

NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH

PART I

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3)

I WILL begin a five-part message on this subject, "No Confidence In The Flesh." Many governments in the world are subject to a vote of confidence. *I would vote "no confidence" in a government of an evil heart which seeks authority over me.*

Three steps are outlined in this passage in Philippians:

- (1) worship God in the Spirit;
- (2) rejoice in Christ Jesus;
- (3) have no confidence in the flesh.

This is the secret.

There is no legal drudgery. It is not a vain attempt to curry favor with God. An unconverted man knows nothing about this. It is not routine – a formula committed to memory and repeated. *It is a dialogue with God.* That is where it begins, mister. You don't begin with religious accessories. *You turn to God.*

You ask, "How?" That is step number two – "rejoice in Christ." Christ alone makes it possible. You can't get to God through a golf course, or an evening of music or painting sunsets. Christ said, "I am the way..." (John 14:6). *Let your pleasure be expressed in Him.* Exalt Jesus! Make your entire life a tribute to Him. Anything else is *hollow*. You can multiply words. You can embellish with glass, carpet, and gems. They may salve your soul, but they will never bring you nigh unto God. Jesus will.

Jesus does for me what I can never do for myself. I am convinced that cultured flesh is still flesh. It retains all the potential for disaster. It will betray me. I can rely upon Jesus.

Give the flesh its due! It has produced printing presses, jet travel, color television, escalators. Are there fewer thieves? Are there more happy marriages? Are there more obedient children? What is all this human development? Development of what? The elements of all that has been developed were in Adam after the fall.

The automobile adds to man's problems. The television multiplies man's problems. He cannot invent his way out of sin and corruption. The flesh – self-will, a will independent of God's – governs him. It is a disaster course.

Man needs a government that will place him back on course. He needs that same power which holds planets in check as they speed around suns. They are not governed by self-will. They do not exercise a power to *disobey*. They are not crashing madly about in the heavens. They are not

plummeting toward chaos, toward "the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13). They are not separated from the Creator.

Moderns adore education. They say at Babel mankind was divided into classes, that under law man's discipline began in earnest. They say that this search and upward swing produced Jesus Christ, a magnificent example of great teachers and extraordinary humans who have brought progress to mankind. *They believe the greatest is yet to come.*

I say history is the history of sin. It isn't a question of *education*. It is a question of *salvation*.

Don't be confused about what the Bible calls "flesh." Jesus Christ came in the flesh – flesh that is in human form. That was not *evil nature*. There is nothing wrong with human form. It is a government, working in that form, that is evil. You have no right to torture flesh, to practice penance by inflicting hurts upon your body. You abuse the engine of God. Human form is God's design. It is not evil.

The "flesh" Paul indicates is the parliament of alienated affections, the self-will, which says no to God.

Its history is pathetic. A solution of arsenic in a glass of water is very like the water, and cannot be detected by the eye. The chemist, in order to prove to the satisfaction of all that it is the deadly poison, takes one portion and to it adds something else, which, whenever it comes in contact with the arsenic in the water, makes it assume a well known color, showing at once what it is.

Mister, there is something within us that is deadly. God has been doing what the chemist does to show arsenic present. Not, as the rationalist would persuade you, trying to improve the arsenic. *God does not aim to make the poison harmless.*

Failure is failure. God doesn't need to place mankind under innocence again. The result is in the Book. God does not need to place mankind under ecclesiastical law again. The result is in the Book. *There is a poison that can never be acceptable, under any conditions.* That poison is a will within that says no to God. It never can be harnessed to save man of himself, and by himself.

Man couldn't govern himself even *under perfect conditions*. He flunked the first test. Do you think "flesh" would do any better if we produced the ultimate in environment today? The Communists think so. Their genetic errors have been the cause of their agricultural bungling. *Perfect soil doesn't make perfect seed.* God's test to Adam was simple – your way or My way. Adam rejected God's way. That is trouble, sir! Any time – any place!

God let conscience be man's guide. You would think a fellow would choose what is healthy, honorable, pure, best. Read the record. Man had the knowledge now of good and evil. He had clamored for it. He wanted to see for himself what was on the other side – the garbage, the cheap burlesque, disease, smut, rotting bodies and minds, the graveyard, the prison bars, murder, theft, rape. Man wanted to titillate to the front page. So, God let him have that kind of world instead of the perfect Garden.

I hear it every day, "Leave a man to his conscience! I think conscience should be my guide." Are you ready to blame your conscience for your lies, your divorce, your vomiting aftermath drunkenness, your pincushion body from drugs, your filthy fantasies? You have *failed*, sir! You can't govern yourself.

I'll tell you what God saw. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination (purpose and desire) of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). That doesn't leave much room. Look these three words: "every," that is without exception, not one good, rotten to the core; "only," unadulterated evil, unmixed sinfulness; "continually," at every moment, in so-called good moments as well as bad.

