

CHAPTER THREE

THE FALL OF MAN

The man God created is very different from the other things that God created. Man, like the angels, has a spirit, and like the lower animals, also has a soul. When God created man, He gave man an absolute free will. He did not make man a machine which can only turn according to His direction. After observing the way God commanded man in Genesis 2 concerning what to eat and what not to eat, we can see that the man God created is not a dead machine under God's manipulation. Rather, he has a free will. If he wants to obey God, he can obey Him. If he wants to disobey God, he can disobey Him. He has an absolute sovereign power over himself. Both obedience and disobedience are at his discretion, and he can choose either at will. This is the most important point. We have to realize that in our spiritual life God never robs us of our freedom. Therefore, without active participation on our part, He will not do anything for us. Whether it be God or the devil, no one can work on us without the consent of our will, because man's will is free.

The spirit was originally the highest part of man, and the soul and the body were subject to it. Under normal conditions, the spirit is like the lady of a house, the soul is like the steward, while the body is like the servants. When the lady of the house needs something done, she charges the steward, and the steward in turn directs the servants to do it accordingly. The lady gives the order in private, while the servants take the order from the steward. Outwardly, the steward seems to be the master. But actually, the real master is the lady of the house. Unfortunately, man fell, failed, and sinned, so that the original, proper order of the spirit, soul, and body was overturned.

God has given man sovereign power over himself. Man's soul is indeed endowed with many gifts from God, among which the most important ones are the mind and the will, or the consciousness and the volition. God's original goal was for man to receive and digest God's spiritual life with the truth and reality in this spiritual life. God has given these gifts to man in order that man would live for Him according to His knowledge and His will. If man's spirit and soul were as perfect, healthy, living, and normal as when they were created, his body would have remained forever and would not have changed. If he had exercised the will in his soul to take the fruit of life, God's own life would have entered into his spirit; it would have saturated his soul and would have changed his body, so that he would not have needed to die or see corruption and would have received the "eternal life." If that were the case, the soul-life would have been fully filled with the spirit-life, and man's whole being would have become spiritual. Contrary to this, when the order of the spirit and the soul was destroyed, the inner man became darkened, and man's mortal body became no longer enduring. Soon everything that belongs to the body will go into destruction and corruption.

We know that between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man's soul did not choose the tree of life. Instead, he chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In Genesis 2:17 God forbade Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and told man that in the day he ate of it he would surely die. Yet in the preceding verse God had promised that the fruits of all other trees could be eaten. We see in this chapter that God purposely mentioned the tree of life first and then the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He also promised that

the fruit of all trees except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil could be eaten freely. Was it not God's purpose that Adam should eat of the fruit of the tree of life? Who can say that this was not His purpose?

The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the fruit that uplifts man's soul and dampens man's spirit. The knowledge of good and evil constitutes the work of the soul in this world. God forbade man to eat of this fruit, not only for the purpose of testing man, but because He knew that within man was the spiritual life and the soulish life, and that if man were to eat of this fruit, his soulish life would develop, and his spiritual life would die. This means that he would lose the knowledge of God and would die to God. This was God's love. The knowledge of good and evil is wicked in this world. Knowledge comes from the intellectual part of man's soul. When man ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, surely his soulish life developed and was uplifted. Once the soulish life develops and is uplifted, the spiritual life is suppressed, loses the knowledge of God, and becomes as dead.

Most servants of God would agree that the tree of life here is the life that God gives to man in His Son Jesus Christ. That is, it is the eternal life, God's own uncreated life. Here are two trees, one to develop the spiritual life and the other to develop the soulish life. Although man was without sin, he was neither holy nor righteous. Man was in a neutral position: he could receive God's life and become a spiritual person, sharing God's nature, or he could develop his own created soulish life, making himself soulish, and thus put his spirit to death. Man's tripartite nature is fully balanced by God, and if any one of his three parts experiences inordinate development, the other parts will unavoidably suffer loss.

