

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE PERTAINING
TO THE CARNAL CHRISTIAN

by

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The purpose of this study is to set forth the lucid Scriptural doctrine pertaining to the carnal Christian as it stands in the New Testament. Those areas analyzed are his identity, limits, potential and need.

The identification and interpretation of verses in the New Testament that are pertinent to carnality are investigated. Essential ones are found in 1 Corinthians 3, Romans 6 through 7 and Hebrews 5:11-14.

A believer is *σάρκινος*, having both an old and new nature. When a believer in Christ yields to the lusts of his old nature, it is because he is *σάρκινος* (Rom. 7:14). The *σάρκινος* man becomes *σαρκικός* because he is controlled by sin. The characteristic of the carnal (*σαρκικός*) believer is his opposition to the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:3). He does not walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), fulfills the appetites or cravings of the old sin nature, yields to envy, strife, division and opposes the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3).

When this *σάρκινος* man yields to sin and hence becomes *σαρκικός* (1 Cor. 3:3), he is so-related to the flesh or flesh-like that he often acts like people who are unsaved (*ψυχικός*). The carnal (*σάρκινος*) man who grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30) is in a position to incur God's chastening (Heb. 12:5-11). The man who is *σαρκικός* cannot become unsaved, neither can he experience the fruit of the Spirit while he is failing to mortify the deeds of the flesh (Col. 3:1-5) or yield to the Spirit (Rom. 12:1, 2). The *σάρκινος* man may realize that he is *σαρκικός*, confess his sins (1 Jn. 1:9); and yield to the control of the Spirit of God, thus becoming *πνευματικός*.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary
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INTRODUCTION

The Purpose

The author purposes (1) to set forth the lucid Scriptural doctrine pertaining to the carnal Christian as it stands in the New Testament. A further purpose will be (2) to make believers astutely aware of the possibilities of sin that lie treacherously within their minds and hearts and to present (3) the tragic truth that many believers are walking in the dictates of the flesh, not reckoning themselves to be dead to sin and alive unto righteousness. Although the power of sin in relation to a believer resembles a dethroned monarch, the writer purposes (4) to demonstrate that the believer finds himself struggling in the center of a trenchant warfare between the "old man" and the "new man," or the "flesh" and the "spirit." He does not understand the truth that he has two natures to which he may yield, either to sin or to the control of the Spirit.

Very few Biblical students with the exception of a few like Marsh who teach "eradicationism"¹ deny the existence

¹E. G. Marsh, The Old Man (Cincinnati: Revivalist Press, 1930), p. 85.

of a spiritual conflict even within the mature Christian. The intention of the author (5) will be to substantiate the fact that it is both a possibility and a realistic Scriptural phenomenon that a person who is justified, regenerated, and sanctified, can live such a disobedient carnal life that he in turn incurs God's chastening. This may be to the extent that he is taken home to be with Christ. It is the author's purpose (6) to examine thoroughly the major portion of verses in the New Testament supplying information most pertinent to the thesis. Those verses will be considered and reverently compared to those in other sections of the New Testament. A serious intention of the author will be (7) to present a thesis accurately setting forth lexical meanings, contextual analysis, syntactical relationships and information that will be governed by the Scriptures alone. It is a comforting thought that many capable godly Bible teachers support the conclusion that the writer sets forth in the present thesis. With a goal of accuracy, the author purposes (8) to deal in as objective a manner as is humanly possible with the terms, phrases and verses that give light to the identity, limit, potential, and need of the carnal man.

The ultimate purpose of this study is to (9) aid fellow Christians who are under the influence of pride, selfishness, and carnal lusts to recognize themselves as being in such a state and yield themselves unto righteousness.

The author plans (10) to exhibit the fact that the truth that a believer can regress and walk seemingly as an unbelieving man in his habits and manner of life is no recent innovation stemming from the "holiness teaching," "higher life movement," or "revivalist" campaigns, as some would imply.

Finally, it is the author's purpose to (11) clarify the truth of the carnal Christian from the Word of God with intense confidence that this proposal is the teaching of Holy Scripture.

The Need

Relating to the work by the present author there is a need (1) for genuine believers to understand why, in some cases, they are living lives that do not experience victory over sin. In the case of a carnal (*σαρκικός*) Christian, an enigma often develops in his thinking. He senses that he has sincerely placed his trust in Jesus Christ to save him yet he cannot seem to overcome pride, gossip, greediness, selfishness, laziness and other sins (carnal lusts). The author recognizes a further need (2) for Christians to notice carefully the sizeable amount of Scriptures that pertain to the possibility of carnal living. Warnings, rebukes, threats, scoldings, promises of reward and loss of reward, chastening to the extent of physical death, and expressions of shame

and disappointment or disapproval all have little significance if all believers escape the possibility of a carnal lifestyle.

The need is apparent (3) for believers in examining the New Testament to build their beliefs concerning the issue at hand after a plenary investigation considering the sum total of all Scriptures. Easily, a student can create an intellectual theological superstructure that derives its sustenance from necessary forced interpretation and fails to heed the unquestionable conclusion of a variety of portions of the Word of God. The present writer makes no claim to having attained freedom from bias and influential presuppositions. However, the sincere desire of this writer is to be as impartial to the Word of God as possible. Quite a humbling experience it is for this puerile writer to sense a need to disagree with such a noted theologian as Benjamin Warfield. However, the whole tenor of the New Testament, especially the Pauline epistles and the present situation among Christians, supports (though the thesis at hand bases no supportive evidence on the subjectivism of professing Christians), the humiliating fact that something is wrong among the members of the Body of Christ. Warfield in addressing himself to the publication of Lewis S. Chafer's book, He That Is Spiritual,¹ states:

¹Lewis Sperry Chafer, He That Is Spiritual (Chicago: Moody Press, 1918).

Mr. Chafer is quite wrong when he says "Salvation is not a so called 'change of heart.' It is not a transformation of the old; it is a regeneration, or creation of something wholly new, which is possessed in conjunction with the old so long as we are in the body."¹

The writer of this thesis agrees completely with Dr. Chafer regarding the possession of the "old man" so long as we are in the body. The very fact that the sin nature has not been eradicated is the cause for many believers rendering unproductive lives as far as substantial growth in Christ is concerned.

Aiden Wilson Tozer, commenting on the prevailing condition of professing Christians says, "The Church has surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted for it one so low, so ignoble as to be utterly unworthy of thinking worshipping men."² The need for believers is to realize that carnal thinking kindles such conditions. The need is pressing for believers to see the reality of their wickedness which is not simply the "outward" sins such as adultery and murder but those deeds such as gossip, greed, and pride which so often are treated as just "being human." God ranks many of these undisturbed sins so prevalent in the Body of Christ as heinous ones.

¹Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, The Princeton Theological Review of Systematic Theology and He That Is Spiritual by Lewis Sperry Chafer. XVII:2 (April, 1919).

²Aiden Wilson Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1961), p. 6.

The need to observe and analyze the strife, envy, jealousy, pride, and self centeredness among believers today is real. This thesis writer declares the cause to be precisely what the Apostle Paul called it in his day, carnality (1 Cor. 3:3).

The author is aware of the need (4) for a recognition of the malignancy which is devouring a multitude of believing men and women in our sin infested world.

The great need felt by the author is for the born again believer to realize he is *σάρκινος* (Rom. 7:14) having a bias to sin and to yield himself to God and righteousness (Rom. 6). The fact that a number of theologians today deny the very existence of a genuine believer who is walking according to the flesh makes this particular study appropriate, relevant and needful.

The most portentous fact concerning the truth of the carnal Christian is not who denies or supports his validity. Unquestionably, the need is to observe what the Scriptures teach concerning this vital and surprisingly controversial altercation.

Clarification

When a writer upholds the Scriptural teaching that the believer is *σάρκινος* (composed of flesh; fleshy) with the potential of being *σαρκικός* or *πνευματικός*; (1) it invariably produces an accusation of undermining

the powerful, wonderful, and gracious work of God wrought in regeneration, justification, and sanctification. This accusation will be dealt with accordingly. Another misunderstanding occurs when (2) the accusation is made that believers have to sin. Certainly this is not the case and will be answered thoroughly from a number of Scriptures. By no means does it please the writer that Christians, including himself, fail to appropriate the available strength to overcome sin. The area in which this work deals denies not the Scriptural teaching that there is no excuse for a believer to sin. God has provided through the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit all the necessary grace to live godly lives (Ti. 2:11-13). Only the realistic truth remains that Christians do not avail themselves of that benefit thus condemning themselves practically speaking to the carnal appetites which readily overtake them, and thereby produce shallow Christian lives.

The clarification is necessary that (3) all those who profess to be saved, born-again, children of God are not genuinely so. By the tests of eternal life in 1 John it is apparent that there will be a host of people who, thinking they were saved, never had eternal life in Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 5:10ff). This being the case does not eliminate the truth that there still are true believers who act according to the course of this world inevitably incurring God's

chastening and displeasure. James Boyer, in referring to the book of 1 John states, "It is a picture of high contrasts: . . . blacks and whites, no shading off in grays . . . no middle ground between love and hate, keeping commands or not . . . and draws a picture of the true, 'normal,' ideal Christian."¹ Boyer then says, "In actual experience, of course, we often find ourselves in 'dirty grays.' Of course, John is aware of this . . . many hints of it . . . part of the common Scriptural tension: 'be what you are.'"² If this regrettable fact were not true, why such pleadings, commands, admonitions, and threatenings to walk in the Spirit throughout the entire New Testament? Why will there be loss of reward for believers?

(4) In this present work, more misunderstandings, misrepresentations, and faulty logical theories including mistaken or inaccurate exegesis will be clarified. An important clarification (5) is the acknowledgment that there is such a phenomenon as the "language of appearance" used by the New Testament writers. In other words, the author of the present thesis agrees that there are times when the writer of a particular New Testament book writes with professing Christians in mind realizing that all those to whom

¹James L. Boyer, unpublished syllabus, "Johannine Epistles," revised 1975, p. 2.

²Ibid., p. 2.

he writes are not genuine born-again believers. This however, does not affect passages such as 1 Corinthians 3, where Paul's accusation of carnality is directed toward those whom he assumes to be genuine believers. The evidence for this assumption will be set forth when that passage of Scripture is dealt with.

(6) The conviction of this writer is that due to the possibility of a Christian's living carnally, there unfolds possible dire consequences for that child of God. That chastening and God's displeasure attend carnality is evident from Scripture.

The Procedure of this Study

The procedure will begin with a clarification of lexical meanings pertinent to this study, namely, "carnal," "flesh," "fleshly," "fleshy," "natural man," "spiritual man," "carnal one" and "carnal two" man. An identification and interpretation of verses in the New Testament relating to the carnal Christian will be set forth. These will be divided into the Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, General Epistles, Johannine Epistles, and Revelation. Due to their importance and content, the Pauline Epistles will receive by far the most attention in that they speak to the issues at hand in the most succinct manner. The Johannine Epistles will be given consideration due to their nature. Some verses will then be taken into view in the Gospels, Acts,

and the General Epistles. These are less valuable to the subject of the present study because of their scarcity of clear verses relating to the carnal Christian. There are some, however, and these will be considered. Following the clarity of definitions and interpreted verses, a formulation of the New Testament Doctrine Pertaining to the Carnal Christian will be set forth. This will include the identity of the carnal Christian, his limits, his potential, and his need. A conclusion will follow stating the main arguments of the present thesis in summary form and terminating this work.