Don't sell me that "conscience bit!" It doesn't matter whether the United Nations, politicians, or folk behind or in front the counter – science is violated. It isn't that they know better they are not prepared to do better.

In two thousand years sin reached such proportions on this modest planet, that it repented God that He had made man. Eight people, out of the millions, were culled from the putrefying mass, and saved for further seed.

There's always a cry in a situation like such for law and order. When we can't run our own affairs decently and profitably, we are ready to vote someone in who will make us do it. The trouble is we elect the same kind of flesh.

Never forget it, mister! *God has already tried man under the perfect rule of human righteousness.* The entire Gentile world indicted under a test of conscience. Read Romans chapter one. The entire nation of Israel, a select nation, was indicted for a test of law. The law did not bring a nation to God. Professing to love the law, they found ways to circumvent the law. This is what the Holy Ghost says, "*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added for the sake (lit.) of transgressions*" (see Galatians 3:19). *Man breaks the law as he violates conscience and spurns innocence.*

The law showed sin to be a *transgression*. That is the purpose. It is willful. It is malice aforethought. The law of God shows you plainly, mister sinner, that you are a *rebel*. It makes you guilty – a lawbreaker. That is worse than offending your conscience or staining your innocence.

A test, before it is of any use, must be perfect. If the test is imperfect, the results will prove nothing. God's law is perfect. It fences you in to absolute, honesty, absolute purity, absolute love. But the "flesh" hates it. The "flesh" writhes under it. The "flesh" will not submit. *There is something basically disobedient in me* – something that refuses to come under.

It didn't take long. Man replied to the Ten Commandments by raising the Golden Calf, thus breaking the first words of the Law, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

You can't *make* men good. If it were possible, I would rush to the poll and vote for such a law

today. We tried that with Prohibition. You can't make your children be good. You can punish them for being naughty. They must want to be good. There isn't a jailer strong enough to make mankind bend to his authority.

The problem is not with the *law*. The problem is with *flesh*. Changing laws won't solve problems, but changing human lives will. The Old Testament has failure written all over it.

Then God sent a *perfect image*. God sent His Son in the flesh. Mankind could see what "flesh" should do, was meant to do, *could* do, when yielded perfectly to the divine will, *when union and communion are retained*. Jesus Christ showed forth a perfect life of service.

Mankind hated that picture. They wanted to mar and scar and crucify such an image. They felt too ugly in His presence. God had to show man what he was – incorrigible, vile, worthy of hell.

It took Jesus and Calvary to do that. Christ was the Law of God. It was all fulfilled in Him. Christ was the picture of perfect government. His obedience in all things was His insignia. Christ was the blameless, innocent Lamb, unspotted, undefiled. Jesus Christ is the substance of all things. Man's trial would have fallen short without the ultimate witness – the Son of Man – on earth, living under my conditions, facing my temptations. Jesus Christ shows conclusively how far from God I am.

"Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son" (Mark 12:6). You would have thought so. But they nailed Him like a butchered hog between two culprits. And they yelled, "Away with Him! ... We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). Mister, you can't make much out of that sort of flesh.

So enmity against God reached a peak at Calvary. In Christ's crucifixion was shown the terrors of the cancer, the malignancy that began at Eden.

Mister, your "flesh" will never make it – no matter how you educate it, diet it, dress it, expose it, worship it. *I wouldn't trust that route if I were you*. It will lead you down a dead-end street. Vote a lack of confidence in it, and throw yourself on the mercy of God. That is what I have done, and I have found peace that fills me with joy unspeakable.

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PART II

"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" (Romans 8:3)

IN our last service we looked at human nature under different testings.

1st – As tried by innocence, his *independence* was seen – that is, sin as to the will.

2nd – As tried by conscience, his *corruption* was seen – that is, sin as to the heart.

3rd – As tried by law, his *transgression* was seen – that is, sin as to commandment.

4th – As tried by Christ, his *enmity* was seen – that is, sin as to a person.

You see the complete character of the poison. The "flesh" would kill God if it could. Mister, you have that nature in your bosom. It is a "killer." In this service we turn toward the description of the "flesh" as recorded in the Bible. God tags it after He has permitted it to pass through innocence, conscience, law, and Calvary. Your New Testament conclusion is not a hurried one. It waits until the full evidence has been presented. The New Testament looks at a *hard heart*.

Paul had a chance to look at himself. *"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing"* (Romans 7:18). Are we better than Paul? The Holy Spirit dwelt in the new nature in Paul as He now dwells in today's believers. But Paul still wrestled with the "flesh."

Only a saved man can know there is nothing good whatever in the "flesh." Many moral, unconverted men believe that there are numerous good traits in mankind. They meet in clubs and fraternities and study groups to exploit these traits. They believe that even the worst men have their good points. These should be salvaged and commercialized.

God's estimate, sir, is this: "nothing good" – not one unredeemed thing that can be used in His kingdom. Read it in Genesis 6:5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." That is the official record, sir, regardless of the yellow pages of your phone book.

