

## ***The World, The Flesh and the Devil***

### THREEFOLD ATTACK

In this chapter, we shall show that the enemy attacks us from these different angles because man is a threefold being. We will then show the nature of the difference between these three temptations, and finally, we will show the methods set forth by the Word of God through which the Christian may have victory in each of the three spheres.

When God created Adam, the act of creation is described as follows: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). The verse reveals to us that the body was made of the dust of the ground, that the spirit came from the breath of God, and that the combination produced the soul. It would be correct, in the light of this verse, for a man to say, “I am a soul, I have a body and I have a spirit.”

There have been many theologians who have denied the tripartite nature of man. They find no difference between the soul and the spirit. However, the Word of God definitely does make such a difference, and we shall see that the difference is an important one in the psychology [in] back of the differences in temptations that come to a man. One of the most obvious verses which tells us how we are to distinguish between soul and the spirit is in the epistle to the Hebrews: “The Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged scalpel, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is the critic of the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

### BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

We shall give only a brief summary of the use of the words body, soul and spirit, for it will not only be instructive for our purpose, but will also show the extent of the task.

The Hebrew word that is most frequently rendered “soul” is *nephesh*. It is found 754 times in the Hebrew text, and it is translated “soul” 472 times. In the other 282 places, it is rendered by no less than forty-four different

English words or phrases. Apart from its use in translating the word *nephesh*, “soul” is found only two other times in the Old Testament (Job 30:15 and Isaiah 57:16). Twenty-two times the word is used of the lower animals without any possible connection with man, thus showing that the Bible teaches that animals have souls, though definitely they do not have spirits.

Man is a soul, and as a soul he conserves his own identity though he may have the same name as other men. John Smith on Third Avenue does not get himself confused with John Smith on Fourth Street. The Post Office department may send their mail to the wrong addresses, but if they are sober, they get to their right homes. So do the animals, for our Lord pointed out “the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests” (Matthew 8:20), and we know from observation that each goes to his own home and it is never confused with any other. Evidently an animal or a bird has an individuality as distinct as that of man. The soul is self-consciousness.

The New Testament word *psuche* does not alter the meaning that we have gathered from the Old Testament word. It is found 105 times in the Greek Testament and is the only word that is translated “soul.” It is thus used 58 times, and no other word is so rendered. It is also seen as “life” 40 times, “mind” three times, and once each as “us,” “mind,” “you,” “heart,” and “heartily.” It is *psuche* which is the word used to translate the Old Testament *nephesh* when there is a quotation in the New Testament.

## MAN’S SPIRIT

The soul, which is the self, the ego, the I, has a spirit. The words for this idea are as definite as the ones we have just looked at. In the Old Testament, we have *ruach* which is found 389 times in the text, it is translated “spirit” 237 times. In the other 152 places, it is rendered by twenty-two different English words. Apart from its use in translating *ruach*, “spirit” is found only two other times in the Old Testament (Job 26:4 and Proverbs 20:27). While at times the word signifies wind or breath, its metaphorical meaning is used for the life of God and for the name of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. This is what was breathed into Adam when he was created, and this is that which distinguishes man from animals.

No man, be he ever so low in the scale of human intelligences, ever failed sooner or later to recognize that there was something about him and superior to him. Aristotle said that “man is by nature a political animal”; Seneca said that “man is a social animal,” and in another place, “man is a reasoning animal.” Chrysostom said “man is a gentle animal,” and Augustine called him “an earthly animal.” There may be a measure of truth in all of these, but it would be far closer to the truth as revealed in the Scriptures which use the word “soul” and “spirit” to say that man is a *religious animal*. We substantiate the use of the word “animal” by the usage of the word “soul,” and we substantiate the word “religious” by the usage of the word “spirit.”

The New Testament word *pneuma* does not alter the meaning of the Old Testament word. It is found 379 times in the Greek Testament of the best critical editors. Used with the word Holy, it is translated “Holy Spirit” or “Holy Ghost” 93 times. It is rendered “Spirit” 130 times and “spirit” 150 times. The full count is completed by the use of the word as “ghost” twice, and once each as “spiritual,” “spiritually,” “life” and “wind.”

## SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY

There is, indeed, a great need for a detailed study of spiritual psychology (note the union of our two words in that phrase), but this is sufficient to establish the fact that man is a soul and that he has a spirit. We do not need to expand the fact that he also has a body. It is, indeed, the body that is the foundation that holds the other two in place so that if the body be destroyed the soul and spirit depart.

Why, then, do some theologians claim that there is no difference between soul and spirit? For much of popular theology is founded on the dichotomy of man into body and soul, rather than on the Biblical trichotomy of body, soul and spirit. Perhaps an illustration will explain. When man was created, he was somewhat like a three-storied house. After the fall, he was more like those houses which had gone through bombing: the third story had fallen into the second; the walls of the second were gaping so that a passerby might see the debris of the two--the house might still be fit for dwelling.

When Adam sinned, the Spirit of man fell down into his soul. The two are almost inseparable in the unregenerate.

There is no adjective in our language for the word soul. Previous students have seen the need for such a word, and the great dictionaries give us soulish, but mark it obsolete for more than a century. In the Greek of the New Testament there is such an adjective. The spiritual concepts of lost men are really soulish concepts. They rise from the natural (soulish) man that receiveth not the things of the spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14). We do not need to press the obvious analogy that the body is like a cracked wall. In view of the confusion of soul and spirit in the unsaved man, is it not comprehensible that philosophers and theologians have thought that they were one and the same? It is the Word of God that divides the two asunder.

## A NEW SPIRIT

When a man is born again, the work of the Holy Spirit plants within him a new spirit. It is a new third story that is held from above by the power of God. As the old man was three-stories held up by the body, and always bearing downward by what we might call a soulish, gravitational pull, so the new man is three stories with the center of his being in the new spirit and is always being pulled upward by a spiritual, magnetic attraction. The Christian life is the development of the forces of the new spirit so that their influences come to combine the whole soul and being of the Christian. "I am crucified with Christ, means that the old soul has to be dealt with in the only way that will bring any change. "Nevertheless I live" means that the life from above is penetrating the fastnesses of the soul and that the sphere of victory is being enlarged constantly in the life of the believer.

Satan's entire strategy is, therefore, directed to continuing the confusion of soul and spirit and of using every artifice possible to increase the pull of the flesh which lusteth against the spirit [Gal. 5:16]. Because of the tripartite nature of man, the devil has arranged his attacks to assault each phase of man's being. Against the body, he brings the temptations of the flesh. Against the soul he brings the temptations of the world. Against the spirit, he comes himself, even though through one of his lesser agents, seeking to win the allegiance of the old spirit to a worship of himself. It is thus

important that we distinguish sharply between the three types of temptations. Failure to do so is in itself a victory for the enemy.

*The Invisible War: The Panorama of the Continuing Conflict Between Good and Evil*, chapter 21, pp. 172-175

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