

Articles and Sermons :: Spirituality: The Key to all That is of God ~ T. A. Sparks

Spirituality: The Key to all That is of God ~ T. A. Sparks - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/12/5 15:43

A spiritual state is the key to all that is of God. Spirituality is the door, and the key to the door, beyond which lies everything that relates to God. Without spirituality there is no way through; the door is closed. The word "cannot" stands written as an impassable barrier - "cannot understand or receive the things of the Spirit of God. "

The world of things temporal is only a shadow of another world and has no abiding qualities or values in itself. It is governed by the law of vanity, vanity meaning simply that it cannot of itself realize its own destiny. It will reach a point, and from that point turn back and in upon itself; its efforts, its groanings, its travailings, never issue in a final realization of its intention. Nothing of it, by its own properties, can realize Divine purposes and ends. It is very important to recognize this.

As we get closer to this matter, we see how it applies specifically to Christian work. Oh, how many things are gathered into organized Christianity with the idea of making for effectiveness! The idea is that if you can have these things you are going to get results.

Money - oh, how much could be done if only we had money! We must have money! I ask you, how was it in the book of the Acts? Was anything done? With all the money today, how much is done of an abiding, eternal, spiritual value? If only you can get names and titles on your programs and advertisements, you are going to effect something! Are you? If you can get reputation, scholarship, learning, ability, physical strength, business acumen, the work will be affected. Will it?

I want to say that not in one of these things, nor in all of them put together, in themselves, is there any spiritual value, and there can be a very vast amount of spiritual value without any of them. God has taken pains along both lines to prove that. Along the line of their presence in abundance He has proved their spiritual futility; and along the line of taking the weak things and the despised and the foolish and the things which are not, by something which was nothing in itself, He has through the ages demonstrated His own power and done mightily fruitful things for eternity.

Well, that is simple and obvious, and it is only one more contribution to this fact, that it is spirituality that counts, that is the effective thing, the thing that gets through, and nothing else. The learning, the money, and all the other things may have a place, provided they do not govern, provided they are subservient to what is spiritual and are never banked upon as the things which are going to do the work; provided it is never assumed that if you have these things, a great work for God can be done. God will make evident the folly of that assumption. A whole range of things is employed by organized Christianity to secure Divine ends, but it does not work. Well, that is the first thing that we note in connection with spirituality.

We proceed in the next place to recognize that for spiritual - that is, Divine, eternal, ultimate purposes, we have to be reconstituted on a spiritual level and basis. That, of course, is the very heart of John 3. Nicodemus is interested in, and concerned about, the Kingdom of God, wanting to know about it, and has come to the Lord Jesus by night, evidently to talk about it. He had, like all other Israelites, an entirely temporal conception of the Kingdom, an earthly idea. It was formal, an official matter. The Lord Jesus does not waste any time at all with that. He simply brushes it all aside, ignores it, and says, "Ye must be born anew". "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." That is elementary, but we are coming to this fact: in order to know anything at all about the things of God (and I take the Kingdom of God to be that realm in which all that obtains is of God - -that which belongs to God) we have to be constituted according to God.

Nothing is possible until we are reconstituted on a new principle, until we are in other words constituted spiritual beings in a new way. The very beginnings of things in relation to God are that they are a new and altogether other constitution, just as absolute as would be the reconstituting of us to live a fish's life, and perhaps more so. We have to begin over again. For the very first thing of God, that is necessary. I know that I am not saying anything that is new in itself to you, but I feel very much that there has to be a reconsideration of the whole Christian conception of things if we are going to have effectiveness.

The ideas of doing God's work, and of what His work is, are very often far from the truth. The ideas of the means by which God would work are very often largely outside of the pale of God's acceptance. We are concerned with real

spiritual effectiveness, are we not? Then we have to learn the secret of it; that is what we are after. There is a crippling, paralyzing "cannot" resting upon the natural, the soulical man where the things of God are concerned; and yet how much of that soulical life is employed and relied upon in Christianity today to secure spiritual ends! If only you can get high-tensioned atmospheres, a good deal of stir and movement and emotion; if only you can get certain conditions brought about by a forceful, powerful personality with its impact upon the people; then you will get results!

And a great deal of result is obtained, but it is not spiritual; it is not abiding and eternal. But unfortunately, the consequences are not limited to that. There issues ever more and more this great tragedy of people having tried and been disappointed, and determining never to try again. The world is strewn with people who have had an experience and no more. Oh, the devil is clever!