CHAPTER I

There are definitions that are essential to this study if a Scriptural doctrine of carnality is to be derived.

Carnal

In view of the fact that much of this study is structured around the meaning of the term "carnal," it is compulsory that a clear and complete explanation of its meaning be offered. Such will be the case as the definition of the word is examined in the New Testament. Its actual usages will be dealt with more fully in Chapter Two.

The word "carnal" in 1 Corinthians 3:3 is *σαρκικός* which means, "belonging to the *σάρξ* (flesh), having the nature and characteristics of *σάρξ* . The word '*σαρκικός*' is contrasted to '*σάρκινος*' which means 'consisting' or 'composed of flesh,' 'fleshy.'"¹

Trench² describes the relationship between *σάρκινος* and *σαρκικός* , both of which are translated "carnal" in the authorized version in the New Testament. Words ending in

¹Arndt, William F. and Gingrich, F. Wilbur. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 750-51.

²Trench, Richard C. Synonyms of the New Testament. Ninth Edition. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), pp. 272-74.

ivos refer to the material of which anything is composed. Some examples would be **ὄλινος**, of thyine wood (Rev. 18:12) and **ὕαλινος**, of glass (Rev. 4:6). The "**ικος**" termination suggests "having the nature or characteristic of." According to Trench:

Fleshly (carnal) lusts are lusts which move and stir in the ethical domain of the flesh, which have in that rebellious region of man's corrupt and fallen nature their source and spring. Such are the **σαρκικαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι** (1 Pet. 2:11), and the man is **σαρκικός** who allows to the **σάρξ** (flesh) a place which does not belong to it of right.¹

Vine states that it is not an easy matter always to discriminate between **σαρκικός** and **σάρκινος**.² He defines **σαρκικός** as "having the nature of flesh, i.e., sensual, controlled by animal appetites, governed by human nature, instead of by the Spirit of God. . . ."³ Also:

Having its seat in the animal nature or excited by it (1 Pet. 2:11), "fleshly" or as the equivalent of "human" with the added idea of weakness, figuratively of the weapons of spiritual warfare "of the flesh" (A.V. "carnal") 2 Corinthians 10:4; or with the idea of unspirituality, of human wisdom "fleshly," 2 Corinthians 1:12; pertaining to the flesh (i.e., the body), Romans 15:27; 1 Corinthians 9:11.⁴

When comparing **σάρκινος**, Vine adds:

¹Ibid., p. 273.

²Vine, W. E. Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1940), p. 170.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

(a) consisting of flesh (2 Cor. 3:3), (b) pertaining to the natural, transient life of the body, Heb. 7:16, "a carnal commandment." (c) given up to the flesh, i.e., with almost the same significance as above, Romans 7:14.¹

This writer feels Hodge has an accurate insight into the definition of "carnal" (*σαρκικός*). To that Biblical scholar "carnal" means "under the power of the flesh."² As opposed to the spiritual (*πνευματικοί*) who are under the control of the Spirit of God, the *σαρκικοί* (carnal) are those who are under the control of their old nature. Hodge makes an important declaration when he asserts, "As however even in the renewed (believer), this control of the Spirit is never perfect as the flesh even in them (believers) are forced to acknowledge that they too are carnal." More fully defining "carnal," Hodge states:

Sometimes carnal means entirely or exclusively under the control of the flesh. It designates those in whom the flesh is the only principle of action (unbeliever). At other times, it has a modified sense and is applicable to those who although under the dominion of the Spirit, are still polluted and influenced by the flesh.³

¹Ibid., p. 170.

²Charles Hodge, A Commentary on Romans (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1972), p. 229.

³Ibid., p. 229.

The definition of Hodge that a genuine believer can be realistically under the control of the flesh (carnal) has its opponents who adhere to two classes of men (natural and spiritual) rather than three (one class of unbelievers, two classes of believers) or four (one class of unbelievers, three classes of believers) classes. Understandably such men as Benjamin Warfield,¹ Henry Alford,² Bishop Ryle,³ and Louis Berkhof⁴ would define "carnal" differently than an advocate of three or four classes of men. The definition of "carnal" as with any word in the Greek New Testament must be most accurately derived by its usages. Thus a particular definition cannot be proved until the usages are examined in context. From the conviction of the present writer, a preliminary definition of carnal will then be "having the nature and characteristics of the old nature" (σαρκικός). When σάρκινος is used, the writer will be referring to that which is "composed of" flesh or "fleshy."

¹Benjamin B. Warfield, The Princeton Theological Review of Systematic Theology and He That is Spiritual by L. S. Chafer. XVII:2 (April, 1919).

²Henry Alford, The Greek Testament. Revised by Everett F. Harrison, 4 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968).

³J. C. Ryle, Holiness. (London: James Clark & Co., Ltd., 1956).

⁴Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941), p. 537.

The position the present writer holds is that "carnal" (*σαρκικός*) is used to characterize a regenerate person who is not being controlled by the Spirit of God or is actually living his daily life in opposition to the Spirit, yielding to the lusts of the flesh (thus grieving the Spirit).

Lewis Sperry Chafer¹ (an advocate of three classes of men: natural, carnal, and spiritual) along with S. Lewis Johnson² (advocate of four classes of men: natural--unsaved, carnal weak man, carnal willful man, spiritual or mature believer), Charles Ryrie,³ Frederick Godet,⁴ and Paul Fink,⁵ would be notable Bible teachers that the present writer could agree with (referring to the existence of a carnal [*σαρκικός*] believer whether you are referring to either three or four classes of men).

It is a necessity in any given passage to determine whether you are referring to *σάρκινος* or *σαρκικός* which may both be translated by the same English word "carnal." A

¹Chafer, He That is Spiritual.

²Lewis Johnson, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians" in the Wycliffe Bible Commentary, ed. by Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962).

³Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Balancing the Christian Life (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), pp. 34-38.

⁴Frederick Godet, Commentary on First Epistle to the Corinthians, Vol. I, translated by A. Cusin (reprinted). (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957).

⁵Paul R. Fink, Personal notes on "The Four Men of 1 Corinthians 2-3."

description will be given in Chapter 3 under the identity of the carnal Christian.

The word "carnal" itself is used in Romans 7:14 (σάρκινος); 8:7 (σαρκὸς); 15:27 (σαρκικῶς); 1 Corinthians 3:1 (σαρκίνους); 3:3 (σαρκικοί); 9:11 (σαρκικά); 2 Corinthians 10:4 (σαρκικά); Hebrews 7:16 (σαρκίνης); 9:10 (σαρκὸς); in the Authorized Version. "Carnally" is used in Romans 8:6 (σαρκὸς) in that same version.

Flesh

The term σὰρξ (flesh) as used in the New Testament has a variety of definitions or meanings. Arndt and Gingrich Lexicon¹ lists eight broad meanings of σὰρξ :

The material that covers the bones of a human or animal body (1 Cor. 15:39); the body itself, viewed as substance (Col. 2:1, 1 Cor. 5:5, 2 Cor. 7:1, Col. 2:5); a man of flesh and blood (Jn. 1:14), a human being in contrast to God and other supernatural beings (Mt. 16:17, Gal. 1:16, Eph. 6:12); human or mortal nature, earthly descent (Rom. 4:1, Heb. 12:9, 1 Cor. 10:18, Rom. 9:8, Rom. 11:14, Rom. 1:3, 9:5); corporality, physical limitation(s), life here on earth (1 Cor. 7:28, cf. 2 Cor. 4:11, Col. 1:34, Phil. 1:24); the external or outward side of life, as it appears to the eye of an unregenerate person, that which is natural or earthly (1 Cor. 1:26); in Paul's thought especially, the flesh is the willing instrument of sin and is subject to sin to such a degree that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin are likewise present, and no good thing can live in the σὰρξ (Rom. 7:18); the σὰρξ is the source of the sexual urge, without any suggestion of sinfulness connected (Jn. 1:13).

¹Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, pp. 750-52.

One can immediately sense the difficulties involved in attempting to define *σάρξ* concisely in the New Testament. In Matthew 26:41; Romans 8:4, 13; 1 Corinthians 5:5; and Galatians 6:8; flesh is contrasted to spirit. In Romans 2:28, 29 it (flesh) is contrasted with heart and spirit; in Romans 7:25 flesh is contrasted with the mind; (cp. Colossians 2:1, 5). When used in Ephesians 2:3 flesh is coupled with the mind and in 2 Corinthians 7:1 with the spirit.¹

For the purposes of the present study only the moral connections attached to *σάρξ* are relevant. Bishop Moule states, "No word for practical purposes, answers better than 'self' (as popularly used in Christian Parlance) to the idea represented by St. Paul's use of the word in moral connexions."²

Buswell uses the phrase "fallen human nature"³ for a direct translation of *σάρξ* a number of times. He is translating from Galatians 5:13-6:2. A casual substituting of the word "body" or "sensational nature" in passages such as Romans 8:4, Romans 7:14, and 8:8, will unquestionably show

¹Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 108.

²Handley, C. G. Moule, The Expositor's Bible, ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll; The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, A. C. Armstrong and Son, (New York, 1899), p. 184.

³J. Oliver Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, Vol. II. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), pp. 198-200.

that a more complete definition is essential. Lange observes, "Whatever ethical sense is to be attributed to the word *σάρξ*, must include the whole man, body and soul, or body, soul, and spirit."¹ Pentecost, in referring to *σάρξ* adds, "the term 'flesh' is also used to describe a man's natural effort, independent of God. That which is of the flesh is that which a man does by himself without any divine assistance, without the enablement of the Holy Spirit."² He continues to list Galatians 3:3 as an example of such a definition.

Pentecost further explains what the Apostle Paul meant by the term "flesh:" "he was viewing the flesh as human nature which as a result of the fall is utterly incapable of conforming to the will of God, to the holiness and righteousness of God or of reproducing the life of Jesus Christ."³ In Romans 7:5 the "flesh" appears to be the sphere in which the unregenerate live. Similarly, Chafer adheres to the belief that the *σάρξ* (flesh) when used with a moral connotation refers to more than the physical body. He states as others have that it includes in its meaning the

¹John Peter Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures--Romans, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), trans. and edited by Philip Schaff.

²J. Dwight Pentecost, Pattern for Maturity. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), pp. 210ff.

³Ibid., p. 210.

whole of the unregenerate person, spirit, soul, and body.

In his classic work, He That Is Spiritual, Chafer writes:

"A physical body is 'flesh' whether dead or alive. But the moral use of the word implies that it is alive and includes that which makes it alive and that which expresses itself through the physical body."¹

In the Word of God, one will observe "fleshly wisdom" (2 Cor. 1:12); "fleshly mind" (Col. 2:18, cf. Rom. 8:6). As Bishop Moule earlier stated, Chafer also says that flesh is "self."² The unbelieving self alone, is beyond hope and under condemnation. However, it is subject to the work of God's grace in its transforming power. The relationship that exists after the initial work of salvation will be much the emphasis of the present study after the present chapter on definitions.

