

THD-045 and 046
Galatians 5:16
The Holy Spirit and the Christian
Part 9:
The Believer's Responsibility

*“Blessed [happy] are they that hear the word of God,
and keep it.” (Luke 11:28)*

Galatians 4:15

What has happened to all your happiness?

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law, are under curse. For it stands written, Cursed is every one who is not remaining constantly in all things which stand written in the book of the law in order to do them.

Gal 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Rom. 11:6, "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."

Gal. 2:21, "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

Gal. 3:24, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."

1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Peter 1:2-3 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue...

*I am come that they might
have life, and that they might have it more
abundantly. John10:10*

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commands, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” – John 15:9-11 ESV

The Galatian Christians had lost their joy, because the Judaizers had meddled in their Christian Lives and introduced the Law. Paul introduces, here, a clear delineation between the Law and the Spiritual Life. Previously we have looked at the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit as a Person and as Deity, and are currently studying the Role of the Holy Spirit in Relation to The Christian
From L.S. Chafer's Systematic Theology

The Believer's Responsibility

Chapter XII

Introduction to the Believer's responsibility

Since they are void of experimental [experiential] features, the ministries of the Spirit to the believer already cited—regeneration, indwelling, sealing, and baptizing—have served to establish the truth related to the Christian's positions and possessions.

This body of truth may well be termed that which is fundamental and primary in all doctrine respecting the Christian; but there is also that which is rightfully termed *practical* features of truth.

These comprehend the believer's responsibility in thought and action toward God, toward his fellow men, and toward self.

With regard to importance, there could be no comparison between these two aspects of doctrine though in the one instance all is accomplished completely when one believes and in the other instance there is ceaseless obligation resting upon the convert; yet the situation, all the same, which every pastor confronts in the individual life to which he ministers is within the sphere of the less important, practical phase of doctrine.

It may well be called *life truth* since it concerns the outliving of that which is infinitely true and certain in the sphere of *positional truth*.

How helpless the would-be soul doctor must be who in his courses of training has never heard even one intimation of the specific instruction which God addresses to the believer, or of the divine plan so extensively taught in the New Testament whereby the Christian may be more than conqueror over evil forces through the power of the indwelling Spirit!

Seminary instructors, however, cannot be expected to teach subjects and courses—no matter how important—of which they in turn had never heard in the days of their own education and which they have consistently ignored thereafter. - L.S. Chafer

I. Intelligent Motives

The Christian who is perfected forever, being in Christ, has, nevertheless, a life of imperfection to live so long as he is in this world.

The new problem which he confronts, as several times before stated, is not one of how he should live that he might be accepted and perfected before God, but rather of how he, an accepted and perfected person, should live after these stupendous realities are accomplished by the grace and power of God. Until this vital distinction is comprehended and received, there will be no progress made in the extensive field of truth which directs the Christian's life and service.

Until positional truth is recognized and received to the extent that the saved one acknowledges that he is saved and perfected in the sight of God on no other ground than that, on his part, he has believed on Christ to the saving of his soul, and, on God's part, he is justified, being both forgiven and constituted righteous through the immeasurable twofold substitution of Christ—bearing condemnation because of the believer's demerit and offering Himself as the source of merit—there can be only confusion and misunderstanding about the true motivating principle in the Christian's daily life.

It could not be denied truthfully that the mass of professing Christians have been deprived of the knowledge of positional truth and because of this have never conceived of any other idea of Christian conduct than that they are obligated to make themselves acceptable to God by their own works of righteousness. Naturally, being so deprived of the knowledge of positional truth they are correspondingly ignorant of the true basis and motive for life truth.

**Positional Truth AND Life Truth =
Righteousness (Imputed AND Imparted)**

This one distinction between positional truth and life truth constitutes one of the most vital contrasts between law and grace.

It is declared that the Jew failed because he sought his righteous standing before God by means of the works of the law, being “ignorant” of the truth that God has provided all the standing and merit in and through Christ that His holiness could ever require.

Because of this ignorance, the Jew went about “to establish his own righteousness” and did not “submit” or come under the bestowed righteousness of God, Christ being “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

Salvation
(Positional Truth)
Righteousness
IMPUTED

Spirituality
(Life Truth)
Righteousness
IMPARTED

II. Prescribed Obligations

Because of the superhuman requirements which rest upon the believer, the Spirit's filling unto supernatural power is demanded.

This anticipates the right and true understanding of the Scriptures as well as the needed adjustments which secure divine power.

If through misguided ignorance the Christian sets himself to keep the Mosaic order when God has faithfully warned him that the keeping of the law is not His will for him and that God has saved him from the law, he must not expect any cooperation of the Holy Spirit in pursuing such a course of error.

III. Dependence Upon the Spirit

Yet again it needs to be emphasized that the divine plan for the believer's daily life incorporates the issue of method by which that life shall be lived.

Two procedures are possible, namely, dependence upon one's own ability and dependence upon the power of the indwelling Spirit.

These two methods are wholly incompatible, or, to use the Apostle's language, they are "contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5:17).

Any attempt to combine two opposing principles will end in failure.