People say to me, "But, Brother Ward, he reads the Bible." Unless that man has been born again, all his knowledge, whatever the source, is reckoned "no good."

Others say to me, "But he goes to church with his Christian wife!" They believe this sense of devotion marks something good. Read God's label!

Hearing the "Dead March" from Handel's oratorio Saul played by a military band at a soldier's funeral has often moved many to tears. And I do not wonder at the most stolid being moved in their feelings; *but what does mere feeling or emotion amount to?* Men undergo that when they are strapped down in the electric chair. God says such emotion doesn't count.

Some think there is good buried in themselves, that they are not all bad, because their consciences get disturbed at certain excesses. They say, "That is too much even for me. You've got to draw the line somewhere." They think, at that moment, they are on God's side. You might as well follow your stomach or your tonsils.

God's Word is the authority, not your conscience. Your conscience is like a thermometer. It is a good instrument. But you cannot turn a cold day into warm one because you have a thermometer. Because you have a faculty that tells you what is good and what is evil doesn't mean that you have the power to make yourself righteous.

The New Testament, preacher, isn't too complimentary to the "flesh." "The works of the flesh are manifest, (they are not waiting to be exhibited sometime in the future; we know what they are) ... adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like" (Galatians 5:19-21). That is enough to fill the police blotter. Look at that proud "flesh!" *It is a fountain of filth.*

Peter tells us what feeds the "flesh." "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh" (2 Peter 2:18). The flesh feeds on buildup. It hates humility. That nature, lady, must have what it wills, and desires whatever the consequences. "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" (1 John 2:16).

It is an enemy. *It can never be an ally.* Romans 8:3-7 gives us the nature of the flesh as opposed to law, to life, and to God. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." The flesh immediately finds ways to circumvent legislation. "The carnal mind (your way of thinking) ... is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

You don't want to think God's thoughts. You feel it deprives you of thrill and the right of adventure. "To be carnally minded is death" (Romans 8:6). You are on a collision course. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8). Your donations and your periodic respect can't change that. *God won't go your way, mister!*

What is your option? The flesh is never sanctified or improved. It can only be condemned. So many of your programs are a waste of money. Believe it and junk them!

Get to Jesus! You ask, "Why? What can He do for me?" He came to do for you what you can never do for yourself. Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." *He alone can strike at that old nature.* It is too much for you.

Though my sins were like scarlet, *Calvary has cleansed them.* I am forgiven, *but the flesh never is.* It is condemned. It is placed under sentence. God never improves it. God never forgives it. I can never come to terms with depravity. I can never package corruption with Christmas, Easter, or Mother's Day wrappings.

There is no option *except birth*. "*Ye must be born again*" (John 3:7). I must be the offspring of new seed. I cannot improve the old. Christ on the Cross not only had our iniquities laid upon Him, but also condemned "sin in the flesh"; that is to say, not the guilt of sin, but sin in the nature. It can never produce favor. There is no appeal. My self-life is *condemned*. God will not accept it in any form or fashion.

Every program to improve the flesh is anti-Christ. God says to reckon yourself dead toward that kind of thing. Don't play with it! Don't cultivate it!

Only Christ can subdue self-will. Otherwise my flesh isn't going to contradict itself. I must have new authority. It must have triumphed over the flesh. I must enthrone Him. The victory is "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:25). The battle is the Lord's. He knows how to handle the conflict. My will has been given to Him. *My flesh* is still flesh. And "there is ... no condemnation to them ... in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). I operate in Him and not in myself. In Christ I am risen. In Adam *I am fallen*. There is no third man. It must be one or the other.

The New Testament is very plain on two points. First, *the believer is not in the flesh*. That is Paul's view. He says, "When we were in the flesh" (Romans 7:5). He had lived differently. Second, *the flesh is still in the believer*. Paul says, "In me (the believer) (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). I live under new authority, and I face the same old enemy. I want to look at this.

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Romans 8:9). I have victory in the Spirit.

Paul tells the Galatians, "*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). He tells the Colossians, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11).

I am in a new perspective. God sees me in Jesus, not in Adam. I am drawing life. I am sustained. I am accomplishing what I could not have accomplished. *God sees what I am becoming in Christ*. This was His attitude toward Israel. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel" (Numbers 23:21). God sees me a winner, "not having spot, or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5:27). *The possibilities are unlimited in Jesus. There are none in the flesh.*

Galatians is a very important showcase in the New Testament. Paul uses Peter as an example. Should Peter refuse to take a meal with certain folk – if he could not mingle freely with Gentiles, cleansed by Calvary and placed in a position of righteousness that no legal observances could effect – then the whole "gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), would have been undermined.

Strict observance of ritual and clerical law could not substitute for Christ – never! Paul shows that both Peter and himself, Jews as they were, children of promise, and not "sinners of the Gentiles" (Galatians 2:15), had to fall into the sinner's place, and accept Christ the gift of God. *The flesh*, no matter how disciplined, can never substitute for Jesus. God will not accept it. *The Adamic nature can never be repaired. It must be put to death.*

Peter preached this. He said, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we (Jews) shall be saved, even as they (sinners of the Gentiles)" (Acts 15:11).