In presenting his consensus on the term *σάρξ* Schweizer comments, "Where *σάρξ* is understood in a full theological sense . . . it denotes the being of man which is determined, not by his physical substance but by his relation to God."³ Definitions emphasizing a variety of viewpoints

¹Chafer, He That Is Spiritual, p. 141.

²Ibid., p. 141.

³Edward Schweizer, "*σάρξ*," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VI, Edited by Gerhard Friedrich, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), p. 134.

could continue on endlessly. For this study it is sufficient to look upon **σάρξ** in the New Testament moral usage as the willing instrument of sin which is subject to such an extent that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin are possible. It is "self" and that which is in constant warfare against the Spirit (Gal. 5:17). No good thing can derive from the **σάρξ** (in its moral usage) and it is frequently if not always synonymous in the New Testament with that which is opposed to God.

The Natural Man

In 1 Corinthians 2:14 the Apostle Paul speaks of the **ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος**. A consideration of the description of this man will leave no possible doubt as to the identity of this individual. **ψυχικὸς** refers to a man who "belongs to" or is "characterized by" the "**ψυχή**." Without an elongated and tedious examination of the origin of **ψυχή** which a source such as Theological Dictionary of the New Testament certainly supplies,¹ the context is inescapably clear regarding the definition of the **ψυχικὸς** man in 1 Corinthians 2:14. Regardless of the way the Hellenists thought of the **ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος**, which was distinctly different, the usage in the New Testament (Ja. 3:15, Jude 19, 1 Cor. 15:44, 46)

¹Edmond Jacob, "**ψυχή**," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. IX, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974).

precisely 1 Corinthians 2:14 depicts him surely as an unregenerate man.¹ To take each passage where *ψυχικός* is used and examine it is unnecessary for the emphasis of the present study. The context of 1 Corinthians 2 shows the natural man does not receive the things of God (at all). The natural man is said to receive (*δέχομαι*) not the things of God for they are foolishness to him. In other words, he does not "approve, accept, or welcome" the things concerning the Gospel² (in context primarily). 1 Corinthians also states the *ψυχικός* man cannot know the things of God. Only an unbeliever in Jesus Christ could possibly fit this description. Therefore, the natural man is defined as an unregenerate man who is characterized by limitation. One who does not and is totally unable to receive or accept the things of God.

The Spiritual Man

The spiritual man is the "*πνευματικός*" man.

πνευματικός is defined as "pertaining to the spirit, spiritual."³ The spiritual man is without question a believer in Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:14, 15 contrasts the spiritual man with the natural (unsaved) man. Whether he is only one

¹Ibid.

²Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 176.

³Ibid., p. 685.

of two classes of men, saved as opposed to lost, or whether he (πνευματικός) is more than simply a genuine believer, that is, a Christian who is mature or Spirit-filled, is where the theological warfare begins. All orthodox theologians recognize the spiritual man is a saved man. Some theologians, S. Lewis Johnson,¹ Charles Ryrie,² Frederick Godet,³ Stanley D. Toussaint,⁴ among many others, take the stand that the "πνευματικός man" is a believer who is mature. Naturally, those who advocate this definition believe there are more than two classes of men. Among those Bible scholars who adhere to two classes of men, spiritual and natural (saved and lost), the most eminent is Benjamin B. Warfield. In his theological review of Chafer's work, He That Is Spiritual, Warfield makes known his viewpoint by disagreeing with Chafer's breakdown of classes. To Warfield, there are only two classes of men, the πνευματικός man who is the saved man and the ψυχικός man who is natural or the lost man. Henry Alford⁵ is also a sympathizer with the position of

¹Johnson, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," p. 1234.

²Ryrie, Balancing the Christian Life.

³Godet, Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

⁴Stanley D. Toussaint, "The Spiritual Man," Bibliotheca Sacra, 125:498 (April-June, 1968).

⁵Alford, The Greek New Testament, Vol. II, pp. 488ff.

Warfield. Thus far it is evident for one to observe that there is not one settled definition for "the spiritual man." Along with Warfield, and probably Alford, Ryle takes an emphatic stand commenting that the Bible always refers to two great divisions of mankind and two only.¹ Thus to Ryle the spiritual man is the regenerate man who will naturally progress in sanctification. There is still another godly theologian who takes somewhat of a different view than those who adhere to Ryrie, Johnson, Toussaint, Godet, or Warfield, Ryle, Hoeflinger² and others. Boyer³ comments:

There are two classes of men: the Natural, or unsaved man and the Spiritual, or saved man. All Christians belong to the second group (cf. Rom. 8:9). But, because of the abnormal, unnatural situation existing at Corinth, Paul found it necessary to distinguish within the group of those who are spiritual, two categories: (1) the mature, (2) the carnal.

Thus in reality the present writer observes a little more than semantical difficulty between views similar to Johnson (four classes) and Boyer (two classes with one broken down into two categories). It would be very appropriate at this

¹Ryle, Holiness, p. 15.

²Norman C. Hoeflinger, review of "Pattern for Maturity" by Dwight Pentecost, Westminster Theological Journal, Vol. XXXI, November 1968-May 1969, (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary), edited by John H. Skilton.

³James L. Boyer, For a World Like Ours, BMH Books, Winona Lake, 1971, pp. 43-44.

juncture to present what Charles Hodge relates in his commentary in 1 Corinthians pertaining to the seemingly illusive definition of the "spiritual man." Though elongated, it is worthwhile. In referring to the Corinthian believer in 1 Corinthians 3, Hodge says:

Now as all Christians are spiritual in the sense in which that term is used in the preceding chapter to say that men are not spiritual in that sense would be to say that they are not Christians. Here, however, the Apostle tells those whom he admits to be Christians and whom he calls brethren, that they are not spiritual. He just used the word therefore in a modified sense. This is a common usage . . . when the distinction is between Christians and the world, then every Christian is said to be spiritual. In like manner we speak of some Christians as worldly or carnal without intending to deny that they are Christians. It is obvious that the Apostle uses the terms here in the same manner. He is not speaking of Christians as distinguished from another.¹

Hodge has some pertinent insights into the problem. The most vital issue in the study at hand is not whether the spiritually minded Christian is a separate class of Christians or not, but whether a man who is genuinely saved can live according to the flesh and appear to live as an unsaved man would.

It is difficult to make rigid, unsurpassable boundaries (terminology-wise) when you refer to different classes or categories of believers. A "carnal" Christian, though yielding to the lusts of the flesh, still has "died"

¹Charles Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), p. 48.

positionally-speaking to the old man (Rom. 6:6-10). The problem realistically is that he has not reckoned or concluded it to be true (Rom. 6:11), and is what Boyer describes as abnormal.¹ It should not be, but it is. While this (in the viewpoint of the present writer) is possible for a Christian, it would not be completely accurate to disassociate him with the term "spiritual" altogether. Even the carnal believer is in the sphere of the Spirit as observed by the Spirit's dealings with him. Johnson (who adheres to four classes of men) equates the spiritual man in 1 Corinthians 2:15 as a mature man on the basis of three primary arguments. The first is a comparison of 1 Corinthians 2:6 with 2:15 (cf. 3:1; he contrasts babes with the spiritual). Secondly he also states that the wisdom of God is for the perfect but he never uses the term again in the section. Finally, he writes of the spiritual man who has unlimited capacity to judge all things.²

The assumption is that the babe in Christ who needs growth through reception of the milk of the Word, does not fit the above category or description (judging all things or being "perfect"). The view of the present writer is that the spiritual man of 1 Corinthians 2:15 is the mature

¹Boyer, For a World Like Ours, p. 44.

²Johnson, 1 Corinthians, p. 1234.

believer or one who is controlled by the Spirit. This is not to deny that there is a true sense in which every genuine believer can be called a spiritual person as opposed to the *ψυχικός* man (natural-unregenerate man). If the purpose of the present study were to prove or disprove the debateable number of classes of men, it would be highly pertinent to discuss such verses as Romans 15:27, where *πνευματικός* is lucidly contrasted to *σαρκικός* representing two distinct spheres. Also included would be 1 Corinthians 9:11, where that which "pertains to the body, physical" (*σαρκικός*) is opposed to that which is spiritual pertaining to the Spirit (*πνευματικός*). Galatians 6:1 should be noted wherein one discovers again a clash of two spheres or realms, one spiritual, and the other carnal.

The most inclusive evidence that the spiritual man is a maturing experienced believer is in 1 Corinthians 3:1. The believer (*σαρκίνους*) who is the "babe in Christ" is contrasted with the spiritual man (*πνευματικούς*). The clear distinction that is made between the spiritual man and the immature believer (fleshy) shows that the spiritual man is a maturing Christian. There is no Scriptural encumbrance that says that 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 cannot shed

light upon the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:15, rather than the other way around, especially if 2:15 is somewhat ambiguous whereas to most readers 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 is explicit and clear in its message.

Carnal One

Due to its relevancy to this study, a view purported by Paul Fink should be noted. This view divides carnal believers into the categories of carnal one and carnal two.

The carnal one man is portrayed in 1 Corinthians 3:1 (*σαρκίνους*) and Romans 7:14. He is a believer having an old and new nature. The Holy Spirit indwells the carnal one man yet he is "biased to sin's control"¹ (cf. Romans 7:14). His spiritual condition is that of a babe in Christ (*νηπίους ἐν χριστῷ*). The extent of God's truth that he may ascertain is limited to the basic elements, namely, the milk of the Word. The carnal one man needs the message of growth in grace as witnessed in 2 Peter 3:18.

His state is a normal state of development in which there is no condemnation for that state (Romans 7:14; 1 Pet. 2:2, 3). Fink takes the position that "he can be pneumatikos

¹Paul R. Fink, Personal notes on "The Four Men of 1 Corinthians 2-3."

though he is a babe in Christ."¹ The carnal one man is further described as "not able to grapple with the deep concepts of the things of the Word of God because he is not mature. There is nothing wrong with this in its proper state."²

Carnal Two

The carnal two man (1 Cor. 3:3) is a believer that has a spiritual lack of development. He becomes (σαρκικός) because he is σάρκινος and yields to sin. As opposed to the carnal one man (σάρκινος, i.e. made of flesh), the carnal two man has the characteristics of flesh and is controlled by the flesh. Fink, in reference to this man warns, "his conduct is indistinguishable from that of men, i.e., the natural man. It is sometimes very difficult to distinguish him from an unsaved man."³

The carnal two man is indwelt by the Holy Spirit but allows himself to be controlled by sin. The very manifestation of his conduct is division (1 Cor. 3:4). Whereas the carnal one man is saved and merely a babe in Christ, the spiritual condition of the carnal two man is one where he is saved yet out of fellowship with the Lord. In contrast

¹Ibid., p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 4.

³Ibid., p. 5.

to the basic elements (milk) of carnal one, carnal two is more fully limited in the amount of God's truth he may ascertain. His amount of reception is virtually nothing.

CHAPTER II

IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION
OF VERSES UNDER CONSIDERATION

This chapter will lay great stress upon the Pauline Epistles due to the unquestionable doctrinal truth therein. However, verses within the Gospels, Acts, General Epistles, Johannine Epistles, and Revelation will be observed due to their relationship to the issue at hand.

