The setting for the narrative of the fall of man is given in Genesis 2.1 Man was made by the Lord from the dust of the ground and from the breath of the Lord he received life. He was endowed with ability to work and guard the garden in Eden. And he exercised rule over the animals by giving them names. Moreover, God provided man with woman who was taken from man to become his counterpart to relieve the aloneness of man. The pair are described as living in joy and innocence before the God who made them. Although the pre-fall condition of man is never defined in particulars, neither here nor in other parts of the Old Testament, yet the author described a setting which if read by one in ancient times would give the impression of an ideal complete life. One could not wish for anything better.

The narrative of the temptation begins with a description of the serpent. Two points of information are given: he is more subtle than any beast of the field and he was made by the Lord God (cf. 2:19). Since the serpent becomes the agent to present the temptation, these descriptive qualities should not escape our attention. The first of subtlety or cleverness (’arum) is a characteristic which in its usage can be either good or bad. In the book of Proverbs subtlety or prudence (1:4) is related to knowledge and discretion;2 in other places it has evil connotations (Job 5:12; 15:5). In the latter sense it is intended here, for the tempter by clever distortion creates a situation before man that turns his good into evil. The author intends to have the reader note that the sinister twist of the tempter is the basis for all temptation and brings on the tragic result, sin.3

The second description of the serpent is that he was made by the Lord God. What induced the author to call attention to this feature about the

1The exposition of this chapter appears in the preceding issue of this journal, pp. 4-14.
2The man of prudence demonstrates practical virtues: patience and restraint (12:16, 23), discernment (14:8, 15), avoids danger (22:3).
serpent? To answer this, one should note the varied and important role that the serpent plays in the legends and myths of ancient times. In ancient Babylon the serpent is pictured on cylinders as a god. The serpent also is seen on sacred symbols which were used in worship or were carried about as charms to ward off evil. Moreover, the serpent is described as the symbol of life as told in the Gilgamesh epic where he comes out of the water, eats the youth restoring herb of Gilgamesh and in leaving casts off his skin. In these accounts the serpent does not appear as anti-god or anti-man, but he has a mysterious divine nature that awakened awe and fear in the pagan mind. Th. C. Vriezen has well summarized the prevailing concepts about the serpent in ancient time as the animal enveloped in mysteries of life and wisdom. Against all these enchantments and powers of the serpent, the narrator declares that the serpent is an animal which God made.

Since the serpent is a creature, we are reminded that he also comes under the dominion of man. The man in giving names to the animals (2:19, 20) exercised lordship over the animal world. Man was established to be sovereign over the world of nature. Here he was to have rule and dominion. Yet it is most noteworthy that out of the world over which he had dominion there is to rise the crafty serpent that not only challenges the rule of God, but also the proper exercise of man's rule. The author's intention apparently is to describe a situation in which man had the position and power to rule the serpent. Man is not caught in an inevitable fate in which he has no choice but to sin. If we may use the author's story about Cain, where the Lord addresses Cain, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (4:7). Cain confronts his temptation and is told that he must master it, which implies the ability to do so. In a not dissimilar situation man must face the temptation that arises out of his world over which God placed him to rule. No, man is not a creature of circumstances, he must rule even as he was ordained by God.

Little reference is made to the serpent in the Old Testament, yet in the few instances the element of mystery is prominent. Before Pharaoh Aaron cast down his rod and it became a serpent which was to serve as a miraculous sign that Moses and Aaron were sent by the Lord to deliver Israel (Ex. 7:9ff.). In the wilderness Moses made a bronze serpent to bring relief to those bitten by the fiery serpents (Num. 21:9). This serpent was placed in the temple and incense was offered it until it was removed by king Hezekiah (II Kgs. 18:4). It is remarkable that the bronze
serpent of Moses should have been kept for veneration even though Israel was under stern prohibition to making and worshipping of any image. The magic spell of serpent veneration, so common in ancient times, also took hold in Israel.