Paul says in effect, if the law could justify them, they were wrong preaching Jesus. He preached Jesus because Christ did for him what his strict religion, and his fanatical adherence to it, had never been able to do.

I'll tell you this, preacher. *Jesus doesn't need a bundle of precepts to help Him present the believer to God.* Jesus was judged, condemned, and crucified by that same bundle of precepts. I'm not going to trust them to make my case before God – not at all. Grace and law cannot help each other in my salvation. It isn't my trying with God's trying. It is God all the way. God doesn't need "a part – savior" to work with Him. He is mighty to save.

In these messages I am presenting the pulse of the gospel. Jesus, alone, is your sufficiency. Surrender to Him! It is your eternal salvation.

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PART III

"For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (Galatians 2:18, 19)

TENETS, creeds, and position papers cannot save you, mister. The book of Galatians, in the New Testament, is there to declare this fact. "For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead."

I can't make it. Its perfection is too much for me. I stand condemned by my inability to produce the right answers. A perfect law renders me *guilty*. I am not forgiving enough. I am not generous enough. I am not patient enough. I am not merciful enough. I am not honest enough. *I can't, in myself, produce enough of any good thing.*

Preacher, you can't effect a merger of grace and law. It must be one or the other. *They can never be combined to save me.*

I am under the sentence of death – *condemned*. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Don't tell me you have never sinned! You would be a second Jesus Christ – a second "Only Begotten Son" – a greater miracle than Jesus of Nazareth – because you arrived without a virgin birth.

It isn't a question of having your case tried later. *Your case has been tried and sentence passed.* "For the wages of sin is (not shall be, but is) death" (Romans 6:23). That is the condemnation, the guilt you feel constantly. What are you going to do about it – turn over a new leaf, try to do better? That's like a man on death row deciding to take a course in archaeology.

You need *pardon*. *You need a new nature*. You need the gospel. My condemnation and sentence of death have satisfied the law perfectly. *I owe nothing to the law – nothing*. It doesn't have a single claim on me. The wages of my sin cannot be demanded twice.

A good example is Daniel. By serving his God, Daniel came under the penalty of the laws of the Medes and Persians, which said, "He shall be cast into the den of lions" (Daniel 6:7). Daniel had willfully broken their law, so he had to pay the penalty. But, sitting at the bottom of that den, with the lions' mouths graciously stopped, he could say, "I am dead to the law of the Medes and Persians."

And when Darius raised him on the morrow, he did so in perfect righteousness, as far as the demands of the law of the Medes and Persians were concerned, and no enemy of Daniel, no adviser of Darius, could punish Daniel for lawbreaking, nor point a suspicious finger at him as he sat with Darius – he could now live to Darius. "I, through the law am dead to the law," only, however, *"that I might live unto God."*

Let me tell you something, lady! This death and resurrection scheme is no figure of speech-preacher's talk. It is an awful reality (judicially and experimentally) to the sinner. *Calvary is everything*. When a sinner believes in Jesus, that sinner has life out of death.

Paul had that experience. He says, "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." What! – is Saul the Pharisee, Saul the persecutor, Saul the theological professor, Saul the *legalist*, master of creed and *curriculum* – is he *dead*? Yes – finished. Where and how? He says, "That is where I find an end of myself – on the cross of Christ": "I am crucified *with* (not *for*, or *instead of*, but *with*) Christ" (Gal. 2:20).

Mister, He (Jesus) covered me. The stroke of justice, meant for me, fell on Him. My agony, my separation from God, was in His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). That was my hell. Those were my wages He collected. That was my penalty He assumed. He "suffered ... the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

I'll tell you this. *No demand can be made against Christ*. After justice had been satisfied, God raised Him from the dead by the Holy Spirit. The Resurrection certifies my complete salvation. My Catholic friend, it can never, never be Jesus Christ plus something else. It was finished at Calvary.

Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:20 21).

You can't have it both ways, lady. You can't be saved by both your episcopacy, and your priestcraft, and your ritual, and by Christ. "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). What you need to do, church member, is to submit yourself to God's righteousness. Stop trying to substitute man's brand of acceptance. Let Christ live in you! You've got too many other ideas living in you. No wonder you are as unhappy as you are!

Look at that line, "The life which I now live in the *flesh* (Galatians 2:20)! Here is the only way to handle the *flesh*. You and I can't do it by amendment and reformation. We do it by death and resurrection.

This "life" is sustained totally by "the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). It exists in a foreign, uncongenial climate. I have no friends. I cannot count on any self-help. I cannot coast. I cannot rest upon beautiful church services. It "lives by faith." The moment I stop believing I falter. I must keep looking to Jesus "the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). *I must look at love*.

