

THE TREE OF LIFE IN RELATION TO IMMORTALITY
GENESIS 3:22

By R. DOUGLAS CASSEL

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity in
Grace Theological Seminary
May 1957

PREFACE

The writer expresses his deep gratitude to his faculty adviser, Professor John C. Whitcomb, for his helpful guidance in connection with the writing of this critical monograph, and to Research Librarian Benjamin Hamilton for his patient counsel regarding the technical apparatus of manuscript preparation.

The writer also expresses appreciation to the entire faculty of Grace Theological Seminary for their teaching ministry, which has served to stimulate his thinking and to clarify Biblical doctrines, as well as to deepen his spiritual experience.

The writer dedicates this monograph to the Lord Jesus Christ.

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INTRODUCTION

The writer, having been trained in the field of the biological sciences, was motivated by this background to research the relationship between physical death and the moral issue of sin. The writer recognizes the fallacy in the scientific explanation of death on purely physical and natural grounds. In the inspired record, the author has pursued this investigation, convinced that absolute truth can only be found in the Creator of the Universe.

Therefore, the author of this monograph will deal with the physical and moral realm by an investigation of the Divine Revelation found in Gen. 3:22. The physical and moral issues are contained in the nature of the Edenic body and the Edenic test involving the Tree of Life.

HEBREW TEXT

According to Biblia Hebraica, third edition, edited by Rudolf Kittel

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלֶּה יְהִי הַנֶּחֱדָם
 הֵיךְ כְּאַחַד מִמֶּכָּן לְדַעַת טוֹב
 וְרַע וְלַעֲתָה פֶּן יִשְׁלַח יְדוֹ וְלִקְחָהֶם
 מֵעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאָכַל וְהָיָה לְעֵלָם

There are no variant readings.

ANCIENT VERSIONS

According to the Old Testament SAMARITAN TEXT edited by Henry Barclay Swete

According to Pentateuchus Hebrico Samaritanus, edited by

Benjamin Blayney

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן
הָאָדָם חַיָּה כְּצֶהֱד מִמֶּנּוּ
לְדַעַת טוֹב וְרָע וְעַתָּה פֶּן
שִׁלַּח יְדוֹ וְלִקְחָהּ מֵעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאֵל
וְהָיָה לְעוֹלָם

All radicals are exactly the same as the Masoretic text.

SEPTAUGINT TEXT

According to the Old Testament in Greek, edited by Henry Barclay Swete

Καὶ εἶπεν Κύριος ὁ Θεός Ἰδοὺ
 Ἀδὰμ γέγονεν ὡς εἷς ἐξ ἡμῶν τοῦ
 γινώσκειν καλόν καὶ πονηρόν καὶ νῦν μὴ
 τοτε ἐκτείνη τὴν χεῖρα καὶ λάβη τοῦ ξύλου
 τῆς ζωῆς καὶ φάγη καὶ ζήσεται εἰς
 τὸν αἰῶνα

ENGLISH VERSIONS

Douay Version, 1609

And he said. Behold Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil: now, therefore, lest perhaps he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.

Tyndale Version, 1534

And the Lorde God fayd: loo, Adam is become as it were one of vs, in knowledge of good and evell. But now left he ftrech his hand / fo. V./ and take alfo of the tree of lyfe and eate and lyve ever.

King James Version, 1611

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 forever.

American Standard Version, 1901

And Jehovah 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 forever.

Moffatt's Bible, 1922

Then said God the Eternal, "Man has become like one of us, he knows good and evil. He might reach his hand now to the tree of life also, and by eating of it live forever!"

The American Bible, 1935

Then the Lord God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, in knowing good from evil; and now, suppose he were to reach out his hand and take the fruit of the tree of life also, and eating it, live forever.

Revised Standard Version, 1946

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.

ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

"Man's most ambitious dream - the conquest of death."¹

This statement expresses the innermost passion of mortal man, realizing the certainty of death.

The mystery of death has baffled natural man down through the ages. Philosophers and religious systems have pondered, speculated, and glamorized death. Still the most crucial issue of life is death.

Certainly, the only valid authority on the subject of death is God. The Bible, being the Word of God, is the only source of information. This fact points the investigator to the book of Genesis. In this book is recorded the creation, rebellion, and condemnation of the human race. The account of the origin of sin and the subsequent relation to physical death is contained therein. Therefore the early chapters of Genesis are essential in establishing the cause of physical death and its relation to the moral issues of sin.

It is also necessary to establish the historicity and literality of the Book of Genesis in this era of modern higher criticism in which even the Mosaic authorship is rejected. The documentary hypotheses supported by the school of higher criticism is an attempt to destroy the credibility of the Genesis account and

¹ John Pfeiffer, "Can Science Conquer Death?" Coronet Magazine (December, 1956), p. 122.

devalue the narrative to mere myth of pagan origin. This issue becomes crucial in light of the fact that the Book of Genesis is the foundation upon which all the doctrinal and historical verities of Christianity are erected. Christianity stands or falls upon the veracity of the Book of Genesis.

Upon establishing a literal and historical interpretation of Genesis as basic requirement, the writer pursues an investigation of physical death and its relationship to sin as set forth in Genesis. This subject necessitates an analysis of the nature of the Edenic body and the implication of the intended effect of the Tree of Life upon the physical frame.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The First Major Problem

The nature of the Edenic body.

The Second Major Problem

The tree of life in relation to immortality.

Major Problems

The nature of the Edenic body

Only the two views will be considered which accept a literal and historical interpretation of Edenic narrative.

Essential Edenic Immortality View.--The view is supported by the commentators who regard the Tree of Life as symbolical - that the body of man, after his fall underwent an essential alteration in its material organic nature, thereby capable of death.

