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The Fall of Man

ACCORDING TO the Genesis creation account, God looked on all that He had made and beheld that it was very good (1:31). This may well represent what creation originally looked like from the divine perspective; but we contemplate the world around us and are filled with dismay. There is an obvious gap between the ideal and the actual, the Biblical vision and the human situation. Understandably, in 1948 when the World Council of Churches opened its constituting session at Amsterdam, the theme was “Man’s Disorder and God’s Design”.

When good King Uzziah died, the prophet Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord lifted upon high; this vision clearly depicts the polar nature of religious experience: on one hand he was inspired to hear from the seraphim that the whole earth is filled with the glory of the Lord of hosts; on the other hand, no less real and no less important was Isaiah’s abject confession: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. . . .” (6:5)

In his *Theology of the Old Testament*, Professor Walter Eich-

rodt of Basle carefully analyzes what he calls "the pessimistic critique of the human heart", which was characteristic of Semitic religion as a whole and Hebraism in particular.¹ According to the Jewish scriptures, he points out, there is an infinite gulf between the all-purposeful God and impotent man; the whole of the creation is sunk in sin and guilt. Man rebels against the unconditional authority of God and his individual actions are often affronts to the divine will. The cosmic order has been disrupted by human contempt for the sacred, with man deliberately hardening himself against positive impulses. He becomes virtually enslaved to sin, and this inner proclivity toward evil reveals active opposition to God and worse, actual enmity towards God.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN

According to Eichrodt, the common Hebrew word for sin means to go astray or to miss the mark. Men contravene an unconditional Ought, thereby transgressing divine law and becoming spiritual criminals. They wander from the path of righteousness, breaking the covenant binding God and mankind together and becoming estranged from the Most High. Every circumstance of man's existence seems to be at odds with his original destiny. Sin separates man from God.

Personal and collective sins, whether committed by the individual or perpetrated by the nation, are alike condemned by the Old Testament priest and denounced by the canonical prophets. The Ten Commandments, aside from purely ritualistic matters, deal primarily with individual wrongdoing: disrespect for parents, lying, stealing, murder, adultery and covetousness, for example. From the prophets came hard-hitting denunciations of social sins like oppression of the poor and unprincipled international relations. Biblical religion is as much interested in social righteousness as in individual rectitude.

Though there were sometimes said to be rare exceptions such as Enoch, Noah, Job and King Hezekiah (men whom the Talmud

¹ Eichrodt, Walter, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Westminster, Philadelphia, 1961, pp. 380-413.

considered wholly righteous), most often the Bible insists upon the universal rule of sin over the human heart. A New Testament writer sums up the virtually unanimous verdict of the scriptures: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (I John 1:8) In one of the older standard books on systematic theology, Professor Charles Hodge said: "What the scriptures so clearly teach is taught no less clearly by experience and history. Every man knows that he himself is a sinner. He knows that every human being whom he ever saw is in the same state of apostasy from God. . . . We have no account of any family, tribe, or nation free from the contamination of sin. The universality of sin among men is therefore one of the most undeniable doctrines of scripture, and one of the most certain facts of experience."²

Particularly important in regard to scriptural belief in the universality of sin is the fact that the key proof texts come from a wide variety of writers. One is not surprised to learn that the unknown old cynic who wrote Ecclesiastes would say, "Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins." (7:20) Isaiah speaks in the same vein: "All we like sheep have gone astray." (53:6) In the Psalms we read, "If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?" (130:3) Even the compiler of the royal annals includes the observation: "...there is no man who does not sin. . . ." (I Kings 8:46)

In the New Testament too, men of markedly differing temperament and outlook share the same basic conviction at this point. Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels exclaims, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone." (Mk. 10:18) The Epistle of James observes, "For we all make many mistakes." (3:2) I John insists, "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar." (1:10) And of course, Paul's opinion is clear enough: "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Christian theology affirms without hesitation the utter goodness of God and the thorough-going sinfulness of man. This apparent contradiction is resolved by referring to the original sin by

² Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. II, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1970 reprint, p. 233.

which the first couple, Adam and Eve, separated themselves from God. This primal sin flows from our first parents and infects us with an incurable malady. Because of what happened in the Garden of Eden, generation after generation suffers from a sense of guilt. No one has been born free of this hereditary taint: the apostasy from God is complete.

According to the Jewish Talmud, the rabbinical schools of Shammai and Hillel (prominent just before the time of Jesus) debated over whether it would have been better if man had never been created, in the light of his subsequent sins and tribulations. After two and a half years of argument, the majority of rabbis voted with Hillel that the creation of man was a tragedy. In line with this bleak opinion was the rabbinic view that from birth man is subject to an evil impulse, and that a good impulse from God is not granted to him until he is thirteen when he becomes a legal member of the synagogue. The Talmud would have us understand that while the evil impulse is king over all two hundred and forty-eight organs of the body, the good impulse is little better than a prisoner in jail. In stressing the grip of sin on the human personality, Paul was in agreement with a large number of the rabbis of his own time.

THE NATURE OF SIN

The Garden of Eden incident in the book of Genesis has long been considered of crucial importance for the Hebrew-Christian understanding of human nature and its interpretation has been a matter of acrimonious debate. Of those who claim to take the Bible literally often an exception is made with the Adam and Eve narrative; Philo among the Jews and Origen among the early Christians treated the narrative as pure allegory. Augustine, who was particularly important in working out the traditional doctrine of original sin, represents the majority position, arguing that the Eden account should be taken both literally and symbolically; that is to say, taken partly as historic fact, partly as spiritual truth.

Unification theology states that the fruit of the tree of knowledge is a symbolic expression. It is reasoned that even fallen parents would never test their children with deadly poison, so how

could God do this? In addition, the eating of a literal fruit could hardly be the cause of the inherited sin which affects all humanity. Jesus said, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." (Matt. 15:11) This discussion of the validity of kosher law is inapplicable to the Fall.