The conversation of the serpent in the fall narrative soon reveals that we have something more than an animal of the field, for the serpent is aware of the divine command given man about the not eating from the tree. However, by a clever turn in word order the serpent asks whether God had said that man is not to eat from any tree in the garden, whereas God had said that man was not to eat from a certain tree in the garden. This subtle twist in propounding the question is to make God appear severe. Moreover, the misstatement pulls the woman into a conversation with the tempter for to remain silent is to condone the false statement, and to answer is to indulge the opportunity to call God's goodness into question.

The woman's reply which apparently was intended to correct the misstatement of the serpent declares that they may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, thereby defending the goodness of God. However, in giving the prohibition of eating from the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, the woman adds that they may not touch it. Thus she makes God's command more severe than it actually was. This making God's command more severe may reveal an unwilling obedience to the command. Zimmerli sees in the sharpening of the command that the woman is unwilling to trust in the goodness of God and considers the command a burden too heavy to be borne.

The reply of the serpent becomes a frontal attack on God. Here is seen the anti-God spirit which poses as interested in the welfare of man. The divine threat, “thou shalt surely die,” is empty and meaningless. The man and the woman are under the delusion of God's goodness to them. The serpent points out that God does not act toward man out of motives of goodness, but from a selfish jealousy God withholds from man the good which he can offer. The serpent declares that God denies man the fruit of the tree because God knows that in eating of the fruit man's eyes will be opened and he will become like God. All this describes with amazing clarity the state of man's thought in his sin. The Word of God to man is called into question. The motives of the Creator are impugned; the goodness of God is regarded as a mockery by which God denies man the higher destinies of life. In this state of mind man becomes the

\footnote{Von Rad describes the serpent’s question as a “complete distortion” of what God had said, *Das Alte Testament Deutsch, Das erste Buch Mose* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), p. 71.}

measure of all things and human experience is the frantic grasp for power rather than a grateful use of God's gifts.

Since we now know of the cult of serpent veneration among the neighbors of ancient Israel, we may detect in this fall narrative a polemic against the popular serpent worship which viewed the serpent as the embodiment of wisdom and life.8 The author here shows that the pagan concept is wisdom perverted, and that instead of life, the serpent is the symbol of death. God chose Israel to give life and understanding to his people. Let Israel note that only in humbly receiving life and wisdom from God, Israel will achieve her high calling. Moses' exhortation to Israel in giving the statutes and ordinances declares, "Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people'" (Deut. 4:6). However, any departure to follow the ways of pagan wisdom brings with it the sad disasters that resulted from man's listening to the beguiling wisdom of the serpent in the garden.

In our narrative we are not told that the serpent is the embodiment of an evil spirit, such as devil or satan, even though the author pictures the serpent in a devilish or satanic role. The Old Testament knows about demons (Deut. 32:17) and about satan who was the one to incite David to sin (1 Chr. 21:1-8), yet nowhere do we read that the serpent of the story is an evil spirit. We first come to identification of the serpent with the devil in the intertestamental literature. "By the envy of the devil death entered into the world, and they that belong to his realm experience it" (Wisdom of Solomon, 2:24). "That they [ungodly] may like the serpent, destroy the wisdom of the perfect (?) with words of transgression" (Psalms of Solomon 4:11; cf. also I Enoch 69:6; Secrets of Enoch 31:6). The allusions in the New Testament clearly show that the serpent in Eden was the devil or satan, "And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 12:9; cf. also 20:2; John 8:44; Rom. 16:20; II Cor. 11:3). Moreover Paul speaks of a hierarchy of evil spirits, "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12), which may well describe the sinister background of the fall narrative.