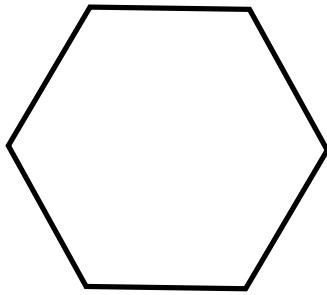
Thus is set forth the fundamental truth that the faith method of life, which stands wholly apart from human strength, is that alone which secures or realizes the Spirit's power and achievement.

IV. Word of God

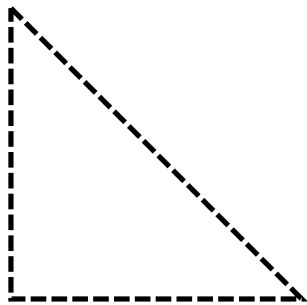
The attitude of any person toward the Word of God is a certain indication of the innermost character and reality of that person's spiritual state.

Recognizing this basic truth the Apostle states that all men of this age are divided, as before indicated, into three classes, namely,

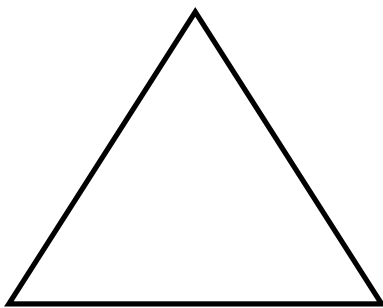
- (a) the natural man—the ψυχικός man who is unregenerate,
- (b) the spiritual man—the πνευματικός man who is saved and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and
- (c) the carnal man—the σαρκικός man who is regenerated as being in Christ, but who is living in the sphere of the flesh.



