you with respect to the head); and you shall bruise his heel (bruise him with respect to the heel).

We noted that v. 14 already alluded to the tempter. The serpent, was, however, still in the foreground. Now the matter is reversed. The evil one is definitely in the foreground, though still addressed as the serpent and spoken of as the serpent, in whose guise he was present.

The object, enmity (*'ebhah*), emphatically heads the sentence. It is the all-important concept. Eve had become the willing servant of Satan. She had obeyed his lie. She had renounced her trust in God and hence had withdrawn also her obedience from God. She had transferred both, her trust and her obedience, to Satan. Over all this Satan was rejoicing. He surmised that it would always stay that way.

God, however, announced: "Enmity, hostility, will I establish between you and between the woman." It is not that there was no enmity present thus far. We saw how Adam and Eve had become God's enemies, hiding before him in fear, refusing to accept responsibility for their disobedience of his will. We saw also how man had displayed enmity toward the woman, blaming her for his transgression. But all this enmity and hostility was misdirected. If man was to be helped, this enmity would have to be redirected in the proper direction again. He would have to acknowledge God anew in humble faith as his gracious benefactor; and his enmity would again have to be directed upon Satan. Unless this would come about, man would remain basically mistaken about all things and would in a fundamental sense continue to misjudge and misuse everything.

It is worth noting that God did not proceed to counsel and advise Eve to redirect her enmity upon the serpent. She utterly lacked the power to follow such advice. Neither did God command Eve to hate the evil one. She could not have discharged such a demand. Instead God announced his own intentions: I, God, will put, establish, enmity between you and the woman. God himself, God who alone was able, would do it. Proper enmity would be established by his divine initiative. It could be established in no other way. God was not promoting an enmity that was potentially there; he was not arousing something that had temporarily become dormant and inactive.

Satan had to hear this, for it was said to him, as the serpent was directly addressed. For Satan it was an announcement of judgment and defeat. All that he could do was listen. God did not invite him to respond. As soon as God had made his pronouncement to the tempter, the LORD again turned to Eve and Adam, whom he had previously drawn into conversation with searching questions. All this makes it quite evident that it was for Eve's benefit and for Adam's that God announced that he would do this great thing of again establishing enmity between Satan and the woman. Here we have an initial revelation of God's unmerited, yet triumphant grace.

Would this divinely established enmity be restricted to these two individuals, to the serpent and the woman? Would it come to an end when they would come to their earthly end? No, God promised more in his announcement. God is still the subject, enmity is still the object, and God is still speaking about establishing enmity as he goes on to say that he would put it likewise between "your seed," i.e. the serpent's seed, and between "her seed," i.e. the woman's seed. The Hebrew singular noun, זָרַע, is a collective in both instances. It clearly refers to a plurality of individuals. This in turn makes it very clear that the previous statement concerning the enmity between the serpent and the woman has to do with two individuals. It does not treat in generic terms of serpents as a class or of womanhood in general.

Who is meant by the woman's seed and the serpent's seed, as God goes on to say that he will establish enmity between them also? The promise is certainly intended for all of Eve's descendants. Potentially the woman's seed would therefore be all of Eve's descendants. But when we think of the actual establishment of the enmity envisioned in this divine promise, only those of Eve's descendants could come into consideration who would come to be like Eve when she would again be at enmity with the tempter. Only then was Eve again at enmity with Satan when God had again brought her back to faith in him, when she was led by God to trust in his saving grace. For this a complete change of heart was needed. Yet God had promised to bring this about. It would be the same with Eve's seed. Those of her seed, her descendants, whom God would put at enmity with Satan's seed, would be those in whom the LORD would likewise awaken humble trust in his saving grace. They would be the believers.

Satan's seed, or the serpent's seed, would be all of Satan's followers, evil angels and evil human beings, all who like Satan would be enemies of God and be active in destroying God's works. To think of physical descendants is out of the question, since physical propagation does not come into consideration as far as Satan is concerned. Essentially Satan is an angel. What Jesus says concerning angels, that marriage and propagation do not come into consideration for them, therefore pertains also to Satan, though he is a fallen angel (Mt 22:30).

Such an understanding of the woman's seed and the serpent's seed is in keeping with the language of Scripture elsewhere. In the parable of the weeds among the wheat (Mt 13:24–44), where the presence of the unbelievers in the world as God's field is under discussion, Jesus explains: "... the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil." On another occasion when Jesus upbraided the hostile Jewish leaders, teachers of the law and Pharisees, who like their prophet-slaying forefathers were obstructing and opposing God's saving activity, he addressed them: "You snakes! You brood of vipers." Like here in the protevangelium the Lord Jesus announced judgment to this serpent's brood: "How will you escape being condemned to hell?"

When according to the gospel of St. John Jesus was testifying to similarly hostile Jews, who scorned and rejected his Savior's work and person, he told them: "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44). This designation of unbelievers as Satan's seed or offspring is particularly significant, because in the unfolding of his assertion Jesus is clearly alluding to happenings and details pertaining to the fall.

