

WHAT CONSTITUTES SPIRITUAL-MINDEDNESS?

"To be spiritually-minded is life and peace." – Rom. 8:6.

ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND the Scriptures, to talk fluently upon them and to expound them clearly is a qualification which we think should follow in the wake of spiritual-mindedness; but some might be able to expound Scripture very well, and to express truths in very good form who are not necessarily very spiritually-minded. A parrot can repeat certain words and phrases; but no one would accuse a parrot of being spiritually-minded. So there are some people who can repeat certain spiritual truths, apparently with a good deal of zest.

To be spiritually-minded is to have a mind in harmony with the Spirit of God, and fully surrendered to the Divine will – fully consecrated to the Lord. It would not be enough merely to have a preference for good, saying, "I prefer not to do any gross sin; I prefer to live a life that will be honest and decent." This attitude would not be spiritual-mindedness. Adam was not spiritually-minded, but in his perfection he had a mind to do right. He had the mind of God in the sense that he had a balanced mind, not one having a preference for sin, or one that was weak. He was sound-minded and could appreciate things from the standpoint of righteousness and justice. But even in his perfection Adam had not a spiritual mind, in the highest, or Scriptural sense of the word.

In Romans 8:6 the Apostle Paul uses the expression "spiritually-minded" in describing a certain class who have become followers of Christ, who have made a full consecration of their lives to the Lord and who, in harmony with this consecration, have been begotten of the Holy Spirit. These are spiritually-minded. These are granted a spiritual insight into Divine things.

OUR LORD BECAME SPIRITUALLY-MINDED AT JORDAN

This was true of our Lord Jesus. Having left the glory which He had with the Father, and having humbled Himself to take the human nature, He was found in fashion as a man. We read that He was not an imperfect man, but "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26.) Yet with all these special qualities He did not have the spiritual mind to which the Apostle has reference. Our Lord had a mind such as Adam had before the fall – a mind in perfect harmony, perfectly balanced. Our Lord received the spiritual mind, however, at the moment when He was begotten of the Spirit, when He made full consecration at baptism, and as a consequence the Holy Spirit descended and lighted upon Him in bodily form like a dove.

Following that begetting, the Lord had an enlargement of understanding and was granted to see certain deep things of God which He had not seen before His consecration; so we read in that very connection that "the heavens were opened" to Him – the higher things became clear to Him – the more spiritual things. These things St. Paul calls "the deep things of God." "The natural man," St. Paul says [the natural man would be a perfect man; fallen man is imperfect, unnatural], "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,...neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14.) Then he proceeds to say that we have received the Spirit of God through the begetting of the Holy Spirit; and that having the new mind, this spirit begetting, we are enabled to understand the deep things of God. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God; and we have received...the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Thus to us is it given to know the deep things of God. – I Cor. 2:11,12.

NO NATURAL MAN IS SPIRITUALLY-MINDED

So, then, the one who has been begotten of the Holy Spirit is spiritually-minded. He sees things from the new standpoint which God

specially brings to the attention of the spirit begotten. As the Apostle John says, "Ye [R4968 : page 50] have an unction from the Holy One, and ye all know it." (I John 2:20.) Whoever receives this begetting of the Holy Spirit, this anointing, has an understanding of heart and of mind which is different from that which any natural man would have, a quality that will progress with him. He has the privilege of growing in grace and in knowledge and in the appreciation of the deep things of God; and he should grow.

The Apostles Peter and Paul go on to explain (I Peter 2:2,3; Heb. 5:13,14; 6:1,2) that one thus begotten of the Spirit of God is at first only a babe, and, as a babe, should desire the sincere milk of the Word – the first principles of the doctrine of Christ; but as he goes on, he should feed upon the strong meat of God's Word. Some of those who have the begetting of the Spirit may be blessed with the special gift of language, so that they can make the matter very clear to others; some others who have also received the begetting of the Spirit may not be blessed with this gift. But all certainly would have the desire to tell forth the blessings which they have received from the Lord, that others might know and might glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are His.

As these spiritually-minded ones would thus endeavor to tell the good tidings, we have no doubt whatever that the Lord's blessing upon them would more and more qualify them as ambassadors and representatives, that they might tell the Message to others – if not in one form, then in another. We have noted, however, that some who speak with stammering lips have sometimes accomplished very wonderful things, while some with a great deal of eloquence have failed to obtain the same results. The victory is not always to the strong nor to the swift; for the Lord may grant His blessing with the feebly spoken word, particularly if the whole life be in harmony with the message given out.

We have been surprised at times to find that some who have apparently considerable understanding of spiritual things, in the sense of being able to tell about them, do not always give the best evidence in their lives that they really have the Spirit of the Lord. Sometimes in their private lives there is that which is quite contradictory. This condition surprises us; causes us to wonder how it is that those who apparently understand the Truth should be without the power, or manifestation of the power of the Truth in their daily lives. We should bear in mind that whoever speaks the words of the Lord with his mouth, should uphold it in his every act, word, thought, in private life as well as in public.

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The Truth should be the standard. Everything else is certainly quite contrary to the Divine will; and that person who fails to uphold the Truth in his daily life gives evidence that he has not the Spirit of the Lord in the proper degree. If, therefore, any of us should find that in our daily lives we have not been living in conformity with the message of our lips, it would be a matter of serious concern, for we cannot doubt that whoever is out of harmony with the Lord in his heart, will sooner or later get out of harmony in his utterances.

We think, therefore, that if in a congregation of the Lord's people any one were proposed as an Elder or a Deacon who outwardly had ever so great ability as a teacher, but who did not in his daily life give good evidence of being fully consecrated to the Lord, and of seeking to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, he should be regarded as a very dangerous person to put into the high position of Elder or Deacon. The sooner he is left quite by himself the better. For the more such people are put forward in public, the worse it will be for them and for the congregation whom they are supposed to serve.

