PROFILE IN FAITH

Aiden Wilson Tozer (1897–1963)
by Lyle W. Dorsett
Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism
Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

Aiden Wilson Tozer never sought to be noticed. Nevertheless, he was such a uniquely magnetic character that he unwittingly drew attention to himself. A man of slender build, angular face, and penetrating eyes, A.W. Tozer sported a modest moustache and a pair of wire-rimmed glasses that were non-descript enough to be relatively fashionable in any era. His suits and ties were as conservative as his glasses, but his noticeably large hands, long feet, duck-like walking gait and tangy voice set him apart in a crowd. In brief, he looked almost comically eccentric rather than distinguished, and unless people knew him, they would never have imagined that he was one of the most admired evangelical spokesmen in the twentieth century.

By the time of his death on May 12, 1963, Tozer had written nine books—all of which were selling well. Two of his volumes, The Pursuit of God (1948) and The Knowledge of the Holy (1961), were already on their way to becoming Christian devotional classics that are read by more people now than during his lifetime. In fact, since his death, Tozer’s articles and sermons have been edited and published into more than forty books.

But A.W. Tozer was more than the author of best-selling books. He employed every medium of communication except television to communicate biblical truth and his powerful challenges to the twentieth-century church. This widely read, self-educated student of history, philosophy, literature, and the Holy Scriptures wrote scores of pamphlets and well

(continued on page 10)
Thoughts to Ponder

The Practice of the Presence of God

Brother Lawrence

Brother Lawrence, also known as Lawrence of the Resurrection, was a lay brother in a Carmelite Monastery in 17th-century Paris. His Practice of the Presence of God is a devotional classic much loved by both Roman Catholics and Protestants. He died in 1691 at the age of 80.

First Conversation

The first time I saw Brother Lawrence was upon the third of August, 1666. He told me that God had done him a singular favor in his conversion at the age of eighteen.

That in the winter, seeing a tree stripped of its leaves, and considering that within a little time the leaves would be renewed, and after that the flowers and fruit appear, he received a high view of the providence and power of God, which has never since been effaced from his soul. That this view had perfectly set him loose from the world, and kindled in him such a love for God that he could not tell whether it had increased during the more than forty years he had lived since.

That he had been footman to M. Fieubert, the treasurer, and that he was a great awkward fellow who broke everything.

That he had desired to be received into a monastery, thinking that he would there be made to smart for his awkwardness and the faults he should commit, and so he should sacrifice to God his life, with its pleasures; but that God had disappointed him, he having met with nothing but satisfaction in that state.

That we should establish ourselves in a sense of God’s presence by continually conversing with Him. That it was a shameful thing to quit His conversation to think of trifles and fooleries.

That we should feed and nourish our souls with high notions of God, which would yield us great joy in being devoted to Him.

(continued on page 23)
What is your bottom line? What are your goals? What do you want from life? What do you want for your children? Perhaps you desire personal happiness for you and for your children. Or maybe you long for financial security so you can pay the bills and see your children well educated without a lifetime of debt. Perhaps your goal is a good name or good character, success in your line of work, success for your children in school, in their careers, or in developing their gifts.

Most Christians will respond to these questions, “Well, those are good goals. But they are not the bottom line.” Financial security, to be thought well of, success in our callings...these are things we long for—both for us and our children—but for the Christian, the bottom line must be found in what the Bible teaches.

The “Untrue Life”

In 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Paul addresses one of the desires listed above—financial security. Paul says, “I command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant and not to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” (1 Tim. 6:17). Paul says something beautifully positive about our need to have our needs met, and not just our needs but far more. God delights in “richly providing” everything for our enjoyment.

God is not against our being comfortable or happy. He delights to give us good gifts, but Scripture teaches us that we also are to keep something else in mind. 1 Timothy continues, “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is life indeed” (1 Tim. 6:18-19). Paul is urging us towards the life that is “life indeed” or “truly life,” as the NIV puts it. He says that this life we are living is not really life—something else is!

Paul gives additional counsel on this subject in verses 6-10 of 1 Timothy 6, and these words are a little harder, “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (1 Tim. 6:6-8). “Godliness with contentment is great gain,” the Scripture says—to be content simply with food and clothing. Now that is a bit more difficult. I rather doubt that any of us are content simply to have the food and clothing we need to survive.
HATE. A very strong word. It was a word that we were discouraged to use when I was a boy. “I hate you,” I would say through clenched teeth to my brother in a fit of anger during a trivial boyhood fight. And my mother would inevitably say, “Michael, don’t use that word. You don’t know what you’re really saying.”

And she was right. My wife and I discouraged our own children from using the word when they were little. And I find that I very seldom use the word myself, except in trite expressions like “I hate being cold,” or “I hate green peppers!”

But hate is not trite. On a purely human level, hatred is destructive. It is the emotion of anger, or fear, or disgust that has settled into a destructive pattern of life. It is an attempt to reject a person completely and to rob that person of his or her very existence. That is why hatred is said to be equivalent of murdering a person in our heart. Hatred prevents a person from loving God and from having eternal life (1 John 3:15; 4:8, 20; cf. Matt. 5:21-22). These are terribly strong words.

A Time to Hate
But on the other hand, the same words for hate in both the Old and New Testaments that can speak of destructive patterns of life are also used to describe ways in which hate is both appropriate, and necessary. There is “a time to hate” (Eccl. 3:8). In the life of fallen men and women, hate will inevitably end up destructive. But in the life of a person who has been touched by the love of God Himself, hate will prove invaluable to living safely and wisely in this world that still lies under the power of the evil one (Eph. 2:1-3).

Specifically, we must learn to hate what Jesus hates. This especially means to learn to develop a pattern of life in which we decisively reject whatever would harm us spiritually, or reject whatever is antithetical to God. Love is the opposite of hatred, as goodness and righteousness are the opposite of evil and wickedness. In love we give to another person what is good for him or her. In hate we reject what would be bad for us or for those for whom we are responsible. It might surprise and disturb us, but the same Jesus who told His disciples that they were to love their enemies (Matt. 5:44) also told the crowd that they were to “hate” father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—and even their own life (Luke 14:26).

As baffling as that may seem, we must come to grips with what this tells us about Jesus, and what that means for our own lives.

Jesus Hates Evil
The primary truth for us to understand is that God hates evil, but loves righteousness. If we rightly understand that the cross defines the central purpose of Jesus’ earthly ministry, then we will also rightly understand that Jesus came to defeat the very wickedness that had held humanity in its grip since Adam’s tragic fall. Jesus came as God’s promised Messianic deliverer, and what motivated Him was His love of righteousness, and His hatred of wickedness (Heb. 1:8-9; citing Ps. 45:6-7).
Starkly stated, Jesus hates evil. This is an absolutely essential, and convicting, truth. But it is also absolutely essential for us to understand that Jesus loves goodness and righteousness. That is why the apostle Paul writes, “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good” (Rom. 12:9).

