

The King's Highway

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THE CARNALLY MINDED HELD IN DISFAVOR

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"So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans 8:8.

Paul doesn't mince terms when dealing with carnality. There is no mistaking his mind in the matter. To him, the carnally-minded are held in disfavor—they CANNOT please God.

In considering the text, let us first define the statement: By "the flesh," Paul cannot mean what we understand as corporal, or physical body. This is proven by the verse following, which reads: "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Then again, the writer to the Hebrews, speaks of one, who before his translation had this testimony, "that he pleased God." These two statements from the Word are sufficient proof that Paul has not in mind here the physical, human body.

Paul's use of the term "flesh," in the text, is identical with: "the carnal mind," "the law of sin and death," "the old man," "the other law in my members," etc. This we believe to be Paul's meaning of the term "flesh."

Secondly, let us consider the significance of the statement. First, carnality has power to render one incapable of pleasing God. This is a fact which some good men are loathe to accept. They seek to defend their position while claiming a carnal state. They speak very definitely on the impossibility of being cleansed from inward defilement, yet claiming for themselves a hopeful and satisfactory standing with God. They seem little grieved over carnal manifestations, and stoutly oppose any suggestion that offers deliverance. They are confirmed in their own way, and have closed their minds and hearts to the light of full and complete salvation. However, notwithstanding all men may say to the contrary, God will enforce the fact by Provision, by Revelation, and by History, that, "they that are in the flesh, cannot please God."

Thirdly, we find in the context, the apostle's ground for the statement. The two words, "So then," have to do with the apostle's summary, and make way for the statement. With this in mind let us look at the context.

(a) The context speaks of Provision. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Here is adequate provision. The apostle further says, "For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The "Suppressionist" theory and the "Growth" theory can hardly measure up to this. Here the weakness of the old economy doesn't matter. A new, and better

law replaces the old. Here, sin is condemned, and the believer freed. Paul, giving his own testimony, shouts his way out of the seventh chapter of bondage to the law of sin, into the eighth chapter of freedom in the Holy Ghost. So then, on the grounds of this Provision, Paul argues the inconsistency of believers, remaining a carnal state. Divine provision always argues two things, viz., man's need, and God's undying effort to meet that need. To deny the first is to charge God with folly; to deny the second is to come dangerously near to insulting God.

(b) Paul's summary treats of the disposition of the "carnally minded." In verse five he says, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh." This comprehends such things as, self-will, worldliness, (in its various forms) pride, envy, touchiness, people's opinion, etc. Now no one needs to be told that this catering to the flesh is crippling to spirituality and displeasing to God. Hence, the apostle argues, on the grounds of this disposition to mind the things of the flesh, they who are thus influenced, "cannot please God."

(c) Paul, in verse six, speaks of the inevitable doom of the carnally minded. "For to be carnally minded is death." Strong words, these. Nevertheless Paul applies them to this **sin of the heart, this thing he calls "the flesh."**

I think, however, there is necessity here for careful reasoning. We need to distinguish between the "carnal mind" and the "carnally minded." I am sure you can see that there is a difference. One is a principle. The other is an attitude—an attitude toward that principle. The conflict between God and the believer, if conflict there be, is not that the believer is found in a carnal state, but that he is in that state by the consent of his will. And in this carnal state he remains, notwithstanding all God has done for his cleansing. In this position he is not only carnal but carnally minded. He votes for its continuance. He opposes God's plan of full salvation, and refuses to have the "old man" crucified. Like Saul, he would "spare Agag," and things pertaining to Amalek. This then is the attitude that works spiritual ruin and death. There are believers who all their days have waged warfare against the strivings of the "flesh," never having heard of the possibilities for their cleansing. Like David, "Their sin is ever before them." Show them "The Fountain opened to the house of David for sin and uncleanness" and there would be no hesitancy on their part to walk in the light. Others having had the light have sought and found instantaneous deliverance. Now the difference in these two was not in the attitude of the mind but in the light received. Carnality becomes an issue between God and the believer. (Note I say, between God and the believer, not between God and carnality) the law we take sides with carnality and

refuse God's provision for cleansing. Paul said, "I was without the law once but when the law came sin revived and I died." The same principle, God deals with the unsanctified believer. Light refused becomes their condemnation. Where there is no light there is Divine compassion, and finally, salvation.

Here, then, is the apostle's bases for the text, namely:

The provisions of Infinite grace to sanctify wholly, leaves the carnally minded without excuse;

The natural tendency of the unsanctified to mind the things of the flesh;

And finally, the sure and certain condemnation resulting from the believers' refusal to walk in the light and exercise faith in Christ to cleanse from all sin.

This unquestionably places the carnally minded in disfavor, and justifies the apostle's statement "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

A NEW FEATURE

We are pleased to announce that we expect to begin publication, in the near future, of a series of contributed articles written by outstanding preachers and teachers of the Holiness Movement. In this series we hope to have sermons from men who have ministered at Beulah Camp, such as Dr. C. W. Butler, Dr. Peter Wiseman, Dr. John L. Brasher, Dr. C. H. Hardy, Rev. E. W. Tokley and others, as well as some who have ministered in our local churches. We also hope to add to these men whom we have not had in personal ministry but are well known for their labours and writings on full salvation lines. We believe our readers will derive much profit and blessing from these feature articles.

If we do not have the Spirit of God, it were better to shut the churches, to nail up the doors, to put a black cross on them and say, "God have mercy on us."

If you ministers have not the Spirit of God, you had better not preach and you people had better stay at home.

I think I speak not too strongly when I say that a church in the land without the Spirit of God is rather a curse than a blessing. If you have not the Spirit of God, Christian worker, remember that you stand in somebody else's way; you are as a tree bearing no fruit standing where a fruitful tree might grow.—Charles H. Spurgeon.

The secret of the Lord is imparted to those who have no secrets from Him.

Only those who walk in the light can lighten those in darkness.

ST JOHN & WADAM WOODSTOCK N.B. Mrs. Fred Brown, Dec 43