Gospels

Due to the fact that the events and messages took place before Pentecost where the Holy Spirit began working in somewhat a different manner than in the Old Testament law dispensation, the terminology is not as succinct as we find elsewhere in the New Testament. Nevertheless, there are two passages of Scripture that will be considered in detail, Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23, 11-24, and John 12:42, 43.

Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23

(Also recorded in Mark 4:1-9, 14-20 and Luke 8:11-15). In this passage the parable of the sower is not only recorded, but interpreted by the Lord Himself. The interpretation is most noteworthy. Beginning in verse 18, Jesus describes different classes of individuals and their responsibilities to

the Word of God. There are basically four types of men presented.

In verse 19, the wayside hearer is the completely unresponsive one from whom the devil (either directly or indirectly) quickly removes all spiritual impressions.¹ There is no question as to his unregenerate (natural) condition or state.

Verse 20 describes the shallow, emotional hearer whose beginning enthusiasm is completely shown to be superficial by verse 21 in that he has no "root in himself." He is a mere professing Christian for a short while. There is no evidence here that his reception of the Word is authentic. It withers away (Lk. 8:6).

Verse 22 presents the third type of reception. It is precisely this type of individual that is carnal (*σαρκικός*). Note the characteristics. The seed grows but its growth is checked and it never ripens.² Dr. Kent describes this situation thus, "A divided allegiance prevents the maturing of spiritual values."³ The cares of this world,

¹Homer A. Kent, Jr., "Matthew," Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 952.

²Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, David Brown, Commentary on the Whole Bible, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), p. 956.

³Homer A. Kent, Jr., "Matthew," Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 952.

the deceitfulness of riches, and as Mark 4:19 says, the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word and it becometh unfruitful. This is the very warning given to believers in 2 Peter 1:4-9. Assuredly, there are those such as Robertson who believe three of the four are unbelievers,¹ and would take opposite viewpoints. The present writer thinks the description of this third type of individual drawn by Trench is a masterful one. In referring to the man (seed), Trench states:

No wonder that they pined and dwindled in the shade, grew dwarfed and stunted; for the best of the soil did not feed them--forming, indeed, a blade, but unable to form a full corn in the ear, or to bring any fruit to perfection . . . what lacked was a careful husbandry, a diligent eradication of the mischievous growth, which unless rooted up, would oppress and strangle whatever sprang up in their midst.²

Trench's description fits well with Boyer's definition of a carnal Christian. In accurately picturing the Corinthian carnal Christians, Boyer says:

The word "carnal" means "flesh-like," displaying the character of one who lives after the old, sinful, fleshly ways. The Christian life is described as a conflict between the flesh and the spirit (Gal. 5:16-25).

¹Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. I, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1931, p. 107.

²Richard C. Trench, Notes on the Parables of Our Lord, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1953, pp. 77-78.

Hence these Christians at Corinth are to be understood as those who are losing that conflict, allowing the flesh to dominate.¹

This, to the author, is the picture of the third representative individual in Matthew 13:18-23.

Verse 23 is the description of an individual who receives, understands, and then bears fruit. All of the evidence is what should characterize every Christian. The fourth individual is with little question the regenerate man who develops in maturity and bears fruit; the goal of every new born babe in Christ. As Boyer aptly stated:

The carnal state is a foreign state, one that should never be the experience of any child of God. It becomes a reality only when the believer gets out of the plan that God desires for him, fails to mature, and allows his former natural ways to dominate.²

John 12:42-43

Verse 42 states, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." Ninety times in the Gospel of John everlasting life (salvation) is said to come through belief (πιστεύω). To argue whether or not in this example the belief was genuine is only an attempt to escape a problem. Verse 42 states the rulers ἐπίστευσαν upon Jesus. The same

¹Boyer, For a World Like Ours, p. 43.

²Ibid., p. 44.

verb **πιστεύω** is used in Matthew ten times, in Mark ten times, in Luke nine times, and in John ninety-nine times.¹ Taking the verse literally for what it says, these men believed thus receiving eternal life (Jn. 3:15, 16-18, 36; 6:40; 7:38). The point is evident. They believed but were more interested in keeping their privileges and prestige than being obedient believers. The same envy (loving the praise or approval of men) was present in Corinth (1 Cor. 3:1-3) among the believers there.

Acts

Acts 19:18-19

The converts spoken of were former worshippers of the goddess Diana. Their activities had been filled with a superstition on words, charms, and sayings. In books, they compiled magical formulas and things pertaining to the cult worship. In this passage of Scripture, "many that believed came and confessed. . . ." Verse 19 says, "many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them. . . ." The word "believed" is "**πεπιστεύκωτων**," thus indicating that the ones who burned their books had believed before that time. There was not an obedience at first to put away their evil practices though

¹Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 116.

it is unthinkable that they had heard the Christian gospel by Paul and had not realized they were unchristian. It took fear (Acts 19:16, 17) of judgment to produce an obedient yielded life.¹ Being biased to sin (Rom. 7:14), these believers acted disobediently and became carnal (σαρκικός).

Pauline Epistles

This section of the present study will receive the most exertion due to the very wealth of Biblical data involved. Verses from Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Thessalonians will be carefully examined whereas a host of others will be seen to be supportive. The verses that will be considered, in the conviction of the author, are indisputable evidence for the existence and character of the believer (σάρκινος) who yields to the dictates of the flesh thus becoming carnal (σαρκικός).

Hodge's opening remarks to Chapter 6 in his Epistle to the Romans are very essential and noteworthy. Here he relates how for the believer, living in sin is not merely an inconsistency but a contradiction in terms.² The writer has discovered no evangelical orthodox Bible expositor who would disagree. It is precisely at this point where a strange Scriptural paradox appears. Romans 6:2 emphatically teaches that a believer has died (ἀπεθάνομεν) to sin (or "on account of"). The question then arises, since the

¹Ryrie, Balancing the Christian Life, pp. 171-72.

²Hodge, Epistle to the Romans, p. 191.

believer died to sin, how can he still live in it? McClain states in reference to Romans 6:2ff:

It is impossible for a Christian to continue in sin, which is implied in this question: "God forbid." We who have died to sin how shall we any longer live therein? . . . There is no answer to that . . . it is an impossibility.¹

After making this undeniable positional truth, McClain then admits the realistic paradox that "of course, there is a sense in which we must appropriate what has been done and make it practical in our lives." McClain then continues to affirm the assumption of the present study that every believer has an old and new nature and becomes *σαρκικός* only when he yields to the lusts of the old nature. If the believer (*σάρκινος*) yields to the control of the Spirit he is *πνευματικός* and in the process of gaining spiritual experience. McClain admits that Christians have a problem with sin. His answer deals with "knowing, reckoning, and yielding."² It would be an unending task to list the expositors and commentators who masterfully teach it is a moral contradiction for a believer to live in sin, yet at the same time admit believers do fall into sin and live "in a foreign state."³

Living in sin is in the firm opinion of the writer quite contradictory to the character of a Christian. This

¹Alva J. McClain, Romans: The Gospel of God's Grace, edited by Herman A. Hoyt, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), pp. 142-43.

²Ibid., p. 143.

³Boyer, For a World Like Ours, p. 44.

writer upholds the position of Lange, (in reference to Rom. 6:2) who comments, "We have here an expression therefore not merely of freedom from all life fellowship with sin but also of the positive contradiction and repulsion between sin and Christian life."¹

The difficulty presents itself even more clearly when a theologian with the stature of Ryle (who does not believe in more than one class of Christians) after upholding two classes of men, saved and lost, states, (in reference to genuine believers):

Whose fault is it if they are not holy but their own? On whom can they throw the blame if they are not sanctified but themselves? God who has given them grace and a new heart and a new nature has deprived them of all excuse if they do not live for his praise. This is a point which is far too much forgotten. The Word of God always addresses its precepts to believers as accountable and responsible beings . . . it is forgetfulness of this which causes many believers to grieve the Holy Spirit and makes them very useless and uncomfortable Christians.²

When men attempt to correlate all the Scriptural teaching (positional and practical) concerning the believer's relationship to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, they are often exorbitantly criticized. Such is the case with Dwight Pentecost and Norman C. Hoeflinger. Hoeflinger, in his theological review³ of Pattern for Maturity by Pentecost,

¹Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures--Romans, p. 201.

²Ryle, Holiness, p. 19.

³Hoeflinger, review of "Pattern for Maturity," Westminster Theological Journal, Vol. XXXI. (November, 1968-May, 1969).

accuses him of setting forth an inadequate view of the nature of the Christian man due to his terminology of the old and new man (or capacities). This according to Hoeflinger, if such is the case, has no answer for multitudinous Scriptures that deal with the old man and the new man (or nature, capacity, old Adam). Romans gives forth precise answers.

Romans 6:6-7

" . . . ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώ-

θη . . . " Who is the "old man" that is spoken of? Is it not the corrupt old nature (as contrasted to the holy or new nature which is the product of regeneration and our union with Christ? If it is not, Ephesians 4:22, 24, and Colossians 3:8-9, and like verses are a strange enigma. It is important to ask the question, What is the body of sin that "might be destroyed" in 6:6? It seems clear that it is synonymous with "the old man" (Col. 3:9). Moule calls it "our body viewed as sin's stronghold, medium, vehicle . . ."¹ It is not the physical flesh but that which stems from man's fallen nature incorporated in the flesh. Berkhof simply calls the old man "human nature in so far as it is controlled by sin (Rom. 6:6)."²

¹Moule, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, p. 165.

²Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 533.

What does the word "*καταργηθῇ*" mean? If it (our old man) is destroyed, how could a saved person then be overcome by its power? *καταργηθῇ* comes from the verb *καταργέω*. Arndt and Gingrich list the following meanings: "make ineffective, powerless, idle; abolish, wipe out, set aside something; be released from an association with someone or something, having nothing more to do with."¹

By the crucifixional work of Christ and His resurrection (Rom. 6:1-10), the old fallen human nature is rendered ineffective and powerless. No longer does the regenerate man (Rom. 6:7) have to be held in its bondage. Regeneration or salvation brings with it an ability or capacity to serve God and righteousness. The unregenerate man has one capacity only, serving self and unrighteousness, whereas the believer may conclude the old sinful nature to be inoperative and serve Christ or yield to disobedience and the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). The teaching of Romans 6:6 (and 7) is a positional truth. This interpretation is necessary due to the practical admonitions that follow in Romans 6:11-13. To this Hodge concurs.² He emphatically declares, "Sin although mortified in the believer is not destroyed." In other words there is still possibility for

¹Ryrie, Balancing the Christian Life, pp. 34-35.

²Hodge, Epistle to the Romans, p. 203.

a true believer not to mortify the deeds of the flesh and succumb to its power. Hodge further writes, "Its power to injure remains after its dominion is overthrown."¹ Thus Romans 6:6 at best does not teach that sin's vehicle or medium has been destroyed in the sense of eradication, but rendered idle or ineffective. To say it does not still present a problem would be to deny every warning as to its subtle capability (Rom. 6:11-13, Gal. 5:16-17, Eph. 5:18).