A striking confirmation of our understanding of the serpent's seed is found in 1 Jn 3:8–13. We will need to content ourselves with a few salient points. In v. 8 we are told: "He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning." Note that in speaking of sinners as being "of the devil," this is led back to "the beginning." This is the very time about which God's promise in the garden speaks. V. 10 then sets forth a contrast: "This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are. Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother." This is then elucidated in v. 12 by an illustration: "Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous." Eve's very first seed, her first son, Cain, is designated as belonging "to the evil one" because of his fruit of unbelief. He belonged to the serpent's seed, Satan's seed.

St. John closes the section with the exhortation: "Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you." The enmity between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed, which the LORD announced as something that he would bring about, continues. This is the enmity which exists between God's believing children and the unbelieving world to this very day. It began with Cain's hatred of Abel, and it is experienced by Christians today. It is not that Christians hate the unbelievers as persons. They know that their heavenly Father so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son to redeem them all and to make them individually his own by faith. So also God's children, Christian believers, are intent upon winning everybody in the world through the gospel for Christ and his salvation. The hostility arises from the unbelieving world which remains adamant in its sin and unbelief. The unbelievers, Satan's seed, resent the Christians' childlike trust in their Savior and the loving, thankful service which the Christians render to their God and Savior in such humble faith. Through the

gospel of the forgiveness of sins, by which the LORD awakens faith in the hearts of sinners and in such faith again constrains them to loving service, he at the same time arouses bitter enmity in Satan's brood, in those who reject his gospel, in those who want to have nothing to do with humble faith and thankful love toward God. Jesus speaks of this when he says: "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division" (Lk 12:51–53; Mt 10:34–36).

The LORD's announcement of mankind's ultimate victory over Satan comes in the final distich of the promise: "He will crush you with respect to the head, and you will bruise him with respect to the heel."<sup>4</sup> In the second distich of the promise the LORD had spoken of a multiplicity of individuals involved on both sides in a God-effected enmity. In the final part of his great announcement the LORD returns to the serpent as one individual. It is the serpent, not his seed, which will bruise the heel of the woman's seed. The serpent will live on, even after the enmity has been extended to the serpent's seed and to the woman's seed. This again brings to light that more is involved here than an actual serpent. The serpent that played a role in Eve's temptation surely died in the ordinary course of events that obtained after death had through the fall come upon the entire creature world. God is speaking to one more powerful than a mere serpent; he is speaking to the evil one, who used the serpent for his evil purposes. Thus in this last strophe, also the woman's seed, *zer'ah*, the antecedent of *hu'* is to be taken as one individual. It is the woman's seed *kat' e'xochen*, one outstanding descendant of Eve, acting as the champion and substitute in behalf of all mankind.

The LORD told the tempter that this woman's seed would crush him with respect to the head. "Crush" seems to be the fundamental meaning of *shuph*, the Hebrew verb used twice in this distich.<sup>5</sup> This is its meaning in the other OT passage, Job 9:17, in which it definitely occurs: "He would crush me with a storm ...". On the basis of its double use in this one verse, involving diverse subjects and objects, one can conclude that this verb root's meaning is broad enough to include, on the one hand, a person's trampling upon the head of a serpent, and, on the other hand, the bruising or biting which a serpent may inflict upon a person's heel as it is administering its crushing action. The bruising or biting, pernicious and painful as it may be, does not rob the champion of his complete victory. But crushing the head of a serpent means administering a fatal blow, one which completely destroys such a serpent's power.

The question has been raised whether it is permissible to take the woman's seed to be a collective in a part of the protevangelium and then in the last distich to have the pronoun *hu'* and the suffix of *teshuphennu*, which have the woman's seed as their antecedent, refer to one individual. We are convinced that the Hebrew collective lends itself well for just such a usage. This can be shown from other instances. The collective singular may refer to all the individuals making up a certain class, and at the same time refer also to an individual member by whom this class is in a special way represented.

In Ga 3:16 St. Paul makes a point of the collective singular which occurs in the Ge 22:18 account of God's promise to Abraham, "and through your seed all nations on earth will be blessed ...". Paul says, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ." Yet Paul knows and acknowledges that at the same time also the believers are Abraham's seed; he knows that they are Abraham's seed through their close relation to Christ, who in the primary sense is the promised seed of Abraham. For in the closing verse of the very same chapter (Ga 3:29) Paul says: "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew words *rosh*, head, and *Jaqebh*, heel, are both accusatives of specification (Cf. A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax*, Third Edition, par. 71). Such accusatives define more precisely the exact point of incidence of the action of the respective subjects upon their objects in the two parts of this distich. Some of the vividness of the depicted actions is lost in the translations of the AV and NIV, which convert these accusatives of specification into direct objects and turn the pronominal objects of the Hebrew text into possessives.