Hatred is therefore not arbitrary. We do not choose what to hate. All appropriate hatred is in some way directed toward evil and wickedness. So we must understand clearly and truthfully what is evil from God’s perspective, and then we are utterly and completely to reject it—hate it. At the same time we are to develop a passion for what is righteous and good from God’s perspective, and utterly and completely cling to it—love it.

If we truly love Jesus, our greatest daily ambition must center on becoming like Him, who is the essence of goodness and righteousness. We will nurture a healthy conscience that is repulsed by our own tendencies to blur the line between good and evil. Have we gossiped? Lied? Gone back on our word? Have we ever taken something that didn't belong to us? Have we ever acted with pride and arrogance, or spoken perversely? Have we acted flippanily toward our marriage or family by engaging in adultery or flirtatious relations with another person? All of these God hates because of the evil they bring. And so should we. “To fear the LORD is to hate evil” (Prov. 8:13; cf. Zech. 8:17; Prov. 8:13; Isa. 61:8; Mal. 2:16).

**Jesus Hates the World System, Not the World**

Although God so loved the world that He gave His Son, he is at war with this world. Jesus says of his disciples, “I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world” (John 17:14). This may sound contradictory, but it points out an important distinction. The Greek word for “world” (kosmos) can indicate one of three very different things: (1) the created order, (2) the persons capable of believing in Jesus, or (3) the world system that is opposed to God. God loves the world of people that he created, but not the world system. Likewise, we are not to love that world system. James, the brother of Jesus says, “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” (James 4:4; cf. 1 John 2:15-17).

Jesus loves the world of sinners for whom He died, but He hates the world system that wars against Him and His kingdom. This is the basis of the adage, “Hate the sin, but love the sinner.” We are to do likewise. We live in a culture that is at odds with Jesus. Many of the former values that once were foundational to our society have either been rejected or are being challenged. We must learn from the risen Jesus who commended the Ephesians because, “You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” (Rev. 2:6). The Nicolaitans practiced idolatry and immorality under the banner of spiritual liberty, claiming that they gained greater spiritual insight by eating meat sacrificed to pagan idols and by engaging in sexual promiscuity. Jesus hates this perversion of values. We are to do likewise, because in our culture it is easy to be fooled by those who parade alternative lifestyles under the banners of “pluralism” and “freedom” and “rights.” To identify ourselves clearly with Jesus is going to put us at odds with the world system, because we will hate what God hates, whether it is adultery, frivolous divorce, violence, or the modern idolatry of worshipping money or power (cf. Mal. 2:16). To hate the world system means to reject the values of the world that would lead us into wickedness. But we are clearly to love the world of people for whom Jesus died.

**Jesus Hates Whatever Keeps Us From Him**

To the crowds that had been following Him around for some time, Jesus made a radical challenge. “If anyone comes to me and does (continued on page 6)
not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). Jesus certainly did not mean this to go contrary to the Decalogue’s admonition to honor father and mother, because he stiffly rebuked the Pharisees for invalidating this commandment by their traditions (Matt. 15:3-6). Jesus upheld biblical family relationships.

But commitment to family can present a rival challenge to a person’s commitment to Jesus. Families can be well meaning, but if they attempt to keep one of their own from Jesus, it is a great evil. One of my former professors was raised in a devout, orthodox Jewish family. While he was in training to become a rabbi, he was introduced to the gospel message about Jesus. His family told him that if he became a Christian they would disown him and declare him dead in their eyes, because they believed that it would be a disgrace to their Jewish beliefs. They meant well, but my professor knew that He must choose Jesus over his family, because it was a matter of eternal life.

Jesus did not call for a disruption of the family, or rebellion against it. Rather, nothing—including family, or wealth, or career or anything at all—must keep a person from following Jesus to eternal life. He stated this similarly in other ways.

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Matt. 6:24).

“The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:25).

These are all challenges for non-Christians to count the cost of following Jesus to eternal life. Whatever may keep us from loving and living with Jesus as our God and Savior must be utterly and completely rejected. He alone is our highest priority, and must continue to be throughout our lives.

Jesus Hates Religious Hypocrisy

Virtually every time that we find Jesus angry or acting out of anger, the object of His wrath was religious hypocrisy. Jesus consistently condemned the religious leaders for performing external religious acts of righteousness for the attention of people, while inside their heart was far from God and full of unrighteousness (e.g., Matt. 15:7-9; 23:1-7, 28-29). They were trying to do what they thought were good things, but they were doing them for evil reasons. His anger burned against the hardness of heart in the legalistic Pharisees (Mark 3:5), against officials who had turned the temple into a robber’s den (Mark 11:15-18), and against the scribes and Pharisees who were leading the people to destruction by their traditions (Matt. 23:13-28). In the Old Testament God declared to Israel, “I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies” (Amos 5:21). The very activities that should have drawn the people closer to God had been turned into religious showmanship.

But I am afraid that we can fall into the same kind of hypocrisy, unless we learn to hate our own phoniness when approaching God. Do we pray and sing to be heard by people, or by God? Do we go through the motions of the Christian life to try to convince others of our godliness, or are we truly attempting to allow God to transform us from the inside to the outside? Do we enforce a strict moral standard with our children, but forget to allow God’s love to permeate the relationship?

The antidote to our own religious hypocrisy is to be starkly honest with ourselves before God and learn to live a life of love. As Paul says, all religious activity, whether it is speaking with tongues of men and angels,
or using a gift of prophecy, or giving all we own to the poor, means absolutely nothing without love (1 Cor. 13:1-3). If we truly love Jesus, we will hate the cancer of religious hypocrisy that can slowly pervade our church life and personal devotion.

“Love, and Do What Thou Wilt”

Many of us may be quite uncomfortable thinking of Jesus hating something. Hate is a very strong word. But I am convinced that the more we love what is good and true and righteous, the more we will learn to hate what is evil, and false, and wicked. This will become increasingly more difficult in our society, because we have seen such a blurring of the line between good and evil. The world increasingly loves what God says is wicked, and hates what God says is good.

The Psalmist’s instruction is helpful here: “Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Psa. 37:4). This is basically equivalent to Augustine’s well-known saying, “Love, and do what thou wilt.” This may be one of the most important guidelines for all of the decisions of our lives, big and small, because if we truly love God we will not do anything that goes contrary to his Word and will for us. The more clearly we love Jesus, the more we will give ourselves to Him and His will for us—heart, soul, mind, and strength. And when we live in the purity and beauty of His love, the more we will naturally hate evil and reject it wholly from our lives. Perhaps the greatest single gift that you and I can give to this world that is held in the grip of evil is to hate evil by living a life that is an example of unqualified love for Jesus.

Endnotes


“All that is not eternal is eternally out of date.”