If the fruit is not a literal apple, fig or grape (some of the traditional conjectures), what does it symbolize? In the garden Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed. After eating the fruit, they realized their nakedness, felt shame, and concealed the sexual areas of their bodies (Gen. 2:25, 3:7). These actions suggest the symbolic meaning of eating the fruit. It is human nature to conceal anything that is wrong or defective. Had they eaten an apple, they would have covered their mouths or hid their hands. However, Adam and Eve covered the lower parts of their bodies, indicating that they had had a sexual relationship outside of that ordained by God. Their sudden experience of shame became an instinctive response to their loss of innocence.

In referring to their sexual actions, the Hebrews (as well as men of other cultures) commonly spoke of eating or picking a fruit. In the Bible and elsewhere "to know" a woman means to have sexual relations with her (Gen. 4:17, 25, 19:8). It is clear that to "eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil" means to have sexual relations.

Although the majority Catholic, Protestant and Jewish opinion on the Fall does not consider it in terms such as this, there have been some who have attempted to demonstrate such a relationship.

Cardinal Jean Danielou, an expert on early Christian literature and a member of the French Academy, in his small book on Genesis asserts, "A majority of critics underline the fact that the sin has a sexual character."³ He goes on to explain that the Eden story represents a Jewish attack on the Canaanite cults which involved worship of sacred serpents and sacred trees as well as the use of sacred prostitutes. However, one need not necessarily assume that the Genesis narrative originated as a denunciation of

³ Jean Danielou, *In the Beginning*, Helicon Press, Baltimore, 1965, p. 54.

Phoenician phallic worship, even though it may have been used for that purpose later. References to lust are likewise found in the commentaries on the Eden story in the Jewish apocalypses⁴ and Christian literature that later appeared in the subapostolic and patristic ages.

Nor can the unusual praise given to the practice of religious celibacy be ignored. Not only did Paul encourage chastity but Jesus also pointed out that there are some who are eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Hinduism, Buddhism and many forms of Christianity have taught that for the true seeker the highest path involved sexual abstinence, necessarily implying that marriage does not have the sanction of God but is a compromise for those who are unable to realize such a path. Such religions hint that there is something fundamentally wrong with sexual desire. Does this not suggest that the original and originating sin is sexual? Does this not mean that marriage as we know it has never meant all that God intended?

Even the rite of circumcision can be related to the Fall of man if one sees its deepest meaning. According to Genesis, Abraham instituted this ceremonial act as a visible sign of the covenant binding the children of Israel to their God. The most obvious significance of the act is cultic, that is, the separation of Hebrews from others. Some modern commentators have tried to explain that the rite was designed for hygienic reasons but this modern view contradicts the Biblical explanation. Others treat it as part of very ancient puberty rituals by which a youth was recognized as an adult but that too is not the meaning given by Abraham. Certain anthropologists suggest that the rite was originally considered an act of symbolic castration. Something about sex is felt to alienate man from God. By cutting off his foreskin, he indicates his determination to cut off any ties he has with Satan. For *Divine Principle*,

⁴ For example, The Book of Enoch, the Book of Secrets of Enoch, Apocalypse of Abraham, Apocalypse of Moses. Detailed explanations and often the literal texts can be found in the writings of F.R. Tennant. Since most of these books were suppressed by the later Church and a few have come to light only in recent times, many theologians have not read them and for the laity they have been well described as "the lost books of the Bible".

circumcision represents symbolic restitution for the original sin of Adam and Eve.

"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." (Gen. 1:28) This passage indicates God's intention to bless Adam and Eve in marriage. Marital love was to be sacred, and that blessing is the highest given by God; when a man and woman unite in perfection, they are in a sense a new, higher being even closer to God. Adultery in the Talmud is considered such a serious sin that it can only compare with idolatry and murder. It is obvious that the sexual action of Adam and Eve must have taken place outside of marriage and that this action was the original sin.

Although the books of the Old Testament are little concerned with the sin of Adam (which has led more than one scholar to deny that it was a matter of concern for the Hebrews), the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, Ben Sirach, the pseudepigraphal Book of Enoch and the apocalyptic literature of the Intertestamental period (quite ingeniously at times and not without fancy) devote considerable length to its discussion.⁵ However, the most valid and important exegesis is found in the New Testament itself. In Romans, Paul wrote:

Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. . . . Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men; so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. (5:14, 18)

Thus, we are told that the original sin is the cause of all subsequent transgressions and is responsible for the spiritual death and misery of all mankind. This has led both theologian and lay Christian alike to wonder how a single sin, whatever its gravity, could corrupt the entire human race. Professor Hodge compares it to one puncture of the eye which causes permanent blindness or to

⁵ For further information, cf. R.H. Pfeiffer's articles on the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, *Interpreter's Bible*, I, pp. 391-436.

a single perforation of the heart which brings life to an end for the whole body. Several rabbis compare it to a poison whose effect is passed on from one generation to another. Psychoanalysts have often traced severe mental disturbances back to a single psychic shock. One could further say that it is like the contamination of a water supply at its source which inevitably affects an entire city or like a disease that enters the roots of a tree and gradually infects every branch and leaf. In the family tree of mankind Adam and Eve were the roots.

THE IDENTITY OF THE SERPENT

The Biblical story relates that a serpent in the Garden of Eden tempted Eve to eat fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil even though God had forbidden it. She succumbed to the temptation, ate of the fruit and gave some to Adam. God had warned that if man ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil he would die. Because of their disobedience Adam and Eve were cursed and cast out of Eden.

Professor F.R. Tennant of Cambridge University has written an exhaustive study of the Fall story using as his sources the Bible, the Talmud, extra-canonical Jewish and Christian literature and the writings of Church Fathers prior to Augustine. In his work, he reminds us that the serpent in the Garden was far more than an ordinary reptile. As the scriptures report, he was a speaking animal, more clever than any other beast of the field, who became the crawling creature in consequence of the punishment for his temptation of Eve. For Tennant, the Biblical account points back to a more primitive legend in which the serpent was a supernatural being who offered to mankind the gift of knowledge of sexual love. Clearly no animal can tempt man in the manner the Bible suggests.