The tempter's statement is an unmistakable lie, "You will not die." However, the lie is immediately followed with a truth, to be accurate, a half truth, in that by eating of the tree "your eyes will be opened and you

8 Though one may detect a disparagement of pagan serpent worship, yet Eichrodt rightly cautions against making this the sole purpose of the account, for the author uses the serpent as the guise for the evil, anti-God power to confuse man's mind with ambiguous half truths and clever deception. Theologie des Alten Testaments (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs Verlag, 1939), p. 96.
will be like God, knowing good and evil” (3:5). By means of this refinement of a half truth, the serpent invites the woman to see the tree in a “lustful” light. She sees the tree as “good for food,” which describes an area of physical satisfaction; further the tree is “a delight to the eyes,” which describes more than an aesthetic delight, for this expresses a personal satisfaction which the woman contemplates in disobeying the divine command; and finally, the tree is “desired to make one wise,” which reflects the basic spiritual import in the considering of the inducement to yield to the tempter. This spiritual base is to become “wise” and thereby be possessor of mysterious powers. The reader can sense that the narrative does not deal with magical qualities inherent in the fruit. The story uncovers the human lust for those subtle and ingenious powers by which the magicians and enchanters bewitched the nations about Israel, and whose enchantment at times cast its spell over Israel herself. This kind of wisdom defies God by placing divine power in the hands of men. James has well said that “this wisdom is not such as comes down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish” (3:15). The Old Testament knows about proper wisdom, however, which it defines: “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job 28:28).

To summarize, the contemplation of and inducement to temptation in this account picture the involvement of the entire man. His physical urge, desire for food, makes the temptation appealing. His delight or satisfaction in transgressing a law, apparently for the sheer satisfaction of going contrary to a command, is the second element in the urge to disobey.

9“To be like God, knowing good and evil” is what occurred when man disobeyed even as the Lord God declares, “Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil” (3:22). In 2:9, 17 we first learn of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from which man is forbidden to eat. This tree has been interpreted as the symbol of world knowledge, or of special moral knowledge, or of mysterious divine knowledge, or of knowledge in its totality which God forbids man to take since it belongs exclusively to God. However, the Old Testament never regards the acquisition of knowledge, whatever kind it may be, as evil. In fact, those who excelled in knowledge and understanding are ones favored of God.

In the Qumran community, established at the Dead Sea in the first century B.C., a young man might become a member at twenty years, at which time also he might be married. “He shall not come near to a woman in order to have sexual relations with her until his completing twenty years when he knows good and evil” Rule of the Congregation 1:9-11, translated by Robert Gordis in Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. LXXVI (1957), p. 124. Since this knowing of good and evil is here related to the sex life, Gordis argues that in the fall story man acquires sexual awareness and in this resembles God, “for the human procreation of life is the counterpart of the divine attribute of creation.” Ibid., p. 134. However, it seems more likely that the Qumran passage defines one who has reached maturity, at which time he can discriminate and make independent decisions. Thus the phrase is used in a few Old Testament passages (Deut. 1:39; II Sam. 19:36; Isa. 7:15f; Jonah 4:11). Genesis 3:22 declares that man became like God, knowing good and evil, which means that he exercised independent discrimination in disregard of God. Man made his sovereignty absolute and thereby made himself God. This was man’s great transgression. Cf. Interpretation, Vol. 1 (1947), pp. 490-2.
Finally his ego, *hybris*, reaches beyond his finiteness to seize the powers of God. These elements so accurately defined in our narrative and so basic to the understanding of the fall are the elements within man today that drive man on in his way of transgression.

Any study of the temptation which brought on the fall of the first man urges the Christian to compare the Genesis narrative with the temptation that confronted our Lord in the Gospels. The elements which we discover in the temptation in Genesis are to be found in somewhat similar forms when Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. The hunger drive is prominent in the inducement to change stones into bread. The delight of the eyes appears in the temptation to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple, and finally the desire to have the mysterious powers of wisdom was to be realized by giving allegiance and worship to the tempter and not to God. Christ, the second man from heaven (I Cor. 15:47), confronted the temptations and through obedience became the victor, whereas the first man, the man from the earth, yielded to the enticements of the tempter. The writer of Hebrews has well said, "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (4:15). Paul surely alluded to the fall of man when he describes the perfect man "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:6, 7). Whereas the first man grasped for equality with God, the true man humbled himself, and through his obedience "God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (2:9). The parallel contrast is clear. Adam in his pride ignored his creature status to become like God; Christ in his humility emptied himself to become the true servant. Adam in his disobedience lost his God-given status, Christ through his obedience receives status and power far beyond that which Adam lost.