"Who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Forgiveness is only part of it, mister. I need the "straight and narrow" after that. My peace is in righteousness. And, preacher, *I could no more get righteousness by law than I could forgiveness*. But now are we "the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "For if righteousness

come by the law,. . . Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21); but we are in Him "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

You won't find your satisfaction in a creed. You will find it in Jesus. *Satisfaction comes from acceptance.* And only Jesus is acceptable to God. Find your place in Him.

God makes me "a *partaker* of the divine nature" (see 2 Peter 1:4). I partake of Christ as I do bread, water, and sleep for physical sustenance.

I arrived on this planet by "the will of the flesh." I am by birth seed of Adam – tainted seed. I am heir to guilt and sentence of death. "By nature (human nature) the children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). *But there is a second birth, a spiritual birth* – being "born of God" (1 John 3:9).

You won't find that birth certificate registered at the county courthouse. That birth, mister – "born of God," not man – *identifies me with Christ.* I become heir to His victory. I have the credits – all of them – of a new seed. And I am taught by the Holy Spirit to use them. I have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). And that's the happiest state you'll ever know this side the Eastern Gate.

But I still live in this body. I am fastened to this earth-vehicle until released. What am I going to do about that? It becomes the practical question of the day.

Suddenly I feel *opposition* I have never known before. An earth-vehicle jostles my new nature. That is the conflict. I carry something that is geared to this planet. I cannot deny it. I cannot ignore it. I must learn to live with it. *I must overcome.*

But my "new nature" has given me the power (the authority) to overcome.

Now I know that the disposition of the flesh (the tendency of the earthy) "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). *It must die.* The grave, my funeral service, are in my portfolio. What that "tainted seed" – the Adamic birth – produced, can never be made acceptable. So, it argues loud and long with the "inner man" – the imperishable man.

Now I know the meaning of "sin that *dwelleth* in me" (Romans 7:17). It has residence whether I like it or not. It can't be uprooted. It is not sin coming *from* me. I am faced with a close neighbor whose ways are in direct contrast to my new nature. There is a part of me that is *of* this planet, *for* this planet, and can never go beyond this planet. It is earthy. It will always be earthy. And my big job is to handle it with the new powers I have inherited from Calvary.

My salvation is *more* than a mere payment of debt. It is more than satisfaction. It is *victory.* My new nature *wants* to serve God. That is its structure. It isn't just out of gratitude. It is essence. That nature is from God. It isn't from my Daddy and Grandfather. It is superior to the seed of Adam. It quickens. My tendencies toward Calvary are quicker than my old reflexes were toward earthly things.

The senses of the inner man are far superior to the senses of the outward man. That is why such eternal reflexes as faith and discernment are keener and more certain than the physical senses of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. *They allow me divine rule over the natural.*

So now we face three very important and practical propositions. They are:

1. The believer has two natures in one person.
2. How does the believer grow in *grace*?
3. The believer faces such problems daily and accounts are rectified *daily*. It must be a day-to-day walk. The flesh must be crucified *daily*!

We must face these three items boldly and scripturally before we conclude this short series of gospel messages with you.

Let me place this in your thinking before we prepare for next week's service, should Jesus tarry. The believer is not two persons – a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. A believer is not two persons, the one perfectly sinful, and the other perfectly sinless, shut up together in one chamber. That is what no psychiatrist on earth can understand. And that is why you need the Holy Spirit to teach you and straighten you out.

The believer has *two natures*. They are the *old* and the *new* – just like the two parts of your Bible – the *Old* and the *New*. The one, the record of *Law*, and other the record of *Grace* – the one the story of *flesh*, the other the narrative of the Spirit. They reveal each other. They cannot be congealed. "That which is born of the flesh is (always will be, continues to be) flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). The *higher* has authority over the *lower*.

The sinner *living* in the flesh, but "*dead* in trespasses and sins," is pardoned, accepted, and made an heir. All through Christ and Christ alone. He receives a new birth. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God*," (John 1:13).

This grace of God gives me new position. I am no longer helpless, a slave, shackled and sentenced. I am a son and responsible to govern, in righteousness, my earth-vehicle. And I can call upon, and receive, all the assistance I need to keep this earth-vehicle a servant.

I can never, for a moment, take the situation for granted. The flesh seeks to dominate. It would rule. It would humiliate me. It would turn me toward earthy goals. I can never afford to let this happen. And, through Jesus Christ, it will not happen. That is a promise. Count on it!

NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH

PART IV

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" 1 Peter 2:11

I MUST grow in grace. That is as important as being saved by grace. My growth becomes my security. Growth is a universal testimony. It is there in plant, mineral, and animal.

The smallest leaflet on the furthest branch of the vine has the same vine life as the largest branch, the trunk or the root. God's seed implanted by the Holy Spirit is a perfect life. Growth is the logical step. Opposition arouses, immediately after the New Birth, to hinder that growth.

Remember! Divine grace is operating in human life. Paul tells the Colossians "the facts of this new living." "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Colossians 3:5). There is a threat that is always there – like weeds always present, always hindering – manifesting its contrary nature in "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). That opposition must be kept down. And God has furnished the authority to do so.