Even Berkhof² (who holds a different position on the carnal Christian issue than the writer), admits that man must co-operate with the Spirit in reference to practical sanctification. He cites the repeated warnings against evils and temptations which clearly imply that man must be active in avoiding the pitfalls of life (Rom. 12:9, 16, 17; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:16-23). The constant exhortations to holy living indicate, according to Berkhof, that the believer must be diligent in the employment of the means at his command for the moral and spiritual improvement of his life.³ To the author, Romans 6:6-7, establishes a positional truth that the believer has been freed from the dominion and bondage of sin. Chafer deals with the positional and experimental

¹Ibid., p. 203.

²Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 534.

³Ibid., p. 534.

aspects of the work of Christ, which to this writer, is a very Biblical and logical conclusion.¹ It does not exclude the possibility that one outside the control of the Spirit can be overcome by its cleaving web. Ryle states:

So deeply planted are the roots of human corruption that even after we are born again, renewed, washed, sanctified, justified, and made living members of Christ, these roots remain alive in the bottom of our hearts and like leprosy in the walls of the house we never get rid of them . . ."²

Romans 6:11-13

This portion of Scripture presents what Chafer calls the key to Christian victory. It is the experimental or practical aspect of Romans 6. At this juncture we discover the reason why there are many experimentally speaking, defeated Christians. They fail to "λογίζεσθε" (v. 11) and παριστάνετε (v. 13). The word λογίζεσθε is from λογίζομαι meaning to "take into account; to consider, calculate."³ Christians are to consider or conclude that they are inoperative to the sin nature and have nothing to do with it. The sad illustration exists of the carnal man who does not so act (σαρκικός).

¹Chafer, He That Is Spiritual, pp. 162-63.

²Ryle, Holiness, p. 5.

³Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 258.

The Greek *παριστάνετε* (v. 13) is an imperative from *παρίστημι*, "to present."¹ Arndt and Gingrich list "place beside, put at someone's disposal, present, offer, bring."² The Apostle Paul would not be admonishing the believers to put themselves at the disposal of God if they did not have the capacity to do otherwise. They could yield to the Spirit's control (*πνευματικός*) or because they were carnal (*σάρκινοι*) yield to the old nature, thus becoming carnal (*σαρκικοί*).

In verse 12 the admonition not to let sin reign (*βασιλεύετω*) in the mortal body of the believer is senseless if it is not a possibility. Sin, due to the crosswork of Christ (Rom. 6), is a dethroned monarch. All the positional reasons for not letting the old capacity to sin reign do not preclude the fact that the believer experimentally may do that very thing.

Romans 7:14-25

This passage of Scripture has led to much innate discussion among theologians as to whether Paul was speaking of himself before his conversion or after. This writer takes the position that Paul was referring to his condition after he had been saved (Rom. 7:14-25) for many years. Dunn concurs with meritable reasons why this is true.³ Without

¹Ibid., p. 246.

²Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 633.

³James Dunn, "Romans 7:14-25 in the Theology of Paul," Theology Digest, Vol. 24; Number 3, fall, 1976, edited by Gerald Van Ackeren, St. Louis University, St. Louis, p. 230.

controversy this is an important pivotal point regarding the possibility of a Christian's potentially or actually living carnally. It should be mentioned that there are four primary divergences of interpretation among worthy theologians regarding Romans 7:7-25: the condition of an unregenerate man, a view held by many of the Greek fathers such as Jerome, Abelard, Bucer, Arminius, Tholuck, Stuart, and Meyer;¹ the condition of the regenerate man, a view held by Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Beza, and the orthodox school; the first section from verses 7-13 refers to the unregenerate while verses 14-25 speak of the regenerate man; Paul is not describing a quiescent state, but the process in which man is driven from the law to Christ and an unregenerate person becomes a regenerate one. Olshausen states, "The state under the law cannot co-exist with regeneration and without question, therefore--as chapter 7:24 to express the awakened need of redemption and verse 25 the experience of redemption itself--verses 14-24 are to be referred to as a position before regeneration, and to be understood as a description of the conflict within an awakened person."²

Verses 14-25 are the critical ones for the purpose of this work. There are inviolable contextual reasons for

¹Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures--Romans, p. 227.

²Ibid., p. 227.

this passage's referring to the current experience of the regenerate Paul; the continual use of ἐγώ plus the present tense; in verses 15, 16, it is not a true representation of the unregenerate to "consent to the law of God, hate sin, and struggle against sin;" in verse 22, the one described "delights after the law of God." This is by no means the experience of the unregenerate man; while there is nothing here in verses 14-25 that a believer in Christ cannot identify with, there are certainly (above) distinct emotions or desires that an unbeliever cannot understand or equate with; the one spoken of considers his corruption a dreadful burden from which he longs to be delivered! There is no pious believer who has ever not felt that way at one time or another; the context supports this view (Tholuck, Stuart, and others disagree on the basis of a strong antithesis between Romans 7 and Romans 8).¹

It is clear from Romans 1 to Romans 7 that a person's regeneration (justification and sanctification) are not accrued by the law but by God's grace. (Rom. 3:20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 28; 4:5, 14-16, 22, 5:1, 9, 12-21; 6:1-10, 14, 22, 23). In Romans 1-5 the main theme is justification by faith apart from the deeds of the law (Rom. 1:16, 17; 3:20-24, 28; 4:5; 5:1). Following Romans 6, Paul presents the positional

¹Hodge, Epistle to the Romans, p. 243.

truths of the crosswork of Christ in relation to rendering inoperative the old man (capacity to sin, fallen corrupt nature) plus its (crosswork) "foundational effect toward sanctification." Chapter 7 of Romans clearly puts the believer free from the bondage of the law and under grace (not to live to sin, but to bring fruit unto God). At this point the question arises, why was the law unable to perform the sanctifying process it seemingly should? The answer stems from the evil, corrupt nature of man. To illustrate this fact (why the law cannot sanctify), the Apostle Paul begins to prove how the law works on the depraved mind. It produces a conviction of sin including a knowledge of its inherent nature, and a recognition of its dominion over us. Even in the believer's life the law could never produce sanctification. Romans 7:14 explains why. It is due not to the fault of the law which is holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12, 13), but to the fact of carnality (Rom. 7:14). Because of the ever clinging old capacity to perform not that which is good, the law could never produce holiness.

The law has no power to eradicate the flesh. Finally Romans 7:25 answers the question of who shall deliver us from the wretchedness of ourselves, Jesus our Lord. Hodge maintains (which is Scriptural and contextually logical) that Paul's object would not have been fulfilled if he had not set forth the effect of the law on the believer's mind. Thus the

eighth chapter of Romans does not have to be antithetical to Romans 7:7-25 primarily, but antithetical to the whole preceding logical discussion from Romans 1.¹

If the passage under consideration describes the experience of Paul after being justified, regenerated, and sanctified, then it is foundational to the support of the present work. In Romans 7:14 Paul states, *ἐγὼ δὲ σὰρκινος*. Lange takes the position that in 7:14 *σὰρκινος* is equal to *σαρκικός* in meaning.² This position does no justice to language.

σὰρκινος is defined by Lange as "carnally formed, inclines, and disposed; a being whose natural spontaneity and view of things are external according to the *σάρξ*."³ This view confuses the aspect of material out of which something is composed (*ινος*) and that which is characteristic of flesh (*ικος*). Delitzsch⁴ states that, "'*σὰρκινος* ' is one who has in himself the bodily nature and the sinful tendency inherited with it." This would make Paul a believer who is indwelt by the Spirit but while still in the flesh, biased to sin's control. If *σαρκικός* be the original language used, Paul was admitting that he was fleshly, thus carnal in the sense of the Corinthians (1 Cor.

¹Ibid., p. 245.

²Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures--Romans, p. 237.

³Ibid., p. 237. ⁴Ibid.

3:3) because he was not yielding to the Spirit's control. This is completely untenable. Paul, in verse 14, explains what is meant by stating he was *πεπράγμενος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*. Paul, in light of what he had declared in Romans 6:7, would not mean that Christ's crosswork had no effect upon sin, but that he was subject in himself (old human fallen nature) to its power (*σάρκινος*). The whole context (Rom. 7:15-2:4) portrays the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit, the old will and the new inward man (v. 22), the old Paul which was still present (vs. 20, 21), and the law of God after the inward man (v. 22).

What has been shown is that Romans 7:14-25 depicts the realistic spiritual warfare of a genuine believer between the *σὰρξ* and the *πνεῦμα*. He has a bodily inherent nature toward evil (Rom. 7:14) which is relentless (vs. 15-24) in its corruption and possibility of evil and coincides with (Rom. 7:20-23) the new nature (new capacity to righteousness through yielding, reckoning, and believing that it is true), so that the two within the believer are continually present and inimical to each other.

Romans 7:14ff, therefore, shows the warfare a carnal Christian (*σάρκινος*) can expect between the "delighting in the law of God after the inward man and the law of my mind bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." No clearer verse could be given to show the subjectivity to the flesh than verse 25 of Romans 7,

". . . with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

Romans 13:14

"But put ye on, (*ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσασθε*) the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof" (authorized version). A more literal rendering might read, "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of your sinful nature" (New International Version). Such an admonition is unnecessary if the lusts (*ἐπιθυμίας*) were not a danger to the believer. It suits Romans 6:11 where the word "reckon" may well be translated, "suppose or deem."¹ The believer should experimentally as well as positionally think or deem it to be so, that the old man is dead and not give forethought (*πρόνοιαν*) to the lusts of the flesh.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

Unquestionably to the sincere unbiased student of the Word of God this passage is one of the most conclusive to the affirmation of this thesis. One of the essential points regarding this passage of Scripture revolves around the question of whether these were professing Christians or genuine born again believers. If it can be shown that the

¹Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 258.

latter is true, then here is an indisputable Scriptural example of *σαρκικός* believers. The writer believes there is no doubt to their identity for the following reasons: Verse 1 calls those to whom Paul is writing Brethren (*ἀδελφοί*) and *νηπίοις ἐν χριστῷ*. While it could possibly be argued that *ἀδελφοί* could entail the "language of appearance," there can be no discrediting the fact that *νηπίοις ἐν χριστῷ* could only pertain to new believers. *νηπίοις* refers to the new birth. In verse 2 the expression "*γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα οὐ βρῶμα*" would not be applicable to an unregenerate man. Milk is for those who have begun to grow. These in verse 2 have begun to grow but something thwarted their growth. Verse 5 states, "*διάκονοι δι' ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε*." These people had become believers.

It is noteworthy that verse 6 speaks of the "*ἡύξανεν*." The word means, "to grow or increase; transitively, signifying to make to increase, said of giving the increase."¹ What was the increase? It was the souls won to Christ to whom Paul was writing.

Verse 9 calls the Corinthians God's "*γεώργιον*" and God's "*οἰκοδομή*." Arndt and Gingrich define those terms as a "cultivated land, field, fig. of a Christian congregation as God's field;" and *οἰκοδομή* as "building,

¹Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 181.

edifice."¹ The terms, if applied to unbelievers would be superfluous. Ephesians 2:19-22 uses this same figure to describe the church. Also 1 Peter 2:5 makes reference to believers as "living stones . . . built up a spiritual house."

