

Evangelical Intellectualism and the Spirit's Power

A.W. Tozer:

There has emerged lately in American Christianity a school of religious thought conceived in intellectual pride and dedicated to the proposition that everything of value in the Christian faith can be reduced to philosophical terms and understood by the human mind. The notion seems to be that anything God can utter we can comprehend, allowing possibly for the need of a little divine aid with the heavier stuff.

The brethren who are promoting this movement seem to feel that the trouble with evangelicalism is that it is not scholarly enough, that it cannot state itself in scientific terms. They appear to be chagrined by the chuckles of the learned liberals at the allegedly ignorant fundamentalists and have been needled into an attempt to prove that we evangelicals are not so dumb after all. They hope to make their point by equating Christian theology with Greek philosophy and the findings of modern science, and demonstrating that if the truth were known the Christian revelation is just good clean reason, nothing more. I pass over the pretty obvious fact that there is in all this more than a trace of the taint of mind-worship. And am I just seeing things or do I detect a deep and painful inferiority complex on the part of these apostles of evangelical-rationalism? But I won't call attention to it. I know how they feel.

Well, I believe these brethren are wrong. I believe they are as badly mixed up and confused as the peddlers of old wives' tales in Paul's day or the snake handlers of our own Ozark Mountains--only, of course, in a different and more respectable way. If they succeed in reducing Christianity to a philosophical proposition, they will do more damage to the true faith of Christ than liberalism, Catholicism and Communism combined.