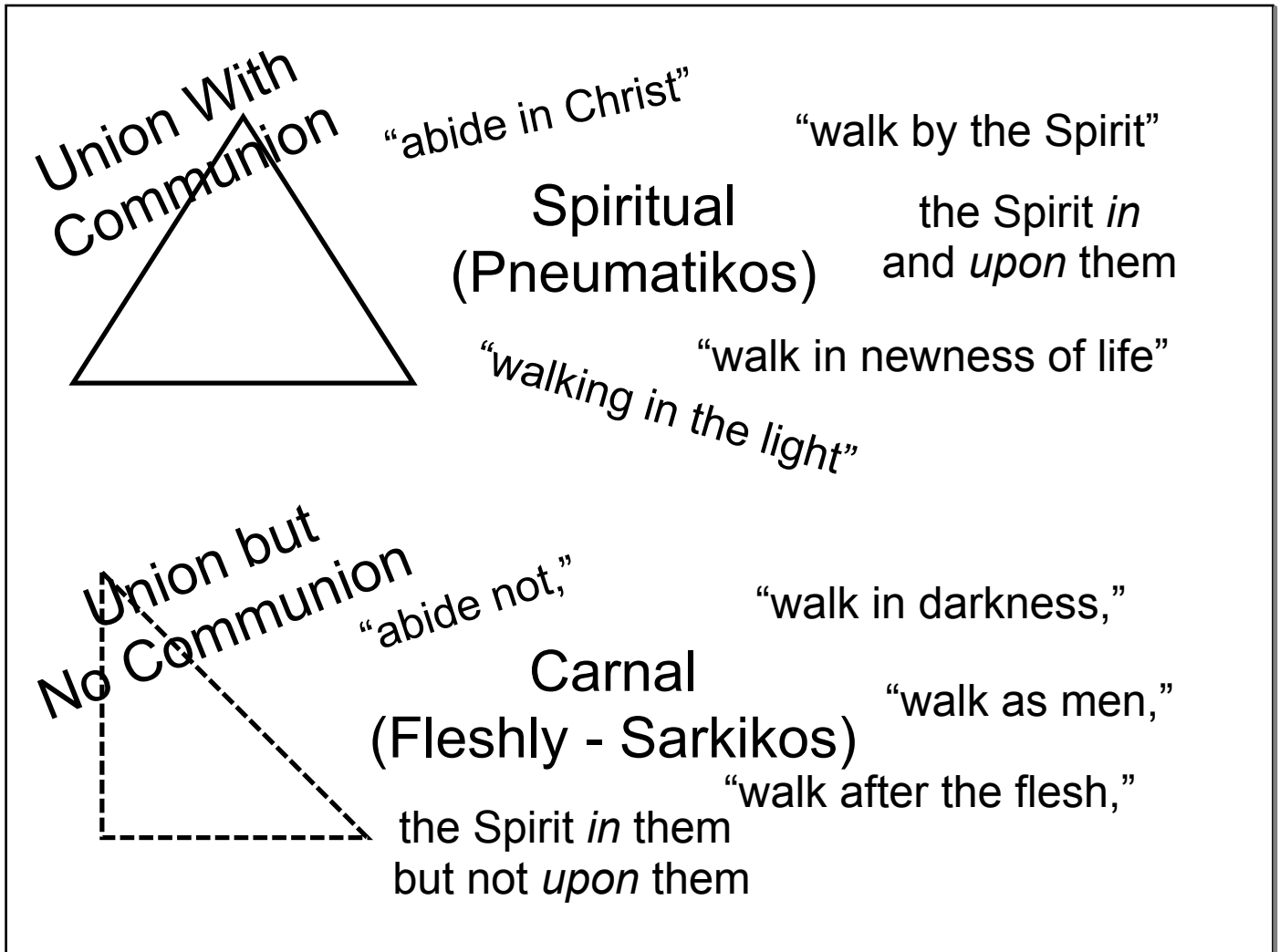
Natural
(Soulical - Psuchikos)
No Union



Carnal
(Fleshly - Sarkikos)
Union but
No Communion



Spiritual
(Pneumatikos)
Union with
Communion



V. A Spiritual Transformation

As there is a great transition from the estate of the unsaved to that of the saved, there is also a transition for the Christian from the carnal to the spiritual state. The former change is wrought by God in answer to saving faith in Christ, while the latter is brought about by a natural release of the Spirit's power in the believer when needed adjustments are made, which power has all been possessed though not necessarily experienced from the moment of salvation.

The New Testament is clear respecting just what the Spirit would produce in a fully adjusted life, and all of this revelation taken together forms the Bible definition of spirituality.

These undertakings in a believer's life are distinctly assigned to the Spirit, and so are His manifestations in and through the Christian.

There is a twofold development to the Spirit's work in and through the Christian, namely, the negative aspect and the positive aspect.

Following the present introduction without more delay, these two aspects will be considered in successive chapters.

Power to Overcome Evil

The individual is a Christian when rightly related to Christ; the Christian is spiritual when rightly related to the Spirit.

Spirituality contemplates two achievements, namely, overcoming evil and promoting that which is good in the believer's life and experience.

The one is negative—a disannulling of evil, the other is positive—a realization of the supernatural qualities and accomplishments which belong to a superhuman manner of life.

Spirituality... is not suppression alone; it is also expression.

It is not only restraining self; it is the outliving of Christ who indwells.

The unregenerate man would not be saved if he ceased sinning; he would still be without the new birth.

The Christian would not become spiritual should he abstain from worldliness; he would lack the positive manifestations of the Spirit.

Spirituality is primarily an output, a vital living, and a fruitful service for God.

However, both the negative and the positive aspects of the spiritual life are essential and each must be given due consideration here.

The central passage, to which reference must often be made, is Galatians 5:16–23.

In this Scripture there is first an unfolding of the Spirit's work toward the evil flesh and in spite of all the opposition that the flesh engenders.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:16–21).

Over against this, the portion which records a positive, constructive, spiritual output from the believer's life wrought by the Spirit reads: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”* (Gal. 5:22–23).

Attention may now be given to one of these features of a spiritual life.

The Christian experiences an unceasing, simultaneous, threefold conflict—with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The Christian's life is likened to a race, a walk, and a warfare.

In the race (Heb. 12:1–2) the weights which the world would impose must be laid aside, in the walk (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16–17) the power of the flesh is to be overcome, and in the warfare (Eph. 6:10–12) Satan and his hosts are to be vanquished.

The conflict with the world is outward and calls for drastic separation therefrom, the conflict with the flesh is inward and calls for a complete reliance upon divine strength and for an intelligent and worthy understanding of the innermost forces of human life, the conflict with Satan is largely in spiritual realms and involves the same utter dependence upon the sufficient power of the indwelling Spirit.

Satan is the most powerful, the most iniquitous, the most despotic, the most delusive, and the most deadly foe.

Conflict with the world is against influences, conflict with the flesh is against inward desires, but conflict with Satan is against a person, unrelenting and cruel, a person who, were he not compelled to gain permission from God for all that he does toward the saints (cf. Job 1:11–12), would destroy every Christian in a moment of time.

It is no meaningless figure of speech which declares that Satan as a roaring lion goes about seeking whom he may devour.

At no moment of life is the child of God free from anyone of these foes, at no moment of life is he able to face even one of these foes, and at no moment of life is he without the infinite enablement of the indwelling Holy Spirit who is given to him as his resource in this immeasurable impact against evil.

Christ said, "*Without me ye can do nothing*" (John 15:5).

Over against this, as the other side of the picture, the Apostle declares, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13).

Fighting “the good fight of faith” means to maintain a reliance upon the Spirit to fight the foe. This conflict continues as long as there is a foe. Never in this life is the influence of the world eradicated, never is that of the flesh, and never is that of Satan. These foes may well be given an individual and more comprehensive examination.

I. The World

Second in scope only to the revealed truth regarding Satan is the confusion, ignorance, and misunderstanding which obtain relative to the facts disclosed in the New Testament about the Satan-ruled, *cosmos* world system.

The truth respecting Satan and his *cosmos* system is clearly set forth in the Scriptures; in spite of this, far more than a normal neglect and perversion of these doctrines exists.

By this distortion of truth much danger is engendered for the believer lest he himself, reflecting the ignorance of his day, be unaware of the nature, power, and design of these foes.

The truth respecting Satan and his world system has been examined at length under Satanology, a subdivision of Angelology. A return to the contemplation of these doctrines is required in the order and course of this chapter.