We are saying that there is an unbridged gulf between the natural and the spiritual, and there can be no carryover; and yet in the Christianity of our day there is a tremendous carryover of the natural to the spiritual. We find the realm of God's things is simply full of natural elements, and they are all paralyzing the spiritual. There has to be a tremendous removal of all this smother and cover of natural elements - men coming in with their drive and their ideas and conceptions and ways. It is killing the work of God. Until that is really dealt with in the power of the Cross of our Lord Jesus and all set aside, and God is free to do His own work by His own means along His own lines, there will be no commensurate result. God's means and God's way is spirituality from start to finish - the impact of a spiritual constitution.

Yes, there is an unbridged gulf between the natural (the soulical) and the spiritual, and there can be no carryover. Look at the fact. It is so often very striking that a person of very considerable natural acumen, learning intelligence and ability in this world is nothing in real spiritual things, though he be a Christian. Are you not often up against that? A Christian man may be tremendously able in business affairs and most acute in his business transactions, full of intelligence and worldly wisdom, able to carry the weight of an immense concern, to be the driving force of a great business, man of weight and consideration in this world, but when it comes to spiritual things he may be a babe. You speak about the things of the Lord, and that great brain is altogether beaten by the simplest things of the spiritual life. You can get nowhere in talking about the Lord.

I am often amazed as I meet and talk with Christian men who are carrying great responsibilities and who have undoubtedly great abilities, and when you talk about spiritual things they are unable to say anything, to make any contribution; you are talking in another realm. And yet they know they are born again, and they have been so for a long time. What is the matter? Well, there is a gulf. They have all that greatness on the natural side, but they are very small on the spiritual. All that they have of intellectual ability and equipment and power in every way to handle big things naturally serves them in no stead whatever when they come to handle the things of God; whereas somebody who has none of it is a giant, a teacher, in the realm of things spiritual. Well, that is a commonplace in our experience.

But it comes right back to this, that there is a gulf, and there is no real bridging of this gulf, there is no carrying from one side to the other. The word "cannot" stands there. Here the word is not about the unregenerate, the grossly sinful. It is the Christian who is still natural, living on the basis of his soul rather than in the realm of his renewed spirit. The natural man "cannot". That is the closed door in things spiritual. Whatever he is in things natural, in things spiritual he is a babe or a fool.

Let me say without any hesitation: the measure of external ritual and formalism and that sort of thing determines the measure of spirituality. The more you have of that, the less you have of true spiritual life, of real spiritual food. A real life with the Lord is something very simple, shorn of all the art of religion; a few children of God gathered together in something which has no ecclesiastical traditions, no religious embellishments, no external forms, but just a simple meeting in the Name of the Lord. There you have life, power, fullness. I am not saying that things must be shoddy in order to have spirituality; I am saying that the law of life is spirituality.

It works in another way. The nearer to earth we get, the more we ourselves feel our importance. Man is biggest when he is nearest to the earth; he is smallest when he is farthest away. I remember my first time in an aeroplane; at ten thousand feet up, I looked down on the ground that meant so much weary toil to cross. It looked only inches big; the people and animals were like toys. The nearer to heaven you get, the less important are the things of earth. All this religious embellishment is the importance of the earth, of the world. The nearer you get to things spiritual and heavenly, the less of that you want, it all goes; you see how really petty and insignificant it is. See the Church from heaven, and all this that goes on down here is like playing at going to church, it is so small. There is a great deal of difference in the spiritual constitution.

To sum up what I am saying, it is this: Spirituality rightly understood is the secret of all that belongs to God. At the very beginning of our life with God, we have to be reconstituted as spiritual beings.

"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

"He that is spiritual....."

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid37>) T. Austin-Sparks

Re: Spirituality: The Key to all That is of God ~ T. A. Sparks - posted by myfirstLove (), on: 2006/12/5 15:59

Quote:
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too "simple" for the carnal man, the pharisees.

Re: Spirituality: The Key to all That is of God ~ T. A. Sparks - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/12/17 0:47

Christianity - A Process of Transformation

Reading: 1 Corinthians 2.

"We... are transformed into the same image"
(that is: 'We pass from one form to another')
2 Corinthians 3:18.