The book of Revelation speaks of "that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world". (Rev. 12:9) Such a passage brings together the last book of the Bible and the first. According to the commonly accepted Christian view, Satan was the serpent in the Garden of Eden. But such an identification did not originate with the Church. In post-Old Tes-

tament writings the serpent is the instrument employed by the devil to tempt Eve: the *Apocalypse of Moses*, the *Conflict of Adam and Eve*, the *History of the Creation and of the Transgression of Adam*, the *Narratio Zosimi* and certain rabbinical literature. In the *Book of Wisdom*, the *Vita Adae* and elsewhere, the serpent is completely identified with Satan. A verse in the *Book of Enoch* mentions Gadreel as the tempter of Eve and in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* he is called Azazel, a serpent in form but with hands, feet and wings.⁶ Rabbi Hoschaia describes the serpent as a double-horned creature, walking upright as a stick, with hands and feet which angels cut off as punishment for the Fall.⁷

Some historians of religion, particularly of a liberal Protestant persuasion or of a rationalist temper, have maintained that the Hebrews did not conceive of Satan as the fallen archangel or the arch-enemy of Yahweh until after the Babylonian conquest, or even as late as the Persian period. It is said that at that time the exiles came in contact with the highly developed demonology of the Middle East and the dualistic theology of the Zoroastrians, who interpreted all existence as a conflict of cosmic proportions between the good God of light, Ahura Mazda, and the evil god of darkness, Ahriman. The Yahwist history of Hebrew origins, of which the Garden of Eden story is a part, is usually ascribed to the reigns of David or Solomon. It is argued that for this reason, Satan could not be the tempter referred to, because the whole idea of such a demonic power did not appear among the Jews for several centuries. Furthermore, in the one Old Testament book (Job) where Satan plays a prominent role, he is interpreted as a public prosecutor in the celestial court, a servant of Yahweh—not an archdemon or a rebellious and fallen archangel. How then can it be maintained that Satan tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden or that he was responsible for the Fall and original sin?

We do know that demonology goes back to the earliest days of the Hebrew people as it does in all primitive cultures. One class of these devils that inhabited desolate places have been described as

⁶ Tennant, op. cit., pp. 245-246.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 152.

goat-shaped beings connected with fertility of the fields. These fertility spirits were placated by sacrifices during the Sinai Wilderness period. Isaiah 13:21 refers to them dancing in the ruins of the once-powerful Babylon. Lilith, associated with them, was conceived by the Babylonians as a wilderness-dwelling storm phantom. The spirit Azazel (Lev. 16) deserves particular notice because of his part in the Day of Atonement ritual: one he-goat chosen as a sin offering was sacrificed for Yahweh; a second was driven into the desert as an offering to Azazel. In later Judaism his name was attached to the leader of the fallen angels. While Walter Eichrodt strongly protests efforts to interpret this demon as an embodiment of Satan, it is possible that Azazel was one of several pseudonyms for the devil of the New Testament.

The Talmud adds many details about demons but it is difficult to decide which are early ideas and which represent much later theological development.⁸ God is said to have turned the worst of the men who built the tower of Babel into apes, spirits, demons and night devils. Another opinion was that Adam and Eve mated with spirits and produced demons. Lilith was sometimes said to have been Adam's first wife.

Scholars like Edward Langton⁹ assure us that Satan as a distinct human personality appears in only three Old Testament passages (Zechariah 3:1, Job 1 and 2, I Chronicles 21:1)—all of which are of post-exilic origin. This would seem to make any Hebrew identification of the tempter in Eden with Satan quite impossible. Nevertheless, several points can be made to resolve this difficulty. That the Hebrews believed in demons or malevolent spirits from time immemorial is granted by all the scholarly authorities. That the serpent in Genesis has extraordinary features of a demonic nature is likewise generally admitted. There is also the fact that the sacred Hebrew literature was strongly influenced by the party which so emphasized the sole reality and power of Yahweh that they consciously suppressed all ideas suggesting the

⁸ A. Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud*, E.P. Dutton, N.Y., 1949, pp. 260-270.

⁹ Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology*, Epworth Press, London, 1949, p. 53.

existence of an anti-God force that could threaten the divine sovereignty. This might help to explain why the book of Job treats Satan as a servant of God instead of His chief foe. But when the Yahwist group lost their power as a result of the Assyrian conquest, Babylonian and Persian influence brought ancient religious ideas into the open and provided an atmosphere for their clarification.

During their exile, Hebrew religious leaders confronted a Zoroastrian theology specifically designed to explain the problem of evil in the most dramatic fashion; this brought to the forefront those elements of the traditional Hebrew faith previously played down in order to emphasize the exclusive power of God. The result is not new and foreign ideas transplanted on Hebrew soil, but old and widely-accepted beliefs which at last have an opportunity to appear above ground. Awareness of Satan surfaced.

During the Intertestamental period, particularly in Jewish apocalyptic literature, much thought was given as to the nature of the Satanic sovereignty as well as the character of Satan's agents. The New Testament comes out of this background.

In the Synoptic Gospels both the lesser evil spirits and Satan play prominent roles. If one were to read the Gospel of Mark alone, it would seem natural to think that Jesus was as well known for his power as an exorcist as for his ability in religious teaching. In Matthew and Luke the temptation of Jesus by Satan includes the idea that the devil has complete authority over the kingdoms of this world. Paul describes Satan as the "god of this world" and the Fourth Gospel refers to him as the "ruler of this world".

However, for at least two hundred years—since the Age of Reason—there have been fewer and fewer educated Western people who have accepted the existence of malevolent or benevolent spiritual beings other than God and the immortal souls of departed humans. That fact alone separated the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries from all previous ages. As Professor Henri-Irene Marrou of the Sorbonne wrote, aside from theologians and others steeped in ancient writings, the reality of Satan is seldom considered these days.

