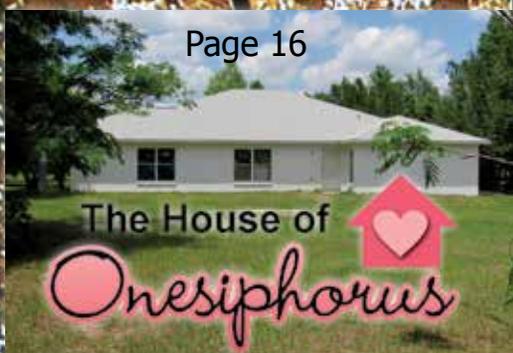




The Fourfold Gospel Witness

Edition 14
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Onesiphorus

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The Fourfold Gospel Witness

Fourfold Gospel Fellowship, Inc.
P.O. Box 831313
Ocala, FL 34483
The Fourfold Gospel Witness.
(Celebrating Jesus Christ as Savior,
Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King)
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Welcome to another edition of the Fourfold Gospel Witness. Our theme is "Beyond the Sacred Page," which is a reference, of course, to the Bible. The Bible is the center of the Christian faith and unfortunately it is also the center of controversy. There are some who cherry pick a verse here and there in order to build their own doctrine. Others go so far the other way and are legalistic and twist the Scriptures completely out of context.

I like what AW Tozer says, "If you have read the Bible and have not encountered the living Christ, you have not really read the Bible."

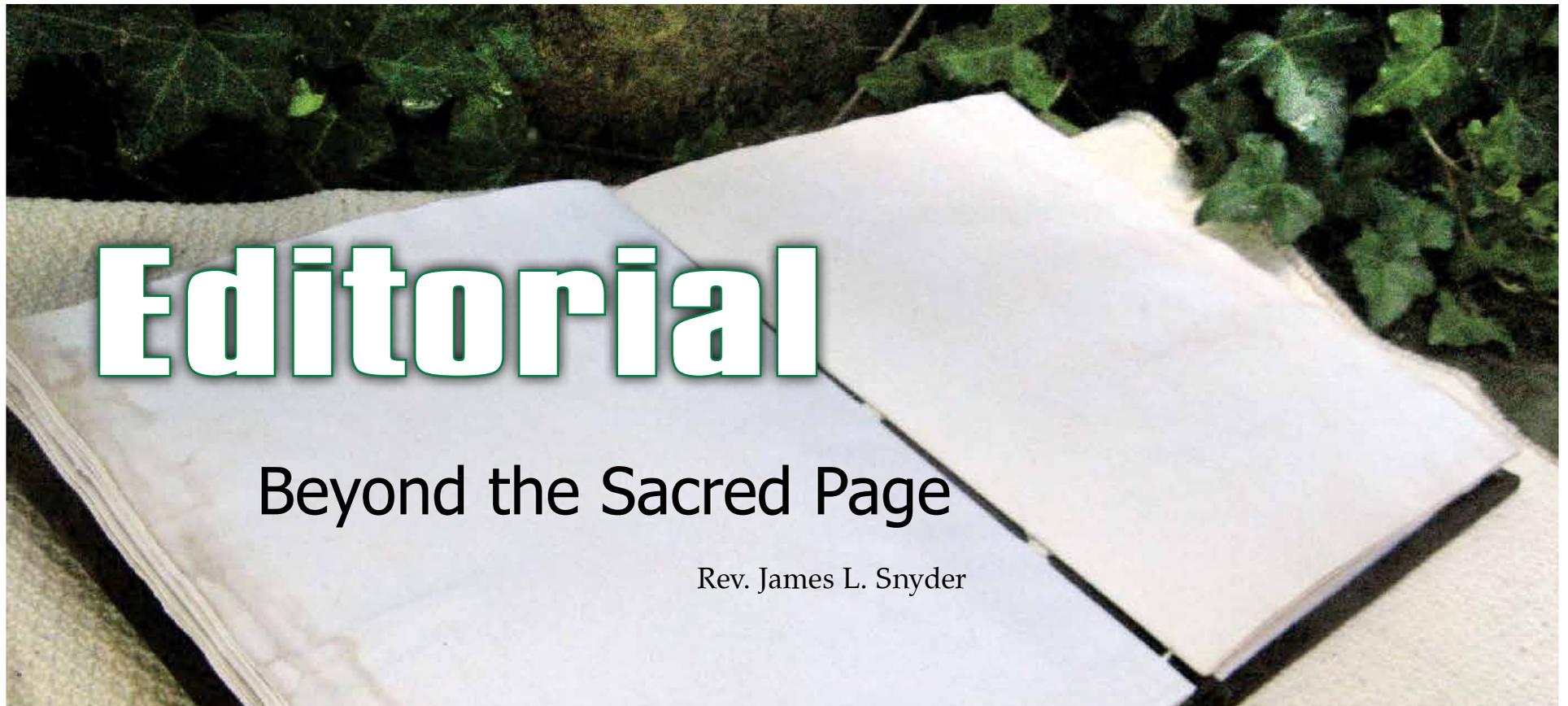
The Bible is all about Christ.