As I have moved about amongst Christians in many parts of this world, and in many situations, one thing has been growing upon me more and more strongly. In the presence of a great deal of confusion amongst Christians and many complications in Christianity, the feeling has become stronger and stronger that the need is for Christians really to know what Christianity is, and to know what it is that they are in as Christians. That sounds, perhaps, rather drastic, but I am quite sure that a very great deal of the trouble - and I think all agree that there is a good deal of trouble in Christianity generally - is due to a failure really to understand what Christianity is. It may seem strange that I should speak to you, mostly experienced and mature Christians, about the true nature of Christianity. Well, if you feel that it is presumptuous and hardly called for, be patient, and I think that before we get very far you will feel as I do: that although we know a good deal about Christianity as it is taught in the New Testament, we are very often in difficulty ourselves for the very simple (or profound) reason that we have not really grasped the meaning of what we are in. So often, when distressed as to some situation, and perplexed that it should have come about, I have found that that is just what the Word has said would happen.

May I say to you (and I am sure you will agree after a moment's thought) that the major part of the New Testament, by which I mean all these Letters which make up the larger section of the New Testament, is all bearing upon this one thing: to make Christians understand what Christianity is. If that is true, and all these Letters WERE to Christians, surely we have to conclude that even New Testament Christians needed Christianity explained to them, and even then there was this necessity of just defining the real nature of that into which they had come.

Begin with the Letter to the Romans. Was that necessary for Christians? It was written to Christians, but what was it written for? To put them right in the matter of Christianity! Apparently those people were not quite clear in their position, in their lives and in their hearts as to the implications of that into which they had come by faith in Jesus Christ.

Proceed, as we are going to do, into the Letters to the Corinthians, and what are they? Set over against a background of real confusion and contradiction in Corinth, those Letters were written really to try to make the Christians understand what

at Christianity really is. And so on and on through the New Testament that is the object; that we and all who believe in the Lord Jesus should really have a clear understanding of what this is, of the meaning of the name we bear, and the meaning of that which we believe and into which we have come by the grace of God. We can gather it all up in this simple statement: that the whole Christian life is an education as to what Christianity is. Is that true? Do you not sometimes stand in the presence of some situation, some difficulty, some trial, some complication, some perplexity, some experience, and say: 'What does it all mean? I am a Christian. I have put my faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. I am His, but I don't understand what it all means. Why this experience? Why am I going this way? Why has this come my way? Why is my life such as it is? These many things are so full of mystery and perplexity. What is it that I have got into? Is this Christianity? Is this really what I have to expect and accept? If so, I need understanding, and enlightenment, and I need help as a Christian, for this thing is often beyond me altogether.'

Well, that is the setting - but is that true? If there is anyone who has never been that way, who has never had a moment like that, and whose path has been so nice and smooth, with everything so right and well adjusted and without any kind of trouble, I will excuse you if you like to read no further, for I have nothing to say to you.

Well now, what is the point on which these words in 2 Corinthians 3:18 are focused? "We are transformed...", and it is in the present active tense: 'We are being transformed'; 'We are in a process of transformation, passing from one form to another.' There is a sense in which that fragment, that condensed verse put into those few words, touches the heart of the whole New Testament and explains everything.

Having said that, we come back to this second chapter of the first Letter to the Corinthians. This Letter (as indeed are all the Letters, but this is a very good example) is built around two contrasted words, and they are in this second chapter. Those two contrasted words describe two different types of humanity, two different manhoods, and between the two, firmly and squarely the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is planted. Look at the chapter again in the light of that last statement! "When I came unto you... DETERMINED to know nothing among YOU save Jesus Christ, and him crucified", and everything after that rests upon that distinction between these two types which the Cross divides and says: 'That belongs to one category of human beings and this belongs to another category of human beings.' There is a cleavage cut by the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ between those two which separates them and makes them two different species of mankind. That truth follows right through this Letter. Read it through with this in your mind. The Apostle here speaks about a foundation and a building. He says: "Let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ", and then he drives the wedge of the Cross right into the superstructure and speaks of one kind of work or works, which are the product of one type of man, or Christian, and another kind of work, or works, which are the product of another kind. The first will go up in flames and will never be found in eternity. It has gone for ever. The second will abide. It will abide the fire of judgment and the test of time, and be found in the ultimate structure, or building of God.

You see, Paul is applying this principle of the divide between two kinds of Christian people, and to the two kinds of work, or fruits, from each respectively, and the building, he says, as to its eternal value, will be determined by who is producing it, by what kind of man, or manhood, is producing it. Which of the two is producing this building? Think about this! These are not non-Christians. What an immense amount is being built upon Christ that is going up in smoke! Every man's work will be tried by fire, and its real value and its endurance will be determined by and will depend upon where it comes from, that is, from which of these two types of manhood.

