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Mental or Spiritual

by T. Austin-Sparks

First published in "A Witness and A Testimony" magazine, March 1926, Vol 4-3.

There is a vast amount of intellectual comprehension of truth and doctrine which is not touching the situation, not meeting the need... A person may know Scripture most thoroughly and yet be the most awkward, cantankerous and peevish person in daily life; or go into business relationships, drive a hard bargain and send another man to the wall for his own ends. You may have all knowledge and yet profit nothing. It is the natural man receiving on the plane of the natural man. It is mental apprehension of Divine truth, and it is not alive, it is not the 'water of Life, clear as crystal.'

Services may be very beautiful but dead... You may have very high ideals, sublime thoughts, and yet there may be just something that renders it all ineffective and you get nowhere. The modern pulpit goes as far as it can, with its own human mental outfit. If a man happens to be more scholarly and better educated than another, his interpretation is thought to be nearer the truth than that of anyone else. If he can put a construction upon the Word of God which is fresh, interesting, and fascinating and just satisfies the inquiring minds of his hearers, they go away with the idea that that is truth. That is no argument at all - no criterion whatever. To make the whole thing a matter of scholarship is to get off the road.

Moses was learned in all the knowledge of the Egyptians, and yet he had to have forty years of isolation and discipline. At the end, Moses had to say, 'I cannot,' and then God was able to say 'Now I have got you down to a level where I can say, 'I can.' Before Saul of Tarsus could go anywhere for God, he had to talk like this: 'Sinners, of whom I am chief'; 'I am the least of all the apostles and not

meet to be called an apostle'; 'the things that I counted gain, I now count but loss'; 'I received it not from men, it was made known to me by revelation'; 'it pleased God to reveal His Son in me.' That is not objective achievement; that is subjective experience, and between the two there is all the difference that there is between life and death...

The man who brags of scholarships and argues that because he has a higher brow than anybody else and is therefore nearer the truth is probably the most blind of all men... The moment you introduce the element of the natural man into the ministry you kill it. The river of the water of Life clear as crystal will not flow through the channel of the flesh.

What you minister must be born of the Spirit of God in your spirit, and it must not be interfered with by the flesh. God will not let the stream of living ministry flow until the flesh is laid forever in death and it is no longer I but Christ.