Discipling the Nations
Jesus defines in His life and work the meaning of transformational leadership—leadership that shows not only the nature of the Kingdom of God, but also how it comes into the world as His followers go forth in the power of His Spirit to emulate His lifestyle. What He exemplified becomes the guiding mandate of His church in the Great Commission: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19-20).

The word “disciple” describes a learner, as in the sense of apprentice or student. Herein is the key to His plan to reach the world, for disciples will continue to learn of Christ as they follow Him, and in so doing, not only grow in His character but also get involved in what He is doing. Invariably, then, His disciples become leaders of world transformation.

Jesus taught His disciples to live in anticipation of the completed mission, when the Gospel of the Kingdom would finally be proclaimed across the earth (Matt. 24:14), and the blood-washed redeemed gathered from every tongue and tribe and nation to praise Him. Though knowing He was sent first to die for the sins of the world, on His way to the cross, He lived in the joy of His return in the clouds of heaven when He would reign with glory and power over His kingdom forever.

What was certain in the future also had a present dimension. Since Christ is the King, when He is loved and served (Luke 17:20-21), the Kingdom is at hand (Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15); the “not yet” is here now. Of course, we must be spiritually reborn to enter this realm of eternal life (John 2:3-7). Only those who are completely in earnest will get in (Matt 11:12). This calls for radical obedience in discipleship. Still, the kingdom life does not come by human striving; it is a gift of God (Luke 12:32).

Personal transformation inevitably impacts society. Love for Christ overflows in expressions of evangelism and social compassion. So as the Gospel goes forth in word and deed, worldlings begin to take note that men and women have been with Jesus. Sinners are moved to seek the Savior. Restitutions are made. Broken homes are reunited with a new sense of responsibility. People reach out to help the poor and oppressed. Public moral standards improve. Integrity makes its way into business and government. Every aspect of life is affected—politics, economics, the arts, sexuality, the environment—and to the degree the holistic Gospel of the Kingdom takes hold, the world is transformed.

Revival Times
This can be seen especially in times of revival, when large numbers of people come alive to God. Such seasons of refreshing occur again and again through the Old Testament. They are the high peaks of corporate worship in Israel, bringing hope and salvation to the nation. Tragically, however, these awakenings usually fail to root out the perversities in society, and soon subside with the death or compromise of their leaders. Without reproducing visionary leadership, no great spiritual movement can endure.

Interestingly, the ministry of Jesus begins with His participation in the emerging revival of John the Baptist—the greatest religious awakening Israel had known in over 400 years. There He is baptized and identified...
by the prophet as “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29; cf. 1:36). With this introduction, Jesus could immediately enlist the following of the Baptist, who is willing to step aside so that Jesus could take over. If He chooses at this point to exercise His supernatural power (remember He could raise the dead), He could easily gather a mighty army, sweep down on Rome, and take the world by storm. Certainly the opportunity is ripe for a great popular revolution. Indeed, that is the kind of Messiah the people are expecting.

Yet, that is not the kind of kingdom Jesus has come to establish. He walks away, and is no longer actively involved in John’s revival. The movement that begins to form around Him takes a different course. Contrary to the pattern seen so often before, the Son of God does not seek the immediate following of the masses. Rather, in His infinite understanding of the human problem, He concentrates His attention upon a few men destined to be the leadership nucleus of a multiplying Spirit-filled church. We can see why His plan to reach the world required making disciples who would learn to impart His way of life to others.

Becoming a Servant
It behooves us, then, to look closely at the way Jesus made disciples, for therein is the example by which transformational leaders are developed. Of course, some of His practices 2,000 years ago likely would not be the same today. Methods are variable, conditioned by the time and situation. But the principles underlying His ministry are unchanging, and offer guidelines for His disciples in every generation.

The place to begin is with the Incarnation, when Jesus “humbled Himself” and, for the sake of the world, took “the very nature of a servant,” a mission that inevitably would lead to Calvary (Philippians 2:6-8). “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). What this self-renunciation means for us has implications we will never cease to learn, but as we can understand, the principle of servanthood is inherent in taking up the cross and following Christ. Here is the foundation of all Christian leadership.

In this chosen way of life, Jesus went about doing good, demonstrating in works of compassion how much people mattered to God. He fed the hungry. He healed the sick. He delivered the demon possessed. He opened the eyes of the blind. He blessed the children. He continually ministered to the needs of people, even to the extent that sometimes He had “no leisure so much as to eat” (Mark 6:31). Little wonder that multitudes were drawn to Him. On occasion the crowds numbered into the thousands (John 3:26, 6:15; 11:47-48; 12:19; cf. Mark 12:12; Matt. 21:26; Luke 20:19).

There is a lesson in this for us. If our ministry does not attract people, could it be that they do not see in our life genuine concern where they hurt? Let us not imagine that our witness has greater vitality when only a handful of people seem impressed.

Yet Jesus realized the superficiality of popular recognition. As long as He satisfied people’s temporal interests, they were with Him. But when the true meaning of His Kingdom became apparent, the multitudes soon changed their allegiance: the “hosannas” changed to “crucify Him” (Matt. 21:9; 27:22).

This was the heartbreak of His ministry. The lovable people were easily excited by the works of Jesus, but just as quickly thwarted in their aspirations by

(continued on page 20)
over a hundred periodical articles for various publications. Chicago’s WMBI radio broadcast his sermons and commentary for more than twenty years, and his penetrating preaching voice resounded from church pulpits, conference platforms, and college auditoriums all across the United States and many parts of Canada from the late 1920s until his death in 1963.

At Tozer’s heavily attended memorial service, Christian college presidents, seminary professors, and well-known missionaries and preachers testified that this exceptionally well-read and intelligent yet humble man had influenced countless young women and men to devote their lives to full-time service as missionaries, pastors, teachers, and parachurch workers. Mourners were told that Tozer’s preaching and writing ministry had caused many evangelicals to respect the place of the mind in Christian living, and at the same time prompted intellectuals to see that piety could be an expression of mind, as well as the heart.

Who was this exceptional man, why was he so popular, and what causes people to continue to read his books decades after his death?

Tozer grew up on the farm where he was born in central Pennsylvania’s Allegheny Mountains on April 21, 1897. One of six children, he was raised in rural poverty, attended a one-room school, learned to read and write from McGuffey Readers, and never had the luxury to stay in school long enough to earn a diploma. When Aiden was fifteen, a fire destroyed the family house and all its furnishings. Aiden’s father suffered a nervous breakdown, and in 1912 the family traded the grinding poverty of Pennsylvania’s stingy hill country for Akron, Ohio. While Aiden labored in a tire factory to help feed his parents and younger siblings, he also devoured books from the public library. He did not complain about his lot in life because he never assumed anyone owed him anything; and in any case, he could earn more in a day at the factory than he earned in a month on the farm. Furthermore, this young man with an unusually brilliant mind delighted in the Akron public library, where he discovered the classics in literature, history, and philosophy. The library became his school and a second home where he enriched and disciplined his mind on great books.