If I come in a worshipful spirit with the intention of encountering Jesus Christ, I will never be disappointed.

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Editorial

Beyond the Sacred Page

Rev. James L. Snyder

In my library are many translations of the Bible. I have not taken the time to count them, but most translations published today are represented there in some form. Never has there been a time when there have been more translations of the Bible. I am for it and I am one of the first to buy the newest translation.

I must confess, however, sooner or later I gravitate back to the old King James Version of the Bible. Not that I think it is better than any other translation. I just enjoy it more. I read the others and enjoy them to a point, but when I am coming to meditate on the Word of God, it is the King James Version that helps me along this line. I find it difficult to speed read the King James Version.

Probably the most useless battle today in the church is the battle over translations. I say, get a translation you like, as long as it is reputable, and get down to the business of reading and studying and meditating on the Word of God.

In spite of an almost endless variety of translations we have a culture today that is alarmingly biblically illiterate. The Bible is available to anybody in just about any language and translation you could think of. Yet, the truth remains, most Americans are not biblically savvy.

I have seen no surveys, but it would not surprise me to learn that the majority of Christians in America today do not read the Bible regularly. This is inexcusable.

Not only is the Bible available in just about any translation you can think of, it can even be downloaded on cell phones and is also in audio version. If you do not have time to read the Bible, maybe you could listen to the Bible, perhaps while driving.

Trying to think of excuses for not reading the Bible I have not come up with one. Except, if you are dead, then you cannot read the Bible.

The thing I try to wrap my brain around is why people, claiming to be Christians, do not read the Bible on a regular basis. Some do, I know. But many do not. I am confused about that group.

With the way the world is going today, I cannot think of any reason not to search the Scriptures daily to see what the Bible has to say about the times in which we are living. In a society that gets all of its information from television and the Internet, I would think somebody would have a desire to understand what God has to say.

I am not suggesting we use the Bible to understand the social and political aspects of our culture. Many are doing just that, but that is not the purpose of the Bible. Talking with

some people who claim to be Christian, I am not sure if they really understand the purpose of the Bible.

Recently, I attended a church and sitting there I looked around during the sermon to see what people were doing. It amazed me how many people did not have a Bible opened. Yes, some people had cell phones with the Bible on it. Even these were few that I could see. Observing the people as they walked out, few had a Bible with them.

How is it that some people think it's okay to go to church and not bring their Bibles with them? Don't church and the Bible go together?