<sup>5</sup> For a thorough discussion of the Hebrew root *shuph* and of the manner in which the verb forms in v. 15c have been handled in the ancient versions we wish to call attention to the monograph of a Catholic exegete, Dominic J. Unger, *The First Gospel*, (Published by the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1954, 362 pages). It offers a good exegetical treatment of the protevangelium, and at the same time supplies valuable information regarding its understanding in the ancient and medieval church.

What the LORD God announced to Satan for the comfort of Adam and Eve in their fallen state was this: A descendant of Eve, as the champion and substitute of all mankind, would win a victory over Satan and rob him of his power. This could only refer to the power which Satan had gained over mankind through the sin into which he had drawn our first parents. In winning this victory over Satan, in inflicting this complete defeat upon Satan, this Woman's Seed would himself undergo suffering and pain at the hand of Satan.

Through this victory the believers, the woman's seed in the wider sense, would win continual victories over Satan. Thus St. Paul in Ro 16:20 alluded to Ge 3:15 as he gave the Roman Christians, and all Christians, a promise of victory over those creating divisions and offenses contrary to the apostolic teaching. He says: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

The Christian church has had full warrant for seeing in Ge 3:15 the protevangelium, the very first promise of the Savior and of his victory over Satan and sin, a victory won through suffering and death.

Contemporary interpretation is prone to speak of the enmity oracle as an original etiological explanation for the widespread aversion that human beings have for snakes and serpents of every kind. But even these interpreters generally agree that in what they call its present position in Ge 3, this enmity oracle has taken on a further purpose, that it is somehow symbolic for man's constant struggle with the forces of evil and temptation.

Yet these explanations do not do justice to God's announcement that he is the one who establishes the enmity in the promise under discussion. Since God is the one who establishes the enmity, he must also be seen as the one who supplies the power for the ultimate victory of the woman's seed over Satan. That is why we can say that already this promise bids us to look for more than a mere man in this promised victorious champion of mankind. With Luther we will also want to note the significance of the fact that he is spoken of as the woman's seed, rather than as the seed of Adam. Therewith we are not saying that the deity of the Savior or his virgin birth are already explicitly taught in the protevangelium. We can say, however, that the wording of God's initial promise was very carefully chosen so as to be quite adequate for embracing also these truths about the Savior when in the course of time God was pleased to reveal them very explicitly.

It is true that apart from the significant allusion to it in Ro 16:20 the protevangelium is not directly quoted in the NT as a messianic promise. Yet we do not want to lose sight of the prominence and the frequency with which our Savior's work of redemption is presented in the NT as a victory over Satan.

In 1 Jn 3:8 we are told: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." Jesus' words in Jn 8:44 leave us in no doubt as to what work of the devil he had come to destroy. There Jesus speaks of Satan as the *'anthropoktonos*, the one who brought death upon mankind, who had done this as the liar from the beginning and as the father of lies. The Gospels show us how Jesus, our great champion, faced Satan in a series of severe temptations at the very beginning of his public ministry (Mr 4:1–11). Jesus saw Satan's prompting behind Peter's attempt to dissuade him from from the course of the cross, at the time when he had solemnly announced it to his disciples (Mt 16:23). In the final discourses with his disciples in the upper room on the evening before his death Jesus repeatedly spoke of his impending passion as a final bout with Satan, which would lead to full victory over him. Jesus told his disciples: "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out" (Jn 12:31). He assured them: "I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me" (Jn 14:30). Looking even beyond the victory to its proclamation in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus promised that the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, would now convict the world of guilt "in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned" (Jn 16:11).

In an unpublished essay Professor Martin Franzmann made some noteworthy remarks on Ro 5:12–19.<sup>6</sup> He pointed out that it is really a retelling of Gn 3. The fall is seen from the vantage point of the raising up of the fallen world in Christ. The One Man at the beginning is confronted by the One Man at the end. Professor Franzmann asks: "Is there any indication in Paul's words that the Spirit taught him to see in Genesis 3 any indication of the coming victorious One Man?" To this question he himself makes the reply: "Paul calls Adam the 'type of the One *who was to come*' (Rom 5:14). The verb used here (*mello*) is one used frequently to denote

<sup>6</sup> Martin Franzmann, *Hermeneutical Principle Involved in the Appraisal of the 1963 Essay on Genesis 3*, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

that something must and will take place because the Word of God has promised it.<sup>7</sup> The only figure in the oracles of Genesis 3 that could be the subject of Paul's *mellontos* is, it would seem, the Woman's Seed."<sup>8</sup>

The same author also feels that Paul in Ro 8:20–21 presupposes the protevangelium. "There Paul says that creation was subjected to futility and that when this subjection took place there was present a hope that the creation, too, would be liberated and participate in the glorious liberty of the children of God. Now if we look in Genesis 3 for a word of hope uttered *before* the cursing of the ground for man's sake, the only possible candidate is the word which speaks of the crushing of the Serpent's head by the heel of the Woman's Seed."