Now you are wondering what the two words are which define the two types of manhood. Read the chapter: "the natural man... he that is spiritual." There are the two words: the natural and the spiritual CHRISTIANS. They are not unconverted people, not non-Christians. Is it necessary for me to put in all the detail to confirm and ratify what I am saying? May I remind you that the Apostle Paul had been in Corinth for two whole years with these people! I do not know what you think, but if you had the Apostle Paul going in and out for two whole years, you would have plenty of ground for consideration! He WAS there amongst them for two whole years, going in and out, teaching them probably every day, and then he went away for five years. Then he heard things which were reported to him by the household of Chloe. I wish everyone would do what the Apostle did! He did not take the report without investigating it. He got the report and then immediately dispatched a reliable messenger to investigate, either to find that the thing was not true or to find that it was so. The messenger sent and came back, saying: 'It is all true, and worse than the report.' The deterioration in five years!

You are perhaps startled and shocked by that, and will say: 'Can it be?' Well, remember the messages to the seven churches in Asia in the Revelation, and how all those churches began. There were wonderful things in those churches at the beginning. Read the story of the beginning of the church in Ephesus, and what a story it is! Against such tremendous antagonism and hostility those people came out clearly, and they brought all their magic books, of which the price is given (

and that represented a tremendous amount in human values!), and piled them up in the open street, or it may have been the market square, or some open place, and set them all aflame. That is a thoroughgoing division! But where is that church in the Revelation? "Thou didst leave thy First love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent" (Revelation 2:4-5). What can have happened? Well, I put that in by way of emphasising this possibility, at least, of declension. Why in Corinth, why in Ephesus, and why in the others that decline? Come back to the two men, the two men instead of one man, the two men instead of each individual. It is not a dividing of a company into this category and that category, but the two things in a person. You know, we are all, if we are the Lord's, in some measure natural and spiritual. Do you agree with that? The question is not whether we are altogether perfect and there is no more of the natural in us. That is not the point. The point is: Who is dominating and governing? Which of the two, the natural or the spiritual? Here in Corinth, as we see by the Letter, the natural man was in control in the men and in the women and had taken ascendancy over the spiritual man.

The two words, then, are 'natural' - and you do not need that I should tell you that the Greek word is 'soulical' - and 'spiritual'; the man of soul and the man of spirit always in conflict. Who is going to have the upper hand, the mastery, in every one of us? The two are in each person.

INTELLECTUALISM

Now what is this natural category, this natural species? Look at the Letter again. First of all, the dominance, ascendancy, control of intellectualism, the wisdom of this world. That is the thing that is being marked and underscored as a part of the trouble in Corinth; the control of intellectualism, the natural reason, the natural mind, the idea that you are going to solve the problems of life along intellectual lines. Will you tell me that that is not a peril of Christianity today? Why, it is everywhere! It shouts at you from the religious press. You may not read so much of it, but it is my business to be familiar with what is happening in the Christian theological world, and I tell you, friends, that as I read certain theological magazines I find DEATH. They are wearisome to the spirit. All this terrific effort to solve the problems of Christianity by the human intellect; the research, argument, discussion and debate, theses, etc.; philosophical Christianity trying to solve spiritual problems; what a weariness it is! I have to put these papers down sometimes! I cannot finish them, for they are so dead, so utterly lifeless. And that sort of thing is everywhere. It is thought that if you go to our seats and seminaries of learning with a clever brain, able to put out a convincing argument, you are going to save souls. There never was a greater fallacy!

This Letter to the Corinthians says that. Read this second chapter again and you will find that Paul is saying that. Paul was an educated man, so much so that for two thousand years the best scholars have found him defeating them, and they have not mastered him yet! Come to the religious bookshops and look at the shelves on the exposition of the New Testament, and you will find that Paul predominates. I got a book by one of our leading professors of theology in the universities and it was called A Portrait of Peter. This man, with all his learning, set out to give us a portrait of Peter. I opened the book and found that the first few pages were wholly occupied with Paul! He could not get to Peter because Paul was in the way, and the issue of his attempt was: 'Well, Peter was a great man, but Paul was very much greater!' Yes, this man Paul was an educated man, an intellectual man, a learned man. You cannot discredit Paul along that line at all, for he will beat you every time in that realm - but listen! 'You Corinthians, when I came to you I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, but in fear and in much trembling. I had determined that I would know nothing amongst you intellectual Corinthians save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' What was Paul's conclusion? 'It is no use, however much I may have of the schools, whatever I may know, however I might be able to argue with the Corinthians or the Athenians on Mars Hill, I will get nowhere along that line with a spiritual situation like this. I have made up my mind about that.' It is part of the natural man to think that you are going to be able to build up something by intellectual, scholastic, academic acumen. The fact is that what intellect can build up, intellect can pull down!

