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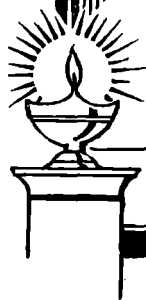
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THE

Bible

STUDENT

THE ENTRANCE OF *THY WORD* GIVETH LIGHT

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in reference to the individual, the Church, the Nation and the whole creation.

Thus past Redemption, present Preparation, and future Realization are brought together, and all emphatically as the glorious result of Christ's atoning work.

(to be continued)

WORD STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By W. WILCOX

'Fleshly' (Sarkikos)

Souter defines in his pocket lexicon as follows, '*sarkikos*—generally ethical, belonging to *sarx*, belonging to the natural life of man as a creature of flesh, with the characteristics of *sarx*, fleshly, unspiritual, carnal'. Trench says, 'Fleshly lusts (carnal) are lusts which move and stir in the ethical domain of the flesh, which have in that rebellious region of man's corrupt and fallen nature, their source and spring. Such are the *sarkikāi epithumiai* (I Pet. 2:11) and the man is *sarkikos* who allows to it a place which does not belong to it by right. It is in its place so long as it is under the dominion of the *pneuma* (Spirit), and receives a law from it, but becomes the source of all sin and all opposition to God as soon as the true positions of these are reversed and that rules which should be ruled'. Godet in his commentary on the Corinthian Epistle writes, 'If in the regenerate man, the flesh hinders the action of the Spirit, in the unregenerate man, who possesses only the breath of natural life (the *psuche*), it reigns as Lord. *Sarkikos*, *sarkinos*, the two adjectives signify *carnal*, but the latter refers to the substance and nature of the being so qualified, the former to its tendency and activity'. The term is used only in the Pauline Epistles apart from a single phrase in Peter's first Epistle. We may examine these occasions of its use.

1. *Carnal Men* (I Cor. 3:3). Such are characterized by:

(a) *Immaturity*. Paul's desire was to feed them with meat, but he found it necessary to use only milk, as they allowed those

things which belonged properly to the natural life of the unregenerate days, to hinder the growth of their spiritual lives. Hence, when they should have been mature and able to assimilate strong teaching, they were unable to digest anything more than simple truths such as would be given to babes in Christ. The spiritual life had been submerged beneath prevailing desires for certain elements which satisfy the old life as dominated by the flesh, and so had been stultified. He proceeds to show what some of these elements were.

(b) *Yieldedness to Passions and Party Spirit.* The particular 'fleshly lusts' which hampered their spiritual development were jealousy and strife. They had become jealous of the gifts of their gifted leaders, and of the gifts manifested amongst themselves in the parts they played in Assembly life. This jealousy had led to party cliques with their attendant strife and divisions. Instead of the Assembly being edified, it had become divided; instead of spiritual life growing, it had deteriorated and they merited the stern reproof of the Apostle. Later he shows them the local Assembly is like a body with several members, the functions of which materially differ the one from the other, yet no jealousy, no attempt at usurpation of the functions of the one by the other exists, and hence no discord is found, but each member promotes the good of the other and so ministers to the good of the whole. Such interdependence of one member upon the other, of one gift upon the other, with the recognition of the complementary nature of the one to the other, should characterize the members of the local body, and thus jealousy be avoided and strife be non-existent.

(c) *Walking after the natural man*, and not after the spiritual, they showed themselves as having a mode of conduct little differing from that of the man of the world, with his passions and strifes, his preferences and schisms, and his plans and schemes. There was little in their outward lives to manifest that they had 'become a new creation in Christ Jesus, in which old things had passed away and all things become new'.

2. *Carnal Wisdom* (2 Cor. 1:12). This is a wisdom affected by the carnal man, in which he prides himself and by which he pursues his carnal purposes. It thus:

(a) *Arises from man's mind* as dominated by the flesh. Here

it is spoken of as in opposition to the grace of God, by which Paul says he ruled his manner of life. Such grace was a gift from God, unmerited by man, and leaving no room for self-pride, whereas the carnal mind pretends to merit and assumes such self-pride as it deems the case allows.

(b) *Aims only at those ideals* which are of a non-spiritual nature, *i.e.*, non-spiritual according to the teaching of Scripture. Spiritual ideals are those inculcated by the Spirit of God, and he who reaches out after them reaches out to God, and aims at pleasing Him. At the centre and circumference of his life there is a consciousness of God which regulates his conduct. The carnal man avoids such consciousness and regulates his conduct according to his own tastes and in pursuit of his own ends.

(c) *Appraises only by non-spiritual standards.* His standards are largely such as for the moment are found to be expedient, or convenient, or likely to win the praise of his fellows. On the other hand the spiritual man has, as Paul had, 'holiness and sincerity of God' ever before him as standards by which to measure up all the concerns of his life. He did not divide his life into the two divisions, often accepted by men as quite proper to the manner of subject being dealt with, *i.e.*, 'religious' or 'secular'. Here Paul had in view his dealings with the Corinthian believers and he says that he was 'more abundantly' anxious to act by these spiritual standards towards them although his conscience could bear testimony that they were his generally accepted standards.

