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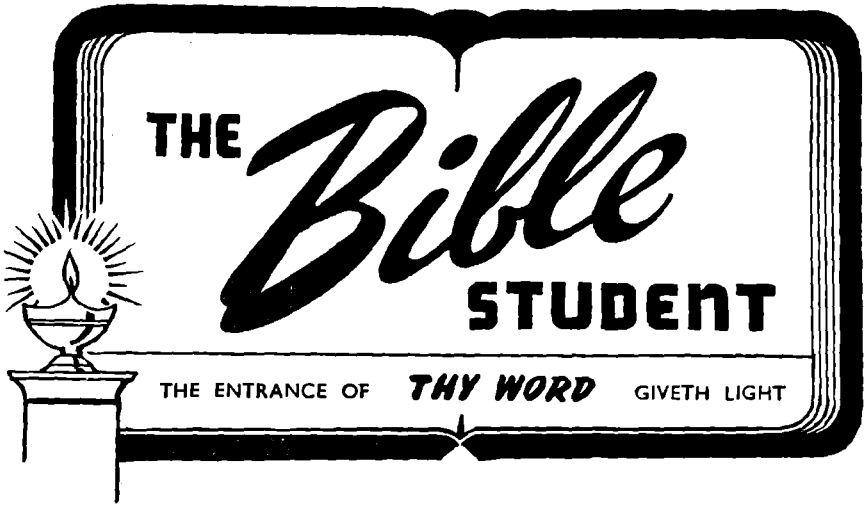
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Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

By W. WILCOX

'Spiritual' (*pneumatikos*)

This word occurs some 26 times in the New Testament, of which 15 are in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. It is used of persons, of the gifts bestowed by the Spirit for the maintenance of Spiritual life, and of the blessings obtained through it. Soutter defines the word as, 'spiritual (with general reference to the higher nature of man as directly in touch with and influenced by the divine)'.

It has been well said that the word describes 'that state wherein that which belongs to the new man in Christ is allowed to be supreme, to be in possession of the reins of the heart, to be in harmony with the divine nature'. The Spiritual 'therefore reaches out to all that which concerns or connects itself with the believer's life, just as the instruments used in the service of the Tabernacle were regarded as holy because they were connected with that which was holy'. 'He who has allowed this spiritual life to grow in him unchecked by giving way to the fleshly nature, is said to be Spiritual (1 Cor. 2:15; Gal. 6:1). He partakes of spiritual meat and drink whereby he sustains the spiritual life, and receives spiritual gifts by means of which he performs his spiritual service'.

In its usage in the New Testament, we may note that the Spiritual Life:

1. *Arises from the Holy Spirit's indwelling.* When a man is begotten of God, and the Holy Spirit finds entry and a permanent abiding place in a man's life, that life becomes spiritual. Neither education nor development of latent powers inherent in the natural man can produce the spiritual state, for these do but furbish up the natural man. A new beginning, a new begetting, a new becoming are necessary, and then within the *new* man the blessed Spirit takes up His abode and constantly maintains and ministers to the spiritual life of man.

2. *Applies itself to spiritual food and drink.* Both spiritual meat and drink must be partaken of in order that the spiritual life may be sustained and developed (1 Cor. 10:3, 4.) As Israel was fed by the heavenly manna and drank of the water provided from the Smitten Rock, so the spiritual Israel needs the continual

supply of the spiritual manna and the spiritual water that flows from that Spiritual Rock—'and that rock was Christ'.

But this requires application—the daily gathering of the manna, and the daily bringing of the empty vessel to the gracious and generous source of supply: daily appreciation of Christ and His work and constant assimilation of that which He ministers for growth into spiritual manhood if the 'new man' is not to remain a 'newborn babe' only. It is here that there is much lack in the present day, when too many seem satisfied with the possession of spiritual life and do not appear to desire the promotion of spiritual growth. The daily reading of the Word and communion with Christ are as needful to the spiritual life as meat and drink are to the natural.

3. *Appears in its spiritual activities.* Receiving spiritual gifts from the Divine Dispenser of such gifts, the believer engages in those activities which allow these gifts to be advantageously employed. (1 Cor. 12:1, 4-11; 14:1, 12). The exercise of such gifts will be not only to his own profit, but to the edification of the Church as well. (1 Cor. 12:8; 14:12.) Filled with the Spirit, he gives expression to his exuberant life in 'spiritual songs', not only for his own enjoyment, but in 'making melody in the heart unto the Lord'. (Eph. 5:19). Thus led by the Spirit he worships, doing his priestly service to God, and glories in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:3). His worship is thus not a mere routine, but a spiritual exercise, possible only to the spiritually minded and the Spirit-led.

4. *Aligns itself with spiritual ideals.* To this end the Apostle prays for the Colossians that they 'may be filled with all spiritual wisdom and understanding to walk worthily of the Lord', etc. (Col. 1:9, 10). The spiritual man will readily discern that the things communicated by the Apostle are spiritual and therefore to be followed for they are 'the commandment of the Lord'. As a living stone in the spiritual house he will seek to offer up 'spiritual sacrifices', giving glory to God. (1 Pet. 2:5).

5. *Associates with spiritual companions.* In the passage above Peter refers also to the 'brotherhood' which is to be loved. Within that brotherhood is found the spiritual companionship of the spiritual man, and the exercise of such functions as are appropriate to one who is a member thereof. He that is 'spiritual' is to seek to restore another 'who has been overtaken in a fault' (Gal. 6:1),

and he is to do so in spiritual meekness as contrasted with the natural way of self-assertiveness.

6. *Approves only of spiritual things.* He exercises the faculty of spiritual discernment which belongs to the spiritual man, and not found in the natural man. (1 Cor. 2:13-15). Being thus able to discern spiritual things he is 'able to communicate them' to others (J.N.D's trans.), and so 'to expound them'. This power of spiritual discernment develops as the spiritual man grows, and as he is more and more receptive of that which is 'taught by the Spirit' (1 Cor. 2:13). How often do we sit down in the school of the spirit and quietly receive His instruction? Is there a lack here in our spiritual lives today? How may we know save as we are taught? How shall we be taught save as by the Divine Teacher, 'Who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God?'

7. *Attracts apposition from fleshly and carnal men.* There is a real antagonism between that which is spiritual and that which is natural. The two belong to different worlds and pursue different ends. Paul speaks of this under the simile of a drawn-out contest in which the Spirit seeks to hold down the flesh, and the flesh seeks to hold down the Spirit. (Gal. 5:17). Further, as the weapons of this warfare are not carnal, it follows that they must be Spiritual (2 Cor. 10:4), and deal with 'imagination' and 'everything that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God', and so, 'bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ'. Victory in this warfare is thus assured to the spiritual man, for ultimately, that which is of Christ must conquer. But until the final victory the battle will continue and the believer will need to keep the edge of his spiritual weapons keen by continual resort to the Word, to prayer, and to Spiritual fellowship.

'PEACE'

'Many a labour, many a burden,	How shall I their number master?
Many a fretting care.	How shall I get through?
Busy footsteps coming, going,	How keep calm amid the tumult?
Little time for prayer.	Lord, what shall I do?
Duties waiting on my threshold,	Thou canst still the wildest conflict,
Will not be denied;	Bid the billows cease;
Others coming round the corner,	Thou canst fill earth's busiest moment,
Crowding to their side—	With Thy perfect peace.'