An important point is noted in verse sixteen where the recipients of Paul's epistle are declared to be the "ναὸς Θεοῦ", the temple of God." These remarks are not characteristic of natural (unbelieving) men. Again in verse seventeen, the writer of Corinthians adds, "οἵτινες ἐστεῦ-μεῖς ." The οἵτινες referring back to ναὸς .

Finally, verse twenty-three securely declares, ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ ." No clearer language could be used to identify these recipients as genuine believers in Jesus Christ.

Having set forth the evidence that Paul is writing to Corinthians who are more than professing believers, a detailed discussion would be beneficial.

Morris² notes the change from σάρκινος in verse 1 to σαρκικός in verse 3. He says:

σάρκινος is the more thoroughgoing word but there is no blame attaching to it as applied to those who are young in the faith. But σαρκικός "characterized by flesh" when used of those who have been Christians for

¹Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 561.

²Leon Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, (Vol. VII) in Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 63.

years, is blameworthy. The mature believer is *πνευματικός*, "characterized by Spirit." To be characterized instead by flesh, as the Corinthians were is the very opposite of what a Christian should be.¹

The believers in Corinth should have made progress by this time. They acted, however, like people who were living in the flesh. Boyer expresses the true condition of these believers, commenting that they had remained babies too long.² The proof was their daily diet. The tragedy of carnal living is upheld when Boyer exclaims "these Christians are to be understood as those who are losing that conflict, allowing the flesh to dominate."³ The sadness of this situation is that due to not yielding, reckoning, and obeying, these believers had allowed the Spirit to be overcome by the flesh and are consequently living like *ψυχικοί*, (unsaved men) natural men. Findlay calls their situation "not fairly grown out of the flesh."⁴

¹Ibid., p. 63.

²Boyer, For a World Like Ours, p. 42.

³Ibid., p. 43.

⁴G. G. Findlay, "St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians," Expositor's Greek New Testament, Vol. II, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll, reprinted, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 786.

The answer for their condition, by one eminent theologian,¹ is that too much self confidence and pride still clung to their commercial minds. They were still much too full of the mind of the flesh so that the flesh overcame the Spirit.

By a choice of their own² the Corinthians believers were not obeying the true spiritual norm, but the norm of the flesh. Lenski (with opposition) comments in regard to "fleshy" and "fleshly," "fleshy and you can not help it; fleshly, and you can but do not help it."³ The latter expresses the tragic situation at Corinth.

Thus the situation with the Corinthians is summed up by saying that their unfitness to receive nourishment other than that of a child is proved by their carnality which is in turn proved by the context of 1 Corinthians 3.⁴

1 Corinthians 3:14-15

Verse 14 declares, ". . . *μισθὸν λήμψεται.*"

Verse 15 speaks of loss of reward. It also securely reminds

¹John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. IX, "The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians," trans. by John Fraser, reprinted, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), p. 65.

²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1946), p. 123.

³Ibid., p. 123.

⁴Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 50.

us that one will not lose his salvation (*αὐτὸς δὲ σωθήσεται*). What would be the purpose of a judgment of rewards and loss of rewards if there were not those who faithfully carried on the work of the Lord and those who were not controlled by the Spirit thus not fulfilling their responsibilities and incurring loss of reward.

Along with the viewpoint of the author, Boyer solemnly points out the same truth by writing, "Yet, it is possible for a person to be saved--to get into heaven so to speak, as through fire--and to come through God's judgment of fire with nothing to show for his life's work except the fact that He is alive."¹ 2 Corinthians 5:10 is paralleled to the present passage illustrating the *βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ* is not for salvation but reward. The *βῆμα* was "primarily, a step, a pace" as in Acts 7:5, translated "to set (his foot) on . . . was used to denote a raised place or platform . . . which was the place of assembly. The word became used for a tribune, two of which were provided in the law-courts of Greece . . ."² In Romans 10:4 the same judgment is spoken of. There believers will be judged for their faithfulness to the Lord.³ Salvation is a gift of God

¹Boyer, For a World Like Ours.

²Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 282.

³Ibid., p. 282.

through faith. It is not received according to what one has done in his body (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:20-21; Rom. 4:5; 11:6; Tit. 3:5; Jn. 3:16). Therefore it is in line with all Scripture to put this *βῆμα* of Christ for rewards or loss of the same. Salvation is not the issue. Also, the Great White Throne of Revelation 20:11 which is a post-millennial event is not to be confused with this reward judgment for believers.

Thus, loss of reward implies believers who are not obedient.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2

The point of this Scripture does not center around the one man guilty of fornication, but around those believers who knew it and disregarded it rather than being morally concerned over it. In verse two "puffed up" is the perfect participle "*πεφυσσωμένοι*." The same verb, *φυσίω* is used already of the partisans in Corinth (4:6, 19, 20).¹ The root meaning is "blow up, puff up, make proud or arrogant," or passively "become puffed up or conceited."² This was still another evidence along with divisiveness in Chapter three that there were carnal believers in Corinth. The believers were not actually boasting over the sin, but

¹Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, p. 112.

²Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 877.

in spite of it. Their pride and impenitence left them undisturbed over this moral evil.

1 Corinthians 11:30-32

Three momentous facts are worthy of note in this passage. The expression *ἐν ὑμῖν πολλοὶ ἀσθενεῖς* applies to believers. This is evidenced by the chastening of the Lord (v. 32 cf. Heb. 12:5-11). They are sick due to yielding to the lusts of the flesh rather than the Spirit. The result of carnality (vs. 21, 22, 29) was that a number of them slept (*κοιμῶνται*). The expression "chastening of the Lord" implies they were children of God.

It needs to be pointed out that the word *"κρίμα"* which is translated "damnation" in the King James Version (v. 29), does not mean eternal damnation in Hell, but a more immediate judgment. This judgment is for sin in the life of the child of God (Heb. 12:5-11). A striking fact is that sin continuously going on in the life of the believer can result in God's chastening by sickness or even physical death (see 1 Jn. 5:16). To this writer, this acknowledged fact from the Scripture proves a superb and conclusive truth. The inevitable conclusion of those who argue against the believer's continuing in sin is that no where then in the Word of God could you have a believer who is called home to Heaven by God's chastening hand due to continued disobedience (as in 1 Cor. 11:21, 22, 29). Yet that is exactly what is

pointed out in 1 Corinthians 11:30 (also 1 Jn. 5:16). The Johannine passage is a difficult one to interpret as regards the identity of the sin unto death, but it states determinedly that there is such a debacle for the believer. Proposing the suggestion that the death spoken of is that of only a professing Christian, is not what the context is assuming at all. More will be said concerning 1 John 5:16 at the proper time.

The writer feels 1 Corinthians 11:30-32 expresses clearly that there were cases of carnal living which resulted in death. The word *κοιμῶνται* metaphorically refers to physical death, not sleep, as we usually refer to the word. This metaphorical usage is not uncommon. The death of Christians in the Word of God is commonly represented under the image of sleep (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 11:11, 12; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Th. 4:10, 14).¹

At this juncture a comment printed in The Australian Forum (in back of which stands a strong Reformed position) is fitting.

Since the flesh is still with us we need also to be motivated by obligation, a trembling at God's Word and a fear of His displeasure. As the view of God's mercy in the light of the cross shall warm our hearts for service, so the view of the terrible justice of God shall warm our hearts to service.²

¹Albert Barnes, Notes on the New Testament, 1 Corinthians, edited by Robert Frew, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949), p. 221.

²Robert Brinsmead, "Sanctification," The Australian Forum, Topic No. 5, New Reformation Fellowship, Fallbrook, p. 3.

This is the type of lesson the Corinthians needed to break the shell of their illogical and unnecessary condition. The words in the above quote are senseless if it is not possible for believers to fall into laziness, apathy, and disobedience.

Galatians 5:16, 17

Galatians 5:16, 17 parallels Romans 7:15-23. Paul presents a clear picture of the spiritual warfare existing between the flesh and spirit. Harrison expresses it as being "locked in continual combat."¹ The inevitable truth is also portrayed in Ephesians 4:22-24. The flesh (what Buswell calls fallen human nature)² is never eradicated until the believer receives his glorified body (2 Cor. 5:1-6; 1 Jn. 3:1-2); thus the potential for carnality. Only a few extremists misidentify the truth pertaining to eradication. Jones defaces the truth of the Word of God when he declares ". . . we have the direct statements of the Bible . . . that entire sanctification is an instantaneous experience wrought by the power of God."³ Marsh in the same

¹Everett Harrison, "The Epistle to the Galatians," Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 1296.

²Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, p. 199.

³W. Jones, The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification, (Philadelphia: National Publishing Asso. for the Promotion of Holiness, 1890), p. 175.

vein agreeing with Jones (both of whom are "second work of grace" advocates), does say, "The eradication of the old man does not save us from mistakes."¹ It is to such theological impotence that Ryle correctly and rightly addresses himself when he warns, "Are they not when they urge on believers the 'higher life' as a second conversion, understanding the length and breadth and depth and height of that great first change which Scripture calls the new birth . . ."² Our passage under consideration (Gal. 5:16, 17) presents man's responsibility (in which he may fail) and the promise for obedience is emphatic. Verse sixteen reads, *Λέγω δέ, Πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε*

The lusts of the fallen sinful nature (*σάρκινος*) are strong but the believer shall not at all³ by any means perform them if he walks in or by the Spirit (*πνευματικός*). Verse seventeen depicts the real experience of every believer. It should be recalled that the Apostle is writing to those who have been called unto liberty" (true believers). Galatians 5:16, 17, not only parallels Romans 7:15-23, but

¹Marsh, The Old Man, p. 95.

²Ryle, Holiness, p. 14.

³Harrison, "The Epistle to the Galatians," Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 1296.

Colossians 3:1-5. Warfare is imminent, thus a potential condition for the foreign state¹ (or condition) of carnality. Paul repeats his admonition in Galatians 5:24-26.

The writer would fail to do justice to these verses if the ideal or positional truth were only presented and not the practical one. Verse 24 uses the expression "τὴν σὰρκα ἐσταύρωσαν." The crucifixion points to the positional (positional not meaning unauthentic, but not humanly realized at this point in time) identification with Christ in his death (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:3).

There is also a human practical sphere to be considered else why would Paul then say, "walk in the spirit?" In other words, the flesh with its affections and lusts is still a present reality (Gal. 5:16, 17). Here again is the danger of carnality.

Ephesians 4:17-32

There are a number of important notations here. The "you" in verse seventeen (ὁμας) is assumed by Paul to be genuine believers because he compares them to the nations (τὰ ἔθνη) non-Jews who are unsaved. A very significant truth to the predication of this study is stated when Paul commands the believers not to walk as non-believing men walk (v. 17

¹Boyer, For a World Like Ours, p. 44.

--μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ).

One of the convictions of the present writer is that the Scriptures attest the fact that believers can "walk as men of the flesh." What would Paul's resolve be to warn believers not to do a particular thing which was impossible for them to do anyway? Verses 20-24 describe the Christian life as putting off one garment and putting on another one. Martin in his exposition of this passage remarks, "It is possible to be a new man in Christ Jesus and yet be living like an 'old man;' that is having on the garment of the 'old man.'" ¹ Verse 22 compared with 24 give exactly the condition that both Ryrie ² and Pentecost ³ describe in their books on the subject at hand which support Martin's view.