The Bible is not a book for information nor is it a book of theology although it con-



So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

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Our Weekly Ministries

Sunday:

10:30 AM - Family Worship with children's church

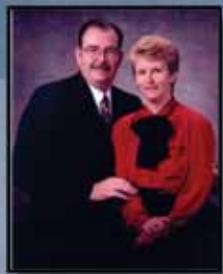
6:00 PM - Sunday Evening Praise with groups for all ages

Wednesday:

5:45 PM - Fellowship Supper (Covered dish)

6:30 PM - Bible study & prayer time

The Family of God Fellowship is a ministry of the Christian & Missionary Alliance with more than 17,500 churches and church groups in 51 countries. Since 1887, the mission of the C&MA has been to reach unreached responsive people groups for Christ.



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tains both information and theology. That is not the purpose of the Bible.

A hymn I enjoy very much has a marvelous phrase that puts the Bible in the proper perspective for me.

“Beyond the sacred page, I seek Thee, Lord.”

The hymn writer had it right. I am reminded what A. W. Tozer said along this line. “If you have read the Bible and have not experienced the Living Word, you have not actually read the Bible.”

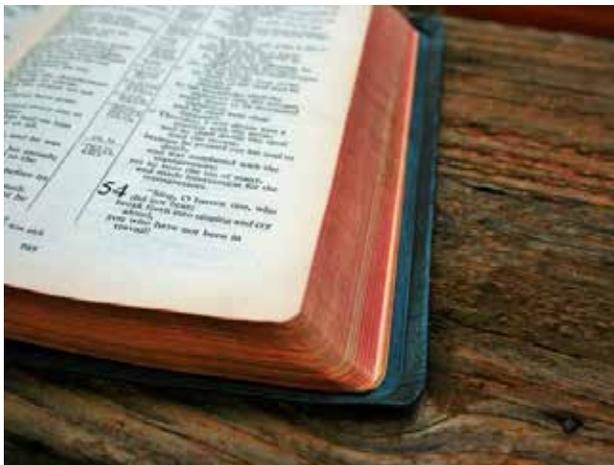
That is the purpose. To encounter the Living Word in personal experience.

I am interested in what people have to say about the Bible. I enjoy listening to a Bible teacher expound the Word. I love a preacher who really knows how to preach the Word. However, none of this takes the place of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. It is in the Word such an encounter takes place.

It is one thing to know what the Bible says, but quite another to experience God in that book.

I am afraid today we are living in a Christian culture more influenced by the world around them than the Word of God

within them. All of our ideas are coming from the world. Our attitudes are coming from the world. Whatever the world is doing at any given time will sooner or later



be found in the church.

Infrequently do we find somebody who will stop and say, “What does the Bible have to say about this?”

I think that is a superb question. To answer that question from a biblical standpoint would lead to some important changes in our Christian culture today. Few people understand that the world is in deep conflict with the Word of God. The two are incompatible with each other to the point of hostility.

Yet, some do not really believe that. To some the church is simply a cleaned up version of the world.

One preacher said on television recently that it did not matter if you were a Christian or not, if you practiced what the Bible said, and he was talking about “prosperity,” God would have to do it for you. According to him, God was under an obligation to bless you regardless of who you were.

I have a bit of a problem with that. The Bible is not a means by which I can coerce God into doing things for my benefit. If you take the Bible seriously, God will do nothing contrary to His nature and charac-

ter, which can be summed up in one word, holy.

An unholy man cannot convince a holy God to do something unholy.

I think of what Mark Twain said about a classic. “A classic is a book on everybody’s bookshelf, but one nobody reads.” I wonder if we have come to that point with the Bible? It is an acceptable book even with politicians today, and yet, the Bible does not seem to have made much of an impact on today’s culture.

I believe that impact must begin with the church. The Word of God needs to have an overwhelming impact on the local church. Too often, we are building churches through the business methods of the world and therefore the power of the Word of God is pushed to the side. We can explain why we have growth in our church. We can explain why things are happening in our church.

If you can explain everything happening in your church then God is not involved. God does that in my life and in the life of the local church which is completely inexplicable. What God does brings glory, not to human innovation, but to God and His marvelous way of touching our lives.