M. Marrou, however, added that besides historians of ideas

and traditionalist theologians, masters of the spiritual life still take Satan seriously.¹⁰ For Christians and many others, one such master of the spiritual life is Jesus of Nazareth. If it is true that Christ believed in the existence of demonic spirits, then most Christians would reconsider denying Satanic reality as part of either a scholarly or popular demythologizing of the New Testament. The usual argument is that Jesus accommodated himself to the language and religious convictions of his hearers. That supposition is, of course, patently false. He contradicted the highly treasured beliefs of both the Sadducees and Pharisees on such matters as the validity of the Mosaic Law concerning food regulations, the Sabbath and divorce. If he did not believe in the existence of Satan and the demons, it is very likely that he would have said so. In his book on demonology, Langton therefore concludes: “. . . it seems to be the indubitable fact that Jesus did believe in Satan as the personal head of the kingdom of evil which is opposed to the reign of God in the lives of men. If His language is not to be held to imply so much as this, it is difficult to see why Christ’s belief in a personal God may not be eliminated also. . . .”¹¹

Someone, perhaps C.S. Lewis, has quipped that since Satan is the father of lies, his most effective deception has been to tell people he doesn’t exist. If we are not looking for him, he can do his work without much fear of discovery. If physical objects can skip our notice simply because we are preoccupied with other matters, how much more difficult it is to perceive spiritual reality which we cannot easily see or hear or touch.

In line with the above remarks, it is fairly obvious that since the Renaissance and even more since the Age of Reason, Western man has largely restricted his attention to the temporal rather than the eternal, the material rather than the spiritual, the human instead of the divine. This intellectual climate itself has distorted our vision. In this sense, the age of the machine and the technological

¹⁰ Quoted, Nicolas Corte, *Who is the Devil?*, 20th Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism, v. XXI, pp. 112-113, Hawthorn Books, N.Y., Eng. trans., 1958.

¹¹ Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology*, The Epworth Press, London, 1949, p. 173.

revolution has been a curse as well as a blessing. Nicolai Berdyaev predicted that with the decline of the West, a new Middle Ages would be born. He did not think of a return to the past as such but of a reawakening of the human spirit to important dimensions of existence which we have overlooked in our preoccupation with material progress. In such an age God and Satan might again become as real as they once were for St. Anthony or St. Thomas, Maimonides and Avicenna, Roger Bacon and Swedenborg.

It is also imperative to distinguish the actuality of Satan from popular misconceptions handed down to us from folklore. There has been widespread attack upon belief in devils because it is easy to ridicule folk legends about spiritual realities. Those who believe in Satan have objectified his existence by describing him in language drawn from the physical world. For example, Satan is supposed to have horns and a tail, yet otherwise look like a human being; if we have never seen such a creature and no one can point him out to us, we reasonably doubt his very existence. It is important to recall that he is an expert at disguises and that he appears in a variety of ways depending at least in part upon what we expect. Baudelaire, the poet—and for a time a confirmed Satanist—reminds us, “The devil’s first trick is his incognito.” If he sometimes manifests himself in a manner which makes his identity crystal-clear, more often he appears masked in an attractive form.

ANGELOLOGY

Belief in friendly spirits has been as much a part of early human cultures around the world as fear of demonic beings. Since the Old Testament is primarily interested in history rather than cosmology, the Jewish scriptures contain no elaborately worked-out doctrine of angels. Again not until the Intertestamental period when Judaism had to explain its own views vis-a-vis the intricate theology of Persian Zoroastrianism can one discover an attempt at systematic angelology. *The Book of Enoch* gives us the names of a hundred and fifty angels. Christians, for their part, took over the views of apocalyptic Judaism, then modified and clarified them in

the light of the spiritual experience of the Church. Here too, a wide variety of opinions can be found in the early literature; no real effort at theological systematization took place until the writings of an anonymous 5th century mystical theologian who used the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of St. Paul. The scholastic theologians of the Western Church during the 13th century, of course, greatly refined the traditional teaching about angels as they did with all phases of Christian doctrine.

Although the Old Testament contains no theological treatise on the existence, nature and function of angels, belief in them is expressed in Genesis, Psalms, Ezekiel, Exodus, Judges and elsewhere. Father Pie-Raymond Régamey of the Dominicans quite wisely points out, “. . . it is necessary to make the reader realize the presence in the Bible of many references to angels drawn from different sources, obliging us to the greatest caution when we discuss what is guaranteed by Revelation. Animism, various kinds of polytheism, astral conceptions of Persia and Babylon, philosophical notions, productions of popular piety, all have a similar effect.”¹²

Because the medieval theologians were particularly concerned to demonstrate the intelligibility of the Christian faith, the definition of an angel according to the system of Aquinas may be of special value for those confused by pictures derived from folklore and religious art. Aquinas said that an angel is a pure spirit, a being entirely free from matter. Angels exist in countless numbers, unlimited by space. An angel is not confined by time or its changes. Angels both love and will. They can enlighten one another and speak to each other, but they do not know fully the innermost secrets of God nor can they completely read the secrets of the human heart.

Further, Aquinas held that they exist in three hierarchies, each with three subdivisions: the highest order of angels includes seraphim, cherubim and thrones; the second consists of dominations, virtues and powers; the lowest is comprised of principalities,

¹² Pie-Raymond Régamey, *What is an Angel?*, 20th Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism, v. XLVII, Hawthorn Books, N.Y., 1960, p. 14.

archangels and angels. This arrangement—from Dionysius the Areopagite, based on his considerable meditation upon passages in the letters of St. Paul—was taught by Thomas Aquinas. If one has a little trouble accepting this classification, he may be comforted by the fact that a contemporary follower of Aquinas complains that Dionysius “has conceived of them in too narrow and rigid a way, and has in too arbitrary a fashion fixed the order of his three hierarchies.”¹³

Angels and archangels play particularly important roles in the Christian drama of salvation. In the Roman Catholic version of the Bible three good archangels are mentioned—Michael, Gabriel and Raphael (in the book of *Tobit* only) and one fallen archangel, Lucifer, who was renamed Satan. Rabbinic authorities add the names of Uriel (the angel who accompanied Enoch to heaven and gave Moses the Law), Phanuel, Jeremiel and Raguel to complete the sacred seven. For the Jews, Michael, commander in chief of the angelic armies, was titled viceroy of heaven. Lucifer, according to some, was considered the archangel assigned to govern the earth and hence could be called the ruler of this world.