The Tozers were not church-going people in Pennsylvania, and it was the same when they moved to Ohio. Therefore Aiden never thought of feeding his soul. That changed, however, two and a half years after moving to Akron. One afternoon in 1915 he heard a street evangelist preaching; his heart was convicted and strangely warmed. Consequently, he soon found a Bible, a church, and a few Christians who recognized his natural gifts. Taken under wing by a Christian and Missionary Alliance Pastor, Tozer was tutored in Scripture and doctrine and quickly schooled in the art of street preaching.

A laywoman, Mrs. Kate Pfautz, also took Tozer in hand and gave him as much spiritual direction as anyone else in Akron did. She led him to a robust view of the Holy Spirit and introduced him to books by some of the great Christian mystics. She also helped find meeting halls and homes where he could preach, and she celebrated the romance and courtship that developed between him and her lovely daughter, Ada.

The couple married in 1918, and by the time of their wedding Aiden had launched his career as a traveling evangelist. In 1920 he was ordained and he soon accepted calls to pastor C&MA churches in West Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana. In 1928 he accepted a call to the Southside CMA Church in Chicago where he stayed thirty-one years. Then in 1959 he received an invitation to Avenue Road Church in Toronto where he remained until his death.

While serving as a pastor for over forty years, the Tozers raised seven children who were healthy in mind, body, and soul. This was no small feat considering Ada Tozer carried much of the burden for raising the
children while her husband spent much of his time reading, writing, and traveling to preaching engagements.

Aiden Tozer’s popularity and influence spread in tandem with the growth of the family. The causes of Tozer’s widespread influence and popularity are many. First of all, he was clearly a man with exceptional natural talents who was set apart and anointed by God for ministry. He read widely and deeply and learned from men and women who were willing to offer him instruction. He also listened to God. Tozer spent many hours a day—at least five days a week—reading, praying, and listening to the Holy Spirit. He sang hymns of praise on his knees, and frequently he fell flat on his face on the floor to pray. He sought to be in the Lord’s presence every day and envisioned himself as a part of the throng described in Revelation 7 who were singing with the angels, archangels, and all the company of Heaven around the Lamb of God on His Throne.

Tozer also captivated people—especially college-aged men and women—because he spoke with a fresh voice. In part his uniqueness can be explained because he never went to seminary and therefore avoided the temptation to imitate prescribed ways to preach and teach. Furthermore, he always eschewed the monotonous “stained-glass voice,” and he lived a life of radical obedience, thereby avoiding the hypocrisy of others who called folks to a lifestyle they never lived themselves.

Tozer was a singular preacher in still other ways. A self-proclaimed “minor prophet,” he cried out for the church to shun materialism, consumerism, and ministry through entertainment. He maintained that the Gospel had been cheapened by hustlers in pulpits who were entertainers rather than prophets. He decried Sunday services that were designed to make people feel good rather than become holy people through radical obedience to the living Lord.

Increasingly Tozer wrote and spoke against a growing trend of churches being run by business models rather than biblical principles, and he criticized the way Christ Jesus was being marketed and sold rather than lifted up to convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. In short, he railed against cheap grace that was producing an ugly and impotent church.

This twentieth century prophet began his ministry calling unsaved people to Christ and calling for Christians to be renewed and revived by asking the Holy Spirit to search their hearts and call them to repentance. And although he never lost his heart for the lost and his longing for revival, he increasingly came to understand that people would never pursue and worship God unless they knew Him. Tozer began to speak to Christians like Jesus did to the Samaritan woman: “You people worship what you do not know.” Inasmuch as Tozer fully believed that the purpose of the Great Commission is to call out a people who will become holy and will worship and glorify God forever, he knew he had to try and lead people to a “Knowledge of the Holy” first—and only then would they begin to trust, worship, and obey.

To be sure, this message offended plenty of pastors who loved the world and employed its methods to grow churches. This message also antagonized the worldlings who attended church, claimed to have a saving knowledge of Christ, yet deplored calls to radically obey Christ as legalism. Tozer’s prophetic voice alienated worldly clergy and the folks with only nominal faith. In the same vein, his calls to develop a more vital relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit became equally divisive. Tozer read and quoted early church fathers such as Irenaeus and Ignatius of Antioch, and Christian mystics like Bernard of Clairvaux and Madame Guyon. And while these writers attracted and stimulated eager minds, Tozer’s knowledge and use of their words became the object of criticism for others. Tozer was accused of being an ecumenist—even a closet Roman Catholic—for his love of the pre-Reformation writers.
Likewise, his concern that many Christians possess a head knowledge of Jesus Christ but have no intimate heart knowledge of Him became quite controversial. Indeed, Tozer claimed that far too many evangelicals were almost binarian rather than Trinitarian with their refusal to embrace and experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. Tozer’s call to the church to invite the Holy Spirit to fill our souls brought the charge that he had become a mystic, and that label to the mind of many Christians was neither complimentary nor truly Christian. When asked if he was a mystic, he always replied with a resounding, “Yes, of course I am. How else can you have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?”

A.W. Tozer’s audience has grown in the decades since his passing because the dangerous trends he warned the church against in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s have become even more problematic in recent times. Furthermore, every generation has its hungry souls who long to know Jesus Christ better and love Him more. People who manifest such hunger continue to catch the fire of Tozer’s love for God. This is why his books like The Pursuit of God and The Knowledge of the Holy find a growing readership each year among those yearning for “something more.” These are the ones who happily join his “Society of the Burning Heart.”

**Sources and Reading**


To read Tozer’s own works, the reader can find over fifty volumes of A. W. Tozer’s writing that are available from Wing Spread Publishers, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania (www.wingspreadpublishers.com).

“Heaven will solve our problems, but not by showing us subtle reconciliations between all our apparently contradictory notions. The notions will be knocked from under our feet. We will see that there never was any problem.”

The world was stunned last year to learn that one of the greatest saints of the 20th century experienced a profound sense of God’s absence in her life. The recently published book, Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light, is a collection of private correspondence between this remarkable woman and her confessors and superiors over a period of at least six decades.

We know Mother Teresa as the Calcutta nun who led a small band of caregivers to bind up the wounds of the sick, homeless, and abandoned. Her merciful spirit and courageous acts were heralded worldwide as reflecting the very Savior she longed to emulate. Ironically, at the very same time that she was extending mercy and hope to the hopeless, Mother Teresa was struggling to feel the presence of God in her own life.

In her confessions, Mother Teresa laments the “dryness,” “darkness,” and “loneliness” she felt within. On one occasion she spoke of “Christ in our hearts, Christ in the poor we meet, Christ in the smile we give and in the smile that we receive.” But just three months prior to that statement, she confided in a confessor, “As for me, the silence and emptiness is so great, that I look and do not see—listen and do not hear—the tongue moves [in prayer] but does not speak.” On another occasion she wrote, “Please pray especially for me that I may not spoil His work and that Our Lord may show Himself—for there is such terrible darkness within me, as if everything was dead.”