If we understand the origin of the soul and the principle of its life, we will be greatly helped in our spiritual life. The spirit comes from God and is given by God (Num. 16:22). The soul, however, does not have such a direct relationship with God. The soul was produced when the spirit entered into the body. The characteristic of the soul is that it is associated with the creatures. It is a created life, a life in the natural realm. If the soulish life remains forever in the place of a steward and allows the spirit to be the "lady of the house," its use will be very great, because by its resolve, man is able to receive God's life and to be related to God in life. However, if this soulish life develops, it will suppress the spirit and subject all of man's conduct to the natural realm of the creature, thus disabling man from joining himself to God's supernatural and super-created life. When man ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, his soulish life developed, and he fell into the place of death.

Satan's temptation began with a question. He knew that once a question was raised, Eve would have to exercise her mind to think. If Eve had been willing to be subject to the control of the spirit, she would have rejected this question. Once she decided to answer the question, she had to exercise her mind, and her soul had to act contrary to the spirit and beyond its limit. Moreover, Satan's question was full of mistakes. He asked in this way in order that Eve would correct his mistakes. In this way, her mind became more active. But Eve did more than this; she changed God's word in her answer and in her conversation. The enemy tempted her by telling her that if she would eat, her eyes would be opened, and she would be like God, knowing good and evil. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise" (Gen. 3:6). This was

Eve's judgment. At the beginning Satan stirred up the mind in her soul. Now he went one step further to gain her will, and she sinned.

The work of the enemy begins with the need of the body. He first told her to eat of the fruit, something that was entirely related to the body. Next he took one step further to tempt her soul by telling her that if her body would take the fruit, her eyes would be opened, and she would know good and evil. He indicated to her that such a pursuit for knowledge was legitimate. As a result her spirit rebelled against God, and she wondered whether God had forbidden her to eat because His intention was wicked. The temptation of Satan comes first to the body, then to the soul, and last to the spirit.

After she was tempted, Eve made a judgment in her will, which was: (1) "that the tree was good for food." This is the "lust of the flesh." Her flesh was touched first. (2) "It was pleasant to the eyes." This is the "lust of the eyes." Her body and soul were also deceived. (3) "A tree to be desired to make one wise." This is "the vainglory of life." The word "desired" means that the emotion and will in her soul were moved. Now the function of the soul was motivated, and there was nothing to stop it. She was no longer a spectator, but was moved in her love and desired after the fruit. The emotion is indeed a dangerous master to man!

Why was there the desire? Not only the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes made the demands, but the curiosity in the soul urged her to pursue further. This was something that would make her wise. The activity of the soul can many times be detected in the pursuit for wisdom and knowledge, including spiritual knowledge. To give no time to wait on God, to have no trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit, and to try to increase one's knowledge with the help of one's mind and books, these are the activities of the flesh. The result of this is damage to the spiritual life. Since man's fall came from the pursuit of knowledge, God used the foolishness of the cross to destroy the wisdom of the wise. Intellectual power is the source of the fall. Therefore, if a man desires to be saved, he has to believe in the foolishness of the cross in order that he would not trust in intellectual power. The tree of knowledge led to man's fall, but God used the foolish tree (1 Pet. 2:24) to save man. Therefore, "if anyone thinks that he is wise among you in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3:18-19; 1:18-25).

After we have carefully read the story of the temptation and the fall, we can see how the rebellion of Adam and Eve led to the development of their soul, the result of which is that the spirit lost its position and fell into darkness. The most important parts of man's soul are his mind, will, and emotion. The will is the master of man; it is the organ of deliberation. The mind is the thinking organ, while the emotion is the loving organ. The apostle told us that "Adam was not deceived" (1 Tim. 2:14). This shows that Adam's mind was not confused. The one who was weak in mind and intellect was Eve. "But the woman, having been quite deceived, has fallen into transgression" (1 Tim. 2:14). The record of Genesis says, "The woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (3:13). Adam said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave [not beguiled] me of the tree, and I did eat" (v. 12). Adam was not beguiled; his mind was still clear. He knew that the fruit was the forbidden fruit. Yet he ate it because of his emotion. Adam knew that all the words of the serpent were the deceptions of the enemy. When we read the word of the apostle,