Angels in the Old and New Testaments served three distinct purposes. They were courtiers around the throne of God or supernatural soldiers in the heavenly armies. They were envoys commissioned to make His will known or to carry out the divine commands. They were intermediaries between the Most High in heaven and men on earth. In all these ways they functioned as servants of God or as the Epistle of the Hebrews called them “ministering spirits” (1:14).

Sometimes certain angelic beings were conceived of in the Babylonian manner as cherubim with the body of a bull or lion but a human face or as seraphim with snake-like bodies but human heads. Also they were often depicted with wings so they could fly from place to place as God directed. Of course, the concepts used by artists were intentionally symbolic and should not be confused with fact. According to the scriptures, angels appeared in human

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 48.

form and could be easily confused with men. We could imagine that having never experienced life in the human world, they project a vibration different from that of spirit men.

A famous Psalm can be easily misinterpreted: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him. . . thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." (Ps. 8:4-5 A.V.) Because of this passage many mistakenly believe that angels are gloriously exalted beings far superior to man. Thus, certain early Christian writers assumed that men are saved to fill up the empty places left by the fallen angels. In the Greek Church, monks, because of the special religious quality of their behavior, are said to live the angelic life. According to Unification theology, man was actually created on a higher level than any of the angels and now exists on an inferior plane only because of the Fall. The roles which scripture ascribes to angels would indicate that they were created as servants of God, whereas men were designed to be his children. And of course, there is Paul's famous assertion: "Do you not know that we are to judge the angels?" (I Cor.6:3)

The different systems of angelology do not agree about the exact nature of Satan's position prior to the Fall. Certain Jewish authorities described him as chief of the seraphim and head of the order of virtues. Thomas Aquinas disagreed, putting Satan among the cherubim because as he explained, cherubim are associated with knowledge, which is compatible with mortal sin, while seraphim are associated with the heart of charity, which is incompatible with such a heinous sin.¹⁴ Still others have seen him as one of the powers or one of the archangels. If Satan belongs to the seraphim or the cherubim, he ranks in the first or second orders in the celestial hierarchies described by Aquinas, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, Gregory the Great and Isadore of Seville. If he is only an archangel he drops next to the bottom of the list.

Possibly in the eyes of many simplistic Jewish believers there existed only two types of celestial messengers, ordinary angels and their leaders, the archangels. The Biblical saga is most intense if

¹⁴ Gustav Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels*, Free Press, N.Y., 1967, p. 261.

Satan was in actuality someone especially close to God. To be on the top rung of the angelic ladder he would have to be one of the seraphim, probably their chief.

Before the Fall, according to *Divine Principle*, Satan was the chief angel in the divine court and the special agent by which God blessed the myriad members of the angelic world. He appeared to be closest to God and seemed to be the divine favorite. In the Hebraic conception of God and His angels as a powerful monarch and retinue of courtiers, this particular angel would have been like the grand vizier.¹⁵ *Divine Principle* identifies him as Lucifer.

THE SPIRITUAL FALL

In the Genesis narrative itself the serpent's motivation is not discussed. One source of information is the post-canonical writing of the Jews. In the Alexandrian book of *Wisdom* written under the name of Solomon we find this simple declaration:

God created man for immortality, and made him the image of his own eternal self; it was the devil's spite that brought death into the world, and the experience of it is reserved for those who take his side. (2:23, 24)

Unification theology is in agreement with this explanation. God loved Adam and Eve as His children whereas He loved the archangel as His servant. Quite naturally the angel who had previously been so close to God felt a lack of love; he perceived that the love God had for Adam and Eve was of a different character. He, the favorite in the celestial court, began to feel jealous. In his eyes, Adam and Eve were a threat to his well-established position; he knew that when Adam reached perfection, Adam would have dominion. Why, he wondered, should these new-comers be elevated to a place higher than his own? (In the Quran, the angel says, "Why should I serve them? They are but of dust while I'm of

¹⁵ Cf. Paul van Imschoot, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Desclee & Co., N.Y., 1954, v. I, pp. 109-115 on the angel of Yahweh as God's grand vizier.

fire.”¹⁶) Why, he thought, should God degrade a servant who had always been faithful?

Rabbi Jehuda ben Thema and Rabbi Jehuda ben Bathera claimed that the angel envied Adam his special privileges in Paradise. He was particularly galled to see Adam reclining while attending angels roasted meat and strained wine for him. In the pseudepigraphal *Life of Adam*, Satan explains that God ordered the angels to fall down and worship Adam as the image of God. Michael immediately did so but Satan refused. After an argument in which God became angry, He expelled the proud angel from His presence. The *Pirke di Rabbi Elieser* also reports that Adam was envied because of his lordship over creation and his greatness in general.¹⁷

According to *Divine Principle*, not only did the angel envy Adam, but also, feeling a lack of love, he turned and focused his desire on Eve. Because Eve was sinless, she was very beautiful in the archangel's eyes. At the same time, if he could seduce her, he could control her and Adam through her. In open defiance of God's principle, he did not control this desire. Gradually, he drew her away from Adam and seduced her with his beauty and wisdom; Eve responded. The result was the spiritual fall of the archangel and Eve by an act of fornication forbidden by God's design.

Several ancient Jewish and early Christian writings agree with this interpretation of the Fall. Rabbi Asi and Rabbi Hoschais claim that Satan thought, “I will kill Adam and take Eve to wife.”¹⁸ Rabbi ben Chalashta explained that Satan intended to rule the earth with Eve as his spouse. The Slavonic *Book of Enoch* relates that Satan “entered and deceived Eve. . .but he did not touch Adam.”¹⁹

A few early commentators claimed that Cain was the literal child of Satan and Eve,²⁰ although the majority of exegetes,

¹⁶ The Holy Quran, VIII, Ch. 7, sect. 2, verse 12.