Franzmann adds: "Paul's use of Genesis 3:15 in the letter to the Romans is allusive; the connection is presupposed and utilized, not argued or demonstrated. This makes these passages strong evidence for Paul's conception of the Enmity oracle. The use of Genesis 3:15 in Revelation 12 is much more outspoken. The references to the Woman, the Woman's Seed, the Enmity, and 'that ancient Serpent' are so palpable as to be beyond dispute. It will suffice to call attention to one feature that might be passed over: That is the description of the church as 'the rest of her (the Woman's) seed' in verse 17."<sup>9</sup>

The revelation of the LORD's faithfulness in his love toward his fallen creatures did not end with the proclamation of the protevangelium in their hearing. It continued to manifest itself as the LORD announced the disciplinary chastening which he was laying upon the woman and the man.

אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר ה'רַבָּה אֲרַבָּה עֲצָבוֹנֶךָ וְהִרְבֵּי בְעֲצָב בְּלִדְיֶיךָ וְאֶל-אִישְׁךָ  
תְּשׁוּקָתְךָ וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל-בְּךָ: ֵס

16. To the woman he said: "I will greatly increase your painful conception; in pain you will bear children; yet to your husband will be your desire, and he will rule over you."

Was this correctly introduced as disciplinary chastening? Or is it punishment? In giving an answer we bear in mind that these terms are not always used with the same strict distinction. They are frequently used as interchangeable synonyms. But for the purpose of this exposition it is vital that we carefully distinguish between the two terms. In its strict sense and usage punishment which God inflicts is compensation in suffering for the violation of his divine majesty. Such punishment flows out of God's holy and righteous wrath upon sin. All suffering now and hereafter ultimately becomes such punishment for those who are obdurate and remain obdurate in their sin and unbelief (Ro 12:19; Ga 6:7).

God's chastening, on the other hand, is suffering which he inflicts out of love for a corrective purpose. While God is still offering man a time of grace, all the sufferings which God sends upon sinners are still chastening. They purpose to make man mindful of his sins, of their merited curses and of his utter helplessness before God, so that he may take refuge in the grace of God proclaimed to him in the gospel. During this earthly life God continues to send sufferings as such chastening also upon those who have come to faith and who enjoy his pardoning grace. This chastening is to aid them in their bitter struggle with their sinful flesh (Pr 3:11; He 12:5–6).

The sufferings and discomforts which the LORD now announced to the woman were meant to be corrective chastening. They were intended to serve as a constant reminder of the sin to which the woman had succumbed, and which had made her subject to death and God's displeasure. Yet in his faithful love God had permitted the woman to hear the gospel message of the protevangelium so that she might find comfort in it.

The particular hardships and discomforts announced to the woman as her future lot were calculated to keep her mindful of the nature of her fateful, sinful deed. In believing Satan's lie and in eating of the forbidden fruit she had sought exquisite delights. What sin brought her was sorrow and pain instead. God states very

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Here the author lists the following NT quotations to prove this point: "(Cf. for Paul, Ro 8:18; Ga 3:23; Col 2:17; 1 Th 3:4; 2 Tm 4:1; elsewhere in the NT Mt 11:14; 16:27; Lk 24:21; Jn 12:33; 18:32; Ac 11:28; 17:31; 24:15, 25; 26:22, 23; 1 Pe 5:1; etc..)"

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

emphatically: “I will greatly multiply your pain and your conception.” It is quite obvious, however, that *'itstsebhonekh weheronebh* is to be understood as a hendiadys. In this figure of speech two nouns are coordinated when in actual function one of them is really subordinate, having the force of a descriptive adjective. That is why we have previously translated: “I will greatly increase your painful conception.” For it is not the multiplying of the woman’s conceptions in itself which is to be thought of as an evil consequence of sin. In mankind’s state of perfection, immediately after God had created mankind male and female, it was an act of blessing that God bade them to be fruitful and to multiply, and thereby enabled them to do so. The reminder of sin and its curses for the woman lay in the pain and discomfort which was henceforth to characterize each conception, each pregnancy, and each birth, the whole process of bearing and rearing children. In pain she would now bear children. The fact that sin brought not joy but distress and pain was to be brought home to the woman in connection with her basic womanly functions, her functions as wife and mother of the human race.

“Yet to your husband shall be your desire.” In her fall the woman had sought to act independently of the man. She had taken the initiative and assumed the position of leadership. She had sought to control the man by taking control into her own hands. By her persuasion she had even induced the man to follow her in her transgression. But her sinful striving for independence from the man and control over him had not brought her joy and satisfaction. It had brought sorrow and distress. It was a futile, fateful effort at overthrowing God’s order of creation. The woman was given to hear that God’s order still stood and would continue to stand. God the Creator made the woman to be a fitting help and companion for man who was first created. This is corroborated in 1 Cor 11:9. Even sin had not changed this God-ordained relation. The woman’s natural concreated desire for her own husband would continue to assert itself. Yet in her state of sin selfishness would likewise assert itself and she would no longer be able to carry out her submission in perfect love. “... he will rule over you.” Also after the fall her husband would continue to rule over her. God’s order of creation would remain in effect.<sup>10</sup> But the husband’s rule as a sinner would now likewise be marred by selfishness.