As soon as the man and the woman took and ate the fruit, the author recalls the words of the tempter that "your eyes will be opened," for in pathetic irony the eyes *are* opened to see not their being like God, but their being naked (3:7). To cover their nakedness they sewed fig leaves together to make aprons for themselves. This sense of shame is not the awakening of sex life, but the feeling of guilt which was not experienced.
before the temptation (2:25). If this were merely a shame arising between the sexes, then there would be no point to further hiding themselves in the garden from the presence of the Lord. The shame results from a new experience, a guilt complex, that emerges from the breach made by man in the relationship of grace with God. This new "knowledge," which man has acquired through disobedience, comprehends God no longer as Father, but as a sinister threatening power which drives man in bondage and anxiety.\(^{11}\)

Guilt is but the first reaction. The second is self-justification, or, to express it differently, setting the blame for guilt upon another. As the man and the woman confront God in their guilt, they show no inclination to acknowledge their disobedience, but an amazing spirit of finding the cause of their guilt outside of themselves. The man openly declares that the woman God gave brought on his ruin; and the woman sets the blame on the serpent. All this points up the fact that man is uncomfortable with his sense of guilt and that he attempts to explain its presence in his being because of circumstances outside of his control. Man was created to be a responsible being, yet he refuses to acknowledge his responsibility in his guilt.

How remarkably well and accurately this narrative describes man's basic affliction, his guilt due to disobedience! In man's struggle for power, individually or collectively, he grasps for sovereignty to make himself the measure of all things. He reaches far beyond his finite realm to arrogate to himself the sovereignty of God. He still listens to the enchanting delusion of the serpent that "your eyes will be opened and you will be like God." However, in his grasp for that divine power his eyes are indeed opened, but to frustration and guilt. There then follows, as in our account, a frantic effort to hide the shame of guilt. Man does not enjoy being guilty. He covers his guilt or he finds a "scape goat" on which to place it. The net result is an entanglement in human tragedy and despair. Man brings upon himself the darkness of his disobedience and he knows not or refuses to know the way out of his dilemma.

All students of this story find the saving feature for man in the fact that God comes to man in his guilt. It is God who does not forsake the work of his hands. And it is God who exposes the evil that has been done. One notes that after man sinned and hid himself, God is the principle person in the story. He finds the man laden with guilt, he confronts man with his disobedience, he sets the warfare between evil and good and he brings the course of the fall to its proper end. We should note these "acts" of God.

\(^{11}\)Zimmerli, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 159.
The first address of God is a curse which is pronounced upon the serpent (3:14). We have observed above that the serpent was more subtle than any of the animals which the Lord had made. This wisdom or prudence arising from the created world demonstrated itself in distortion and deception so that now that "earthy" wisdom comes under the scrutiny and curse of God. This demonic wisdom has destroyed the harmony of relationships between God and man and between man and his world. Therefore the curse of God is pronounced on the evil spirit.

The author does not intend to discuss the origin of evil and evil spirits. His concern is not the origin of evil in God's well-created world, but he tells us how evil manifested itself and how God placed the curse upon it. The curse is symbolized in the serpent's crawling on its belly and eating the dust. It is idle to inquire whether the serpent originally walked on feet; nor is it necessary to observe that the serpent does not eat dust. To eat the dust is to describe defeat and destruction as when the enemies of Israel shall lick the dust like a serpent (Mic. 7:17; Ps. 72:9). The curse set upon the serpent indicates that God has determined the downfall of evil which brought disobedience and death into the world.

