The Economy of God

Man and the Two Trees

Man Neutral Between the Two Trees

- At the beginning of the Word of God we are shown two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- After God created man, He placed him before these two trees, and man's whole life and walk were pictures as a matter of feasting upon one tree or the other.
- What do these two trees signify?
    - The tree of life signifies God Himself in Christ as our life.
    - The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents nothing else than Satan, the source of death.
    - In the whole universe only God Himself is the source of life, and only Satan is the source of death.
- Man in innocence, created by God, was neutral to life and death.
    - It was God's intention for this neutral, innocent man to take God into himself, that God and man, man and God, would be mingled together as one.
    - Another possibility, however, was that man would be induced to take the second tree, the source of death.
    - It is not a matter of doing good or evil but of receiving God as life or Satan as death.

Man Corrupted by the Tree of Death

- The significance of Adam taking the fruit of the tree of knowledge was that he received Satan into himself.
    - The fruit of Satan was sown in Adam as a seed in the soil; thus, Satan grew in Adam and became a part of him.
- Through the fall Satan came into man as sin and is ruling, damaging, corrupting, and mastering him in the members of man's body.
- The body was pure, since it was created good, but when the body was corrupted by Satan, it became flesh.
- The body is called the body of sin because sin is in the body.
    - This corrupted, transmuted body is called "the body of sin" and "the body of this death," because this body became the very residence of Satan.

        - The body of sin means that the body is sinful, corrupted, and enslaved by sin.
        - The body of this death means that the body is weakened and full of death.
- When God became incarnated as a man, the kind of man He put on was a man corrupted by Satan.
    - There was no sin within Him, but there was "the likeness of the flesh of sin."

Man Released from the Tree of Death

- After God became a man and put that man with Satan within him upon Himself, He brought that man to the cross.
- Through incarnation God put the corrupted man upon Himself and brought this man to death on the cross.
- Christ brought man with Satan into death and the grave and brought man without Satan out of death and the grave.

Man Resurrected by the Tree of Life

- When Christ was resurrected, we too, those who believe in Him, were also resurrected.
- By incarnation God came into man, and by resurrection man with God became one. Now God is in man's spirit.
- We must always bear the cross daily.
    - Whenever our flesh is away from the cross, we will find that Satan is alive again.
    - Our responsibility and business are not to try to do anything good. We must simply follow the Lord in the spirit and apply the cross to the flesh.
- What will be the ultimate issue?
    - The New Jerusalem is the Triune God mingled together with the resurrected man.
    - The lake of fire is Satan's ultimate destruction.
    - All that is not related to the Triune God and the resurrected man will be put into the lake of fire with Satan.
- The normal Christian life does not consist in doing good. The normal Christian life is simply taking Christ and living by Christ and putting the flesh with Satan to death all the time.

(The Economy of God – Chapter 12)