How do we make sense of the inner anguish of Mother Teresa? What do we do with these personal laments of spiritual darkness—sentiments she had hoped would remain private?

Some will of course contend that there is no reality beyond ourselves, and Teresa’s quest for divine presence is a misguided aspiration. The outspoken atheist and author of God is Not Great, Christopher Hitchens, says of Mother Teresa, “She was no more exempt from the realization that religion is a human fabrication than any other person.” Her attempted cure of “more and more professions of faith could only have deepened the pit that she had dug for herself.” But most of us, whether for reasons of the heart, or reasons of the mind, or both, will not be satisfied with Hitchens’ dismissive, dogmatic atheism. Such a framework can hardly account for the love and mercy exhibited by the likes of Mother Teresa. The drive to serve others unselfishly and the deep human sense that there is something or someone beyond our finite selves is hard to explain on purely naturalistic grounds.

When we reflect on Mother Teresa’s “dark nights of the human soul,” we do well to remember that Jesus himself echoed the same. On the cross, in the midst of his own agony in bearing the world’s sins, he cried out with a Psalm of lament. We might have expected Jesus to quote from Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” But instead he quoted from Psalm 22, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus felt the pangs of distress.

(continued on page 14)
in the garden of Gethsemane and deep emotional and physical pain as he hung on the cross. Thus, his incarnation, suffering, and death identify with us in our own laments and internal anguish. Because he’s been there, Christ walks with us in the darkest and deepest moments of life.

Some will say, but Jesus came to give us happiness and joy. After all, he declared, “I have come that you might have life, and have it to the full” (Jn. 10:10). Surely true believers should be exempt from depression, loneliness, and inner strivings that are at war with our professions of belief.

It is true that joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is difficult to know why Mother Teresa had difficulty feeling that joy of the Lord in her own life. But I suspect that our own pursuits of joy and happiness often reflect more the mood of our culture than the fruit of the Spirit. We live in a society that wants happiness without pain, achievement without cost, success without burden. Many are attracted to a health and wealth gospel that distorts reality, God’s Word, the meaning of the cross, and the experience of millions of believers down through history. God never promises a life immune from struggle. He promises rather to walk with us in moments of turmoil, tragedy, and emotional lows. God promises that he is there, even when his presence is not felt.

That Mother Teresa did not “feel” God did not mean the absence of God. We may never know why her feelings failed to accord with her commitments. Perhaps it was deep-seated emotional depression that was never medically treated. Or perhaps God in his sovereignty allowed her to experience the dark nights of the human soul to engender a life of incredible love and care for “the least of these.” Or perhaps she strove so hard to show Christ’s love that grace really was an issue for her.

The fact that she continued to believe and to share the love of Christ, even without feeling divine presence, demonstrates the depth of her love and the perseverance of her faith. Later in life, after years of emotional darkness, and after countless prayers for God’s comforting nearness, she prayed: “If this brings you glory—if souls are brought to you—with joy I accept all to the end of my life.” I only wish my own faith and trust in Christ reflected the same.

We may have difficulty knowing what to do with Mother Teresa’s confessions because we are so far removed from the life of true faith, deep commitment, and authentic spirituality. Perhaps we struggle with her anguish, because we desperately want lives free from struggle, and hence seek a “god” made in our image. And what most people want from this “feel-good god” is superficial happiness, a life without pain, and a journey with no deep valleys. We want a “cosmic Santa Claus” as sovereign of the universe.

We likely also have difficulty handling Mother Teresa’s confessions because we too readily equate spirituality with feelings and emotional states. We feel spiritual when our emotions are high, when in fact those emotional feelings may have little to do with hearts that are attuned to God and lives that truly reflect the path of our Savior. Emotions are an important part of life, but a desired emotional state is never the sign of true faith or spiritual maturity.

I believe that God was with Mother Teresa, though she rarely “felt” the divine presence she longed for. And God is with us when we genuinely trust and follow our Lord and his kingdom. Faith is ultimately not about our feelings. It is about the gracious God of the universe who is really there, and will walk with us, even when our emotions say otherwise.
It is said that Augustine in his pre-conversion days had serious problems with the Scriptures. He had been trained in all the fine points of rhetoric and was offended by the Bible’s simplicity. The Scriptures did not meet Augustine’s standard of style and eloquence. Yet one day he was in a garden and thought he heard some voices—perhaps some children playing a game—saying, “Take and read, take and read.” Immediately he picked up a Bible, let it fall open, and read the first verse he saw. It was Romans 13:13-14, …not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh in regards to its lust.

Augustine’s problem was directly confronted. He was convicted of his sin. The simple Scripture was a means of his conversion. The simple language he had once despised had come alive to him.

One of the aspects of the Holy Spirit’s work is to illuminate—to shed light upon the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit does this not only in cases like Augustine’s, where the end is conversion, but also in the daily lives of believers. There is nothing more necessary to complete understanding of Scripture than the light of the Spirit. Paul, for example, prays for the Ephesians,

...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (Eph. 1:17-18).

The Spirit is the one who enlightens us. The Word of God is our source of wisdom, revelation, and knowledge.

It is important when studying Scripture to use every means available to arrive at the meaning of a text. Commentaries, theological dictionaries, Greek and Hebrew lexicons, and a careful method of interpretation are all of value. However, if our study stops with the use of external means, we fall short of complete understanding. Spiritual understanding is the highest gift that God can give. Jonathan Edwards says in a sermon, “Divine and Supernatural Light:”

Spiritual wisdom and grace is the highest and most excellent gift that God ever bestows on any creature: in this the highest excellency and perfection of a rational creature consists.

We could listen to this emphatic language and ask, what does the illumination of the Spirit add to our understanding? If there is only one literal sense to Scripture, surely this could be discovered by anyone’s objective study of text. Could not a non-Christian arrive at a proper understanding of a text? The answer is yes and no. Yes, they could have an accurate understanding of the passage. No, there are

(continued on page 16)
Spiritual Light
(continued from page 15)

levels of meaning that they would miss. There is a difference between having a true opinion about a text and having a full sense of its significance. It is possible to grasp an idea with the mind and yet sense neither its truth, nor goodness, nor beauty. It is possible to understand that God’s holiness is a fact without feeling a sense of its excellence. The Holy Spirit’s illumination of Scripture does not reveal any new words, propositions, or doctrines. He gives us a deep sense of truth. The Spirit drives home in the heart and conscience what the mind understands. We ought to pray with the psalmist, “Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from thy law” (Psalm 119:18).

This deep sense of the beauty of God’s word leads to assurance and conviction of its truth. Paul’s goal for the Laodiceans and Colossians was that they might have

...a full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery; that is, Christ Himself... (Col.2:2).