Beside the setting of the curse on the serpent, God also sets enmity between the serpent and the woman. The guise of friendship by which the serpent beguiled the woman is torn apart and the true nature of evil is seen as enmity. Man himself should have set the barrier between himself and the devil. However, what man did not do, God now does. God knows that disobedient man ladened with guilt and fear will have an unrelenting struggle with the evil he has embraced. He will never feel "at home" with evil. The resistance to and warfare with evil are God ordained. In fallen man God has placed something of his moral purity that shall carry on a bitter conflict with the powers of evil.

The enmity which God has set will issue into a long warfare, for the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, i.e. their descendents will carry on the conflict. The entrance of evil is more than a dark cloud that drifts away after the storm. The scene on earth as pictured in the harmony of the garden has been radically changed by the warfare between man and the evil he embraced, a warfare which will be carried on through the generations.

12"The seducing power remains according to his [author's] intent in darkness, the riddle where the demonic evil stems from is not touched on; it must remain a riddle if the evil is not to become something harmless. Instead the two essential statements are entirely clear: evil does not arise out of God and it stands under the power of God." Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 96.

13Vriezen cites the Babylonian "fall cylinder" on which the serpent stands on its tail and has fct. Other cylinders have figures of a serpent's head on a human body, or of a goddess with a serpent coiled about the body. Op. cit., pp. 109-111. Zimmerli remarks that since the Bible says nothing about the question of the original form of the serpent we ought not to expect it to answer any question on this matter. Op. cit., p. 197.
Moreover, this warfare is savage and bitter as described by the well-known words, "He [the seed of the woman] shall bruise your [the serpent’s] head, and you shall bruise his heel" (3:15b). Every interpretation struggles with the verb here translated “bruise.” The verbal root is shuph and appears only in two other places, Ps. 139:11, Job 9:17. Because of this limited usage one cannot find much help by studying its meaning elsewhere. The most commonly accepted translation is either “bruise” or the more severe “crush.” Since the author uses the same verb to describe the results of the battle as it affected the serpent and the seed of the woman, the translation “bruise” seems more satisfying.\(^\text{14}\)

More important than the proper translation is the interpretation which one may derive from this most descriptive passage in which the heel of the woman’s seed violently stamps down upon the head of the serpent and in turn the serpent strikes back with its venomous fangs into the heel. It seems clear enough that the bruised or crushed head would indicate the death of the serpent. But what is the meaning of the bruised heel? Surely it would mean that the serpent had injected its venom into the heel. If so, this would cause the death of the seed of the woman. So we have before us a graphic picture of the serpent crushed to death and the seed of the woman struck by the venom of death.

If for the moment we may allow this interpretation about the result of this conflict, then our account describes the severe, if not tragic, conflict of mankind with evil. This is a life and death struggle. In this intense struggle with evil mankind gains the mastery; he crushes the head of evil. But also evil lashes back to inflict its deadly wound. This apparently pictures a battle which ends, not merely in a successful riddance of evil, but in disappointment and death. One is reminded of Paul’s description of the struggle within him in which he sees a warfare between his mind and sin dwelling in him. He becomes a captive to the law of sin in this struggle and he cries out, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). So it is in humanity at large: enmity between good and evil, a warfare, and finally, a captive of death.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^\text{14}\) The LXX renders the verb shuph by teren, “to watch for, to pant after.” The Vulgate has coeteri, “shall bruise,” for the first verb and insidiaberis, “shall lie in wait for,” for the second. The English versions have “bruise” with the ARV giving “lie in wait for” in the margin. The Dutch versions have vermozerelen, “crush.” Luther’s Bible like the Vulgate has two renderings: zerstren, “crush,” and stechen, “sting”; and the new Zürich Bible also has two: treten, “trample,” and schnappen, “snap at.”