POWERISM

Then look at this prominent word: power. It is there in the chapter: wisdom... power; and at Corinth there was a worshipping of natural power, ability to conquer by natural strength. You can call it 'powerism', for it was an 'ism' there. Crush by your superior strength, impose something forceful, mighty, upon people, and you will win. Only be strong enough and you can solve all the problems and change all the situations. 'Powerism' is the natural man's idea of how it is going to be done.

EMOTIONALISM

Then emotionalism has a large place with these Corinthians. Going to capture, captivate and master, and gain your end by force of emotion stirring up people's feelings, playing upon them, working upon them until they make an almost hysterical

ical response. If you do that well and thoroughly you will get some Christians! The Apostle says: 'Not at all!' It is evident that these Corinthians were very emotional people.

FOOLISHNESS

What does the Apostle put over against these three aspects of the natural man? Over against wisdom he puts 'foolishness'. In the first chapter he speaks of "the foolishness of the preaching". You find that 'foolishness' was a great thing with the Apostle Paul! "We are fools for Christ's sake" (1 Corinthians 4:10). What did he mean? Well, he did not mean: 'Be simpletons!', which is what we immediately take to be the meaning of being foolish. What Paul meant by foolishness was the denial that intellectualism could find out God. 'The princes of this world, and the wisdom of this world did not find out God', said Paul, 'and they could not find Him out. They could not find out anything to do with God.' "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: and he cannot know them." Foolishness is the denial that all the wisdom and all the philosophy of the Greeks there in Corinth, where they boasted of this thing so much, could get through the barrier to find God; and that all this power of mind and will projected and asserted in any way whatever will come up against the barrier and not get through, will not find God, nor the things of God. It is all written off as a foolishness when the quest for God is pursued along that line. How foolish it is! And Paul gives a wonderful, almost startling, example of this: "God's wisdom... which none of the rulers of this world knoweth: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." There is not much sense in that wisdom, is there? Not much logic or philosophy in that!

So Paul puts what he calls 'foolishness' over against their wisdom, meaning a positive denial registered by the Cross of the Lord Jesus that mere intellectualism can find God and the things of God. It cannot, for the natural man cannot!

WEAKNESS

Over against the powerism of this mentality of the natural man, the Apostle almost glories in using the word 'weakness'. He says even that Christ was crucified through weakness, and he is always speaking about, and glorying in, his own weakness. What does he mean? The denial that this kind of human force, assertiveness, can achieve anything in the spiritual world. What a building we are tearing down!

You know, that has been the test of man right from the beginning. Was it not the test of Abraham to let go even of what God had given him in Isaac? The test of this man's real spirituality was the ability to let go. Was it true of Jacob? Was he not a man of tenacity, of determination, a man who would get what he wanted at any price, at the cost of anyone else's convenience and wellbeing? Was that not the issue of Peniel, or Jabbok? "I will not let thee go!" That is Jacob! He had been like that all his life, holding on tenaciously to what he wanted, what he had or what he wanted to have. But the finger of God touched the hollow of his thigh, and after that you can see that he is a cringing man! See how he meets his brother Esau!

You are not, whether you are Abraham or Jacob or any of the others whom we might mention, going to get through with God fully and finally by your own natural determination and tenacity. One of the great lessons of the Christian life is to learn how to let go to God. Oh, all the exhortation to be strong in the Lord, to endure, to acquit you like men and be strong, does not mean with this natural strength. It is another kind of strength, and a very different kind, a strength which is only seen by our ability to let other people sometimes have their way, to get what they are after and set us at naught. They hold, grip, maintain things in their hands to our disadvantage, and our real strength is in our weakness. The Apostle Paul put this into words. Read the second chapter of the Letter to the Philippians: "Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant... becoming obedient, even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." Well, has it proved to be the right thing? 'We are being changed...' Do you see the point now?