This view is supported by Lange,¹ Vos,² and Machen.³

Conditional Edenic Immortality View.--The view is held by the scholars who regard the fruit of the Tree of Life as inherently efficacious - that the body of man is essentially identical in its material organic nature before the fall, but capable of immortality upon fulfillment of prescribed conditions.

Those men who support this view are Smith,⁴

¹ John Peter Lange, A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, trans. Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1868), I, 174.

² Geerhardus Vos, Biblia Theology O. T., (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1948), p. 47.

³ J. Gresham Machen, Christian View of Man (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927), p. 184.

⁴ R. Payne Smith, "Genesis," An Old Testament Commentary for English Readers, ed. Charles John Ellicott (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., n. d.), I, 102.

⁵ J. C. Murphy, Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1917), p. 102.

Raymond,⁵ and Murphy.⁶

... the view reported by the school of higher criticism and the "liberal" scholars. The reason for supposing that this view is an innovation from the Bible itself is that the language of the Bible is not so plain as it is commonly supposed to be. The language of the Bible is not so plain as it is commonly supposed to be. The language of the Bible is not so plain as it is commonly supposed to be.

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⁵Edbert A. Simpson, *Genesis*, "The Book of Genesis," *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Robert L. Hays, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), I, 511.

⁶Gertrude E. A. Smith, *Genesis and Babylonian Traditions* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), p. 11.

⁷Edward M. W. Turner, *The Book of Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge* (New York: McGraw-Hill & Co., 1901), p. 111.

⁸A. H. Hays, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1907), p. 317.

⁵Miner Raymond, *Systematic Theology* (Cincinnati: Cranston and Stowe, 1877), II, 53.

⁶J. C. Murphy, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Boston: Estes and Laurist, 1873), p. 141.

The Tree of Life in Relation to Immortality

Mythical View.--Simpson states the view supported by the school of higher criticism and the "liberal" exponents: "The reason for supposing that this verse is an intrusion from the Eden myth . . . The imagination that pictured it and the symbol which it contains of ancient men's religion belong to the childhood of the race."⁷

Those who support this view are Jostrow⁸ and Worchester.⁹

Symbolical View.--Strong expresses the view which contends for the literality and historicity of the Genesis account but rejects the idea that "the fruit of the Tree of Life had any inherent efficacy."¹⁰

Jenks states, "That the narrative is historical does not forbid our assuming that the trees of life and of knowledge were symbols of spiritual truths while at the same time they were outward realities."¹¹

The men who support this view are Lange¹² and Machen.¹³

⁷Cuthbert A. Simpson (exegesis), "The Book of Genesis," The Interpreter's Bible, ed. Nolan B. Harmon (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), I, 514.

⁸Morris Jostrow, Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 52.

⁹Elwood Worchester, The Book of Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1901), p. 184.

¹⁰A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1907), p. 583.

¹¹William Jenks and Joseph A. Warne, Comprehensive Commentary on the Holy Bible (Brattleboro: Fessenden and Co., 1835), p. 38.

¹²Lange, op. cit., p. 205. ¹³Machen, op. cit., p. 184.

- Inherent Efficacy View.--Murphy and the advocates of the "inherent efficacy" view, also contend for the literal and historical record of Genesis and that the fruit of the Tree of Life contained properties of preservation of the human body.

"...it follows that the Tree of Life must have had some virtue by which the human frame was to be kept free from the decrepitude of age, or the decay that terminates in death."¹⁴

Those who support this view are Smith¹⁵ and Raymond.¹⁶

WHITNEY'S INTERPRETATION

¹⁴Murphy, op. cit., p. 140.

¹⁵Smith, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁶Raymond, op. cit., p. 53.

The First Major Problem

The nature of the Edenic body

To ascertain the effects of the Tree of Life upon the human frame it is absolutely essential to determine first the nature of the Edenic body. Therefore, the consideration of physical properties of Adam will precede the effects of the Tree of Life.

Immortality is a word with various shades of meaning, depending upon the field of study. In this respect, the usage of the term in philosophy and theology has resulted in a wide range of interpretation. Geerhardus Vos has cited three aspects of immortality which are philosophical, theological and eschatological.

(1) "Immortality" in philosophical language may express the persistence of the soul, which, even when the body is dissolved, retains its identity of individual being.

(2) Theological terminology - that state of man in which he has nothing in him which would cause death. It is quite possible that at the same time an abstract contingency of death may overhang man, i.e., the bare possibility may exist of death in some way, for some cause, invading him, but he has nothing of it within him. In this second sense it can be appropriately said that man as created was immortal, but not that after the fall he was so, for through the act of sinning the principle of death entered into him; whereas before he was liable to die under certain circumstances, he now inevitably had to die.

(3) Eschatological language, that state of man in which he has been immune to death, because immune to sin.¹

The writer accepts the definitions of philosophical and eschatological immortality in their entirety, but the theological immortality interpretation which bears chiefly upon the nature of

¹Vos, op. cit., p. 23.

the Edenic body, the writer rejects since it is the interpretation of the Essential Edenic Immortality view. Nevertheless, Vos has catalogued the three principle aspects of immortality; philosophical, eschatological, and theological. The writer will present a refutation of Vos' theological definition in the course of the argument.

Because of the great controversy over evil and its relation to physical death, the two opposing views have arisen in regard to the body of Adam. The major issue involves the question, "Was Adam created with an immortal body?" If not, immediately there poses the problem, "Does not this have serious moral implications according to Rom. 5:12, 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'"

The Essential Edenic Immortality view detours this problem by stating "that except for sin the body of man as originally created, and as it would have been found in Adam's posterity would have had the natural faculty without further chance of being free from death."²

To change this immortal condition according to Lange "the body of man after his fall underwent an essential alteration in its material ground,"³ making man mortal, fitted for death.