¹⁷ F.R. Tennant, *Ibid*, pp. 152, 199.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 153.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 208.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 159.

Jewish or Christian, do not go quite so far. Tennant concludes from his careful examination of all the literature, "It is beyond question. . . that various legends concerning the monstrous intercourse of Adam and Eve with demons, and especially of Eve with the serpent or Satan, were both widespread and ancient among the Jews."²¹

However well documented in ancient Hebrew literature, this explanation of the Fall, or part of it, may be so startling that it almost forces us to ask important questions. In particular, how, we may wonder, can such an event ever have taken place?

Can one seriously believe that an angel could have sexual intercourse with a human being? To throw light on the problem, we must first examine the beliefs of the Jews and Christians recorded in the Bible. Both the Old and New Testaments take it for granted that spiritual beings can and do lust after mortal women. One key passage is a short account to be found in the sixth chapter of Genesis; in it "the sons of God," *bene elohim*, descended from heaven, successfully seduced certain women and produced offspring. Rabbinic authorities claim that two hundred angels were involved in this episode which Genesis associates with God's determination to cleanse the earth by the flood. We might dismiss this story as primitive myth if it did not reappear in two different parts of the New Testament. In the Epistle of Jude and the epistle called II Peter the story is revived and given the canonical authority of Christian scripture. For the Christians of the apostolic age, no less than for Hebrews writing in the time of Solomon, it was assumed without question that spirits and human beings could and did have sexual relations with each other. This Genesis story so impressed Jewish writers in the Intertestamental period that they even reported the names of some of the angels directly involved: Azibee, Badariel, Baraqijal, Semyaza, Jejon, for example. In fact, the incident continued to have such popularity with the mystical Jews that Simeon ben Yohai, reputed author of *The Zohar*, threatened to curse any of his disciples who believed angels

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

had these capabilities.²²

Having seen how deeply rooted this idea is in Jewish, Christian (as well as Muslim) religious tradition, let us further examine the Biblical perception of the angelic nature: 1. When two angels visited Lot at Sodom to warn him of the coming destruction of the city they looked so human that they were taken as men by the inhabitants of the city (Gen. 19:5). 2. An angel wrestled with Jacob so vigorously that he dislocated the patriarch's thigh joint (Gen. 32:25). 3. When Mary saw an angel near the tomb of Jesus, he looked like a young man clothed in a long white garment (Mark 16:5). From this one can readily see that angels not only possess powers of sensual perception similar to humans, but also take a form that can on occasion be perceptible.

Consider this experience of St. Teresa d'Avila with an angel she called "the Heavenly Bridegroom":

I saw in the angel's hand a long golden dart with a fiery tip. Several times he thrust it into my deepest self in such a manner that it pierced my bowels. When he drew it out it seemed as if my bowels came with it, leaving me all on fire with great love of God. The pain was so intense that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness thereof that I could not wish to be rid of it.²³

Additional evidence of this phenomena comes from the Satanists who worship the prince of darkness. They have long maintained that in their mystic rites one could experience sexual union with their master or his supernatural confrères. During the Middle Ages down to the seventeenth century and even today they have confessed as much to clerical and secular authorities, not as an admission of guilt, but as their belief and experience.

Love unites two beings bringing a reciprocal influence. Hav-

²² Gustav Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

²³ *Life*, 29:17.

ing united with the archangel, Eve felt an uncontrollable sensation of fear and shame. The archangel, who wanted to hold the same position over Adam that he held over the angels, and who could not bring himself to love Adam and Eve as God did, felt intense fear and shame because of his conscious violation of principle; these sensations came to Eve immediately. People today often feel fear without apparent cause. The presence of evil spirits brings an atmosphere of fear which men can sense but often are unable to explain.

Eve also learned that she was to be Adam's mate—not the archangel's—and with that she became aware of the seriousness of her transgression.

THE PHYSICAL FALL

According to *Divine Principle*, during their period of growth, Adam and Eve loved each other as brother and sister not as husband and wife. Upon realizing that Adam was her rightful mate, she desired to recover her previous position in God's favor. In addition, desperate to free herself from the state of fear that she had been plunged into, she looked to Adam who was sinless and still in a state of innocence. Feeling that she might reverse conditions by making love with Adam—cancelling the act of love with the archangel—she, no longer innocent, tempted Adam to behave as her husband. Adam responded and had sexual relations with her prematurely. Thus they disobeyed the command of God. Adam instantaneously felt the same fear as Eve did; he recognized his sinful act. Ashamed of what they had done, they concealed their lower parts and hid themselves from God.

By this action, Adam and Eve were cut off from God, much in the same way that an emotionally disturbed child is cut off from reality. In this internal world of fear and shame, Satan could control and dominate God's firstborn. Adam and Eve who had grown to the top of the growth stage where the blessing of marriage from God was imminent fell far below even the formation stage and became subject to Satan.

Such an account is not inconsistent with known behavioral

patterns, nor has it gone altogether unsuggested in older manuscripts. The *Apocalypse of Moses* describes Satan climbing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, putting upon its fruit "the poison of his wickedness, that is, of his lust; for lust is the head of sin."²⁴ Later, Clement of Alexandria, representing the early Fathers of the Church, wrote:

The first man, when in Paradise, sported free, because he was the child of God; but when he succumbed to pleasure (for the serpent signifies pleasure crawling on its belly, earthly wickedness nourished for the fuel to the flames) was a child seduced by lusts, and grew old in disobedience; and by disobeying his Father, dishonored God. Such was the influence of pleasure.²⁵

THE TREE OF LIFE AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

In studying the Genesis account of the Fall of man it is important to remember that the Biblical text as we have it was not only written long after the events it relates, but also was composed in the typical Near Eastern manner with considerable use of symbolism. Near Eastern scholars such as Dr. George M. Lamsa emphasize how often we misinterpret Bible passages by ignoring the special literary forms used by the original writers.