we find that Adam sinned purposely and was not like Eve who sinned through being beguiled. He loved Eve more than himself. He idolized her and loved her so much that he rebelled against the commandment of the Lord for her sake. How pitiful this was. His head was controlled by his heart, and his reason was overcome by his love. Why have men "not believed the truth"? It is because they "have taken pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thes. 2:12). It is not because reason is lacking, but because the desire is lacking. Therefore, when a man truly turns to the Lord "with the heart [and not with the head,] there is believing unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:10).

Satan gained Adam's will through his emotion, and caused him to sin. The way Satan beguiled Eve was to confuse her mind, gain her will, and then cause her to sin. When man's will, mind, and emotion were poisoned by the serpent to follow Satan and to rebel against God, the spirit with which man communicates with God received a fatal blow. Here we see the principle of Satan's work. He beguiled man's soul to sin through the things of the flesh (the eating of the fruit). Once the soul has sinned, the spirit falls into darkness and degradation. This is the order of all his works—from the outside to the inside. Either he works from man's body or he works from his mind or his emotion for the purpose of gaining his will. Once man's will surrenders, Satan gains the whole being, and the spirit is put to death. The way he worked the first time is the way he works in all subsequent times. God's work is always from the inside to the outside. He first works from man's spirit, then enlightens man's mind, touches man's emotion, finally causes man to exercise his will to activate his body to carry out God's will. All the devil's works go from the outside to the inside, while all the works of God's Spirit go from the inside to the outside. In this way we can differentiate what is of God and what is of Satan. This shows us that once Satan gains man's will, he controls man.

We must be careful to realize that the soul is the organ of man's personality; it is the part that expresses man's free will and is man's master. This is why the Bible often says that it is the soul that has committed sin. Micah 6:7 mentions "the sin of my soul." Ezekiel 18:4 and 20 speak of "the soul that sinneth." In Leviticus and Numbers, we often see the expression "if a soul sin" [KJV]. Proposing to sin is the function of the soul. The definition of sin is the will responding to temptation. Therefore, to sin is a matter of the will, which is of the soul. For this reason, propitiation is for the soul. "To make an atonement [propitiation] for your souls" (Exo. 30:15). "To make propitiation for your souls" (Lev. 17:11). "To make an atonement for our souls before the Lord" (Num. 31:50 [KJV]). Because the one who sins is the soul, the one who requires atonement is also the soul. For the same reason, only a soul can atone sins. "But Jehovah was pleased to crush Him, to afflict Him with grief. / If You make His soul a trespass offering, / ...Because of the travail of His soul, He will see / And He will be satisfied; / ...Because He poured out His soul unto death... / Yet He alone bore the sin of many / And interceded for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:10-12).

If we study the nature of Adam's sin, we will find that besides rebellion, there is also the matter of independence. We should always bear in mind the matter of the free will. The tree of life signifies dependence. In the beginning, man had not yet received God's life. If he had received this life, he would have obtained eternal life. This shows that there was the possibility for man to attain to the highest form of life. It also shows that man did not attain to it. Man will not attain to the highest until he has acquired God's life. This is the meaning of dependence. The tree of the knowledge of

good and evil signifies independence. Man wants to have knowledge that God has not given to him and tries to gain the things outside of God by exercising his own will. All these speak of independence. When man rebelled against God, it was a sign of independence because rebellion against God means that there is no further need to depend on God. For man to try to know good and evil is also a sign of independence. He is not satisfied with what God has given him. The difference between being spiritual and being soulish is very clear here. To be spiritual is to fully trust in God and to be satisfied with what God has given. To be soulish is to turn away from God and to freely seek after what God has not given, in particular, to seek after knowledge. Independence is a characteristic of the soul. No matter how good a matter is, even if it is the matter of worship, if there is not the total dependence on God and if there is any self-assurance or self-confidence, it is something soulish. Within a man, the tree of life cannot grow vigorously by the side of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This rebellion and independence is the principle of transgression for all sinners as well as for the believers.