In opposition to this view the conditional immortality view holds that man was created a natural human body without sin or the effects, not subject to death, although capable of death, but intended for immortality upon fulfilling certain conditions; to mention two, sustenance derived from food and preservation and rejuvenation

²Machen, op. cit., p. 184. ³Lange, op. cit., p. 205.

derived from the Tree of Life. This is the view supported by the writer.

Moral Argument.--Does the relation of physical death and evil present insuperable difficulties in the conditional immortality view? The writer is convinced that it does not impugn the absolute holy character of God and is in harmony with the doctrinal truth set forth in Rom. 5:12. To prove this, certain basic facts concerning physical death are in order.

First of all, man is a unit. Death must effect the entire body, soul and spirit. Mortality, moreover, applies to the שׂר, the organic living body; not the principles of matter in that body nor to the נְשָׁמָה, breath of life which came from God.⁴ Therefore, death is not a complication of dying members, but death involves the entire being.

Secondly, by definition, "Temporal death is a dissolution of the connection between soul and body."⁵ Since death is the separation between the material part and the immaterial part of man, death is instantaneous and not a gradual process although a gradual process of decay may result in death. No matter in what condition a creature, namely man, may exist, if this separation has not occurred, he is still a living being.

Thirdly, a careful distinction must be made in Scriptural interpretation between physical and spiritual death.

⁴Murphy, op. cit., p. 141.

⁵Enoch Pond, Lectures on Christian Theology (Boston: Congregational Board of Education, 1867), p. 357.

spiritual. Thou shalt die . . . most evangelical Christians regard the threatening before us as including spiritual and eternal death; and some represent it as including also temporal death. But manifestly, if it includes eternal death, it cannot include temporal death, since the two ideas are incompatible.⁶

Is the primary meaning of the Rom. 5:12 and the Gen. 2:17 physical death? This is debatable.

Lastly, evil is not an immediate causation of physical death nor are they directly proportional. Physical death is the universal result of sin but not the immediate. "As eternal life does not consist in exemption from literal death, so its opposite does not consist in the mere loss of life to the body."⁷ Man can be spiritually dead and possess physical life and by the same token, a believer can experience physical death and possess spiritual life. These are two concrete examples which are not challenged as injustices, and therefore certainly an Edenic body of a conditional immortal nature is consistent with the nature and decrees of God.

The early chapters of Genesis are characterized by brevity in the description of the creation of the universe and more specifically man and his Edenic environment. Since the Bible does not pose to be a comprehensive study in the fields of physiology and anatomy, the organic nature of Adam is very obscure. It is obvious, therefore, that much of the investigation cannot be dogmatically supported by Scripture, but rather the bulk of evidence must be deducted from plausible Scriptural inferences.

Although many of the facts consist of inadvertant evidence, two definite negatives can be affirmed. Adam did not possess a

⁶Ibid.

⁷J. L. Dagg, A Treatise on Christian Doctrine (Charleston: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1859), p. 147.

spiritual body in the New Testament sense, and no Scriptural statement in Genesis confirms a change of the material organic nature of Adam.

It is seen a natural being it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. He said that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from Heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

It can be unquestionably established that the body of Adam was not a spiritual body created by the spirit, but rather was a flesh and blood body (verse 14). According to Scripture, Christ had a human (physical) body, of course, but Paul asks the contrast between the first man in his natural body and the second man in his risen body.⁵

The passage does not support an altered, ethereal body, but to the contrary, the context seems to suggest a natural physical body unaltered from creation to death by the continual reference to Adam's origin and the present condition of the human race. The natural meaning of the phrase, "the first man is of the earth, earthy . . . as to the earthy, such are they also that are earthy" (verses 14 and 15) appears to be analogous, making the created body of Adam identical to the material body of his posterity.

⁵Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), II, 137.

Negative Argument.--In 1 Corinthians the fifteenth chapter from verses 44 to 50, a direct contrast is made between natural body and the spiritual body.

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from Heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

It can be unquestionably established that the body of Adam was not a spiritual body animated by the Spirit, but rather was a "flesh and blood" body (verse 50). According to Robertson, "Christ had a human (psuchikon) body, of course, but Paul makes the contrast between the first man in his natural body and the second man in his risen body."⁸

The passage does not support an altered Edenic body, but to the contrary, the context seems to suggest a natural Edenic body unaltered from creation to death by the continual reference to Adam's origin and the present condition of the human race. The natural reading of the phrase, "the first man is of the earth, earthy . . . as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy" (verses 47a and 48a) appears to be analogous, making the created body of Adam identical to the material body of his posterity.

⁸Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), IV, 197.

Robertson states: "As is the earthy" (hoios ha choikos). Masculine gender

"earthy" (chaikos). Late rare word from chous, dust. "As is the earthy" (hoios ha choikos). Masculine gender because of (anthropos) and correlative pronouns (hoios, toioutoi) of character or quality. All men of dust (choikoi)⁹ correspond to "the man of dust" (ho choikos), the first Adam.

The second negative, that no Scriptural statement in Genesis confirms a change of the material organic nature of Adam is verified by a careful study of the first three chapters of Genesis. Therefore to state that an alteration in his human frame occurred, is an argument from silence and is based purely upon supposition or speculation. The writer is also aware of the fact that no absolute confirmation of the unaltered nature is found in the Genesis account, but this does not discredit the fact that an essential alteration of the physical body of Adam is of sufficient importance to warrant mentioning if not in Genesis at least in some other portion of Holy Writ. Nevertheless, the Genesis account suggests an identical organic nature before and after the Adamic fall as presented by the inferences of Scripture in the writer's physiological argument.