In the New Testament, the English word *world* is a translation, for the most part, of three widely different Greek terms: *αἰών*, used forty-one times when referring to time, denotes an age; *οἰκουμένη*, used fourteen times, denotes the inhabited earth; and *κόσμος*, used one hundred and eighty-six times, indicates a vast world system.

The word *cosmos* (its opposite is chaos) means an order, system, and arrangement which is such because it is so determined by a master mind.

Over this system is the one whom Christ three times designated “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

As before set forth at length, the world system is that project the realization of which actuated Satan in the beginning when he departed from the will of God (John 8:44; Isa. 14:12–14), which world system God has permitted Satan to realize to the end that it may be judged, along with its prince, for what it will have demonstrated itself to be.

Beyond and aside from the evident divine permission for this system to run its course, including the evil which it incorporates, God is exercising His own undiminished authority over His creation.

Strictly speaking, Satan has created nothing.

All that he utilizes, he has appropriated from that which is in no way his own.

The precise knowledge of all that enters into the satanic *cosmos* system will be gained only as the contexts are examined in which the word *cosmos* occurs.

It is this, the specific study of what is one of the greatest doctrines of the New Testament, which many worthy men have failed to pursue; and, because this body of truth is so little apprehended, the great company of believers are unaware of the enmity which the world system sustains toward God and His people. James writes: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

This reference to adultery is tied in here with a spiritual usage and therefore means a forsaking of right love and loyalty toward God, substituting in their place the things of this Satan-ruled world.

James says again that Christian responsibility is a call to keep oneself “unspotted” from the world (1:27).

It is of great advantage to the Christian to know the nature and extent of the *cosmos* world system.

It includes governments ruled by force and motivated by greed (Matt. 4:8–9; Luke 4:5–6); yet the believer must live under, and to a large extent share in, and pray for these governments.

Their laws are said to be ordained of God.

This satanic system has its educational standards and ideals which resist and ignore every fact and feature of revelation. "The world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1:21); yet the child of God must sustain a relation to the world system and its education in various ways. This world system professes to defend, or at least to tolerate, its own religious ideals, which ideals are no more than a recognition of ethics coupled with a denial of every feature of the saving grace of God made possible through the sacrificial blood of Christ; yet the believer is called upon to associate with men who thus interpret the Christian faith and to keep in such relation to them that he can testify to them.

Similarly, the world system presents its own sort of entertainment.

The world and “worldly” Christians turn to so-called “worldly” things because they discover in them an anesthetic to deaden the pain of an empty heart and life. The anesthetic, which is often quite innocent in itself, is not so serious a matter as the empty heart and life. Little is gained toward true spirituality when would-be soul doctors have succeeded in persuading the afflicted to get on without the anesthetic.

If these instructors do not present the reality of such consolation and filling for heart and life as God has provided, the condition will not be improved.

How misleading is the theory that to be spiritual one must abandon play, diversion, and helpful amusement! Such a conception of spirituality is born of a morbid human conscience.

It is foreign to the Word of God.

It is a device of Satan to make the blessings of God seem abhorrent to young people who are overflowing with physical life and energy.

It is to be regretted that there are those who in blindness are so emphasizing the negatives of Christian truth as to create the impression that spirituality is opposed to joy, liberty, and naturalness of expression in thought and life when such are in the Spirit.

Spirituality is not a pious pose.

It is not merely a “Thou shalt not,” “Thou shalt.”

It flings open the doors into the eternal blessedness, energies, and resources of God.

It is a serious thing to remove the element of relaxation and play from any life.

We cannot be normal physically, mentally, or spiritually, if we neglect this vital factor in human life.

God has provided so well that our joy can be full.

It is also to be noted that one of the characteristics of true spirituality calls for it to supersede lesser desires and issues.

The Biblical, as well as practical, cure for “worldliness” among Christians is so to fill the heart and life with the eternal blessings of God that there will be a joyous preoccupation and absentmindedness relative to unspiritual things.

A dead leaf that may have clung to the twig through the external, raging storms of winter will silently fall to the ground when the new flow of sap from within has begun in the spring.

The leaf falls because there is a new manifestation of life pressing from within outward.

A dead leaf cannot remain where a new bud is springing, nor can worldliness remain where the blessings of the Spirit are flowing.

The preacher is not called upon to preach against “dead leaves.”

He has a message of the imperishable spring. It is of the outflow of the limitless life of God.

When by the Spirit ye are walking, ye *cannot* do the things that ye otherwise would.

The line of demarcation between the things of God and the things of the *cosmos* world is not always easily discerned.

At this point, it is imperative that the Christian should be led of the Spirit.

However, the conflict with the world, with its glitter, tinsel, and delusions, is very real.

The Apostle John writes: *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”* (1 John 2:15–17).

The child of God is not of this sort of world. Twice in His last prayer connected with the upper room Christ said: *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”* (John 17:14, 16). So, again: *“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one”* (1 John 5:19, R.V.). It therefore becomes the Christian to live in separation from the world. This he can do only through being empowered and directed constantly by the Holy Spirit.

John again declares in his first epistle, “*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*” (5:4–5).

It is evident from the fact John refers in verse 5 to faith in the Son of God as the way to victory over the world that he is there contemplating the Christian’s deliverance from the *cosmos* world system, which deliverance is wrought when the Christian is saved (cf. Col. 1:13); but it is equally true to say it is by faith or confidence in the power of God that he is delivered from the influence of the *cosmos* world from day to day.