MAN'S SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY AFTER THE FALL

Adam existed by the breath of life, which is the spirit. The spirit has God-consciousness; it knows God's voice, fellowships with God, and has a very keen knowledge of God. After Adam fell, his spirit became dead.

At the beginning, God said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). After Adam and Eve ate the fruit, they continued to live a few hundred years. This shows that the death that God spoke of was not only physical death. The death of Adam began from his spirit. What kind of death was this death? The scientific definition of death is to be cut off from all fellowship with the environment. When the spirit dies, the spirit loses its fellowship with God. When the body dies, the spirit cuts off fellowship with the body. Therefore, for the spirit to be dead does not mean that the spirit is gone. It merely means that the spirit has lost its keen knowledge of God and is dead to God. Spiritual death means that there is no more fellowship with God. Consider, for example, a dumb person. It is not that this person does not have a mouth or two lungs. He cannot speak because there is some problem with his mouth. His mouth is dead to the human language. When Adam disobeyed God, his spirit died. The spirit was still there, but it was dead to God and had lost its capacity. When man sinned, this sin corrupted the keen intuitive knowledge of God that existed in man's spirit so that he became dead to the things of the spiritual realm. Thereafter, man may have religion, morality, education, ability, power, and mental and physical health, yet he is dead to God. He can speak about God, conjecture about God, and even preach about God, yet he is dead to God. He can no longer hear or feel the voice of God's Holy Spirit. This is why many times in the New Testament, God refers to those who live in their flesh as dead people.

The death in the spirit of the first man gradually spread to the realm of the body. Although after his spirit died, he still lived for a long time, during that time death was operating in him. It continued to work in him until his spirit, soul, and body all became dead. At that time, a body that could have been glorified and changed was turned back to dust. When the inner man within him became disorganized and fallen, his outer body was destined to death and destruction.

From that time on, the spirit of Adam (as well as that of all his descendants) was suppressed by the soul. Soon after, through the soul's suppression, the spirit was merged with the soul, and the two parts became closely knit together. This is why the writer of Hebrews said in 4:12 that God's word has to pierce and divide the spirit from the soul. The reason that the two have to be divided is that they have become one. Since the spirit became so closely knit to the soul, man began to live in an idealistic world. He began to act according to his intellect or his feelings. At that time, the spirit had lost all its power and senses, and had become dormant. Originally, the spirit had the ability to know God and serve Him. Now it had lost all its ability to function and had fallen unconscious. Although it was still there, it was as if it were not there anymore. This is the meaning of the expression in Jude, "soulish, having no spirit" (v. 19). (In verse 19, the spirit does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to the human spirit, because the expression immediately preceding it says "soulish." Since the soul is human, the spirit following this expression must also be human. The position of the article in Greek also confirms this.) This does not mean that man's spirit no longer exists, for Numbers 16:22 clearly tells us that God is the "God of the spirits of all flesh." Every person in the world still has his spirit. But this spirit is covered up by his sins and cannot fellowship with God.

Although this spirit is dead to God, it still works as actively as the mind and the body. It is indeed dead to God, but it is still active in other areas. Sometimes a fallen one can have a spirit that is stronger than his soul or his body and that can still rule over his whole being. Most people are soulish or are carnal. But the former kind of people are "spiritual"—their spirits are greater than others'. One can find such cases in those who practice planchette, divination, witchcraft, etc. They communicate with the spiritual realm, not through the Holy Spirit, but rather through the evil spirits. The spirits of sinful men are joined to Satan and the evil spirits. Their spirits are dead to God but alive to Satan and receptive to the operation of the evil spirits within them.