This assurance is so important that John Owen wrote:

...there is not any truth of greater importance for men to be established in; for unless they have a full assurance of understanding in themselves, unless they hold their persuasion of the sense of Scripture revelations from God alone...they will never be able to undergo any suffering for the truth or to perform any duty unto God in a right manner.

Our own doubts often hinder our worship, obedience, and service to others.

Above all, the Spirit gives us confidence and boldness. Luther, in his Bondage of the Will, argues against Erasmus on the place of assertions in the Christian life. Erasmus is wary of any assertions. Luther, on the contrary, maintains, “Take away assertions and you take away Christianity.” The mark of the Christian should be assurance and confidence in believing God’s truth. The Christian is one who asserts because the Holy Spirit has given a firm grasp of the truth. Thus, Luther says to Erasmus:

Leave us free to make assertions and to find in assertions our satisfaction and delight; and you may applaud your skeptics and academics...the Holy Spirit is no skeptic, and the things He has written on our hearts are not doubts or opinions but assertions—surer and more certain than life itself.

If we desire this sense of the beauty of God’s truth, if we desire this assurance and confidence, if we desire this spiritual wisdom, we must ask for it. James 1:5 says, “...if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...and it will be given to him.” Later in the same book it says, “You do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:2).

It would be a good rule always to pray for the Spirit’s help and guidance before and after reading the Scripture. We should pray that the Spirit shed his light upon our hearts so that we might sense the power and goodness of Scripture and become established in a full assurance of understanding. I believe that if we put this into practice it will revolutionize our study of Scripture. Jesus says in Luke 11:13, “…how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” If we ask for the Spirit’s illumination, He will help us to have a deeper sense of the truth, goodness, and beauty of a text; its application to our lives; and the ability to powerfully communicate to others the truths we learn. Above all, we will come to a deeper assurance of the truths God has revealed to us and give Him praise for all He has said and done for us.
Rethinking the Bottom Line
(continued from page 3)

Then Paul continues with words which are particularly hard to hear in our society (which is why we need to pay them special attention): “People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Tim. 6:9-10). Should I really want to be wealthy? Do I want my children to be wealthy when Paul says that it might be rather dangerous to their eternal souls?

Most of us are aware of the dangers of wealth—even if the practical outworking of these commands in a consumption-driven society can be difficult. Yet what about cultivating our gifts and talents? Is this also dangerous? Would it not seem that Scripture calls this a biblical goal for our children and us? The parable of the talents certainly provides Scriptural support of the cultivation of our gifts. It warns us not to let our gifts lie waste because we are going to have to give an accounting to God for them one day (Matt. 25:14-30).

But just as with the desire for financial security, there are snares to watch out for in the cultivation of gifts. Philippians 2:3 tells us, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.” If we are honest with ourselves, we know there is a very fine line between pursuing the godly development of our gifts and pursuing the success that comes because of those gifts—between godly ambition and “vain conceit.” Pride is something that every one of us, if we know ourselves at all (and we need to acknowledge that we do not know ourselves very well), has deeply embedded in our hearts.

It is the same for our children. It is so very important to encourage our children, and yet we have to be so careful when we do so. We have to be very careful not to encourage self-centered ambition and pride—the “vain conceit” of which Paul speaks. Scripture provides us with ways to test our hearts regarding both the love of money and vain conceit. 1 John 3:17 says, “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has not pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?” (See also 1 Timothy 6:18.) Your generosity to others is a good test of whether you are living for the love of God or the love of money.

In Philippians 2:3-4 Paul gives us a similar test to apply to the development of gifts: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” A good test of whether I am using and developing my gifts to God’s

If we are honest with ourselves, we know there is a very fine line between pursuing the godly development of our gifts and pursuing the success that comes because of those gifts—between godly ambition and “vain conceit.” Pride is something that every one of us...has deeply embedded in our hearts.

(continued on page 18)
Rethinking the Bottom Line (continued from page 17)

glory rather than my own is how I think about myself in relationship to other people. Am I a servant of other people? Do I think more highly of others than I do of myself? As our children develop the gifts God has given them, are they also becoming humble servants of those around them? If not, our so-called “encouragement” has actually done them harm. If at the end of the day we have commended our children’s accomplishments so highly that they pursue personal ambition rather than the service of others, then the gifts God has given them will have become means to turn them from Him.

Psalm 147:10-11 tells us, “His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man, the LORD delights in those who fear him and put their hope in his unfailing love.” It is not that legs are unimportant. In the movie Chariots of Fire, Eric Liddell, the Olympic runner and missionary to China says, “When I run it pleases God.” It does delight God for us to use the gifts He has given. But what truly delights Him is those whose hope is not in their speed, beauty, strength, or wisdom, but in His unfailing love.

The Life That Is Life Indeed

Now that we have clearly established what is not the bottom line, what does Scripture teach about what is the bottom line? The Westminster Shorter Catechism (a Scripture-based teaching tool) summarizes it nicely in its very first question and answer: “What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Jesus summarizes this teaching for us when He is asked what is the greatest commandment. He responds, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind…. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37). Micah 6:8 tells us to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly before God. Matthew 6:33 says, “Seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

Loving God and pursuing His justice, mercy, and faithfulness, this is to be our bottom line. This is to be the vision for my life and those of my children. The hard part is, we have to do more than agree to this, we have to live it. We have to do more than tell it to our children, we have to be an example of it to them.

Suppose somebody were to ask my sons, “What really matters to your dad? What does he live for?” What would they say? Would they say, “My father is committed to doing what is just, to loving mercy, and to walking humbly before God?” The apostle John puts it very simply, “Little children,” he says, “let us love in deed and truth, not just in words” (1 Jn. 3:18).

How do we speak to our children? How would our children respond if
someone asked them, “For what do your parents praise you? Where do they commend you?” Would they think of grades or sports or musical abilities? Or would they say, “My dad is thrilled when I am merciful to other kids at school, when I have really worked hard at trying to do what is just and right.” I am not saying it is wrong to praise our children for their gifts and talents. But is that the first thing that comes to their minds? Are you communicating to your children what really matters about their lives?

This applies as well in the area of discipline. What do your children do that most grieves you? Do they draw more of a response when they are unmerciful, proud, and unloving or when they break the family rules? We know we should be more grieved when our children break the commands of God, but is this what we communicate in daily life?

Our children need to know that what is far more important than keeping the family rules is the longing for them to be righteous—to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly before God.

What Now?
These are very hard questions, and some of them cut me to the heart. I hope some of them cut you too. But God never takes us to our failures and leaves us there. Our comfort is found in the Psalm we looked at earlier, Psalm 147. As we consider our lives, we know we have often taken delight in strength, in wisdom, in success, and in wealth. Our hearts are often secretly enticed to all these things, so what do we do now?