When was the last time we got on our knees before an open Bible and lost track of everything around us and was overwhelmed by the mighty presence of God? Most believers are living lives far below what they could be living. Everything in their life can be explained and they are struggling from day to day to be a good Christian.

I say, let us quit trying to be a good Christian. Let us quit trying to handle it ourselves. Let us throw ourselves unreservedly on the Lord Jesus Christ and let the consequences up to Him.

As I go “beyond the sacred page” I begin to experience God in the way that He wants me to experience Him. Much of what we have today is such a distance from God. We live the Christian life on long distance and God is not satisfied with that.

We must come into such a fellowship with God that it cannot be explained nor maintained by natural means. There is a supernatural aspect to my Christian life that can only be activated by a personal encounter with God orchestrated, if you please, by the Holy Spirit.

I do not believe that as Christians we should denounce other people and other religions. I like what F. W. Boreham once said. “You can always show a stick to be crooked by simply laying a straight one beside it.” This is what is needed today. I know criticism has its place. I think the greater place is to model a life beyond human explanation that will draw all people to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And this all begins “beyond the sacred page.”

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Enlarged Work
by: A. B. Simpson

“Enlarge the place of thy tent.” Isaiah 54:2a

About one hundred years ago a humble Baptist preacher stood in an English pulpit and announced this text at the opening of what was perhaps the first Missionary Convention of modern times. He then proposed the two following divisions as the themes of his discourse. 1. Attempt great things for God. 2. Expect great things from God. And then from these two propositions, themselves inspiring enough to impel the whole missionary movement, he preached a sermon which became the watchword of the greatest Christian movement, since Apostolic days. That was the birthday of modern missions. Soon he himself was a missionary in Calcutta, and today an army of missionaries is girdling the world and about to multiply more and more every year until the Master comes. The preacher had been one of those whom the Lord delights to use—one of the weak things, and the things that are despised. A humble cobbler, he had supported himself by toiling all day long at his last, but while his hands were busy, his heart was out upon the world, and his eyes were often upon the maps that lined the walls of his workshop, and the calculations and plans for the world’s evangelization. Deep down in his heart had grown up a mighty faith for the lost millions of mankind, and his great sermon was but the out breaking of the pent-up fires that had long been burning in his breast. It was the voice of God to his generation. It is the voice of God to another generation, the generation of today. It is the voice of God to us, beloved. Fresh from the hallowed influences that have so deeply moved our hearts and blessed so many here, God is pointing to a world where a thousand millions still are lost, and saying to us, “Enlarge the place of thy tent, fear not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes, let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations on the right hand and on

the left. For thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall He be called.”

Three thoughts are here suggested.

I. ENLARGEMENT

God’s plan for all His work is to begin in feebleness and expand and develop to maturity. He first makes a perfect sample and then multiplies it. So the work He has done for us is but a sample of what He can do, and wants to do for all the world. The blessing that has filled and thrilled our hearts these past days may be multiplied as many times as there are cities in the world, and reproduced wherever there are hungry hearts to fill and messengers to tell of the grace and the fullness of Jesus. That gospel of the Saviour’s fullness that has filled your heart can fill a thousand million hearts. That faith which has brought you deliverance can deliver all the captives of the great oppressor and set the whole world free. That humble work which has grown up out of “a handful of corn on the top of the mountains” can become a mighty forest on all the mountains and “shake like Lebanon, and they of the city flourish like the grass of the field.”

God has simply been making samples, but He can multiply them by millions. Will we let Him use us for their reproduction, for they are multiplied by reproduction. They are not made as the machines in yonder factory, but they grow as seeds multiply, as yonder geraniums by culturings, as that oak by the seeds it drops into the ground, or that single grain of wheat that sometimes sends up twenty stalks from a single seed, and each stalk bears half a hundred seeds. God has given us in this blessed work a gospel so full that it needs a world for its field. He is showing us the plan of a Christian church, that is

much more than an association of congenial friends to listen once a week to an intellectual and musical entertainment and carry on by proxy a mechanism of Christian work; but rather a church that can be at once the mother and the home of every form of help and blessing which Jesus came to give to lost and suffering men, the birthplace and the home of souls, the fountain of healing and cleansing, the sheltering home for the orphan and distressed, the school for the culture and training of God’s children, the armory where they are equipped for the battle of the Lord and the army which fights those battles in His name. Such a centre of life and power Christ wants in every centre of population in this sad and sinful world.