The latter deliverance from the world day by day seems to be that to which reference is made in the last half of verse 4, *“and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”*

Since the line of demarcation between the believer’s spiritual walk and the choice of the *cosmos* world often is so difficult to draw, and because the world’s attractions and demands are so impelling if not prevailing, divine sufficiency must be claimed at all times and under all circumstances.

II. The Flesh

In some instances the word σάρξ, translated *flesh*, is synonymous with the word σῶμα, translated *body*; the word *flesh* is more often employed with reference to the whole of the unregenerate man—spirit, soul, and body. It thus assumes an ethical and psychological meaning which does not inhere in the word *body*.

A physical body is denominated *flesh* whether dead or alive, whereas the term *flesh* in its ethical meaning includes not only the body but also that which makes it a living thing—the unseen reality which expresses and manifests itself through the body.

A very complex situation is thus confronted wherein the living factors of human existence—spirit, soul, Adamic nature, heart, kidneys, mind, sensibility, will, and conscience—are all integral parts.

This complexity, which in some features of it defies human analysis, has had the required treatment under Anthropology previously.

Thus—to repeat briefly from Volume II—as a feature of the immaterial part of man is included a nature which is prone to sin.

It is in reality the original human nature which has been injured, and as such has been reproduced throughout all succeeding generations.

By his first sin the first man became at once a different order of being than that which he was made by creation, and the law of procreation obtained, which is to the effect that the species reproduces after its kind. That Adam's offspring was fallen is confirmed and demonstrated by the act of murder on the part of his first-born.

Being derived from Adam, this fallen nature is rightfully termed *the Adamic nature*.

Failure to recognize this nature as an unalterable and universal feature in all human existence does not change the fact, and it is the part of wisdom to acknowledge it and should be the plan of one's life to be adjusted to it.

Four more or less common errors should be identified and avoided:

- (1) that man is not evil by nature,
- (2) that children are born into the world unfallen,
- (3) that the Adamic nature may be eradicated, and
- (4) that the Adamic nature may be controlled by the power of the human determination and will.

Being an integral part of a human being, this evil nature cannot and will not be dismissed until the body itself in which it functions is redeemed, or until the separation between the body and the immaterial elements of soul and spirit is achieved by death.

The Adamic nature is the dominating factor in all that enters into the flesh.

That nature remains undiminished and unimpaired in each believer after he is saved and becomes one of the three great foes of the spiritual life.

With the reception of the divine nature which is imparted through regeneration, the Christian becomes a complex being, possessing two natures—not, two personalities—with a corresponding complexity of life, for unless the evil nature is controlled by more than human competency it will assert itself to the dishonor of God.

It is not within the range of human will power, even when fortified by the best resolutions, to control the Adamic nature.

The conflict must be turned over to the indwelling Holy Spirit with constant and unrelenting faithfulness.

To gain the victory the believer must maintain an *attitude* of faith to the end that he may be saved from the reigning power of sin, just as he was saved by an *act* of faith from the guilt and penalty of sin.

In every aspect of the situation it is plain that one must live by faith.

The life which a justified person should live is, because of his superior foes and because of his own impotency, an impossibility apart from the divine enablement which is realized in answer to faith.

Salvation into safety from eternal judgment and salvation into sanctity are both a work of God.

Human determination can avail no more in the one than in the other.

The fact that the unregenerate possess a fallen nature is generally admitted.

The misunderstanding is with regard to the Christian. The Bible teaching is clear, and yet some professing Christians are misled into assuming that they do not any longer possess the tendency to sin.

This question may be discussed both from the [experiential] and from the Biblical standpoint.

Experientially, the most saintly of God's children have been conscious of the presence and power of a fallen nature. This may be called the normal consciousness of the devout believer.

Such a consciousness is not an evidence of immaturity: it is rather the evidence of a true humility and clear vision of one's own heart.

It does not imply a lack of fellowship with God occasioned by grieving of the Holy Spirit through sin.

Who can hate sin more than the one who is *aware* of its presence and power?

And who is in greater danger of its havoc in his spiritual life than the one who in unwarranted presumption has assumed that the disposition to sin has been removed?

The contention that one has no disposition to sin must be based upon a shocking lack of self-knowledge respecting the motives and impulses of the heart, or, if not, such an assumption is made through failure to comprehend the true character of sin itself.

If an individual can convince himself that sin is something different from *anything* he ever does or is inclined to do, beyond indeed anything he ever thinks, feels, or undertakes, he can doubtless convince himself that he has not sinned at all.

If, in his own mind, one can modify the character of sin, he can, by that very process, relieve himself from the *consciousness* of sin.

There are not a few such people in the world today. Truth of a spiritual nature cannot stand when based upon human experience.

It must be based upon revelation.

Sin is not what some prejudiced, misguided person *claims* it to be; it is what God has *revealed* it to be.

Sin has been well defined, from a study of the whole testimony in the Word of God, as “any violation of, or want of conformity to, the revealed will of God.”

It is *missing the mark*.

But what mark?