"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other" (Galatians 5:17). They can never be merged. There can be no more agreement between them than there can be between mongoose and cobra.

Not enough emphasis has been placed upon the truth, "The Spirit against the flesh." And Paul tells us why. "So that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17). This is the opposite fact to the side he presents to the Romans. There he shows that the good things we want to do are prevented by coercing flesh. Now he tells the Galatians that fleshly things, asking for liberty within us, are prevented by the presence of the Spirit. A mighty God furnishes the believer resistance – spiritual muscle – in redemption. Count on it and apply it!

Salvation is more than forgiveness, mister. Salvation is divine life. I am "quicken'd. . . together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5). I am partaker of the same power. Paul tells the Ephesians that the believer is a member "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:30). I have *all the authority I will ever need to overcome*. It is up to me to use it.

John learned to use it. "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*" (1 John 3:9). That is a big claim. It isn't directed to a carefully selected few. "*Whosoever is born of God.*" That means the most recent believer.

I'll tell you this, sir. That new nature, implanted in you by God's Spirit, will not sin any more than two and two will yield to five. But don't count on your flesh – your earthy – your humanity! *And if you "sow to the flesh, you'll reap of the flesh."* But if you "sow to the Spirit you'll reap of the Spirit" (see Galatians 6:8). As always, you must make that decision. You will behave

yourself if you walk in the Spirit!

You can serve the first Adam, or you can serve the last Adam. The choice is in your garden just as it was at Eden. You have both spiritual birth and natural birth as your inventory. It is up to you to establish priority. Do you prefer to live as a son of God or do you prefer to live as a son of Adam? You'll get a lot of help either way. The flesh is there and the Spirit is there.

The flesh will mislead you. There are no exceptions. Paul could boast more than any man of his superior training. He was cultured. His flesh had been toned to a point of pride. He came to the conclusion it was worthless. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ...I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knoweldge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:7, 8).

Ordinance – policy – ritual – bylaws – convention – adherence – discipline can never implant life. They are only stakes, fencing, scaffolding. They render a service as do sunshine, rain upon seed. But the miracle is in the seed. Without seed, soil and sower are sterile.

Church and catechism can send you to hell, lady, unless there be a new birth upon which church and catechism can work. The same sun that softens wax can harden clay. The church can harden you. It shouldn't, but it can. Something that should be an advantage to you can become a disadvantage to you. You can sit under sermon and song until it becomes impossible to renew you to repentance.

I am overcome without the help that God gives. With God's help the roles are reversed. You are victor. That's the thrill. That's the reward. That's the purpose of salvation. I enjoy the service humanity provides. But it shall not reign over me. It is by opposition and warfare – not by assimilation and agreement – that we grow in grace. I do not grow by the flesh getting better. It will never get better. I ask that the grace of God be stimulated in me. That grace is more than equal to the quest of the flesh.

I reckon the promise and program of the flesh a failure. That is my first step toward victory. I must accept the verdict – "no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3). Without that conclusion I tamper. I experiment. I am up and I am down. Morality is no substitute for "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). External right doing is a hollow, disappointing ersatz for the real thing.

The sense of fulfillment is in walking "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). My direction is firm. My instinct is to turn toward heavenly things.

I don't owe the flesh one thing. "We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (Romans 8:12). I don't see any profit in being a fornicator, unclean, covetous. There's no future in it.

It is the walk that counts. In the beginning man walked with God. That walk was interrupted when man turned toward the flesh. Paul lays it on the line. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

You can't strengthen the Spirit by a fleshly program. How many religious societies try! Living toward the flesh breaks fellowship. The result is death. You'll have a dead soul.

Watch out! When that authority is gone, you are helpless. Samson was. Paul told the Romans, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14).

That is the trap – making "provision for the flesh." Parents fall into it. Preachers fall into it. Educators fall into it. "Make not provision for the flesh" (Romans 13:14). Stay away from plaudits! Cancel flowery introductions. Erase temptations to remove testimony and prayer portions of the meetings. Keep those ego-building arrangements out of the choir. Stop catering to an indifferent organist. "Make not provision for the flesh" (Romans 13:14). If you do, sir, the flesh will take over. Christ made Himself of "no reputation." That has become our biggest industry – reputation building.

The flesh likes to have distinct billing on the marquee. We are zealous for our by-lines and credits. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3), doesn't fit our modern public-relations pattern. Publicity has become our life stream. We vindicate the flesh as King Saul did before Samuel. We say, "Oh, but it is for God's glory that I tell it." We spare when God says, "mortify."

The flesh never quits trying. It is resilient. Like appetite, thirst, sleep, it keeps coming at you. Take care of being "vainly puffed up" by the mind of the flesh. It will flatter you. It is never more dangerous than when it tells you that you are making spiritual headway. I believe it was Spurgeon who handled the flesh properly, when, after a sermon he preached, a member of the audience said, "Oh, you did well today!" and he replied, "Yes, Satan told me that before I left the pulpit."