With this in mind we should look at the two trees mentioned in the Garden of Eden narrative. Many scholars have wrestled with this problem without coming to any unanimous conclusions. Some feel the original story made no reference to the tree of life. In their view, this was added later to show that when man had the chance to choose between immortality and sexual pleasure, he foolishly picked the latter.

According to Unification theology, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were not literal trees but were intended as representations of the two persons in the Garden.

²⁴ Tennant, *Ibid.*, p. 197.

²⁵ *Protrepikos* XI.

The tree of life was the symbol of man in perfection. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life. . . ." (Rev. 22:14) Man's hope was his perfection, total oneness with God; since the Fall man's innate desire for perfection has been unfulfilled; his ultimate desire is the realization of the tree of life. Adam was to become perfect with Eve in marriage blessed by God. Then they would have produced children of life because they would have been in a state of psychical and physical maturity.

Dr. N.P. Williams²⁶ makes the incorrect inference that those who ascribe to the sexual nature of original sin must also believe that God required Adam and Eve's perpetual celibacy. This, of course, need not be so. One rabbinic view held that Adam and Eve were husband and wife before their fall, leading Satan to envy their bliss. Going even further Rabbi Jochanon ben Chanina taught that Cain and a sister were born while Adam and Eve were still in Eden. *Divine Principle*, however, is in agreement with nearly all Christian exegetes that the first children came subsequent to the fall.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil was the symbol of Eve, prior to perfection. Through God's blessing, Adam could have fulfilled goodness with Eve; however, by uniting with her prematurely he fulfilled evil and after, recognized his transgression. Trees multiply through fruit; mankind would multiply through the fruit of love—specifically, Eve's love. Thus Eve was represented as the tree of knowledge; and eating the fruit represents experiencing Eve's love.

THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL

Had Adam and Eve been united by the love of God, they would have produced children free of inherited sin. But because Adam and Eve joined with Satan through the act of unprincipled love, their descendents were children of the Fall, and the world came under satanic rule. In this sense the Fourth Gospel relates that

²⁶ N.P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and Original Sin*, Longmans, London, 1927, p. 58.

Jesus told certain rebellious Jews, "You are of your father the devil." John the Baptist could likewise denounce his contemporaries as a brood of vipers and later, early Church Fathers could speak of men as "slaves of Satan".

In the Fourth Gospel Jesus called Satan the "father of lies" and "a murderer from the beginning" because he was the author of spiritual death. Jesus continued the use of the tree as a symbol of man, inferring that fallen men, fruit of satanically influenced parents, had to be grafted onto a new vine—himself.

Since the Fall, Satan has continuously tempted man and tormented him with accusations about his sinful nature. Even now he is constantly trying to alienate men from God.

Contemporary Roman Catholic theologians are now inclined to emphasize what they call "the sin of the world" rather than relying upon the traditional doctrine of the first sin. Professor Andre-Marie Dubarle, a French Dominican scholar, for example, writes "...original sin is not a unique catastrophe at the birth of our species; it is the continually perpetuated perversion of mankind, in which new sins are conditioned more or less by the preceding sins and carry on the existing disorder. Instead of a disturbance that would die away in three or four generations, there is a generalized and anonymous corruption, with everyone its victim and many its authors, but in such a way that more often than not it is impossible to pinpoint any individual responsibility."²⁷

To the extent that this new emphasis serves to highlight the actual human situation and reminds us of our collective responsibility for the ills which plague mankind, it may be useful. The point of the traditional Fall doctrine, however, involves something quite different. It was designed to explain how a God-created world has turned out so badly. As N.P. Williams indicated in the opening sentence of his 1924 Bampton Lectures on the Fall, "The problem of evil is at once the most momentous, most terrible and most intractable question which has ever vexed the thought of man."²⁸ How could it have happened? And how could we become

²⁷ Dubarle, *The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin*, Herder and Herder, N. Y., 1964, p. 224.

²⁸ Williams, *Ibid*, p. 3.

so bound to it?

Unification theology asserts that ever since Satan dominated Adam and Eve, he has controlled the world in a deviated form of God's principle. With the accumulation of the sins and evils of mankind, Satan's power has vastly increased and the number of his subjects has multiplied. Satan's servants, traditionally termed evil spirits, are either fallen angels or evil people in the spirit world. Evil spirits can exercise power over people on earth only as long as men themselves become their objects for a reciprocal relationship. That is, man attracts Satan by making a base for him. If man rids himself of the satanic elements inherited from Adam and Eve, grafts himself to a "true vine", then Satan becomes powerless; without the unfortunate and unnatural rapport that mankind established (and maintains) with him, God could quickly bring His will, His purpose of creation to fruition.

An in-depth knowledge of Satan's crime and false dominion—which has heretofore only been intimated in the scriptures and dogmatized somewhat abstractly—will ultimately enable men on an individual and world-wide scale to encounter and overcome his power. Yet to do this man must exercise an important ingredient of his original nature given by God: his free will.

Divine Principle's understanding of free will is similar to previous Christian views. Free will is the highest gift God gave man. If man were simply forced to serve God, there would be no beauty or life in man, and no joy or glory for God. It is most beautiful and precious when man serves God voluntarily and loves Him wholeheartedly, in free will. The flower turns its face to the sun because there is no alternative open to it; man's free will gives his existence a special dimension. From this man is supreme in all creation, validating his lordship.

Some believe that Adam and Eve fell because they had free will. Of course, their free will made it possible for them to fall. If they had fallen because of their free will, however, there would always be the danger of falling, even after they had become perfect. Insecurity would exist even in the kingdom of God where man is to have complete freedom. Such insecurity would then exist

forever, and the promised attainment of perfection would be impossible.

Though free will did not cause the Fall, Adam and Eve lost their freedom because of their sin and became subject to Satan's domination. Hence, spiritually man does not have complete freedom to do what is right and good in God's eyes. He is inextricably enmeshed in voluntary and involuntary captivity; this has been brilliantly analyzed by Augustine, Calvin, Kierkegaard and Niebuhr as well as portrayed through our greatest novelists. On this point St. Paul lamented:

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (Rom. 7:14-15, 24)

Hence, it is necessary for man to restore his original liberty before he can build the kingdom of God in his midst; though man may have free actions, those actions may not be the result of inner freedom. One of the signs, it is felt, of a growth in the spiritual life of mankind is that in present times there is a universal demand for liberation on every level; whether it be racial, national or theological.