All that God announced to the woman, *'elha'ishshah*, after the fall he said to her not merely as an individual but to her also as the representative and mother of all future women. This is indicated by the article affixed to *'ishshah* as she is addressed. Upon the entrance of sin womanhood in general would suffer pain and distress in the bearing and rearing of children. But woman’s desire and attraction would continue to be for her own husband. She would never feel completely at ease and be fully satisfied without her own husband. Yet man’s leadership would now be marred by chauvinism of every kind; it would no longer be exercised in perfect love. Wherever sin would prevail without restraint man’s rule would all too frequently degenerate into harsh and heartless domination over the woman, even into abject slavery for the woman.

Gn 3:16 is a reaffirmation, not the establishment, of the God-ordained relationship between man and woman, as it is to be expressed most specifically in marriage. As we noted in Gn 2, God already established man’s headship and the woman’s subordination at the very creation of the man and of the woman, established the relationship in the interest of the basic institutions of marriage and the family. The hardships, and the sin and selfishness, which the woman would now experience in the marriage relationship were by God’s will and announcement now to serve her as a corrective chastening, as a wholesome reminder of sin and its curses.

Some have considered her subordination to her husband in marriage in itself to be the chastening or punishment which God laid upon woman because of her sin in the fall. But this viewpoint has no scriptural support. Nowhere does Scripture place the sole or even the prime responsibility for the fall into sin upon the woman. If Eve was subordinated to her husband and bidden to be in submission as a punishment for her disobedience, then Adam would be absolved of all guilt in being appointed to rule over her. Then Adam’s excuse of blaming Eve (Gn 3:12) would have been upheld. Actually, Adam with this excuse revealed his own total depravity. As we shall presently see from Gn 3:17–19, Adam is by no means absolved from guilt. Though

<sup>10</sup> *The order creation* is a convenient term for all the relationships pertaining to mankind, partly for this life, which God established at creation. They include the relationship of human beings to their God as well as various relationships between human beings themselves, eg. between parents and children, neighbor and neighbor, man and woman, husband and wife. All these relationships belong to the moral law, for they are relationships to which the moral law, God’s immutable holy will comprehended in love, addresses itself (Cf. Mt 22:37–40; Eph 6:2; 5:22–33; 1 Cor 14:33b–34).

Adam's headship over his wife is upheld after the fall, St. Paul, just because of this headship, ascribes the full responsibility for the entrance of sin to Adam (Ro 5:12): "... sin entered the world through one man and death through sin ..."

Above all, the aforementioned viewpoint is not in keeping with the scriptural concept of the marriage relationship. It is not in harmony with the LORD's use of the marriage bond. Both in the Old and the New Testament he uses the relationship between husband and wife to depict the blessed relationship between him and his people, his church of believers (Isa 54:5; 62:4, 5; Jer 3:14; 31:32; Eph 5:23–24; Re 19:7–9). Only because the marriage bond, the relationship between the husband and wife in marriage as God established it at creation, is a blessed relation, can it depict the blessed relation between the LORD and his church of believers. This would not be true if the woman's submission to her husband bore the stigma of a chastening made necessary because of sin. The scriptural use of the marriage bond to picture the bond between Christ and his church remains fitting and meaningful only when with St. Paul in I Cor 11:3, 8, on the basis of Gn 2, we lead it back to creation: "the head of the woman is man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man."

With this understanding Paul could indeed write: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies."

It is a blessed privilege for believers to submit to Christ who has redeemed us in self-sacrificing love. To do so as believers in thankful love is the height of blessedness. So also the wife will find the true blessedness of God's gift of the marriage bond to the extent that she submits in love to her husband as her head; similarly the husband will find the true blessedness of God's gift of the marriage bond to the extent in which he exercises his headship over the wife in Christ-like self-sacrificing love.

The evil consequence of sin upon the marriage bond lies in this, that a sinful nature keeps even a Christian husband from fully exercising his headship over his wife in a Christ-like self-sacrificing love, and in this, that sinful nature likewise keeps even a Christian wife from submitting to her husband in everything in a perfect love. Thus even Christian spouses can only approximate the full blessedness which God had in mind when at creation he originally instituted the marriage relation.