Surely the *divine* standard.

The believer may ask, Have I done *all* and *only* His will with motives as pure as heaven and in the unchanging faithfulness of manner characterizing the Infinite?

God has provided the possibility of a perfect victory; but Christians have all too often failed in its realization.

If possessed with any degree of the knowledge of God and self-knowledge, they are aware that too often they are far from sinless in the eyes of God.

The consciousness of sinfulness at times in their life has been the testimony of the most spiritual believers of all generations, as they have been enabled to see the Person of God in contrast to themselves.

Job, the upright in heart, abhorred himself before God. Daniel, against whom no sin is recorded, said “My comeliness was turned in me into corruption.”

The central passage bearing upon the truth that the believer possesses two natures and that one of these, the sin nature, cannot be governed even by the will power of a regenerate person is found in Romans 7:15–8:4; but before the passage is quoted some general introductory words are in order.

This Scripture presents a conflict between two aspects of the ego which the believer represents.

The word *I* appears in two quite different and conflicting uses, but all within the one personality of the Apostle whose experience is here recorded.

The controversy is real, being waged as it is between two natures—the original fallen nature which is prone to evil and which for convenience may be styled *the old*, and that which in the same person answers to his saved self and which may be called *the new*.

For the time being and for the best of reasons, the saved self is hypothetically contemplated apart from the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The vital question is whether a Christian, of himself and merely because he is saved, has power to contend victoriously with his sin nature.

No more subtle or deceptive battle is possible.

In this conflict between the saved man possessed of a new nature and his fallen nature, the saved man with his holy aims is utterly defeated.

Being saved, now he has high and holy ideals, and yet because of his inability to realize these he becomes a “wretched man.”

Quite in contrast to this sort of battle is the conflict described in Galatians 5:16–17, which passage reads: *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit [lit., by means of the Spirit], and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*

Here victory over the flesh is assured if it is fought in reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

In this passage it is also disclosed that the believer’s old nature and the Holy Spirit are always “contrary” the one to the other.

These two can never by any self-discipline of the old nature be brought into the slightest agreement.

What is true respecting the disagreement between the Holy Spirit and the old nature according to Galatians 5:16–17 is equally true of the disagreement between the new nature or saved self and the old nature according to the Romans passage under consideration.

Of the two passages, it should be observed that the one records a total failure and the other a total victory, the essential and impressive difference between them being that in the one instance the limited strength of the saved self has wrought in conflict with the old nature unto total defeat and that in the other instance the Holy Spirit when followed has wrought in conflict with the old nature unto total victory.

Various interpretations of Romans 7:15–25 have been advanced, all of which fail in a greater or less degree to account for the situation which the context sets forth. The more common and more erroneous type is one advanced, for example, by Philip Mauro which contends that the Scripture records here an experience of the great Apostle before he was saved. The fallacy of this interpretation is evident. No such experience could really have occurred in the Apostle's life, nor could it happen in the experience of any unregenerate person.

On the contrary, the Apostle declares that before he was saved he lived in all good conscience and before the law as one blameless (Phil. 3:6).

Beyond the dictation of a feeble conscience the unsaved entertain no such ideals or purposes as these of Romans 7 to walk well-pleasing to God.

God is not in all their thoughts.

Finally and conclusively, the same ego of Romans, chapter 7, is continued unaltered into chapter 8 and its Christian emphasis.

The difference being indicated between chapters 7 and 8 is not one of salvation, but deliverance from the power of sin and death which is ever the legitimate fruit of the sin nature.

This record is plainly that of the experience of the Apostle Paul.

It describes that through which he passed when with less understanding of his own self he had attempted to realize heavenly ideals in life by relying on his own strength of purpose and will.

It would be inconsistent for those who have never striven by any means, false or true, to reach such ideals to look down with pity on one who is at least on the way to discover his own limitations and the limitless resources which are resident in the indwelling Spirit.

Having determined that this passage records the struggle of a child of God, it is of real value to note that he, though saved, possesses a fallen nature, and his deliverance is not by eradication but by the overcoming power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:2).

From each reference to the old “I” as well as from the parallel phraseology which is found in the passage, namely, “*sin [nature] that dwelleth in me*” (vss. 17, 20), “*In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing*” (vs. 18), “*Evil is present with me*” (vs. 21), “*sin which is in my members*” (vs. 23), “*I myself serve ... with the flesh the law of sin*” (i.e., the nature—vs. 25), it is evident that the writer possessed a fallen nature.

BACKGROUND:

ROMANS 5:12 Therefore, as [THE] sin [NATURE] came into the world through one man [ADAM], and [SPIRITUAL] death [SEPARATION FROM GOD] as the result of [THE] sin [NATURE], so [SPIRITUAL] death [SEPARATION FROM GOD] spread to all men, because all men sinned [WHEN ADAM SINNED, SINCE HE WAS THE FEDERAL HEAD OF THE HUMAN RACE].

16 Nor is the free gift at all to be compared to the effect of that one [man's] sin. For the sentence [following the trespass] of one [man] brought condemnation, whereas the free gift [following] many transgressions brings justification (an act of IMPUTED righteousness).