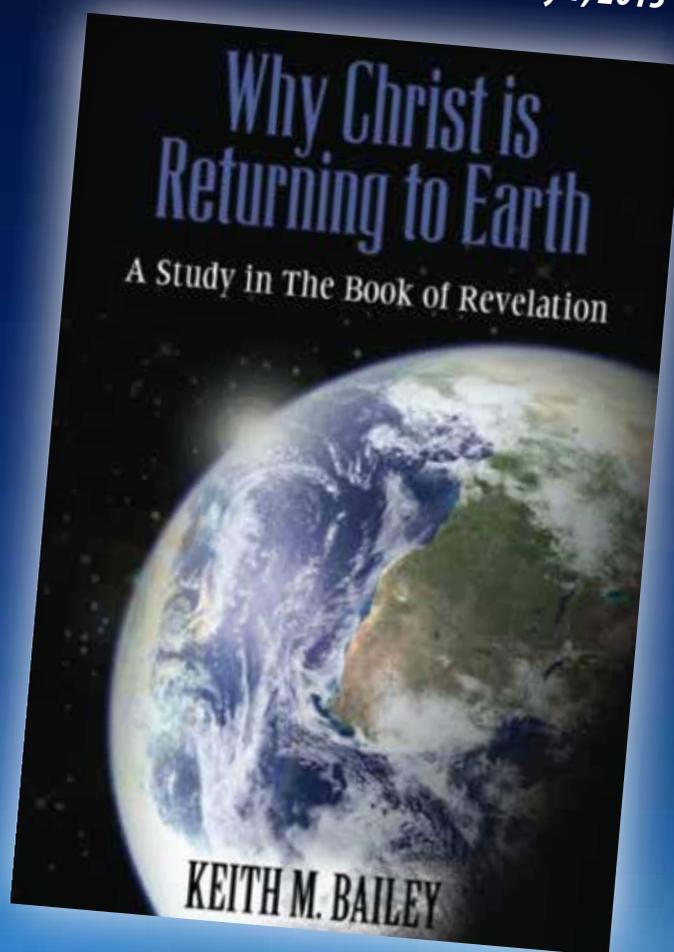
The figure of enlargement is that of a tent; its curtains are to be stretched forth and its cords are to be lengthened. These curtains are surely the promises and provisions of the Gospel, and they will stretch as wide as the needs of human lives and the multitudes that seek their shelter. The cords are cords of prayer, cords of faith, cords of love, cords of holy effort and service. He bids us lengthen the cords of prayer. Let us ask more, but let the strands of faith be as long and strong. Let us believe more fully, more firmly, and for a wider circle than we have dared before. Let the cords of love be lengthened until we shall draw men to Christ with the very cords of our hearts. Let our efforts for His kingdom reach a wider circle. Let each of us make the world our parish, and as the Bride of the Lamb realize that all that concerns our Lord’s kingdom concerns our hearts, “For our Maker is our husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name, the God of the whole earth shall He be called.”

God has committed to our trust the gospel in its fullness. Let us never rest until in all its fullness it is known in every hamlet of this great land and in every land and tongue.

Why Another Book on Revelation?

\$12.00 Available around February 1, 2013

Many believers find Revelation difficult and therefore they seldom read it and never have seriously studied it. It is also neglected from the pulpit. Both laity and pastors avoid it for the same reason. It seems too mystical and symbolic for anyone but a professional to understand. Such is not the case. It was written for all believers to read and comprehend. The Holy Spirit inspired the book of Revelation and if for no other reason the Bible declares it to be profitable for doctrine, correction, and instruction in righteousness.