\(^\text{15}\) J. Skinner sees no victory but a perpetual warfare which is the import of the curse upon the serpent. \textit{A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis} (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910), p. 81. O. Procksch states that both participants in the conflict die. "This is a picture of an unending tragedy which shakes the marrow and bone." \textit{Die Genesis} (Leipzig: A Deichertsche Verlagbuchhandlung,
This strife between the serpent and the "seed of the woman" is observable throughout the Old Testament. After the expulsion from the garden, fratricide takes place; Lamech is filled with vengeance; violence increases in the earth; pride erects the tower of Babel. In Israel's history, she is delivered from the oppression of Egypt, yet some centuries later Israel oppresses the poor within her borders. Under David and Solomon the tribes become united and are free from foreign power, yet in a few centuries internal strife and disunity bring the tribes under Assyrian and Babylonian tyranny. In fact, the rise and fall of Israel during her half millenium of history is a graphic recital of the conflict between "the serpent and the seed of the woman."

If we may see the "serpent-seed" strife in the history of Israel, how much more may we observe it in the history of mankind! The oppressed are delivered often to become another oppressor. War "to end all war" establishes the setting for another war. The ghettos and gas chambers are being replaced by large refugee camps. The world divides itself between the "haves" and "have nots" with the latter in need of the surpluses which are an economic problem to the former. Could our past and present more eloquently describe the bitter and tragic conflict between the serpent and the seed of the woman? Collectively and individually mankind is caught in this warfare to crush the evil within and without, and all the promise of triumph fades like mist in the morning sun.

This verse has often been regarded as messianic in that the seed of the woman is predictive of the coming conquering Messiah. One searches in vain to find any of the New Testament writers appealing to this passage as predictive of the coming deliverer. In the Targums, the Jewish interpretation sees in this text a victory over the devil "in the days of the King Messiah." The intertestamental literature and the recently discovered literature of the Qumran Community at the Dead Sea which was especially messianically minded make no use of this passage. Medieval exegetes of the Christian Church were controlled by the accepted Vulgate translation, ipsa<sup>16</sup> conteret caput tum, "she shall crush your head," and saw its fulfillment in the virgin Mary. Luther rejected the allusion to Mary, but believed that it did refer to the virgin birth of Christ. More generally the view of Calvin prevailed in Protestant interpretation that mankind united in Christ is promised a victory over the devil. Paul's statement in Romans 16:20, "Then the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet"

<sup>16</sup> The Old Latin texts, third century A.D., have ipsa "he" and also ipsa and illa "she." Even the Vulgate tradition has ipsa in it!
which seems to allude to the text in Genesis, envisions a God-wrought victory through the Church, the body of Christ. This appears to be the prevailing understanding in Protestant circles, even though one encounters some variation coming from competent and devout scholars.17

As one reads the pronouncements of doom beginning at this verse and continuing through the chapter, one sees more despair than hope. Zimmerli has well observed that these terse statements describe the full measure of woe which man’s disobedience brought upon him.18 In rapid succession God declares that under the enmity and strife between the serpent and the woman man lives in hostile relationship with the animals, some of which like the serpent, lion or bear, will take his life. And the tragedy is that, prior to his fall, man was the ruler of the animal kingdom. Moreover, the blessedness of children in the family is greatly saddened by the pain and sorrow of child birth which at times claimed the life of the mother. The man, who was placed in the garden to work it and to keep it, now finds the earth cursed under his feet so that it reluctantly yields its fruit to him. This highlights the futility and burden of man’s toil. And finally there is death. Was man created immortal? Our author does not tell us. The sad fact is that man’s disobedience brought him into death. And his death is described in a most abject manner, a return to the dust from which he came. Finally his doom is crowned by being driven from the garden in which the Lord had placed him; and the way to the tree of life was barred so that man could not regain the blessed

17J. Calvin understands that “seed” is a collective noun and refers to mankind and not to Christ. Further this “seed” will be in a continuous conflict in which victory is promised the human race. With reference to Romans 16:20 he declares that the Church under her Head shall gloriously triumph over Satan. Commentary on the Book of Genesis, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing Company, 1847), pp. 168-171.

C. A. Briggs declares that the seed of the woman, a second Adam, will gain the victory over the serpent, and shall suffer a slight wound, not death, for death seems inappropriate to the Messianic idea. Messianic Prophecy (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1886), p. 76.