While Adam and Eve were still in the unfallen Edenic state, God refers to them as "male and female" (Gen. 1:27) and commands them to "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28). These two phrases suggest sexual biological functions of procreation, and is supported by the interpretation of Christ on the law of divorce.

"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female" (Mk. 10:6).

⁹Ibid. p. 27, p. 28.

Physiological Argument.--Machen¹⁰ and others, who support the opposing view, recognize the difficulties in reconciling the physiology of Adam in the view of bodily alteration. The writer will propose four independent arguments (1) natural external and internal characteristics, (2) normal biological functions of procreation, (3) similar chemical composition and original make up, and (4) identical physical processes of metabolism.

The Genesis description of man suggests natural external and internal characteristics: "male and female" (1:27), "flesh" (2:21), "ribs" (2:22), "eyes" (3:6), "nostrils" (2:7), "hands" (3:22) and many other members and organs suggested. Therefore, man must have been similar in appearance. All of these are more than mere components of man's physical make up, but are united with the body as a whole in its complexity. The alteration of one or more of these would have an effect upon the biological processes of the body. This argues for an identical organic unity in the human body before and after the fall.

While Adam and Eve were still in the unfallen Edenic state, God refers to them as "male and female" (Gen. 1:27) and commands them to "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28). These two phrases suggest normal biological functions of procreation, and is supported by the interpretation of Christ on the law of divorce.

"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." (Mk. 10:6).

¹⁰Machen, op. cit., p. 184.

Christ's reference is to the original created body and the discourse leads directly into the present marriage state without any indication or explanation of an alteration in natural sexual relationship. Therefore, it can be affirmed that man was created capable of the biological functions of procreation, and probably these functions are identical to the natural physical body.

"Til thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). This statement concerning Adam suggests a similar chemical composition and original make-up.

According to Delitzsch,

The body of man, in order to unite all elements into itself is formed from earth, the most composite of the elementary forms and indeed, in accordance with the delicacy of its organization, out of אדמה, therefore of the finest portions of the earthly material, and, what is not less worthy of note, out of moist red earth: moist, for a cloud had just ascended and had watered it; red for the earth is called אדמה. The earth was watered, because man was to be a microcosm, an image and copy of the Kosmos baptized and drawn from the waters; as also actually the elementary ingredients of the human body are united in the human body amounts to more than three-quarters of its entire weight.¹¹

It is obvious that Delitzsch considers Gen. 3:19 as connected with elements of which the physical body is composed. If the primary meaning is not chemical composition, it does refer to the origination and the termination of the organic nature which appear unaltered from creation to dissolution.

The strongest physiological argument is that of the identical physical processes of metabolism. It is the writers intention to prove that food was essential for the sustenance of the Edenic body.

¹¹Franz Delitzsch, A System of Biblical Psychology (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1890), p. 92.

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

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." (Gen. 2:9a)

Comparing these verses with statements made immediately following the fall:

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. . ." (Gen. 3:17b-19b)

The writer offers the authority of Lange regarding the meaning of "meat" and "food" (Gen. 1:29 and Gen. 2:9). Although Lange opposes the writer's conditional Edenic immortality view, he supports the writer's physiological argument by this interpretation.

Together with the nourishment of man (v. 29) there is appointed the nourishment of the beasts (v. 30). What is common to both is the appointment of the use of vegetable food; the distinction is that man shall have the use of the herb with its seed, that is in itself, and of the fruit-tree, whilst the beast on the other hand has the green of the herb. The meaning of this is, that for man there is the corn (or core) of nature, for the beast, the shell, or husk.¹²

Literally the word (root אכל) means "אכלה" eating, food; with ל it is also a verb לאכלה for food, for eating, to eat." (Jer. 12:9)¹³

¹²Lange, op. cit., p. 174.

¹³Alexander Harkavy, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary to the Old Testament (New York: Hebrew Pub. Co., 1914), p. 23.

Although the word can mean to eat, the etymology of the word seems to suggest, eating with the implication of nourishment, as illustrated by Judges 14:14: לֶחֶם אֲכָל וְיָצָא - out of the eater came forth food.

The reference is to Jud. 14:8 and 9, the account of Samson and the riddle: "And after a while he returned to take her; and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion and behold, there was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey. And he took it into his hand; and went on, eating as he went." (ASV)

The word translated "food" in Jud. 14:14 refers to honey which Samson ate as food. Therefore, it has been translated many places in the Old Testament as "food."

The context also suggests that man derived the sustenance and nutrition for the Edenic body in a similar manner as did the animals of Eden. This would suggest a similarity in metabolic processes. And Keil and Delitzsch indirectly support this interpretation by stating:

The teaching of Scripture, that death entered the world through sin, merely proves that the human race was created for eternal life, but by no means necessitates the assumption that the animals were also created for endless existence. As the earth produces them at the creative word of God, the different individuals and generations would also have passed away and returned to the bosom of the earth without violent destruction by the claws of animals, or the hand of man as soon as they had fulfilled the purpose of their existence. The decay of animals is a law of nature established in the creation itself, and not a consequence of sin or an effect of the death brought into the world by the sin of man.¹⁴

Keil and Delitzsch oppose the writer's conditional immortality

¹⁴C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Vol. I of The Pentateuch, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1885), p. 66.

view of man, but propose a natural animal body. Since the Scriptures suggest a biological similarity between Adam and the living creatures of Eden as seen in Gen. 1:29 and 30, what is the basic difference between their organic material bodies? Basically there is no organic difference, but the writer is convinced that Adam was capable of immortality upon the condition of eating the efficacious fruit of the Tree of Life. This will be developed in a subsequent argument.