In history, free will from a religious perspective is best illustrated in the lives of those who chose God and spiritual liberty at great risk or even at the cost of their lives, Joan of Arc, Martin Luther King, Cardinal Mindszenty, and numerous Christian martyrs.

COULD GOD HAVE PREVENTED THE FALL?

According to most of the standard forms of Christian theology, with the notable exception of Christian personalism, God is described as omnipotent and omniscient. By and large the average Christian assumes that God knows everything and can do anything: that there are no restrictions on the divine power and no limitations on divine knowledge. On the basis of such belief it follows that

God could foresee the possibility of the Fall of man. Actually, orthodoxy pushes us even further; God knew that the serpent would seduce Eve and that she would successfully tempt Adam before these events took place. In Christian theology God is said to see in His mind past, present and future as an instantaneous 'Now'.

According to such theology, God knew beforehand of the coming Fall with its calamitous effects on subsequent generations, yet did not prevent the momentous transgressions. Whenever this sort of theology is taught, sooner or later some genuinely troubled believer will ask, why did not God intervene? Confronted with this kind of dilemma, many sensitive and thoughtful people have concluded that God is either not all good or He is not all-powerful because, with our kind of world as evidence of His workmanship, He cannot be both.

When the devout Christian philosopher Leibnitz argued that ours was the best of all possible worlds, Voltaire demolished the theodicy with ridicule in his novel *Candide*. The classic book of Job wrestles with the problem of God and evil without coming to a generally accepted solution. For a half century or longer the New England Theology derived from Jonathan Edwards employed the subtlest logic and sharpest insight in an effort to explain the difficulties to little avail.²⁹ Since that time many theologians have been content to declare that Christianity did not come to solve the problem of sin but to overcome the fact of sin. If *Divine Principle* can throw a fresh light on this matter, for this alone it will deserve the careful attention of theologians.

It might be asked, what force could possibly cause the arch-angel, Adam and Eve to deviate from God's principle and turn away from His love? That force is love. God made this power so absolute that even His principle that regulates the workings of the universe does not preclude expression of love in a way which violates His will.

²⁹ The standard account can be found in Frank H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology*, 1907. A convenient summary of the discussion, "Why Did God Permit Sin?" is included in *Children of the Devil*, Philosophical Library, 1966, pp. 30-40, by Dr. William T. Bruner, a Conservative Baptist theologian.

Literature and history alike pay tribute to the omnipotent reign of love over the human heart. Freud and other psychoanalysts point out that in this fallen world the erotic impulse by itself is strong enough to disregard all the moral conventions which society and conscience ascribe to the will of God. Shakespeare has immortalized how love drove Romeo and Juliet to suicide, how Hamlet's uncle was driven by passion to kill his brother in order to marry his sister-in-law, and how Lear became literally insane because he made a mistake about how much his daughters loved him. In our time, King Edward VIII abdicated the throne for the sake of love.

The sexual interpretation of the Fall has signal merit precisely because it points the finger at the one sin which is rooted in the biological structure of man. In one sense and apart from details of his theories, Freud correctly traced the human tragedy to the libidinous drive. Long before, the Fathers of the Church connected original sin with the sin of concupiscence even though they denied the one interpretation of Genesis which would justify their conclusions.

In the *Divine Principle* view, God created man as an object to whom He could send His limitless love and from whom He could receive a full response. Thus God wanted man to live in the highest expression of love. If the principle controlled man's love, then it could not be absolute. After reaching the state of perfection, man is no longer under the principle, but under the direct dominion of God, where the bond between them is unconditional and inseparable. However, before man reaches perfection, his desire may be misdirected. For this reason, according to *Divine Principle*, man and woman should experience a full union of love with each other only after their love for God has crystallized. Through the commandment, God's children were directed to center their affection beyond themselves.

Unification theology further contends that God could foresee the possibility of man's fall; but though almighty and all-knowing, He does not intervene directly in the affairs of men until they have grown to perfection. Adam and Eve, though warned, fell when they were immature. Had God intervened, He would have violated

His own perfect system and invaded man's responsibility.

Furthermore, God created man to be lord of all creation. To assume that position man must pass through a process of maturation; in this he must be given a large measure of responsibility to develop self-initiative and self-discipline. He has to grow to a secure state worthy of trust by God, by his children, as well as by creation. If God had exercised direct dominion over Adam and Eve at that point, He would have been recognizing them as mature, which they were not. Also, it would have been an indication that Adam could not be trusted to reach perfection. For this reason God did not explicitly forewarn Adam and Eve of the archangel's temptation. They had to use their judgment in all situations.

Thus far such reasoning has stressed the need for God to preserve the personal integrity of man. The other side of the matter is no less vital. In the analysis of original sin and the Fall one must in no way compromise the moral integrity of God. The Fall was man's affair alone. God is in no sense a responsible participant. He cannot recognize evil as part of His plan of creation. Christian theology has always been determined to avoid a dualistic world view in which God and Satan are co-creators and co-rulers of the universe. God is perfect goodness and utter holiness. Therefore neither the sin of Adam and Eve nor the non-principled act initiated by Satan can be related to the divine purpose of creation.

It is for man to discern evil and abolish it by exercise of his own free will. Quite appropriately Dr. William T. Bruner has insisted that the moral government of God depends upon 1) the righteousness of God and 2) the free moral agency and absolute personal responsibility of each individual soul.³⁰ No truly Christian hamartiology can be produced by minimizing either. The world has not yet been restored because of failures in the second condition of Bruner; God continually tugs at man to draw him to direct dominion. For this purpose, one was anointed to dramatize that responsibility.

³⁰ W.T. Bruner, *Children of the Devil*, Philosophical Library, N.Y., 1966, p. xvi.

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