The "putting off" in verse 22, the renewing in verse 23, the "putting on" in verse 24, and the "grieving" in verse 30 all evidence man's will and his freedom to do what he should do or not do. Brinsmead in writing from the book, The Quest for Holiness, quotes Adolph Koberle as saying, "If even the justified sinner must face the judgment it is no longer a matter of indifference as to the

¹Alfred Martin, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 1312.

²Ryrie, Balancing the Christian Life, p. 35.

³Pentecost, Pattern for Maturity, pp. 62-63.

degree in which he has allowed himself to be purified by the Spirit from the defilement and evil of the flesh."¹

If one admits to degrees of allowance in relationship to the will and Holy Spirit then why must it seem so strange and controversial to allow the fact that some will not yield very much to the Spirit, thus living carnal lives?

Each admonition of Paul in verses 17-32 seems proper and necessary if Paul realizes that the believer may fail to put off the former conduct of living as he should, thus grieving the Spirit (4:30).

Ephesians 5:18

καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν
ἀσωτία ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι.

The believer is not commanded in Scripture to be baptized or indwelt by the Spirit. This has already taken place (Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22; 1 Cor. 12:13; Jn. 14:16, 17). He is commanded to be filled (imperative--*πληροῦσθε*). The human option is unquestionable in this passage. This is not to say that it is admirable if the believer is disobedient. In verse eighteen, contrasts are lucidly drawn. A man drunk with wine (*καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ*) acts in an unnatural manner that is sinful (Prov. 23:31). A man who is filled (*πληροῦσθε*) with the Spirit acts in a way characteristic of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Actually, the imperative

¹Brinsmead, Australian Forum, p. 6.

πληροῦσθε is a present passive imperative from *πληρόω*. The word *πληρόω* is used in Acts 13:52 of filling with joy, in Romans 15:14 of being filled with knowledge, in 2 Corinthians 7:4 being filled with comfort. What is contrasted in Ephesians 5:18 might be spoken of as being controlled by something. The drunk man filled with wine is controlled by that wine. There are degrees of control and influence. In the same way the person who is controlled by the Spirit will be intoxicated with righteousness. Every believer has no moral choice due to the fact that God commands the filling. Experimentally God does not force that filling. Mauro's comment is worth noting here. He writes, "If a believer chooses to serve sin with his physical body he exposes himself to the power of death."¹

No believer can expect to sin without severe consequences. Thus Ephesians 5:18 is a command to be controlled by the Spirit lest believers fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Larkin's answer for overpowering the old nature (from the human responsibility aspect) is amputation (Matt. 18:8-9), mortification (Col. 3:5-10; Rom. 8:13; Phil. 2:12-13), and limitation (Heb. 12:1).² Why would God command believers

¹Philip Mauro, God's Gift and Our Response (London: Alfred Holiness, n.d.), p. 108.

²Clarence Larkin, Rightly Dividing the Word (Philadelphia: Erwin W. Moyer Company, n.d.), p. 216.

to be continually filled if, as is true of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it was something already accomplished by God? Thiessen describes what is spoken of in Ephesians 5:18 by saying, (in describing sanctification) "God has already set apart to Himself everyone who believes in Christ; now the believer is to set himself apart to God for His use."¹ Thiessen appropriately remarks, "Where the initial surrender has not been adhered to, there is need first of a definite presentation of the life to God before practical holiness is possible (Rom. 6:13; 12:1)."² The author believes Ephesians 5:18 is the key to victorious Christian living and the neglect of the command will produce carnality.

General Epistles

Hebrews 5:11-14

In the totality of the General Epistles, no passage matches this one (Heb. 5:11-14) for a convergence on the doctrine of the carnal Christian. Kent calls it some of the "severest language in Scripture directed against God's

¹Henry Clarence Thiessen, Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), pp. 380-81.

²Ibid., pp. 380-81.

people."¹ What was the melodramatic accusation? The following points need careful attention:

In verses 12, 13, the author of the book assumes by the reception of milk on the part of the hearers that they are believers. Furthermore, he explains they should have been teachers by now (*καὶ γὰρ ὀφείλοντες εἶναι διδάσκαλοι διὰ τὸν χρόνον . .*) thus implying they were saved long ago.

The dullness of hearing on the part of the hearers was not due to a lack of knowledge on the teacher's part or because the material was difficult. It was due to the fault of the hearers who were characterized as being "lazy or sluggish."² The word used to describe these believers is *νωθρός* which Vine defines as "indolent, sluggish."³ Kent brings out the fact based upon the word *γεγόνετε* that the condition of these Christians was an acquired one. They have become dull in hearing.⁴ The early eagerness to respond to the Word of God had grown cold. They had their attention captured by other things than those spiritual ones

¹Homer A. Kent, Jr., The Epistle to the Hebrews, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 102.

²Ibid., p. 102.

³Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol. IV, Set-Z, p. 40.

⁴Kent, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 102.

which should have. To the writer these believers exemplified many modern day carnal believers. Newell expresses his remorse over this Corinthian-like situation in the words, "Can it be possible that human hearts are capable of such shallowness, indifference, ingratitude, sluggishness, and unbelief?"¹ The unbelief spoken of is not for salvation because the context (v. 13) makes it clear they were babes thus infant believers.

Verse twelve is emphatic that a sufficient period of time had elapsed since they were saved and they should have been grounded securely in the Christian Faith. Anyone denying that these spiritually immature believers were genuine Christians is simply doing injustice to the context! They are appealed to on the basis that they are babes in Christ (*νήπιος γὰρ ἐστίν*).

The writer of Hebrews in Chapter 6, verse 1 says, (not intending to leave the babes without encouraging them to mature) " *τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα*." Wescott suggests that the thought is not primarily of personal effort but of personal surrender to an active influence.² This would accurately parallel the many Scriptures already mentioned in this work that pertain to yielding to the Spirit (Eph. 5:18)

¹William R. Newell, Hebrews, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1947), pp. 167-69.

²Kent, Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 105.

and not to the carnal lusts. The conclusion of Hebrews 5: 11-14 is to the writer, totally unclouded. These believers were babes in Christ (vs. 12, 13). They had not grown from infancy as they should have (v. 12). They were sluggish and lazy (v. 11). They were carnal believers who were not maturing in grace and gaining discernment as they should have been (vs. 13, 14). Warfield's statements in light of this Hebrews passage perhaps fall short of being stated exactly correct. He states, "You may find Christians at every stage of this process, for it is a process through which all must pass but you will find none who will not in God's own good time and way pass through every stage of it."¹ Those believers who slept in 1 Corinthians 11, the sin unto death in 1 John 5 pertaining to believers and possibly this Hebrews illustration of lazy, sluggish, stunted Christians show the potential of failing to appropriate the work of God's grace thus not maturing in the process of sanctification as a believer should.

Passages such as the one discussed above (along with 1 Corinthians 3) make it difficult to understand theological interpretations such as that of Kuyper.² The irresistible nature of the work of sanctification on the believer is

¹Warfield, Princeton Theological Review, p. 327.

²Abraham Kuyper, The Work of the Holy Spirit, trans. by Henri De Vries, 1900, reprint, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 480-84.

stressed by Kuyper.¹ He along with Hoeflinger, mentioned earlier,² must de-emphasize the will of man in the entire carnal Christian issue. In doing so, this leaves passages such as Ephesians 5:18, 1 Corinthians 3, and Hebrews 5:11-14 without much explanation.

James 2:5, 6

James addresses those to whom he writes as (ἀδελφοί μου), my brethren (James 1:2). Again in James 2:1 the same expression is used. In James 2:5 the writer of this epistle calls those to whom he is writing, "ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί." Verses six and nine present an accusation that clearly shows the carnal attitude of these believers. Verse six accuses them of insulting or dishonouring the poor and verse nine with showing favoritism. These are no spiritual characteristics of a believer but stem from the sinful fallen human nature evidencing carnality. No great weight is put on this passage due to the near context of Chapter 2 where in some cases the faith may not have been genuine saving faith. Thus the possibility of mere professing believers is admitted in this context. The assumption however, appears to the writer to be that James is treating his words as directed toward

¹Ibid., p. 483.

²Hoeflinger, "Review of Pattern for Maturity," Westminster Theological Journal, p. 125.

true believers (vs. 1, 5), who by their actions grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30).

1 Peter 1:14, 15

A brief comment will suffice for this Petrine passage. As it has been previously observed in other passages, 1 Peter 1:14, 15 stresses the importance of not acting like *ψυχικοί* men of the world. A possibility of carnality is existent or this admonition to be holy (v. 16), not fashioning conduct like unregenerate men is really meaningless.

Johannine Epistles

Without question the Johannine Epistles appear to the book of 1 Corinthians like the Epistle of James appears to the book of Romans. The two must be both considered and a solution given that (believing in plenary verbal inspiration) will be logical and non-contradictory. To the author the key to understanding the Johannine Epistles is found in understanding how John writes and what his thoughts were in writing the things he did. The writer completely agrees with G. G. Findlay when he says, "Sin is illegal, sin is un-Christian, and sin is diabolical."¹ The subject of sin is prominent in 1 John. It should at this point be said that the writer believes sin is unnecessary

¹George G. Findlay, Fellowship in the Life Eternal (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), pp. 253-73.

for the Christian. God made a way (Titus 2:11-13) for the believer not to sin. The realistic fact presented in this study is that all believers have not availed themselves of that grace and thus are living carnal lives beneath their privilege (Rom. 12:1, 2).

1 John 3:6

1 John 3:4-9 describes the essential character of the children of God. Westcott states, "Sin is impossible for the child of God."¹ If this is true realistically, then many Scriptures dealing with sin in the believer's life are worthless and the Bible is not God's Word. In what sense is the above statement true? In John's style of writing it is characteristic for him to set forth a generalization and then later to qualify it (cf. Jn. 3:22 with 4:2). In this same manner in 1 John the Apostle is accustomed to giving forth high contrasts,² blacks and whites (no shading off into grays). The Apostle John "draws a picture of the true, 'normal,' ideal Christian. In actual experience, of course, we often find ourselves in 'dirty grays.'"³ Buswell, recognizing the manner of John's writing, comments, "John is

¹Brooke Foss Westcott, The Epistles of St. John, Macmillan and Co., 1886, p. 101.

²James Boyer, "Unpublished syllabus on Johannine Epistles," Grace Theological Seminary, revised 1975, p. 2.

³Ibid., p. 2.

accustomed to stating a generalization without mentioning the exceptions where the exceptions are obvious."¹

πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει . This verse (6) has reference to our union and identification with Christ. The incongruity of the believer's habitually (present tense) practicing sin is such because believers are in Him in whom there is no sin (1 Jn. 3:5). This is a positional truth. John elsewhere says (1 Jn. 2:6) essentially "be what ye are." This is not an attempt to escape the problem of the true believer's not practicing sin. 1 John 1:9 is present for acts of sin in the believer's life. If John obviously in the same epistle pointed out the way for believers to receive forgiveness for sins committed, he knew they would sin. The union and identification of the child of God with Christ if taken per se would result in the believer's not only not practicing sin, but the believer could not commit one act of sin. If we are in Christ (and we are positionally) and in Him is no sin, then if taken without exceptions, not one act of sin could be committed. Buswell's explanation of the general characteristic of John's writing style seems honest and true in light of all the Scriptures in the New Testament.