The writer believes there is conclusive evidence to affirm that Adam was dependent upon food substances for the nourishment and sustenance of the physical frame. This then is an essential and primary requirement for physical life. The argument of the physical process of metabolism, in itself, verifies a conditional immortal body.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred." (Mt. 4:1-2)

Hunger is a natural function of a body craving for nourishment. Even though Christ possessed a perfect humanity all the biological requirements of life appear necessary. Christ refrained from food for a duration of forty days, but the writer believes, as a true humanity, an indefinite period of abstinence is not plausible. The basic requirement of life seems to be an essential part of even a truly perfect humanity.

¹⁵ Alvin J. Wolfelt, "Christ" (Unpublished notes for theology class at Grace Theological Seminary, n. d.), pp. 30, 31. (Micrographed).

Humanity of Christ Argument.--The true humanity of Christ, since free from the effect of sin, is a perfect and unmarred human body giving some insight into the nature of the Edenic body. This analogy cannot be carried to the fullest since Christ as the God-man is a unique person in all of history. Many Scriptural passages ascribe true humanity to Christ.

According to Dr. Alva J. McClain:

In Christ were displayed all the marks of a true human being.

He begins earthly life as a babe, with a prenatal period (Lk. 2:5), grows and develops as a human being (Lk. 2:40), displays the emotions formed in a normal human being (Mk. 3:5), displays normal human appetites (Mt. 4:2), displays certain normal human limitations (Jno. 4:6), had the appearance of a human being (Mt. 16:13-14), and proves He is human by suffering and death (Jno. 19:34).¹⁵

The particular incident in the life of Christ which expresses His true humanity and bears upon the conditional immortality view is the temptation in the wilderness.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred." (Mt. 4:1-2)

Hunger is a natural function of a body craving for nourishment. Even though Christ possessed a perfect humanity all the biological requirements of life appear necessary. Christ refrained from food for a duration of forty days, but the writer believes, as a true humanity, an indefinite period of abstinence is not plausible. The basic requirement of life seems to be an essential part of even a truly perfect humanity.

¹⁵Alva J. McClain, "Christ," (Unpublished notes for theology class at Grace Theological Seminary, n. d.), pp. 30, 31. (Mimeographed).

In support Robertson states "The weakness from the absence of food gave the devil his special opportunity to tempt Jesus which he promptly seized."¹⁶

This harmonizes with the writer's conditional immortality argument of Adam according to the physical processes of metabolism.

Some may object on the grounds that it was absolutely impossible for Christ to die unless in harmony with His will. The writer cautions the objector by declaring the uniqueness of the person of Christ and also one must clearly distinguish between the providential preservation of God and the physical capabilities of a natural human body. The writer is dealing with the latter not the irresistible decrees of God.

Life to preserve and rejuvenate the material organic nature.

Conditions two and three will be developed in the Second

Major Problem.

¹⁶Robertson, op. cit., II, 49.

Conclusion.--On the basis of the evidence presented in the moral argument, the negative argument, the physiological argument, and the humanity of Christ argument, the writer concludes that the body of man before the fall was essentially identical in its material organic nature to our own bodies today but was capable of immortality upon fulfillment of prescribed conditions.

This is the conditional Edenic immortality view.

The conditions:

- (1) Food and the basic essentials required for the sustaining of the material organic nature.
- (2) The moral obligation of obedience to God.
- (3) The Tree of Life to preserve and rejuvenate the material organic nature.

Conditions two and three will be developed in the Second Major Problem.

These two chapters contain a number of symbolic mythical elements which interweave with the sacred narrative such as the Garden of Eden, the serpent, the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life, the Cherubs and the whirling sword of fire, which are freely and easily introduced without a word of explanation. Now the very peculiarity of mythical symbols of this kind is that they are not originally the result of conscious literary invention, but belong to the unconscious, creative period of religion which antedates the art of writing. Besides, several of these symbols, as we shall soon see, have unmistakable counterparts in the religious traditions of other nations.¹⁷

In relation, the writer will present a paraphrase and state the arguments presented by Hodge.

(1) Internal evidence - when contrasted with the mythological accounts of the creation and origin of man as found in the records of many heathen nations whether Oriental, Greek, or European, the difference is at once apparent.

(2) It forms an integral part of the book of Genesis which is accepted as historical by all Christians.

The Tree of Life

Mythical View.--Since the Interpreter's Bible is a very recent work, and reflects the current trend in the modern school of "liberal" theology. This view has issued from the documentary hypothesis of higher criticism, which rejects Mosaic authorship and contends for a Genesis account which is the product of various redactors. These redactors, primarily, the Jehovahistic "J" and Elohist "E" accounts have been compiled into the present Genesis document. In the final analyses, these men hold a low view of inspiration and sacredness of the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, a mythical interpretation is in perfect harmony with their doctrinal stand.

Worcester sets forth this view very precisely.

These two chapters contain a number of symbolic mythical figures closely interwoven with the sacred narrative such as the garden of Eden, the serpent, the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life, the Cherubim and the whirling sword of fire, which are freely and easily introduced without a word of explanation. Now the very peculiarity of mythical symbols of this kind is that they are not originally the result of conscious literary invention, but belong to the unconscious, creative period of religion which antedates the art of writing. Besides, several of these symbols, as we shall soon see, have unmistakable counterparts in the religious traditions of other nations.¹⁷

In refutation, the writer will present a paraphrase and quote the arguments presented by Hodge.

(1) Internal evidence - When contrasted with the mythological accounts of the creation and origin of man as found in the records of early heathen nations whether Oriental, Grecian, or Etruscan, the difference is at once apparent.