Place your trust in God. God will tell you your faults. But God will never let another accuse you. He stands up for you against any accuser. So, if you go around faultfinding, you are out of order. It's a good test. Rejoice in another. Let an evangelist commend another evangelist. Let a pastor in town praise another pastor in the same town. That takes grace, mister!

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). Just as you daily practice personal hygiene, make it a practice to keep yourself spiritually fit. You foster growth. Carelessness can cost you. Ask the victims!

By the authority of the Spirit command your body to perform as God created it to perform. That doesn't erase thrill and excitement, happiness and achievement. God's will is neither asceticism nor ostracism. They are a dishonor to the magnificent "temple" God created – your body. But you don't worship the temple. You worship the Presence dwelling in the temple. Care for your body. Neglect is an insult to God.

There is no "automatic" in the Christian life. It is constantly a matter of taking sides. Whatever

feeds the spirit starves the flesh. Peter knew by experience. He says, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

A world system, always sponsoring the flesh, will judge you a "stranger" when you do not take their cocktails; when you do not play cards; when you do not dance. You are a "stranger." That's what you are! Get used to it. Stop trying to be a mixer.

A believer can't fit into the company and practices of unbelievers. We are living the life of Christ; and as such, we are to hate, "even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23). There can be no compromise, no getting together.

Lady, if you are a believer, you are learning what the flesh is. You recognize it by its unmingled vileness before conversion, in a life of sin. You recognize it by the horrid lusts it proposes to your cleansed soul. You recognize it from the description God gives of it in His Word. He exposes it in precept and example.

God's Word is a faithful record. It credits and condemns. When God places a character in the Bible, and you read about that character, you can readily see what is both right and wrong about that character, and how he or she got that way. No religious publication on earth matches it. The conflict is reported. That makes you respect the conquest – "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23).

It's growth, sir! That is the story of all stories. I am acquiring that stature of manhood in Christ Jesus. I'm on my way to being a "man." That was God's intent in the beginning. "Let us make man!" That purpose hasn't changed. This time, instead of "dust," God has chosen Spirit. And there is a difference.

NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH

PART V

*"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which
I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the
Son of God, who loved me, and gave
himself for me" (Galatians 2:20)*

THE righteous requirements of the law are "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). I don't owe the flesh anything. "We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:12, 13).

I'll tell you this. If you live for this world system and its goals, it is impossible to maintain communion with your Lord. "*Ye shall die.*" Life cannot be maintained without a source of supply.

Paul leaves no doubt about this. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14). That's the pitfall among us today. We make provision for it. Christ followed this routine. He "made himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7). The reputation business has become one of our busiest industries. We spend thousands on publicizing and advertising – all to build, improve, and sell flesh.

The flesh lusts for recognition. It opposes the divine directive, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3). The flesh wants everyone to know.

So often the flesh says, "Oh, but it is for God's glory that I tell it." We involve God in a program He repudiates – Make no provision." Paul says it's a mine field. He warns of a danger, being "vainly puffed up." Soon we're morally and spiritually poverty-stricken, trying to find nourishment on "Husks that the swine did eat" (Luke 15:16).

We sometimes are seduced to believe Christian "flesh" is superior to sinner "flesh." That is fatal. "That which is ... flesh is (continues to be) flesh" (John 3:6). It cannot be made to work toward spiritual ends. Moral energy is not an acceptable specie in salvation circles. You must keep looking unto Jesus – the Author and the Finisher. The moment you take your eyes from Jesus you will fail. Peter learned this lesson. It was the difference between survival and sinking.

I must travel "in the light, as he is in the light" (1 John 1:7). I have been transferred by redemptive miracle into another kingdom – from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. It is a new culture. I move in His world. I recognize this new world by the record of His life among us. He became "the light of the world" (John 8:12). Mankind saw this new world through Jesus. The adulteress saw it. "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

Light makes it possible to see. Zacchaeus saw himself immediately. He saw his need for cleansing. And he did something about it. He availed himself of the light. He walked in the light. He didn't compromise the light. He got busy immediately with restitution. He let light flood his bankbook and his finances. They had been hidden and very private. Now he wanted his books open to everyone.

"If we confess." That is the predicate. Forgiveness and cleansing follow. I must get out into the open. That is always the place of a "son". The family welfare is my concern.

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not" (1 John 2:1). That is the only permissible standard for the believer – "sin not." "be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

Light provides energy. I must avail myself. That energy is more than enough to mortify the deeds of the old man.

But "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1,2). He alone judges my failure. He alone covers my failure. It is a personal matter between your Lord and yourself. He does not excuse failure. He takes my guilt upon Himself. He clears me through His own death and offering. He applies His victory to my cleansing.

He is always washing, improving, presenting His own. He washed Peter when by daily standards that disciple was "clean every whit." The Word of God has a daily action upon us. Paul tells the Ephesians, that Christ wants to "sanctify and cleanse. . .with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26).