17 For if because of one man's trespass (offense) [SPIRITUAL] death reigned [OVER EVERYONE] through that one [BORN WITH HIS GENES], much more surely will those who receive [God's] overflowing grace (unmerited favor) and the free gift of [IMPUTED] righteousness [putting them into right standing with Himself] reign as kings in life through the one Man Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).

18 Well then, as one man's [ADAM'S] trespass [one man's false step and falling away led] to [SPIRITUAL] condemnation for all men, so one Man's act of righteousness [leads] to acquittal and right standing with God and life for all men.

19 For just as by one man's disobedience (failing to hear, heedlessness, and carelessness) the many [WITH HIS GENES] were constituted sinners, so by one Man's obedience the many [WITH HIS GENES] will be constituted righteous (made acceptable to God, brought into right standing with Him).

20 But then [THE] Law [OF MOSES] came in, [only] to expand and increase the [AWARENESS OF] trespass [making it more apparent and exciting opposition]. But where [THE] sin [NATURE] increased and abounded [BECAUSE OF NEW KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT TRESPASS INCLUDES], grace (God's unmerited favor) has surpassed it and increased the more and superabounded,

21 So that, [just] as [THE] sin [NATURE] has reigned in [SPIRITUAL] death, [so] grace (His unearned and undeserved favor) might reign also through [IMPUTED AND IMPARTED] righteousness [WHICH IS THE OPPOSITE OF SPIRITUAL DEATH/SIN NATURE LIFE] which issues in eternal [SPIRITUAL] life through Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) our Lord.

NOW, ON TO THE SUBJECT...

The portion of this passage which leads up to the question “Who shall deliver me?” as read with some comment interjected is as follows:

14 We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am a creature of the flesh [carnal], having been sold into slavery [BY ADAM] under [the control of THE] sin [NATURE].

15 For I do not understand my own actions [I am baffled, bewildered]. I do not [CONTINUALLY] practice or accomplish what I wish, but I [SOMETIMES] do the very thing that I loathe [which my NEW SPIRITUAL instinct condemns].

16 Now if I do [habitually] what is contrary to my desire, [that means that] I acknowledge and agree that the Law is good (morally excellent) and that I take sides with it.

17 However, it is no longer [THE NEW SPIRITUAL] I who do the deeds, but the sin [NATURE] which is at home in me [MY FLESH] and has possession of [THE OLD] me.

18 For I know that nothing [SPIRITUALLY] good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can [PLAN TO DO] what is right, but I cannot [CONTINUALLY] perform it. [I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out.]

19 For I fail to [CONSTANTLY] practice the [SPIRITUALLY] good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am [PERIODICALLY] doing.

20 Now if I do what I do not [SPIRITUALLY] desire to do, it is no longer [THE NEW SPIRITUAL] I doing it, but the sin [NATURE] which dwells within me [IN MY EARTHLY BODY].

21 So I find it to be a [PRINCIPLE] (rule of action of my being) that when [THE NEW SPIRITUAL] I want to do what is right and good, [AN] evil [NATURE] is ever present with me and [THE OLD] I am subject to its insistent demands.

22 For I endorse and delight in the [NEW PRINCIPLE] of God in my inmost self [with my new nature]. [Ps. 1:2.]

23 But I discern in my bodily members [THE appetites and wills of the flesh] a different [PRINCIPLE] (rule of action) at war against the [PRINCIPLE] of my [NEW] mind (my reason) and making me a prisoner to the [PRINCIPLE] of [THE] sin [NATURE] that dwells in my bodily organs [THE appetites and DESIRES of the ADAMIC SINFUL NATURE].

24 O unhappy and pitiable and wretched [NEW SPIRITUAL] man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from [the shackles of] this [SIN NATURE RIDDEN] body of death?

25 O thank God! [He will!] through Jesus Christ (the Anointed One) our Lord! So then indeed [THE NEW SPIRITUAL] I, of myself with the [NEW] mind and [NEW] heart, serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the [OLD PRINCIPLE] of [THE] sin [NATURE].

The nature of this conflict is evident as is also the complete failure being recorded.

How to perform that which is good is a problem which every serious Christian faces, and while thousands of preachers are occupied with telling their congregations that they should be good, practically none are telling them *how* to be good.

This failure is due to the neglect of Christian life truth in institutions where men are trained for the ministry.

This neglect is not due to any want of explicit Scripture bearing upon it, or to any lack of provision on the part of God to the end that believers may be victorious in life and service.

The great Apostle discovered what uncounted others have discovered, namely, that, when he would do good, evil—the sin nature with its disposition to sin—was present with him. His own efforts to realize those high ideals, which are the natural accompaniments of a regenerate estate, were ineffective.

Thus in uttermost distress he cried, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

By a gruesome, yet meaningful, figure the Apostle likens his fallen nature to a corpse lashed to him which he must carry wherever he goes.

The answer to the problem is twofold: he will be delivered *through* the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ (7:25) and *by* the personal intervention of the Holy Spirit (8:2).

The actual or experimental deliverance is by the Holy Spirit, but such a deliverance is made possible only through that which Christ has wrought in His death as a veritable judgment of the sin nature.