It is worth noting that contemporary historical-critical interpretation on the one hand sets forth some of the same thoughts and observations which we have unfolded in expounding the chastening which God laid on the woman after the fall. Gerhard von Rad, for example, writes:

The woman and the man are not cursed (it is unthinking to speak of their malediction!); but severe afflictions and terrible contradictions now break upon the woman's life. There are three facts which because they are related to one another in unresolved tension grind down the woman's life: (1) hardships of pregnancy, pains at birth, and (2) yet a profound desire for the man in whom she (3) does not find fulfillment and rest (Ruth 1:9), but rather humiliating domination. "In the bondage of compulsive drive and yet most immediately involved in the wonder of creation; groaning in pain, cramped in travail, humiliated, overburdened, care-worn, and tear-stained ... (W. Vischer, *Christuszeugnis*)." Whence these sorrows, these contradictions, this degradation in the woman's life? It is not a small matter that our narrative absolves God's creation of this. Here a primeval offense receives its consequences, which faith recognizes as a punishment inflicted by God.

Woman's punishment struck at the deepest root of her being as wife and mother ...<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis, a Commentary*, pp 90–91 (translated by John H. Marks. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1972)

On the other hand note the difference of approach in this interpretation. Gerhard von Rad marvels at the religious insight of the Israelite narrator, the Yahvist, to whom he ascribes this portion of the Genesis account. He is of the conviction that this human narrator has sought an answer for the sorrows, contradictions and the prevailing degradation in woman's life. It is not a small matter in von Rad's eyes that this narrator has not led these afflictions back to God's natural order of things, that he wholly absolves God's creation of these troublesome features. It is not a small matter for von Rad that this writer in his faith has rather led it all back to a primeval offense which is receiving its consequences, that he recognizes in these troubles of womanhood a chastening inflicted by God.

In other words, according to von Rad divine revelation comes by way of the deep religious insights of men of faith. These insights have a hard kernel of religious truth, though they still have aspects and features at the same time that are conditioned by the experiences and the limited understanding of the particular biblical writer and the specific social problems of this day. Hence modern man must preserve these insights, yet at the same time bring them up-to-date and make them fully relevant to his own time and circumstances, to his own understanding. We can still lead woman's problems, as far as they are still thought to exist, back to mankind's estrangement from God, yet without necessarily operating with a primeval offense.

It should be obvious what this kind of interpretation leads to. By carefully studying the text you may very clearly apprehend what is being said. Still, you choose what pleases you as being deep religious insight also for our day. What does not please you, or what no longer seems relevant for modern man, you discount as a limitation in the understanding of the religious insight of the biblical writer.

Treasuring the certainties of God's Word, we shall want to continue to take also this portion of Gn 3 as a part of God's inspired and inerrant revelation, apprising us of something that actually happened; in humble faith we shall want to take to heart what God actually said to Eve, what he is still saying to all of her daughters, and finally to all of us.

The chastening laid upon Adam<sup>12</sup> was similarly calculated to keep alive in him a keen remembrance of sin, to which he had consented and with which he had merited God's wrath and displeasure.

וְלָאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתְּךָ וְתָאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרָנָה  
הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבּוֹרְךָ בְּעֶצְבוֹן תֹּאכַלְנָה כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:

17. And to Adam he said: "Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'you shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life."

<sup>12</sup> *Ule'adham 'amar*. So far in Gn *adham* has invariably been used with an article, when it referred to the first human being, specifically to the first male human being. As such he at the same time represented mankind, most specifically the male human being. The occurrences of *'adham* without the article in Gn 1:26 and 2:5, 20 were not exceptions, for in these instances, as our exposition pointed out, *'adham* is used as a common noun referring to man as a species. In Gn 3:20, 22, 23 and 4:1 *ha'adham* continues to be used to designate the first male human individual in the above sense. Not until Gn 4:26, after other men had come into existence and have been spoken about in Gn, does *'adham* without the article occur for the first time as a full-fledged proper name of the first male human individual.

The only real exceptions seem to be Gn 3:17, 21, where *'adham* is prefixed with the preposition *le* pointed with a vocal schwa. (The latter pointing is also found in Gn 2:20, though here *le'adham* can well be taken to be the common noun "man" and need not refer directly to the first male human individual.) Many OT scholars assume that the masorettes erred in these three instances, failing to point *le* with the *qamets* of the article. For example, the critical apparatus of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, Liber Genesis*, prepared by O. Eissfeldt, in each of these three instances recommends reading *la'adham*. Yet U. Cassuto may well be right in contending that the masoretic pointing of Gn 2:20 and 3:17, 21 is based on linguistic usage: namely the usage that nouns like *'elohim* and *'adham* referring to specific individuals, though they can also be common nouns, are not used with an article when prefixed by a preposition (cf. footnote 72).



The man had listened to his wife and submitted to her persuasion; he should have ruled. He should have supplied the leadership for which God had created him. Basically, of course, his sin consisted in this, that he gave up his fear, love and trust in God as he transgressed God's commandment and ate of the forbidden fruit. Yet all this happened when he listened to his wife. As a constant reminder of this sinful default in his God-assigned role, he was now to experience insubordination. He was to experience such insubordination from the soil, the *ha'adhamah*, the tillable ground over which he would otherwise have exercised complete control.