The first step is acknowledging that we often delight in our own strength. Acknowledge this to the Lord, acknowledge it to yourself, and acknowledge it to your children. It helps them to know that we struggle with these things—that we do not find this easy. It is easier and more natural for us to commend them for their abilities rather than for loving justice and mercy and walking humbly before our God. But it is when we acknowledge our struggle to them, to ourselves and to the Lord, that the words of the Psalmist can be a comfort to us. It is then that we can really seize the promise at the end of Psalm 147, for as the Psalmist turns us from trusting in our own power, he exhorts us to put our hope in “[God’s] unfailing love” (Ps. 147:11).

God does not only provide His Word to wound us with an awareness of our sin. Our merciful God will never wound His children without providing a promise of healing. As we see the idolatry in our lives, our prayer is that He will keep us from idols. Our hope that He will answer that prayer is based on His promise of unfailing love.

Your heavenly Father loves you. Put your hope in Him.
Preparing Transformational Leadership the Jesus Way
(continued from page 9)

their spiritually blind leaders. Like sheep without a shepherd, they had no one who could lead them in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus was doing all He could to help them, but in the Incarnation He accepted the limitation of a physical body. Unless men and women were raised up to multiply His leadership, the potential evangelization of the world could not be realized. He told His disciples to get under the burden, and pray to “the Lord of the harvest” to send workers to meet this compelling need—workers with a shepherd’s heart who could effectively lead the sheep (Matt. 9:36-38).

His Unfolding Strategy
Our Lord’s own ministry seems to unfold around this need. Before attempting to trace that pattern, however, let me emphasize again that any human activity that does not flow out of communion with God is an exercise in futility. With this truth in mind, I believe we can discern in the Gospels how such prayer is answered.

1. Look for Learners
While ministering to people Jesus looked for some disciples in whom He could invest His life most productively. In time He selected twelve especially to be with Him. Peter, James, and John had an even closer relationship. It was not that He loved the multitudes any less; indeed, it was for the sake of the world that He concentrated on persons who would learn to lead them.

Doubtless those early disciples were not the most astute students, perhaps not the most religious, but with the exception of the traitor, their hearts were big and they were willing to lay other things aside to follow Jesus.

2. Stay With Them
Jesus’ disciples learned by being with Him. For the better part of three years they were together. They walked the streets together; they ate together; they attended the temple and synagogue together; they went on retreats together. Even when He ministered to others, whether preaching in the marketplace or talking with lonely beggars along the road, His budding leaders were usually at hand to observe and listen.

3. Show Them How the Kingdom Comes
In this ongoing fellowship, the disciples of Jesus were always learning. Every aspect of His life was opened to them—prayer, use of Scripture, public worship, stewardship, caring for the needs of the sick and the poor, always seeking their ultimate welfare in the Gospel. What is also obvious, without realizing it, the disciples were being mentored in the way disciples are made.

4. Teach Them Obedience
From the beginning Jesus asked His disciples to follow Him, and this expectation was reinforced in different ways throughout their training. That was how their faith was expressed. It was also the way they would keep learning.

5. Involve Them in Ministry
Jesus gave His leaders-in-training something to do. First assignments were small, common tasks where they were already capable, like providing hospitality. But as they developed in their confidence and skill, He began to use them to confirm others in the faith. Later He sent them out in new areas two by two to reproduce what
they had watched Him do. All the while, He was projecting His vision of the Kingdom, culminating in His post-resurrection commands to win the world.

6. Keep Them Growing and Going
To see how the disciples were coming along, Jesus would check on them, asking them questions, responding to their queries, building in them a sense of accountability. It was “on-the-job-training” all the way. Their encounters with life situations enabled Him to deal with issues when they came up, giving His teaching the ring of authenticity. Though their progress was painfully slow, especially in comprehending the cross, Jesus patiently kept moving them on toward the goal of discipling the nations for the glory of God.

7. Expect Them to Reproduce
The day came when Jesus turned His work over to His followers. They were commissioned to go to the world and replicate what He had done with them. The believers around Him were but the vanguard of a movement that would continually expand until finally the whole world had the opportunity to confront the Gospel.

It is not difficult to see why Jesus prayed so earnestly for these men that the Father had given to Him (John 17:1-26). For in a real sense, everything He had done on earth now depended upon their faithfulness. Would they “go and make disciples of all nations?”

8. Trust Them to the Holy Spirit
As observed in His command to pray, workers for the harvest do not come by human ingenuity. Jesus made it abundantly clear that His life and work is possible only through the Holy Spirit. As He had glorified the Father on earth, now the Spirit would glorify Christ. He would take the same place with the disciples in the unseen realm of life that Jesus had filled in His visible experience with them. The Spirit was a real compensation for the loss they were to sustain—“another Counselor” just like Jesus—who would fill them with His presence (John 14:16).

We can understand why Jesus told His disciples to tarry until this promise became a reality in them (Luke 24:49). How else could they do His work? His passion for glorifying God by accomplishing His mission had to become a burning compulsion within them. The supernatural work to which they were called demanded supernatural help—an endowment of power from on high. They needed to come by faith into a refining experience of the Spirit’s infilling, and live in that obedience day by day.

A Pattern to Follow
The way Jesus discipled interprets the way in principle every believer can do it. Too easily we have relegated His work to various clergy vocations and to highly organized programs of human betterment. Not that these ministries are unnecessary, for without them the church cannot function as she does. But unless the Great Commission directs the daily life of the entire body of Christ, the church cannot function as she should.

Here the priesthood of all believers comes alive. Discipling is not a special calling—a gift of the Spirit to a few privileged saints; it is a lifestyle—the way that Jesus directed His life while He was among us, and now the way He commands His church to follow.

(continued on page 22)
We can afford to invest largely in these learners—spending time with them, showing them the disciplines that sustain a holy life, helping them express their gifts of ministry, monitoring their growth, and, above all, never ceasing to pray for them.


3. The present and future aspects of the Kingdom exist in tension, and are not mutually exclusive. A good treatment of this truth is by Oscar Cullman, Salvation in History (London: SCM Press, 1965), pp. 166-236. This subject has received considerable attention from biblical scholars, resulting in a plethora of literature. Among the best treatments are studies by John Bright, The Kingdom of God (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953); and George Eldon Ladd, Jesus and the Kingdom (New York: Harper & Row, 1964). The latter book includes a good bibliography of the pertinent writing in this field.


5. Thankfully, despite the absence of leadership, God was never without a witness. There were always a few—the faithful remnant who never bowed their knees to Baal. Though not in prominent positions of society in the religious world, these godly men and women were discipling their children at home in the law of God (cf. Deut. 6:4-25).

Thoughts to Ponder: The Practice of the Presence of God

(continued from page 2)

That we ought to quicken—i.e., to enliven—our faith. That it was lamentable we had so little; and that instead of taking faith for the rule of their conduct, men amused themselves with trivial devotions, which changed daily. That the way of faith was the spirit of the church, and that it was sufficient to bring us to a high degree of perfection.