¹Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, p. 205.

There is no question that John teaches that a believer does not habitually sin (3:6). That is the rule. John does not mention the exceptions (Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Cor. 3:1-3) or the dirty grays. It is true to his purpose in 1 John and his style of writing. The writer feels 1 John presents tests whereby the believer can have assurance that he has been begotten of God.¹ John's purpose is also polemical as he refutes and teaches against the antinomianists. This argument against licentiousness has a great deal to do with the general Hebrew paralleling manner in which John writes.

Another important factor entering in to our discussion of 1 John 3:6 is that of chastening. The believer unquestionably can potentially choose sin (Eph. 5:18, Rom. 12:1, 2) but not without God's chastening hand (Heb. 12:5-11). If a person can get away with sin that is a Biblical evidence he is no true believer (Heb. 12:8). As Law writes, "Sin is altogether excluded from the sphere of what He was, and is, and is to be."² If the "self" or "flesh" were eradicated now, then the believer could fully experience his ultimate identification with Christ. It is the very fact that the believer who has not been delivered from the sphere of the

¹See Robert Law, The Tests of Life, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, reprinted, 1968.

²Ibid., p. 218.

sinful fallen nature still has the warfare with sin. Positional and experimental aspects have to be distinguished to divide the Word rightly. In light of John's high contrasts and the teaching of the whole New Testament the present writer cannot use this passage to dismiss all the clear ones that emphatically relate to sin in believers' lives.

1 John 3:9

The οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν in verse 9 restricts the various interpretations. Basically there are four familiar interpretations to the first part of verse 9, " πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει ;" Boyer lists four familiar interpretations to the "seed" spoken of. These are the views of the Holy Spirit (cf. 2:27), or the indwelling Christ. Also spoken of as the divine nature or new principle of life in us which we share in common with God. A further view is that of new nature; also the Word of God is sometimes held as an alternative view. Then His seed, meaning his descendants, offspring, children; the children of God,¹ is a position held by some. The most Biblical interpretation would be the Holy Spirit or indwelling Christ. However, the new nature would have strong appeal contextually.

¹Boyer, "Unpublished syllabus on Johannine Epistles," p. 58.

Possibly the Word of God could be spoken of due to the above Scriptural references that are similar.

The phrase *οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν* could not be referring to sinless perfection as Marsh¹ teaches (based upon the second blessing) because it is in this context based upon birth or regeneration (3:9). The context supports the truth (upon the basis of the present tense of the verb and the infinitive) that the process of a daily experience is what John has in mind. An habitual life of sin is not what characterizes the believer. Admitting this truth from 1 John 3:9 does not negate the exceptions that John fails to speak of in his Hebraic parallelistic style of writing. This as Boyer presents² is the only fair and all-inclusive interpretation in light of the total experience of the believer taught in the New Testament. In conclusion, John is not raising the question of the theoretical possibility but of practical factuality.³ It must be brought into the picture that the factor of God's chastening work is worthy of note here.

1 John 3:9 cannot be used to annul (the same with 3:6) the clear misinterpretable facts of other portions of

¹Marsh, The Old Man, pp. 90-95.

²Boyer, For a World Like Ours, p. 44.

³Boyer, "Unpublished syllabus on Johannine Epistles," p. 60.

God's Word. John Owen's remark would be suitable here, ". . . whereas the Spirit of God is everywhere said to sanctify us, we ourselves are commanded and said constantly to mortify our sins."¹

Revelation

The example listed in Revelation 2:5 pertaining to the Churches of Ephesus (2:1-5) and Laodicea are worthy of note. It is debateable whether one can classify the Laodicean assembly as genuine believers or not. Verse nineteen hints they were in the love of God thus ready to be chastened for their carnality. If this is the case, as the writer upholds, then this would represent a further Biblical evidence of the existence of the carnal believer.

¹John Owen, The Holy Spirit, Sovereign Grace, n.d., p. 538.

CHAPTER III

FORMULATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE PERTAINING TO THE CARNAL CHRISTIAN

Identity

The carnal man is *σάρκινος* (fleshy, 1 Cor. 3:1). He is not the *ψυχικός* (natural man, 1 Cor. 2:15) man. From the state of unregeneracy (*ψυχικός*) he has been delivered (Rom. 8:5-7). Whether one speaks of three classes of believers¹ or two classes,² or one class³ with two subheadings, spiritual and carnal, the believer is carnal (*σάρκινος*) with a bias toward sin (Rom. 7:14-23; 1 Cor. 3:1). Being biased to sin, the *σάρκινος* man may not walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) fulfilling the appetites or cravings of the old sin nature and becomes *σαρκικός*. Because envy, strife, division (1 Cor. 3:1-3), and opposition to the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) control the *σάρκινος* man, he is *σαρκικός*. This type of believer is so-related to the flesh or flesh-like that he acts like people who are living "in the flesh." He is losing the conflict

¹Johnson, 1 Corinthians, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 1234.

²Chafer, He That Is Spiritual, pp. 3-14.

³Boyer, For a World Like Ours, p. 44.

expressly declared in Galatians 5:16-25 between the flesh and spirit whereas the flesh is dominating his actions and decisions. Thus, he grieves (Eph. 4:30) the Holy Spirit. The proof of his carnality is evidenced by his actions (1 Cor. 3:3-4). He lives according to the course of this world (1 Cor. 3:3). The truth that the *σάρκινος* man (when yielded to sin's control) is *σαρκικός* is exposed by not only what he does but by his lack of yieldedness to the mind and will of God (Rom. 7).

Limits

The carnal believer (*σαρκικός*) cannot become unsaved (1 Cor. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:13; Rom. 4:5; Jn. 6:37, 39). He cannot experience the fruit of the Spirit while he is failing to mortify (deadens) the deeds of the flesh (Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:1-5) or yield to the Spirit of God (Rom. 12:1, 2). The carnal believer (*σαρκικός*) will only be characterized by conflict and defeat (1 Cor. 3:3; Rom. 7:15; 21-23; Heb. 12:5-11). The believer, although indwelt by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22), can only be mastered by the flesh as long as he fails to reckon, yield, and present his life to God (Rom. 6:11-13; Gal. 5:16, 17).

His life can only (as long as he remains under the domination of the flesh) reap worldliness and fruitlessness (2 Peter 1:5-8; Eph. 4:17; Matt. 13:22). The *σάρκινος*

man remains immature being nourished by "milk" (1 Cor. 3:1) until he moves along in maturity (Heb. 6:1ff). He is not able to discern all things and make spiritually-wise decisions (1 Cor. 2:15; Heb. 5:12, 13). The *σαρκινος* man who is yielding to sin is limited to a nominal amount of rewards, if any, at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15). The carnal man will remain weak and in a position of disapproval for service unless he repents (Rev. 2:5). He is limited to the sphere of the flesh (as long as he fails to yield to the Spirit) which is enmity against God and is subject to the flesh (Rom. 8:7, 8, 9) which is antithetical to the law of God.

Potential

The potential of the carnal (*σαρκινος*) man is as bright as the promises of God. He may yield to the Spirit of God and be controlled by the Spirit (*πνευματικός*). On the other hand, the believer (*σαρκινος*) may yield to disobedience and hence become *σαρκικός* (having the characteristics of flesh). The *σαρκινος* believer may reckon, yield, and present his body to God, thus renewing his mind (Rom. 6:11-13; Eph. 4:22, 23). His potential and goal is maturity which he may achieve in time if he stops yielding to the flesh, and starts yielding to the Spirit. A further potential is fruitfulness (Mt. 13:23). His exciting potential is victory over principalities, powers, rulers of the

darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness (Eph. 6:21, 13) as he reckons the old man to be a dethroned monarch (Rom. 6:11, 12). The carnal Christian may escape an early death if he examines himself and turns from sin before the Lord judges him (1 Cor. 11:28-32). He may potentially manifest the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) rather than the works of the flesh.

Need

The needs of the carnal man are characterized as follows: to understand the old and new natures and the bias he has in relation to sin (Rom. 7:14); to confess his sin (1 Jn. 1:9); to appropriate God's sanctifying grace (Ti. 2:11-13); to be awakened out of his sluggishness to see his tragic and unnecessary condition (Heb. 5:11-14); to "reckon" his old man dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11); to "yield" in the struggle between the flesh and spirit his members as instruments of righteousness unto God rather than unrighteousness to sin (Rom. 6:13); to "present" the body a living sacrifice and not to be conformed to the world (Rom. 12:1, 2); to develop an appetite for the meat of the Word that he can grow thereby (Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Pet. 2:2) and become a *πνευματικός* believer; his need to walk in the Spirit, to be led of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), and to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

CONCLUSION

The writer has attempted to give Biblical evidence for the existence of the carnal believer in the New Testament. The aim has been to set forth the truth pertaining to the *σάρκινος* man and his choice of becoming *σαρκικός* or *πνευματικός*.

Admitting the existence (as Boyer does)¹ of a class of believers (though Boyer subheads them under spiritual) who are living carnally (*σαρκικός*), does not undermine the wondrous work of God in salvation (Eph. 2:1-10). It simply adheres to the clear Scriptural truth of Rom. 7:14, 1 Corinthians 3:3, Hebrews 5:11-14, 1 Corinthians 11:28-34, Romans 6 and 7, Galatians 5:16, 17, Ephesians 5:18, plus many other Scriptures.

It is admitted by the writer that many professing believers have never been truly born again. These often imitate Christians for a period of time then fall away. The writer believes a carnal (*σαρκικός*) Christian is not the norm or rule for Christian experience. However, it is very clear from the Pauline Epistles that such a type of Christian exists. His detailed nature was set forth

¹Boyer, For a World Like Ours, p. 44.

in Chapter 3 under Identity.

The author argues that an over-emphasis on positional sanctification can impede the clear teaching of the whole Word of God. The experimental, realistic dirty gray is found between the life of the saved and the unregenerate man. The carnal Christian, though his life represents shame and disobedience to the Spirit, must be dealt with and considered. The inevitable conclusion of those who argue against the believer continuing in sin is that nowhere then could you have a believer who is judged and taken home to Heaven because of disobedience. Scriptures are in existence (1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Cor. 11) where that is a potential and actual occurrence. Scriptures also are multitudinous in the New Testament that warn, admonish, rebuke, and instruct believers as to the warfare between the flesh (σάρξ) and the spirit. The potentiality of choice for the σάρκινος man is observed continually in the New Testament.

To dismiss from one's mind the actuality of believers who are continually yielding to the fleshly carnal desires (σαρκικός) is to shut one's eye completely to the possibilities of the σάρκινος man (Rom. 7:14) in the New Testament that needs to be preached, taught, and clarified. The most necessary need is that of balance. Dealing with the Scriptures that are penned by the guidance of the Spirit of God, one must be aware of the spiritual warfare raging

within the believer. The challenge for the *σάρκινος* man is to yield to the Spirit of God and be controlled by the Spirit (becoming *πνευματικός*). The danger for the believer is that he will fail to do so and by yielding to unrighteousness, become *σαρκικός*, bringing reproach upon the name of Christ.

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