Man would henceforth experience difficulty in securing his sustenance. The ground would produce its fruits, but winning them from the soil would be attended by toil, difficulty and hardship. In toil man was now to eat of the fruits of the ground. The former ease of tilling the ground would be a thing of the past. A divine curse blighted the fruitfulness of the soil. No longer would it be fitting for imperfect, sinful man to dwell in the midst of a perfect world. Divine pedagogy now made the outward circumstances surrounding man to correspond with the fallen, depraved state of man. Man needed to feel his wretchedness. For man's benefit a world put under the bondage of corruption and subjected to vanity (Ro 8:19–22) would best serve to prepare man for God's invitation to take refuge in his saving grace.

יְקוּץ וְדִרְדָּר תִּצְמִיחַ לָךְ וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה:<sup>18</sup>  
 בְּזַעַת אֶפְיֶיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם עַד שׁוֹבְבֶיךָ אֶל-הָאֲדָמָה כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לָקַחְתָּ כִּי-עָפָר אָתָּה וְאֶל-עָפָר תָּשׁוּב:<sup>19</sup>

18. “Thorns and thistles shall it produce for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19. In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you will return.”

That which man would now procure with his labors would be gotten in meager quantities. Undesirable elements would henceforth grow without receiving man's attention, while he would be eating the plants of the field. Lifelong continuance of toil was imposed on man.

When Adam is told: “In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread,” this is a drastic paraphrase of the previous statement (17d): “In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.” Not that eating would be so difficult that it would bring sweat upon man's face. The thought is rather that his labors would be so arduous and unrelenting that the moments of refreshment and relaxation would still find man bearing the signs of his labors. The life of toil would finally terminate in physical death, in the dissolution of man's body into dust, from which it was taken.

We again believe that we are here informed how God actually described the immediate labors and hardships which Adam would be facing in gaining a livelihood upon being cast out of Paradise.<sup>13</sup> Still the types

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<sup>13</sup> Contemporary historical-critical interpretation devotes considerable time to ascertaining just what kind of life is described here. The objective is to determine the environmental setting out of which the envisioned biblical writer is supposed to have written this account. As a part of his comment on these verses Gerhard von Rad in his Genesis commentary, p. 91 (see footnote 88) writes: “Upon closer inspection, one finds that the curse speaks clearly of two different forms of life outside of Paradise.” He then divides the text into A (vvs. 17c, 19a, 19b) and B (vvs. 18, 19a). “The one version (A) has in mind the life of the peasant (Fellah) and his unending troubles to exact a harvest from the clods; the other (B) the life of the Bedouin in the steppe. His existence is characterized less by the effort of preparing the ground than by the poverty and skimpiness of the livelihood accorded him. The misery, therefore, of both primary forms of life in Palestine is aetiologically established in this passage (Begrich, ZAW, 1932, 102). The fusion of the two passages, which at one time at an earlier stage were certainly independent, makes the curse of the clods and therewith the misery of agricultural life thematically predominant, but because of this union the passage has become more comprehensive; it speaks not only of hardship but also of the wretchedness of human existence.”

In all this von Rad again sees merely the religious reflections of the Yahwist narrator rather than an actual curse spoken by God to Adam in Paradise. He says (Ibid., p. 92): “Must it be emphasized again that the passage does not consider work in itself a punishment and curse? Work was ordained for man even in paradise (ch. 2:15). But that it makes life so wretched, that it is threatened by failures and waste of time and often enough comes to nothing, that its actual result usually has no relation to the effort expended—that the narrator designates as a dissonance in creation which is not accounted for by God's original ordinance. The passage touches on

of disorders mentioned are merely a sample and type of all the difficulties and vexations which man since the fall experiences in labors of every kind, physical and mental, by which he gains his livelihood.

וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ חַיָּה כִּי הִיא הִיְתָה יָאֵם כָּל־חַיִּי:<sup>20</sup>

20. And the man called the name of his wife Life (Eve), for she was the mother of all the living.

*Hawwah* means life. The *LXX* has *Zoe*; the *Vetus Latina* has *Vita*. In faith the man fixed his attention on the one comforting detail in the entire announcement of the LORD. More was expressed by the man than the mere idea that God was indeed speaking the truth when he had indicated in the protevangelium that Eve would have offspring, and that for this reason she would become the mother of all the living. That in itself was a truth which was quite evident and one which would be readily believed. It would hardly be significant enough to be brought to our attention in such a solemn manner. Rather we see the conviction expressed here by Adam that since all living human beings would come forth from Eve, therefore also life in the fullest sense. Scripture often simply equates life with salvation.

The significant way in which Adam's naming is reported leads us to believe that he referred to the things implied in the promised victory over Satan, life in the midst of death. It is worth noting that this statement of Adam follows closely upon the announcement of physical death. This fact caused Franz Delitzsch to say: "The promise purports truly a seed of the woman. In the very face, therefore, of the death with which he is threatened, the wife is for Adam the security of both, as well for the continuance, as for the victory, of the race; and it is, therefore, a laying hold of the promise and of the grace in the midst of wrath, and with a consciousness of death

unfathomable relationships between man and earth; it does not attempt to explain more closely what it says about the disturbance which began with man and now also brought the earth under the domination of misery. It only establishes the fact."