This book is an attempt to let Revelation tell its own story. The central theme as set forth in the first verse is the unveiling of Jesus Christ in full victory and in His glorified state. The book begins with an announcement that Jesus has won. He is stage center and in charge from the beginning of the Revelation to its conclusion.

This last book of the Bible shows how the history of the world will terminate. Jesus Christ is to personally, bodily, return to earth and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth. The fact that His church will reign with Him is of personal interest to every Christian. You cannot get this full story any place else in the Bible but the Revelation. The rapture of the church, the restoration of Israel, and the end of the times of the Gentiles show how God will close out history just as He had planned it. All these facts surround the incredible seven year tribulation period. It all makes sense when put in its context. History is laid aside and the door is opened to eternity.

This study of Revelation gives special attention to the key Christ gave John in Revelation 1:19. He told the apostle the book would be made up of three parts; the vision of the glorified Christ, the things that are an overview of the church age given in the seven letters, and the third section is comprised of the things hereafter. This third section begins with chapter four and continues to the end of the book. God is pleased to lift the veil on the future to the extent we need to be aware of it.

Other books by Keith M. Bailey may be found at www.kmbbooks.com.

And we must lengthen the cords of our liberality. The Lord is asking for millions today to spread His gospel in its fullness over the world, and we to whom this full gospel has been such a blessing are especially called to take it as our trust for Him and send it everywhere. The world is open today and the workers are being prepared as never before, men and women full of faith and the Holy Ghost. Never was there a time when a little money would go so far in spreading Christ's Word. Less than ten million today would evangelize all the world before the close of the century.

When I think of the opportunity of using money for God today, I could almost envy the men who have the opportunities of successful business. God is going to send very large amounts into the treasuries of consecrated work, and if we are but true to this trust we shall yet see tens of millions spent in sending the fourfold gospel to every corner of the globe.

II. CONSOLIDATION

But the wider our work the stronger it must be at the centre. And therefore as the cords are lengthened the stakes must also be strengthened. What are these stakes?

1. Surely God's Word is the first. The more widespread the work God gives us to do the more important is it that we be true to the great standard of truth, the Bible and the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the day of new theologies and loose views of evangelical truth. More sacredly than ever does the Master require us to stand faithful to the cross of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of man's sin and ruin, the great atonement, the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, the person and work of the Holy Ghost and the certainties of future retribution and reward. Thank God we do not have to resort to the novelties of rationalism to attract the multitudes. Give them the Living Bread, the atoning blood, the old and ever new story of Jesus and His love.

2. Personal holiness. This is the next safeguard of the Lord's work. God cannot trust an unsanctified people or an unconsecrated man with much service for Him. Poor Jonah is sure to mar his most successful work with a touch of himself. The more God entrusts to our hands the more humbly let us lie at His feet and the more faithfully use our trust for His glory. This is one of the wise things the Salvation Army has done. It has required all its officers to be sanctified men and women. Such a work can afford to be successful. God grant us wisdom to see to it that all who bear the vessels of the Lord are clean. So shall He give us the world itself for our inheritance.

3. The spirit of self-sacrifice. No work can ever be glorious without the martyr spirit. Luxury is killing the churches today, and the only remedy for it is the red blood of sacrifice. Great faith and great sacrifice will always be found together. This must be the spirit of this work if it is to cover the world. We must be willing to endure hardness as

good soldiers of Jesus Christ. We must be indifferent to popularity, and human praise or blame, we must be willing to live with great simplicity and rigid economy, we must be willing to be misunderstood and persecuted, we must be glad to be the companions of the lowly and despised, we must gladly face toil, hardship and even death, and count all things but loss for Christ and His kingdom. Such a people only can possess the world for Christ, and such soldiers shall march to world-wide victory while the splendid brigades of rank and luxury shall fail in the day of battle and prove but a splendid pageant and a dress parade.