BALANCE

So, over against intellectualism - foolishness; over against powerism - weakness; over against emotionalism - what? The denial that the quest, the craving, the pursuit of sensationalism will get you there. For I believe that was the heart of these Corinthians' lust, their excessive desire, their outreach of soul for spiritual gifts. It is impressive that it is to the Corinthians, far more than to any other church in the New Testament, that so much is said about spiritual gifts. These demonstrations, this display, these things that you can see and glory in because you can see them, are all out of sensationalism. I am quite sure, from what we read, that if you had gone into those gatherings in Corinth you would have seen some hysterical behaviour as they made these spiritual gifts, as THEY thought, the ground and nature of their spirituality - and the

They are the most unspiritual church of all. So over against unbalance, lopsidedness in the Christian Church, there is need of balance.

Do you notice one characteristic of these Christians, one defect which is written so clearly and so largely here in the Letter? There is a lack of the power of spiritual discernment, the spiritual perception, the spiritual intuition which warns us: 'Go steady! Don't be carried away! Don't be thrown off your balance! This thing may be all right in its right place and under proper control, but be careful! There is a snare in every spiritual gift, and if you make the GIFT the main thing and not the spiritual meaning of the gift, that thing, which in itself may be quite right, will lead you into trouble.' I am covering a lot of history when I say that. Perhaps some of the biggest problems with which some of us have had to deal in people have been the result of this unbalanced quest for the manifestation of the sensational aspects of Christianity.

Well, perhaps some of you are not able to understand all this, but this is the situation here in Corinth, and I am only saying this to show that there are these two orders, these two categories of what I have called species of humanity which have their residence within one shell of the human body: soul and spirit. They are there, and the Apostle writes to these same people - for the second Letter is only a continuation of the first - 'We are being changed from one form to another.' What is going on? What is the process of the Spirit of God in the believer? What is the meaning of all this that the Lord allows to come our way, this discipline, these adversities, these trials, these sufferings, these difficulties, these 'strange things' (to use Peter's words, for they are strange to us as coming from God, or being allowed by God)? What is the meaning of it all? To bring about the change, the transformation from one species to another, from one kind of humanity to another. There is something in each trial, in each adversity in the suffering, which, under the sovereignty of God, is intended by Him to make a difference in us. 'We are being transformed.'

It is certainly not wrong to have a soul! It is THAT which has to be saved. In the course of that salvation, the great lesson is how to keep the soul under the control of the spirit. This is what is meant by being 'spiritual'. This is truly "He that is spiritual".

From "A Witness and a Testimony" July-August 1969.

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid37>) T. Austin Sparks

Spiritual Considerations - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/12/17 9:11

INTELLECTUALISM

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Reading Sparks is always a slow, contemplative effort, even as listening to his messages is. This may be long in its working, but it is full of great truths.

Re: Spiritual Considerations - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/12/19 15:23

Really loved this ...

FOOLISHNESS

What does the Apostle put over against these three aspects of the natural man? Over against wisdom he puts 'foolishness'. In the first chapter he speaks of "the foolishness of the preaching". You find that 'foolishness' was a great thing with the Apostle Paul! "We are fools for Christ's sake" (1 Corinthians 4:10). What did he mean? Well, he did not mean: 'Be simpletons!', which is what we immediately take to be the meaning of being foolish. What Paul meant by foolishness was the denial that intellectualism could find out God. 'The princes of this world, and the wisdom of this world did not find out God', said Paul, 'and they could not find Him out. They could not find out anything to do with God.' "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: and he cannot know them." Foolishness is the denial that all the wisdom and all the philosophy of the Greeks there in Corinth, where they boasted of this thing so much, could get through the barrier to find God; and that all this power of mind and will projected and asserted in any way whatever will come up against the barrier and not get through, will not find God, nor the things of God. It is all written off as foolishness when the quest for God is pursued along that line. How foolish it is! And Paul gives a wonderful, almost startling, example of this: "God's wisdom... which none of the rulers of this world knoweth: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." There is not much sense in that wisdom, is there? Not much logic or philosophy in that!

So Paul puts what he calls 'foolishness' over against their wisdom, meaning a positive denial registered by the Cross of the Lord Jesus that mere intellectualism can find God and the things of God. It cannot, for the natural man cannot!

Re: foolishness - posted by rowdy2 (), on: 2007/1/29 1:25

Thanks for this great post.

I am starting a file tonight to save great post and this will be my first entry.

rowdy2