The soul becomes subject to the demand of the senses and becomes their slave, so that even when the Holy Spirit would fight for a place for God, the fight is futile. This is why the Scripture says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh" (Gen. 6:3). The flesh in the Bible refers to the life and nature of the soul and body of the unregenerated man. More often it refers to the sinful nature within the body. This flesh is the common nature which man shares with other animals. Now man is completely under the control of the flesh, and there is no possibility of escape. The soul has replaced the spirit as the ruling one, and everything is independent and self-centered. Man now walks according to the desires of the heart. Even in matters of religion and in the most zealous pursuit of God, man exercises the power of his soul and decides on his own to seek after God and to please God apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The soul not only exercises itself in this way but is controlled by the body. The lusts of the body, its feelings and demands, are all summoning the soul to obey, to carry out their commands, and to gratify them. Not only are all the descendants of Adam dead in their spirits, but they are "out of the earth, earthy" (1 Cor. 15:47). They are fully under the control of the flesh and walk according to the soulish life and the carnal nature. Such people cannot have fellowship with God. Sometimes they express their intellectual power, and sometimes they express their lusts. More often, they express both. The flesh controls the whole being without hindrance and without any interference.

This is the kind of people mentioned in Jude 18 and 19: "Mockers, going on according to their own lusts for ungodliness. These are those who make divisions, soulish, having no spirit." To be soulish is the opposite of having the spirit. Now, the spirit that was the highest, that ought to be joined to God, and that ought to rule over the soul and the body has become surrounded by the soul, whose motive and purpose are totally earthy. The spirit has lost its original position. Its condition is now abnormal. This is why the Bible says that they have no spirit. The result of such a fully soulish condition is to mock, to go on according to one's own lusts, and to make divisions.

First Corinthians 2:14 also speaks of this kind of unregenerated soulish person: "But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually." Such persons are controlled by their souls and are suppressing their spirits. They are the opposite to the spiritual man. Although these ones can be very intelligent and can come up with wonderful ideas and theories, they cannot say anything about the things of the Holy Spirit of God. They cannot receive the revelation from the Holy Spirit. How different is this from the world's view! The world thinks that man's intellectual power and his reason are almighty, that he can find out all kinds of truth in the world by his mind. But God's Word considers these as very vain.

Even when a man is soulish, many times he still realizes the uncertainties of this life and seeks for eternal life in the coming age. However, man can never find the truth of life through his mind or by theories. These are unreliable means. Most of the time, clever people hold divergent views. Theories are liable to lead men to errors. They are castles in the air and lead men to nothing but eternal darkness.

Indeed, unless intellectual power comes under the leading of the Holy Spirit, it is unreliable and is very dangerous. It will take right as wrong and wrong as right. If one is not careful, he will not only suffer temporary loss but will suffer permanent damage. The dark thoughts of man usually lead him into the place of eternal death. It would be well for the unregenerated soulish man to know this.

Yet when man is fleshly, not only is he under the rule of the soul, but his soul is actually joined to his body. Many times, the soul is even directed by the body to commit the vilest sins. The body of sin is full of cravings and lusts. It was created out of the dust of the earth. Therefore, its inclinations and motives are all earthly. Since the serpent's poison has entered into man's body, its legitimate desires have now become lusts. Since the soul once obeyed the body to rebel against God's demand, it has to continue its obedience to the body. At such times, the lusts of the body express themselves in many forms of sin through the soul. The authority of this body is so great that it causes the soul to become powerless to withstand it and only be its obedient slave.

Man is divided into three parts: the spirit, the soul, and the body. God's original intention is that the spirit remain on top to rule over the soul. After man became soulish, the spirit was suppressed and became a servant to the soul. After man became carnal, the flesh, which occupied the lowest place, became the king. Man was

changed from spirit-ruled to soul-ruled, and from soul-ruled to body-ruled. Step by step he became fallen, and the flesh took control. What a pity this is!

Sin has killed the spirit, and now spiritual death has come to all men so that all men die in sin and transgressions. Sin has also caused the soul to become independent so that the soulish life now becomes an independent and selfish life. Furthermore, sin has empowered the body so that now the sinful nature reigns through the body.