(2) It forms an integral part of the book of Genesis which is confessed as historical by all Christians.

¹⁷Worcester, op. cit., p. 184.

(3) An essential part of Scriptural history as a whole, which treats of the origin, apostasy, and development of the human race, as connected with the plan of redemption.

(4) The facts were recorded are assumed and referred to as matters of history.

(5) These facts underlie the whole doctrinal system revealed in the Scriptures. Our Lord and His apostles refer to them not only as true, but as furnishing the ground of all the subsequent revelations and dispensations of God.¹⁸

Therefore, Genesis is a literal and historical account of the origin and early history of the human race.

(1) The Tree of Life is symbolic because the Tree of Life is not a tree, but a symbol of the life of God.

By no sort of ingenuity can the Tree of Knowledge be transformed into a knowing tree. It likewise militates against the notion that the two trees were symbolical of the peculiar effects of their fruit on the human mind and body.

Conclusion: These two trees are not identical in their nature, but are identical in their function. The Tree of Life is a symbol of the life of God, and the Tree of Knowledge is a symbol of the knowledge of God. The two trees are not identical in their nature, but are identical in their function.

(2) Since the Tree of Life is not a tree, it is not a symbol of the life of God, but a symbol of the knowledge of God.

There are those who regard the tree as having been a kind of sacramental agent of transferring man without death to a higher stage of physical life, but its disappearance in the book of Revelation is not a support for this interpretation. In Rev. 22:2 the tree of life appears, but it is in a

¹⁸Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology (New York: Charles Scribner and Co., 1892), I, 124.

Symbolical View.--The symbolical view is a valid interpretation from the standpoint of due justice to historical veracity of Scripture. The exponents of the symbolical view regard the Genesis account as historical and literal, but reject the inherent efficacy of the Tree of Life and contend for a symbolical interpretation stating the Tree symbolizes the divine sign and seal of immortality. The writer rejects this view as being inadequate and lists a series of objections raised by the commentators of the symbolical view with a brief statement of refutation by the writer.

(1) The Tree of Life is symbolical because the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is symbolical.

By no sort of ingenuity can the Tree of Knowledge be transformed into a knowing tree. It likewise militates against the notion that the two trees were styled from the peculiar effects of their fruits the one conferring physical immortality on Adam's body.¹⁹

Refutation: These two trees are not identical in their functions. The knowledge of good and evil is strictly a moral issue, while life not only involves the moral realm, but is vitally connected with the physical. If the functions of these two trees were identical, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil would have a more appropriate nomenclature; the "Tree of Death." This is not the case.

(2) Since the Tree of Life in Rev. 22:2 is obviously symbolical, it therefore necessitates a symbolical Edenic tree.

There are those who regard the tree as having been a kind of sacramental means of transferring man without death to a higher stage of physical life; but its reappearance in the book of Revelation does not encourage this interpretation. . . . In Rev. 22:2 the tree of life reappears, but it is in a

¹⁹Thomas Whitelaw, "Genesis," The Pulpit Commentary, eds. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., n. d.), I, 44.

highly symbolical passage (cf. Rev. 11:7).²⁰

Refutation: The two trees cannot be analogous, since the body in the eternal state is not a natural, but a spiritual body. The conditions are totally unrelated, and there is no similarity of purpose, since the spiritual body is unconditionally immuned to death. The natural body is not.

(3) The Tree of Life is not efficacious, but only a sign and seal of immortality.

Chiefly intended to be a sign and seal to Adam, assuring him of the continuance of life and happiness, even to immortality and everlasting bliss, through the grace and favour of His Make, upon condition of his perseverance in the state of innocence and obedience.²

Refutation: This would be the case providing Adam possessed an essentially immortal body. Since the Edenic body was conditionally immortal, the Tree of Life was not merely a sign and seal of immortality.

(4) The Tree of Life could not preserve the human body in continued existence in defiance of God's death decree. Gill says: "Not that it was possible, by eating of the fruit of the tree of life his natural life could be continued forever, contrary to the sentence of death pronounced upon him."²²

Refutation: To the contrary, the direct statement of Scripture refutes this supposition. "And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (Gen. 3:22b).

²⁰E. F. Kevan, "Genesis," The New Bible Commentary, ed. F. Davidson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1953), p. 78.

²¹Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1935), I, 10.

²²John Gill, An Exposition of the Old Testament (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1852), p. 24.

The Word of God asserts the efficacy of the Tree of Life in counter-acting physical death when the prevailing condition of man was a state of spiritual death and separation.

(5) The phrase "take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" is not a statement of fact, but rather an expression ridiculing man's self efforts.

Thereby profane that sacrament of eternal life, and fondly persuade himself that he shall live forever. This is another scoff or irony whereby God unbraideth man's presumption and those vain hopes wherewith he did still feed himself.²³

Refutation: The natural reading and the context of the passage would prohibit this interpretation. The expulsion from the Garden and exclusion from the Tree of Life indicates a statement of fact, and not a meaningless taunt.

(6) The efficacious instrument in providing Adam with immortality was not the Tree of Life, but the power of the Word of God.

It seems best again with Luther to assume that this remarkable power was characteristic of the tree not by its inherent natural qualities but by virtue of the power of the Word of God, who was pleased to ordain that such should be the effect of partaking of the fruit of this tree.²⁴

Refutation: Partially and indirectly, this is true, but the direct cause of immortality is not the Word of God, since the Word of God, itself, places the emphasis upon the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:22). It can be said that the power of the Word of God was instrumental in creating the efficacious tree, but not the immediate cause. The Tree of Life possessed the inherent qualities of immortality.

²³Matthew Pool, Annotations on Holy Bible (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1853), 11.

