

hoofs. And how could any sheep or cow pluck grass from the earth without eating the microscopic sized insects and mites which live on the blades and upper roots of the plants? Beyond this, how could such animals drink large quantities of water from streams and pools without ingesting many tiny aquatic arthropod animals? It should also be remembered that such tiny insects and mites are not insignificant specks, but that there is only one phylum of animals which is more complex than they, namely, the phylum which contains the vertebrates. Each such tiny insect is equipped with a complex nervous system, well-developed eyes, an elaborate respiratory system, a chemically efficient excretory system, etc.

Actually, we should not be surprised that the regular death of even complex organisms was included in the "way of life" before the fall of man. God created the whole animal kingdom, and much of the plant kingdom, with dependence upon the intake of food for the production of energy; and that food is always organic material produced by cells. In nearly all cases these cells which provide food for man and other organisms must die, either before being eaten or soon afterwards, as they are digested. Even most of the fungi and bacteria are dependent upon cellular organisms which have died, to provide their food for energy and growth. In fact, some kinds of fungi and bacteria are equipped with mechanisms to produce strong enzymes which digest the living cells of plants and animals which are their food. Thus if death were not a part of the original world of living organisms, then the entire basis of their lives would have had to be different from any principle known on the earth today. But, as we have seen, such a difference is not in keeping with the Genesis account of life in the Garden of Eden.

Death seems (and is) horrible to man, because man possesses an immortal spirit which is affected by death of the body. But from the viewpoint of the animals which are below man (if they had a viewpoint), there can be no such horror of death, because they possess no immortal spirit or personality. It is true that we sometimes attribute a fear of death to animals as we see them try to escape danger, but there is absolutely no justification for doing so. The Bible's teaching of the nature of man as distinct from the animals, and as being the only organism which possesses self consciousness, makes it absurd to attribute a conception of death to the animals. By divinely instilled, inherited instincts most kinds of animals try to avoid dangers and injuries; but they have no idea of death, nor fear of the same.

If one is still perplexed about the problem of death being inconsistent with God's perfect creation he should consider the following: (a) The passage in Rom. 5:12 is obviously emphasizing human death, and does not necessarily refer to animal death. (Note that the verse concludes, "so death passed upon all men.") (b) When God said to Adam, "cursed is the ground for your sake," this certainly tells us that the sin of man brought certain drastic disadvantages to the animal and plant world; but the statement does not necessarily imply that this was the beginning of death among non-human organisms.