Von Rad goes on to note that the versions A and B, which he has posited as being now fused together, both conclude with the prospect of death as man's return to the earth. Yet he is seemingly not sure that in the original form of these separate statements death was considered anything but the normal termination of man's life which is depicted by both versions as fraught with difficulties. Yet he asserts that in the present plan of the whole narrative a threat of death precedes the account of the fall and that here in 19d the punishment pronounced upon man ends with a terrible statement about actual death. Still he feels forced to add (*Ibid.*, 93): "We must in any case content ourselves with the fact that it cannot be made to agree absolutely with the threat of 2:17, for men did not die after their deed, and the penalty itself is directed so intensively toward life that it must be considered as maintained and not basically forfeited."

One is struck by the efforts that are made and the ingenuity that is expended in dividing what very naturally belongs together and in putting into contrast what quite well fits together and merely constitutes a further unfolding. Why is this? Let us realize that this follows out of the respective interpreter's presuppositions with which he begins.

In *The Study of Old Testament Theology Today*, p. 26, Edward J. Young makes a very pertinent point: "All men, insofar as they act in consistency with their basic presuppositions, reason in a circle. And all men, whether consciously or not, have basic presuppositions. A man, for example, who starts with the presupposition, whether consciously adopted or not, that the Bible is not a special revelation of God, will arrive at conclusions which are consonant with his starting point and basic presuppositions. He is reasoning in a circle." Then Young himself quotes R. J. Rushdoony, who also stated this truth very aptly (*Ibid.*, 26): "All reasoning is circular reasoning, but reasoning from God is God-given, and God-created data has the validity of conformity to the nature of things. The opponents of inspiration reason from autonomous man's reason, through brute factuality which has no meaning other than man's interpretations, back again to man's basic presupposition. In other words, all reasoning moves in terms of its basic presupposition, either God or autonomous man, interpreting all reality in terms of the presupposition."

"We need not fear, then, if the charge of reasoning in a circle be raised. It is the only way in which one can legitimately reason." It is vital that we keep this truth before our minds. This will let us realize how important it is that we keep mindful of the presuppositions with which interpreters begin their work. Interpretive conclusions and judgments which seem strange to us, and often enough also seem quite unnecessary, will not appear that way, or at least much less so, when we try to look at the text from their presuppositions. This will then also make us wary of taking over findings and conclusions which have been obtained from anti-supernaturalistic and evolutionary presuppositions. We will not fit them into an exposition which is proceeding from an altogether different set of presuppositions, namely those which Scripture itself gives us in asserting that it is God's inspired and inerrant word, given to us through human instruments as his special revelation for our salvation.

incurred; in a word, it is an act of faith that Adam names his wife *hawwah*—Eve.”<sup>14</sup> J.P. Lange appropriately adds: “In distinction from *'ishshah* (woman) this is a proper name which as a memorial of the promised grace, as Melanchthon calls it, expresses the peculiar significance of this first of wives for humanity and its history.”<sup>15</sup> Historical-critical interpretation is again in keeping with its presupposition of a naturalistic development of religious ideas.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted in *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, critical, doctrinal, and homiletical, by John Peter Lange, *Genesis*, p. 240 (Grand Rapids, Mich., Zondervan Publishing House).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>16</sup> Gerhard von Rad (op. cit. p. 93) says: “With the penalties in ch. 3:14–19 which explain aetiologically in faith the severe dissonances and enigmas of human life, a high point, a kind of conclusion, has been reached. By continuing the narrative beyond this critical point, the author, who works altogether with preformed traditions, could not avoid certain irregularities and breaks. The transition from v. 19 to v. 20 has long been considered one such noticeable fracture, and the naming of the woman (a second time, moreover, after ch. 2:23!) was not thought acceptable as the first echo, so to speak, to the penalty. ‘Mother of all living’ is a name of honor; does it not presuppose, moreover, that she has already borne children? The Aramaic word, too, *hawja* (serpent), has led to supposition that at the basis of the narrative there is a very different older form, in which only three acting partners appear: God, man, and a (chthonian?) serpent-deity. But nothing of that kind is palpable. Even though this verse may derive originally from another context and a seam be here recognizable, one must nevertheless seek to understand it in its present place. One must see the man’s naming of the woman as an act of faith and certainly not faith in promises that lie hidden, veiled in the penalties, but rather an embracing of life, which as a great miracle and mystery is maintained and carried by the motherhood of woman over hardship and death. We said above, v. 19, that man could regard life in spite of all punishment as maintained and not basically forfeited. This life, which over and beyond the death of the individual is passed on by mothers, he now takes and blesses even though it is threatened by death. Who can express the pain, love, and defiance contained in these words?”