

**THE NATURAL MAN****F.B. Meyer:**

If it were not that I believe in the Holy Ghost, I would almost shrink from speaking about the profound philosophy wherewith the apostle Paul deals with the self-life; but I believe that God's Spirit will take my broken words and speak to each of you.

Will you turn to 1Co\_2:14 : "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither call he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

"The natural man." The Greek is the "psychical" man, the man in whom the soul is all, and the spirit is like a dark, untenanted chamber.

The temple of old was constituted thus: outer court, holy place, holy of holies. The outer court corresponds to our body, the holy place to our soul, the holy of holies or the most holy place to our spirit. In the regenerate man the most holy place is tenanted by the Spirit of God, but in the unregenerate man it is untenanted and dark, waiting for its occupant. The natural man is the man whose spirit is empty of God.

In the fifteenth verse of the same chapter, we read: " But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

Here we have the "spiritual" man, the man whose spirit is quick with the Spirit of God, who speaks and wills and lives beneath the impulse of the Holy Ghost Himself. Oh, that every believer became truly spiritual; spirit-unfilled (written with a small "s"): the Spirit of God (written with a large " S") dominating the spirit of man.

In the third chapter of the same epistle, Paul begins: "And I, brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal even as unto babes in Christ."

Now the "carnal" man is a Christian, a babe in Christ. We might think that the carnal man is unregenerate, but it is not so. He is regenerate, he is in Christ, and Christ is in him; but instead of Christ being predominant, the carnal element is predominant. I believe that there are hundreds of people who are in Christ; but they are babes in Christ. Christ is in them, but He is overcrowded by the superiority of their self, life. Their self, life was once clothed in rags; it is now clothed in the externals of religion; but it is still the self-life, and in the Christian may predominate over the Christ life, and be the cause of unutterable darkness and sorrow.

May God help me now to reverse it, so that the carnal element shall be crowded out, shall be crucified, and the Christ element shall become the pivot of your life!

In order that you may know what the carnal element is, let me say that that word also stands for "flesh," and that the Greek word is sarx. Now the Apostle uses the word "flesh," "carnal," or "sarx" in a very especial form. He does not mean the natural body, but he means the element of self. That is proved from Rom\_7:18, where he says: "In me, (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing." My flesh is "me." Some men spell it with a tiny m, and some with a capital M, but whether the m is in italics or in capitals, the "me" in each person is the flesh. Spell "flesh" backward, drop the h, as we are apt to do in London, and you get s-e-l-f; "flesh" is "self," and "self" is "flesh." It is "me," and as long as "me " is first and Christ second, I am living a carnal life though I am in Christ and a saved man.