²⁴H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis (Columbus, O: The Wartburg Press, 1942), p. 180.

Writer's Interpretation.---"There is no such thing as 'natural' death. Death may be regarded as a disease or complex of diseases."²⁵

This is an excerpt from a recent issue of a nationally known magazine which concludes by stating:

According to Dr. Bjorksten, 'Death is a slow coagulation, as clotting. It may be possible to find a substance X which will defeat death . . . which can dissolve the cross linkages that our bodies can't dissolve.' If that substance is discovered, he believes, science will add a thousand years or more to our longevity, and perhaps even stop or reverse the aging process.

Then the end of life for human beings, as far single-celled creatures, will be an unnatural and unnecessary event. It will come only as the result of accidents, war and other catastrophes. And man will have achieved his most ambitious dream--the conquest of death.²⁶

Scientists have deluded themselves by failing to recognize the moral implication of death. This is the resultant of rejecting the Author and Sustainer of life and the imposed moral restriction whereby the Righteous God cannot allow evasion of physical death. The writer is convinced that originally both the moral and the physical issues were incorporated into the Tree of Life. The writer takes the liberty to suggest that the "Substance X" for which science searches so desperately was an essential component of the Tree of Life - never to be produced again for use by the natural body.

Since God is the sole authority on matters pertaining to life or death, the writer is confident that the solution to the mystery of physical death is revealed in the Word of God. Therefore, the origin of physical death is to be found in the Genesis account of the Edenic rebellion.

"The phrase, 'Tree of Life' is literally 'the tree of the lives.' This is simply a Hebraism as seen in Gen. 2:7 at רֵמֶת הַיָּיִם -

²⁵pfeiffer, op. cit., pp. 124, 125. ²⁶Ibid.

breath of life, Gen. 6:17; כפר הַיִּים book of life, Ps. 69:29; עֵץ הַיִּים - tree of life.²⁷ The writer points out that this grammatical struction, however, in no way does it affect the interpretation.

The writer contends for a literal and historical interpretation of the Genesis account and by the same token--the Tree of Life is a literal historical tree.

To regard the Tree of Life as a "sign and seal of immortality" does not escape the impending problem. The writer believes that it is contrary to the doctrine of Scripture to state that a mere external sign was capable of obviating the penalty of physical death and null the immortality of Adam in opposition to the decree of God. Certainly this is not the case in the external observances of circumcision or baptism. An external symbol in itself is not efficacious.

The proponents of the symbolical view attempt to bolster this discrepancy by stating that power of the Word of God was actually the efficacious means. If this be the case, then the decree of Gen. 3:19 "unto dust shalt thou return," should be sufficient without the subsequent precautionary measures taken in Gen. 3:24 to prohibit Adam's access to the Tree. If the Word of God is the direct agent of immortality, then a simple negation by the Word of God should result in death. It appears to the writer that the Word of God, taken literally, verifies the efficacy of the Tree of Life.

Stating the situation hypothetically, had Adam partaken of the Tree of Life in his originally depraved condition, what would

²⁷William Genenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, trans. Edward Robinson (25th ed. rev.; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888), p. 309.

Inadequacy of Opposing Views.--It is on this basis that the writer rejects the mythical view as being unscriptural. Partially in this regard of literal interpretation of Scripture, the writer is also forced to abandon the symbolical view as being inadequate. For in the process of investigating the writer has not encountered a satisfactory explanation of the direct, positive Scriptural affirmation concerning the tree of life, "eat, and live forever."

To regard the Tree of Life as a "sign and seal of immortality" does not escape the impending problem. The writer believes that it is contrary to the doctrines of Scripture to state that a mere external sign was capable of abrogating the penalty of physical death and seal the immortality of Adam in opposition to the decree of God. Certainly this is not the case in the external observances of circumcision or baptism. An external symbol in itself is not efficacious.

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Stating the situation hypothetically, had Adam partaken of the Tree of Life in his spiritually depraved condition, what would have been the result? According to the Word of God, he would have become immortal even in his rebellious state. It is the writer's

opinion that the only interpretation which will fulfill this condition is an inherent efficacious tree. This tree in some mysterious manner immuned the physical frame to death. Is this absurd? Even modern drugs of botanical origin have profound effects upon the human body. Certainly a God-ordained tree is a plausible prohibitor of death, at least by natural processes. On this basis, the extreme precautionary measure contained in the providence of God for excluding Adam and Eve from the Tree of Life are quite evident. This would have produced an immortal creature in an outlaw condition. But the most serious implication as found in this deathless condition is the fact that redemption would be impossible.

For immortality in a state of sin is not the Sin di-vi-vi-s which God designed for man, but endless misery . . . The expulsion from paradise therefore was a punishment inflicted for man's good, intended, while exposing him to temporal death, to preserve him from eternal death.²⁷

Exclusion from the Tree of Life was absolutely necessary.

²⁷Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 107.

The Tree of Life and the Edenic Test.---In accord with the previous statements, Adam and Eve never ate the fruit of the Tree of Life. This is supported by Keil and Delitzsch: "From the Da (also) it follows that the man had not yet eaten of the tree of life. Had he continued in fellowship with God by obedience to the command of God, he might have eaten of it, for he was created for eternal life."²⁸

This is essential to the writer's inherent efficacy view. If the Tree of Life had not been utilized what is the purpose of the Tree of Life in the Edenic test?

The writer would first of all differentiate the functions of the two trees; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the Tree of Life.