Something happens daily in and through and by Christ that can never happen otherwise. It is an action that a living Christ provides. It is a nature geared to "things which are above" (Col. 3:1).

The test is this. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). I remain a responsible, free-will agent. I must choose. I must exercise choice moment by moment. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). John says, "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and (having believed – having the new life, the new energy) love one another, as he gave us commandment" (1 John 3:23). That spells it out, mister.

Take any epistle in the New Testament, and that letter will spell it out for you. Each epistle concludes with a list of practical directions. Christianity isn't theory. It is everyday living – living now as you would in eternity. The New Testament describes it as a walk. It tells us how the believer should walk.

This isn't accomplished by a whip and a taskmaster. It can't be done that way. Paul tried and failed. He is the supreme test for all time. But he discovered how it can be done. He discovered love for Jesus can do it.

Paul says this traumatic experience quickens you. It does for a bride. A young woman who detests every moment of housework flings herself into extra hours of service – cooking, shopping, dusting, washing pails of diapers because she is in love. Love accomplishes what the law cannot enforce. That is the message of Paul.

Let me sound a warning! Guard against a mere doctrinal or intellectual grasp of truth. Without that throb, that pulse or quickening, "knowledge puffeth up."

I identify with Christ. I am, by new birth, a son of God. It is my privilege – more than that – it is my obligation to walk as a son. I have the authority to do so. I have the power to do so. This is the answer to every flesh problem in the catalog. I have left the world system where Jesus left it – at the grave. I am crucified with Christ. That means victory, eternal victory. I am no longer a slave to the world, the flesh, the devil. They have been rejected. There is no compromise. Calvary tells me that. My intent is to purify myself as He is pure.

*"So nigh, so very nigh to God, I cannot nearer be;
For in the person of His Son, I am as near as He."*

I have dual citizenship. I have responsibilities toward government. But, through His blood, I have citizenship in heaven, and I have obligations toward heaven. These are even more binding than my acceptance of taxes and services upon earth.

You cannot perfect in the flesh what you began in the Spirit. Your growth in Christ issues from your start in Christ. You'll never make it, lady, if you don't stay at the altar and in the prayer room. You can't start a plant in soil and then take it to sand.

There is a good fight and there is a bad fight. Your struggle with self-consciousness is a bad fight. That much the psychologist and psychiatrist will admit. You must reckon as God reckons. That is a good fight. You must reckon that Calvary, the Open Tomb, the Ascension, the high-priestly ministry of Jesus for you now, are sufficient for your daily victory, when appropriated by faith. That is the good fight. "The just shall live (not struggle, not exist) by faith" (Romans 1:17).

I ask you this question. God is pleased with Jesus. Why are you not pleased?

Will you ever be pleased with yourself? If you are, you are your own god. Paul tells you the way of victory. "No longer I, but Christ" (see Galatians 2:20). You can't do it, mister. Jesus can.

Come as a sinner. You will always need help. God knows that. God accepts that. God's redemptive resources are unlimited. Jesus was made a curse for us. He lay in the tomb, and you – "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) – are lying in the tomb. He has come down to the very spot where you are. His victory is your victory. There is no other possible meaning. It is the Savior for the sinner. It is God's way of life for my way of death.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless" – don't forget that nevertheless; that is what Satan wants you to forget – "nevertheless I live" (Galatians 2:20). I am going to shout that in the face

of every foe, every lie. "I live." How? "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." That's how. I have a new resident. He is the new man. The old man has been evicted. "Christ liveth in me." And when He does, I am alive.

This is not a matter of feeling. It is a matter of faith. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." That fact is history. Calvary is a fact.

<p>With Christ we died to sin, Lay buried in His tomb; But quickened now with Him, our life, We stand beyond our doom!</p>	<p>Romans 6:8 Romans 6:4 Ephesians 2:5 Romans 6:7</p>
<p>Our God in wondrous love, Hath raised us who were dead; And in the heavenlies, made us sit In Christ our living Head.</p>	<p>Ephesians 2:4 Ephesians 2:6 Ephesians 2:6</p>
<p>For us He now appears Within the veil above; Accepted and complete in Him,</p>	<p>Hebrews 9:24 Hebrews 6:19 Ephesians 1:6 Romans 8:39</p>
<p>In Christ we now are made The righteousness of God; As Son's of God and heirs with Christ, We follow where He trod.</p>	<p>1 Corinthians 1:30 2 Corinthians 5:21 1 John 5:1 Colossians 3:1</p>
<p>Rejected and despised He bore the open shame; As fellow-sufferers, going home, We glory in His name. Soon will be the Bridegroom come, His Bride from earth to call! We, glorified with Him, shall reign, Till God Be all in All.</p>	<p>Isaiah 53:3 Hebrews 12:2 Romans 8:17 Acts 5:41 Revelation 22:20 1 Thessalo. 4:16 Revelation 20:4 1 Corinthians 15:28</p>