Though considered earlier, this theme arises at the present point again and for careful examination, since it is a major factor in all Spirit-empowered living and service.

Inasmuch as this aspect of Christ's death has constituted the central theme of the preceding chapter in the Roman letter, the Apostle is justified in building his argument upon it and that without further analysis of it.

As before stated, the Holy Spirit, being holy, could not be free to do anything with the sin nature unless first it be judged by God and in a manner all-satisfying to Him. Every barrier to infinite holiness must be removed.

In this connection it may be observed that the Holy Spirit is free to regenerate the unsaved without judgments or the infliction of a single blow, and on the ground of the truth that Christ died for the sins of the one whom the Spirit would save.

The regenerating work of the Spirit is thus seen to be “through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

In like manner, Christ having died a judgment death unto the sin nature, the Spirit is free to deliver unceasingly “through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Christ’s death unto sin, meaning the nature, is described in Romans 6:1–10 and consists in the believer’s co-crucifixion, co-death, co-burial, and co-resurrection with Christ.

All that the believer is, even to his sin nature, came under that substitution, which substitution has become a perfect judgmental satisfaction secured on the part of God against that nature.

Since the entire structure of the divinely arranged plan whereby the believer may live above the power of the flesh to the glory of God is grounded absolutely and solely on the truth that Christ died unto the sin nature as an all-satisfying judgment of it, this fact becomes at once the primary issue, the gospel of deliverance, the good news respecting a finished work for the believer which in point of importance and scope of achievement is second only to that saving work of the Holy Spirit which is based on the finished work of Christ for the unsaved.

For his own sake and for the sake of others to whom he may be called to minister, the student should be aware of four immeasurable realities:

(1) that every Christian being possessed as he still is of the flesh is called upon to wage a ceaseless warfare against the old nature,

(2) that every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit and is thus equipped with power to be victorious over the flesh,

(3) that Christ has died the judgment death required against the sin nature, and

(4) that the deliverance from the power of the flesh is wrought on the principle of faith or dependence upon the Spirit rather than on the basis of any supposed resources of his own.

These four truths which are so closely related are probably more misunderstood and neglected than any others within the range of Bible doctrine.

Who, indeed, could estimate what would have been the history of believers as respects their character and faithfulness had these truths been given the elucidating emphasis that belongs to them!

How important it is in the progress of each believer that he shall come to a right comprehension and recognition of himself, that is, of the fact and dominating force of the flesh with which he contends!

Earlier in this volume, when examining the doctrine of the Spirit's baptism, the truth was presented that by such a baptism Christ is "put on" (cf. Gal. 3:27), and this upon the righteous ground of the sweet savor aspect of Christ's death.

Under the present discussion the complementary truth is being contemplated, which reveals that by the death of Christ unto the judgment of the sin nature the "old man" is "put off" for Christ to be "put on."

[Experientially], by means of the power of the Holy Spirit the believer may realize the negative aspect of the spiritual life, which means deliverance and preservation from evil; and positionally, by means of the Spirit he may realize the positive aspect of the spiritual life, which is the outliving of the in-living Christ (cf. Gal. 2:20).

Several major passages establish the truth that the believer's flesh with its sin nature was judged by Christ in His death, and show how it was a complete substitution to the extent that the flesh with its sin nature was as perfectly dealt with as it would have been had these features been judged in the believer himself.

In truth, since there was nothing of a sin nature in Christ which related Him to a judgment death, the only explanation of His death possible in this aspect of it makes it out a substitution for others; the souls for whom He died this death (cf. Gal. 5:24), upon believing, are reckoned by God to be wholly and eternally in possession of every value of that death.

Certain passages may well be considered:

Galatians 5:24. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Unlike some other references in the New Testament to the death of Christ as a judgment of the sin nature residing in the believer, the tense of the verb as translated in this verse is properly represented.

In a past and completed sense the Christian's flesh, with its affections and lusts, was crucified when Christ was crucified.

Far, indeed, is this removed from the idea that the believer is to attempt self-crucifixion by any means whatever; rather the great transaction is done and the responsibility resting on the Christian is to *believe* it and to *reckon* it to be true.

Complete assurance can thus be gained that the way is also clear for the Holy Spirit to accomplish a full experimental deliverance from the reigning power of sin.

The declaration of the passage is direct and conclusive. All that are Christ's *have* crucified the flesh.

This is the divine achievement in and through the death of Christ.

It is most evident that this refers to a positional rather than an experimental reality; yet how limitless is the value to the believer of the fact that the judgment is accomplished and the victory is possible!

There need be no wonder if this fact is not generally understood and recognized.

Even the death of Christ as the righteous basis for forgiveness and justification is slighted and misunderstood by the great mass of people; and it is probable that where a hundred have come to comprehend their dependence upon Christ's death for their salvation, there is no more than one that apprehends his dependence upon Christ's death for his sanctification as well.

Romans 6:1–10. Though not again quoted here, this Scripture portion should be read with care considering the fact that it is a record—the most extended and exhaustive in the New Testament—of the thing Christ did in judgment of the believer’s sin nature.

The context continues on, with reference to the presence and power of the sin nature and the possible victory over it, into chapter 8.

We will look at this, in depth, next week.