It is the writer's opinion that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil functioned strictly in the moral realm as a test of obedience. The act of disobedience resulted in the recognition of good and evil on an experimental basis. This is supported by the writer of critical monograph "The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil."²⁹

As for the Tree of Life, the writer believes that this tree functioned in the moral and physical realm. Faced with a moral test he would develop a holy character. Each successive decision for the good would result in the progressive development of a holy character. As he developed, this holy character would enable him to make the proper decision when tested and finally he would have been confirmed in his holiness until it would have been impossible for him to have made an improper decision.³¹

The writer states that this traditional view reflects a limited spiritual origin, and is faulty when recalling the fact that

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ralph Hall, "A Critical Investigation of Genesis 2:17" (Unpublished critical monograph, Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1951), pp. 40, 41.

Moral Realm:--In regard to the moral issue, it was the antitheses containing the opposite choice of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Therefore, making the test of obedience, not a test of a purely negative aspect, but the counterpart; the tree of life was the positive choice. Psychologically this is advantageous. The Edenic test was not just an absolute restraint or prohibition, but rather the constructive positive choice was the beneficial alternative. Not only is this psychologically true, but this is a Biblical concept for righteous living.

The writer finds further support in the fact that both trees were placed in the midst of the Garden. The close proximity provides a legitimate choice--good or evil. Dagg partially supports the writer in stating

The tree of life was the symbol of the divine favor; and the other tree, the symbol of the divine prerogative. . . Yet the proximity of this tree to that which bore forbidden fruit, perpetually reminded the subjects of this probation, that the favor of God could be enjoyed only by respecting his prerogative.³⁰

This choice, the writer believes, would have sealed the eternal obedience of man in the moral realm. The writer rejects the traditional view.

By making the proper decision when faced with a moral test he would develop a holy character. Each successive decision for the good would result in the progressive development of a holy character. As he developed, this holy character would enable him to make the proper decision when tested and finally he would have been confirmed in his holiness until it would have been impossible for him to have made an improper decision.³¹

The writer states that this traditional view reflects a tainted arminian origin, and is absurd when recalling the fact that the human race fell into a totally depraved condition in Adam. But from

³⁰Dagg, op. cit., p. 147. ³¹Hall, op. cit., pp. 40, 41.

the traditional view no definite test is established and partaking of the Tree of Life is meaningless since Adam was required to pass countless tests of obedience. Even more serious, since no definite test seals the eternal destiny of the human race, Adam's posterity would be required to run the gauntlet of "confirmed holiness." The logical inference of Scripture is that the headship of the human race as founded in Adam would have perpetuated the Edenic blessings by his obedience. From the traditional view, the Edenic test is valid only in the destruction of the human race with a lack of any beneficial outcome in man's respect.

The writer is convinced that as the disobedience of Adam plunged the entire human race into eternal destruction, except for the mercy of redemption, so the obedience of Adam would have sealed the eternal salvation as did the obedience of the second Adam to those who are in Him. Adam's obedience would have been evidenced by choosing the Tree of Life.

Physical Realm.--The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was not called the Tree of Death because it has no inherent physical qualities. Death was the result of exclusion from the Tree of Life. To the contrary, the Tree of Life did contain inherent physical qualities. Not only was it a moral test, but contained physical benefits, therefore, the nomenclature: The Tree of Life.

The writer is indebted to Murphy's fundamental dictum of the moral law in aiding the writer to formulate the connection of the Tree of Life to the Edenic test.

The two trees stood related to one another in a way that touches the very centre of man's moral being. 'Do this and live' is the fundamental dictum of the moral law. Its implied counterpart is: The act of disobedience is evidently decisive for the whole conduct, character, and relation to God. It therefore necessarily forfeits that life which consists in the favor of God and all consequent blessings. The two trees correspond with the condition and the benefit in this essential covenant of law. The one is the test of man's obedience or disobedience; the other the benefit which is retained by obedience and loses the blessing. Henceforth both the legal and beneficial parts of the covenant must come from a higher source to all that are saved.³²

While disobedience to God's moral law resulted in Adam's banishment from the Edenic paradise, obedience would have fulfilled the moral obligations with its consequential benefits. One of these benefits is immortality contained in the efficacious fruit of the Tree of Life.

³²Murphy, op. cit., p. 140.

Details of the Edenic Test.--The writer believes that the Edenic test was immediate. By this is meant, in the same manner as man required food substances for nutrition shortly after creation, so was the Edenic test. Only a very brief period of time elapsed between the creation and test of Adam and Eve. The writer is inclined to estimate it in a matter of days.

Eve was brought, in the providential permission of God, to the point of decision by the Satanic inspired serpent. At this vantage point in the Garden, with probably the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil on the one hand and the Tree of Life on the other, the human race in Adam was required to make a choice. This choice was a universal seal with moral and physical implications. The Tree of Life constituted the positive, beneficial, moral counterpart of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and contained the efficacious, inherent, physical capability of immortality.

The Tree of Life in the Eternal State.--The writer is in accord with the generally accepted opinion of the commentators that the Tree of Life in the eternal state is symbolical. It is on this basis that many regard the Edenic tree as symbolical. The writer emphasizes the fact that the Eternal tree and Edenic tree are not analogous because their function are not identical. In the Eternal State man possesses a spiritual (heavenly) body while in Eden the body of man was a natural (earthly) body. The general tenor of Scripture seems to suggest that the spiritual body does not require preservation and rejuvenation. Therefore, the writer believes the Tree of Life in the Eternal state is symbolical and stands as an eternal memorial of the Edenic tree. As immortality was lost in Adam, it is insured in Christ. The Tree of Life as the Eternal State is an eternal testimonial of immortality to redeemed humanity.

ENGLISH PARAPHRASE

And now, since he has made the improper moral choice, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the inherently efficacious fruit of the tree of life and by eating receive the physical benefits of preservation and rejuvenation which would result in immortality.

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