It is hardly necessary to observe that important lessons are here to be found for the believer who desires not to be reckoned as carnal, or as having his conduct regulated by carnal wisdom.

3. *Carnal Weapons* (2 Cor. 10:4).

(a) *Spiritual Warfare needs spiritual weapons*, tempered and made keen by spiritual means. It is obvious that carnal weapons cannot be fully successful in the waging of warfare of a spiritual nature. They might gain temporary advantage but are doomed to ultimate defeat. The Roman soldiery, the scoffing, the crown of thorns, the cross, might seem to bring about the defeat of the Nazarene, but the shout of victory, the resurrection from the tomb, and the manifestation of the living Christ, alike declared the triumph of the crucified. The lictor's rod, the stocks and the executioner's sword might appear to quell the missionary activity

and the spiritual power of the Apostle Paul, but his spiritual teaching has stimulated vast numbers to spiritual triumphs down the centuries to the present day, while the power that wielded the rod and ordered the death-stroke has crumbled to the dust, and its memory is but a shade of the past. The carnal weapon can only yield carnal results.

(b) *Spiritual Warfare is waged against opponents*, who war in the regions of the mind and of the spirit in contrast to that of the natural. Paul is out to remind the Corinthians that in this warfare spiritual weapons must be used to meet and conquer such opponents. They advance the product of their own thought, and seek after ideals opposed to the 'Knowledge of God'. The daily experience of what God is and of what He can do for the trustful heart, arms the believer with weapons which no carnal power can overthrow. His 'life is hid with Christ in God'.

(c) *Spiritual Warfare leads to Spiritual Triumphs* where every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. *Aichmalōteuō* means to *take captive* (in war). Every thought is to be subdued, its hostility overcome, its disobedience quelled, and is to be brought to a continuing obedience, even to such obedience as was manifested by the Christ. So every action would be one of obedience to God, for thought is the precursor of action, and all life will be a region in which the will of God will be pre-eminent.

4. *Carnal Lusts* (1 Pet. 2:11).

(a) *Activity*. Fleshly lusts war against the soul. The Roman power was at this time at war with the Christians to whom Peter was writing. Hostile acts, and bitter persecutions, even to the point of death, were continually being experienced by the believers at the hands of the infamous Nero. In the same way fleshly lusts were hostile to, and aimed at, the subjugation of the spiritual life with its affections and desires towards God. The conflict was hot, and the warfare bitter, but they could engage in it with hope, and fight on to ultimate victory.

(b) *Abstention*. These lusts or strong desires belonged to a realm to which they were alien and wherein they had no citizen rights and therefore should have no appeal to them. They should thus abstain from them, turn aside from them, treat them as belonging to another realm of a different order from their own. So should the believer look upon fleshly lusts, and treat them as outside the spiritual Kingdom to which they belong, and therefore

as opposed to their best interests. Timothy is told 'to flee from these things'; Peter says 'abstain from them'.

(c) *Appearance*. In so doing they would manifest 'seemly behaviour among the Gentiles'; for to give way to such lusts was inconsistent with the profession of Christ. In the doing of good works which even their enemies would have to acknowledge were good, in spite of the slander they directed against them as evil-doers, they would glorify God 'in the day of visitation'.

5. *Carnal Things* (Rom. 15:27; 1 Cor. 9:11). The believers were to remember that they owed a debt to those who had ministered to them spiritual things—they were to discharge that debt by ministering to such in carnal things; a reminder as needful in our day as it was in the days of Paul. Happy are the saints who remember their obligations and happy is the servant of God who is not made to feel as one who is an object of charity but as one who benefits by this rule of reciprocity! Here the 'things' are spoken of as carnal because they belong to the realm which minister to the fleshly needs of men.

THE GOSPELS

By E. W. ROGERS

It is not possible in the scope of one article adequately to treat such a vast subject as a study of the four gospels. The *progress of doctrine* presented in them, following as they do, upon the Old Testament prophetic scriptures, can only be touched upon in the barest possible way. The *accuracy* of the four records and their *differences* in detail from each other can receive but the slightest notice. The fact of their *inspiration* will be assumed rather than considered: and the *external* and *internal evidences* of their authenticity must be left altogether alone in this survey.

Every student should make a thorough study of Bishop Westcott's study of the Four Gospels: it is a masterly work and can only be neglected at great loss. He should also study Kelly's 'Lectures on the Gospels', and Bellett's 'The Evangelists'. At this late date in Christian history none can expect to be original. We should thank God for such a vast amount of expository literature that is ready to our hand, and we should use it.