That we ought to give ourselves up to God, with regard both to things temporal and spiritual, and seek our satisfaction only in the fulfilling of His will, whether He lead us by suffering or by consolation, for all would be equal to a soul truly resigned. That there needed fidelity in those drynesses or insensibilities and irksomenesses in prayer by which God tries our love to Him; that then was the time for us to make good and effectual acts of resignation, whereof one alone would oftentimes very much promote our spiritual advancement.

That as for the miseries and sins he heard of daily in the world, he was so far from wondering at them that, on the contrary, he was surprised that there were not more, considering the malice sinners were capable of; that, for his part, he prayed for them; but knowing that God could remedy the mischiefs they did when He pleased, he gave himself no further trouble.

That to arrive at such resignation as God requires, we should watch attentively over all the passions which mingle as well as in spiritual things as in those of a grosser nature; that God would give light concerning those passions to those who truly desire to serve Him. That if this was my design, sincerely to serve God, I might come to him (Brother Lawrence) as often as I pleased, without any fear of being troublesome; but if not, that I ought no more to visit him.

Second Conversation

That he had always been governed by love, without selfish views; and that having resolved to make the love of God the end of all his actions, he had found reasons to be well satisfied with his method. That he was pleased when he could take up a straw from the ground for the love of God, seeking Him only, and nothing else, not even His gifts.

That he had been long troubled in mind from a certain belief that he should be damned; that all the men in the world could not have persuaded him to the contrary; but that he had thus reasoned with himself about it: I engaged in a religious life only for the love of God, and I have endeavored to act only for Him; whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the love of God.

I engaged in a religious life only for the love of God, and I have endeavored to act only for Him; whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the love of God.

(continued on page 24)
That with him the set times of prayer were not different from other times; that he retired to pray, according to the directions of his superior, but that he did not want such retirement, nor ask for it, because his greatest business did not divert him from God.

That he expected, after the pleasant days God had given him, he should have his turn of pain and suffering; but that he was not uneasy about it, knowing very well that as he could do nothing of himself, God would not fail to give him the strength to bear it.

That when an occasion of practicing some virtue offered, he addressed himself to God, saying, Lord, I cannot do this unless Thou enablest me; and that then he received strength more than sufficient.

That when he had failed in his duty, he only confessed his fault, saying to God, I shall never do otherwise if You leave me to myself; it is You who must hinder my falling and mend what is amiss. That after this he gave himself no further uneasiness about it.

That we ought to act with God in the greatest simplicity, speaking to Him frankly and plainly, and imploring His assistance in our affairs, just as they happen. That God never failed to grant it, as he had often experienced.

That he had been lately sent into Burgundy, to buy the provision of wine for the society, which was a very unwelcome task for him, because he had no turn for business, and because he was lame and could not go about the boat but by rolling himself over the casks. That, however, he gave himself no uneasiness about it, nor about the purchase of the wine. That he said to God it was His business he was about, and that he afterward found it very well performed. That he had been sent into Auvergne, the year before, upon the same account; that he could not tell how the matter passed, but that it proved very well.

So, likewise, in his business in the kitchen (to which he had naturally a great aversion), having accustomed himself to do everything there for the love of God, and with prayer, upon all occasions, for His grace to do his work well, he had found everything easy, during fifteen years that he had been employed there.

That he was very well pleased with the post he was now in; but that he was as ready to quit that as the former, since he was always pleasing to himself in every condition by doing little things for the love of God.

That with him the set times of prayer were not different from other times; that he retired to pray, according to the directions of his superior, but that he did not want such retirement, nor ask for it, because his greatest business did not divert him from God.
so to do, he had no need of a director to advise him, but that he needed much a confessor to absolve him. That he was very sensible of his faults, but not discouraged by them; that he confessed them to God, but did not plead against Him to excuse them. When he had so done, he peaceably resumed his usual practice of love and adoration.

That in his trouble of mind he had consulted nobody, but knowing only by the light of faith that God was present, he contented himself with directing all his actions to Him, i.e., doing them with a desire to please Him, let what would come of it.

That useless thoughts spoil all; that the mischief began there; but that we ought to reject them as soon as we perceived their impertinence to the matter in hand, or our salvation, and return to our communion with God.

That at the beginning he had often passed his time appointed for prayer in rejecting wandering thoughts and falling back into them. That he could never regulate his devotion by certain methods as some do. That, nevertheless, at first he had meditated for some time, but afterward that went off, in a manner he could give no account of.

That all bodily mortifications and other exercises are useless, except as they serve to arrive at the union with God by love; that he had well considered this, and found it the shortest way to go straight to Him by a continual exercise of love and doing all things for His sake.

That we ought to make a great difference between the acts of understanding and those of the will; that the first were comparatively of little value, and the others, all. That our only business was to love and delight ourselves in God.

That all possible kinds of mortification, if they were void of the love of God, could not efface a single sin. That we ought, without anxiety, to expect the pardon of our sins from the blood of Jesus Christ, only endeavoring to love Him with all our hearts. That God seemed to have granted the greatest favors to the greatest sinners, as more signal monuments of His mercy.

That the greatest pains or pleasures of this world were not to be compared with what he had experienced of both kinds in a spiritual state; so that he was careful for nothing and feared nothing, desiring only one thing of God, viz., that he might not offend Him.

That he had no scruples; for, said he, when I fail in my duty, I readily acknowledge it, saying, I am used to do so; I shall never do otherwise if I am left to myself. If I fail not, then I give God thanks, acknowledging that the strength comes from Him.

Third Conversation
He told me that the foundation of the spiritual life in him had been a high notion and esteem of God in faith; which

(continued on page 27)
“Your father and mother and all of you are—as you used to call it in the Shadowlands—dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is Ended: this is the morning.’...the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.”

C.S. Lewis, The Last Battle
That there needed neither art nor science for going to God, but only a heart resolutely determined to apply itself to nothing but Him, or for His sake, and to love Him only.
Three Exciting New Programs
from the C.S. Lewis Institute

WORLDVIEW PROGRAM
Understanding Others

The Worldview Program provides a framework for understanding the concept of worldview, defining the prevailing worldviews of our day, and examining how they influence lives and shape culture. Against this backdrop, students will explore the biblical worldview and how to live out and articulate its principles to influence the people and culture around them.

APOLOGETIC EVANGELISM PROGRAM
Winning Others

In partnership with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, our Apologetic Evangelism Program provides a clear understanding of the conversion process, the message of the gospel, and how to share it in a postmodern culture. Particular attention is given to offering reasons for our faith in response to the common questions and objections people have today. Participants will gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to effectively share the gospel with friends and colleagues.

DISCIPLEMAKER PROGRAM
Discipling Others

Our Disciplemaker Program trains already mature believers in how to disciple and mentor others in following Jesus Christ. A combination of biblical and theological foundations, practical skills and tools enables the student to become actively engaged in discipling other believers upon completion of the course.

For Complete Details About Any of Our Programs, Visit Our Website:

www.cslewisinstitute.org