C. F. Keil interprets the seed of the woman as a group spiritually or ethically determined which culminates in Christ. He observes that through the woman the craft of the devil came on mankind, and through the seed of the woman shall come the conqueror of the devil. Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869), Vol. I, pp. 101f.

E. W. Hengstenberg objects to early Christian interpreters who see a direct reference to Christ here. In general terms victory is promised the seed who will in some future time vanquish the serpent which shall inflict only curable wounds on mankind. Christology of the Old Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1863), Vol. I, pp. 28-30.

F. Koenig in summary states that in the God-established conflict the serpent shall finally be overcome. Although the being and nature of the deliverer is not clearly seen, yet the nature of the deliverance brings about a renewed fellowship of God with man. Die messianischen Weissagungen des Alten Testaments (Stuttgart: Chr. Belser A. G., Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923), p. 84.

relationship with God which once he had. Truly this is deep and dark despair!

Zimmerli warns against reading the author's account of the consequences of the fall only from the somber point of view. The picture is rather twofold: a world under the curse of God and also a world in which the grace and goodness of God still is present. In the setting of death man still has the breath of life which God breathed into him. The world is truly under the curse of God, yet God's glory and wonder are clearly seen in this world about which Psalmists sing (Pss. 8, 104). The pains of childbirth and the rule of the husband over the woman, often oppressive, picture the doleful consequences of the fall, yet the man shall find his essential "good" in the woman to whom he cleaves, and the blessedness of children in the family is the crowning grace of God. The curse brings on toil and sweat for man in his arduous labor, yet God's grace does cause the herb to grow which is to be man's food. Indeed God also provides for the clothing of man (3:21). God has not destroyed his creation, but he maintains it.

As the man and his wife leave the garden to go into the world they encounter the woeful results of their fall. As we noted above, the strife between the serpent and the seed of the woman ensues. This story from Eden to the close of the Old Testament narrates that struggle in which evil is greatly subdued by the warriors of faith, yet, alas, each of them succumbs to the poisonous sting of the serpent. And so the Old Testament closes much like our first parents leaving Eden, looking for one to bring deliverance.

The realization of the victory in the seed-serpent conflict appears in the coming of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, the man from heaven, as given by Paul. Christ as the man from heaven enters the intense conflict with the devil. The conflict appears at his birth in the slaughter of the innocents by King Herod. The battle gains in intensity as Jesus faces the tempter, as he meets the demon possessed, as he faces the opposition of the Jews and Gentiles. Finally the sentence of death comes upon him. However, the Victor in the seed-serpent conflict accomplishes his victory through death. It may well be that the imagery of the seed-serpent warfare as given in Genesis 3:15 envisions the victory of the seed through death. Surely in the suffering servant it is clear that through suffering and death he shall bring salvation and redemption to many (Isa. 53:9-12). And we are left without doubt as the writer of Hebrews declares that, "by the grace of God he might taste death for every one . . . that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil" (2:9, 14). The despair in which mankind came since first the

\[19\text{bid., pp. 199-201.}\]
enmity was set between the serpent and the woman can only be removed through the victory of our risen Lord whom the God of peace brought again from the dead (Heb. 13:20).

In summary, our study of these two chapters of Genesis points up the nature and relevance of this account about man and his fall. Thanks to the advance in our knowledge of ancient peoples among whom Israel lived, we can see that the Bible is aware of pagan beliefs and practices and gives its witness against them. The sacred writer under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit uses language and symbol well-known to people of that day to depict God's relationship of beneficent grace to man in his creation. Further the author describes with discerning clarity the temptation, the disobedience, and its woeful consequences which are in evidence throughout the Old Testament, and indeed throughout the history of mankind. And at last, the pathos and despair of the fall are seen as the man and his wife are driven from the garden, from the fellowship with God. The restoration of that fellowship, the theme of the Old Testament as related through the redemptive acts of God for Israel, is not fully achieved until Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection becomes the mediator of the new and better covenant in which the God-people bond is established and, to use the words of Paul, we cry, "Abba! Father!" And the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that "we are children of God" (Rom. 8:15f.).