God give us the spirit of Scriptural faith, personal consecration and true self-sacrifice, and then He can give us the world for Christ.

The figure of the tent suggests the idea of constant vicissitudes and humility. This is no proud architectural pile but a simple tent, ever changing and oft taken down and moved forward. It is the figure of the changing wilderness, the pilgrim life and constant movement. This is not our rest. This is no place for great cathedrals and splendid establishments and ecclesiastical states but continual advance and ceaseless aggression. It is to be feared that splendid churches have been the greatest curse of the church. As long as the early Christians met in humble upper rooms, they had the power of God and godliness, but when they began to imitate the splendor of the world and vie with the architecture of imperial palaces and heathen temples, the Holy Spirit took His flight, and the world and the devil became paramount. The days of the Jewish tabernacle were better days than those of Solomon's temple. The beginning of this work was in a humble tent; let us never forget the tent spirit or lose the pilgrim spirit. "Enlarge the place of thy tent." He does not say get a temple, but a bigger tent. Lord, help us to enlarge but never leave our tents.

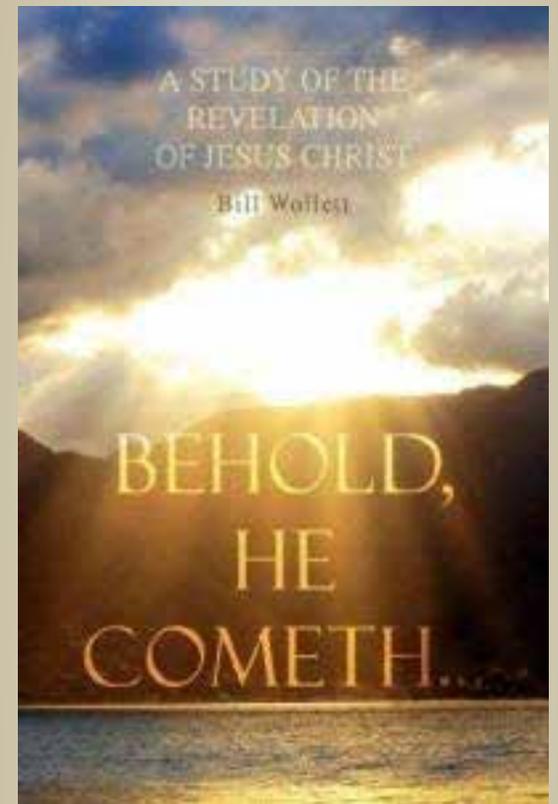
III. DIVINE RESOURCES.

"For thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name, the God of the whole earth shall He be called." This is the secret of it all. We have back of us one who has infinite resources, and He is not only our King and our Friend, He is our Husband. He has given us all His heart and all His glory, and He will surely give us all the world for our dowry and our inheritance. This is the secret of successful work, to know Christ in this blissful and intimate relation, and to receive our work, by virtue of our union with Him, as the very fruit of our marriage with the King of Kings. So may He reveal Himself to us all, and then, as His very bride, standing at the threshold of His home and inviting in His lost and wandering children, it shall be true of us, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come," and the world will come to Him.

"How knowest thou whether thou be come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Like Esther on Ahasuerus' throne, we have been called to the kingdom that we might use our place of right and power to save a world. God help us so to win them back to our beloved Husband, so to bear them for Him as His very children and ours, that "the God of the whole earth shall He be called."

It has been the experience of some of God's children, and it was mine, to be called by His Spirit, in years of loneliness and sorrow, to learn very deeply the Song of Solomon in its true spiritual significance, and then, in this deep, sweet love-life with Christ, to be led into precious service for Him, and to find the life filled with most gracious fruitfulness and blessing. O beloved, He is calling you to His bosom and then to His work, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, forget also thy kindred and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him." And then, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth."

Without controversy, the Book of the Revelation is the most neglected book of the Bible. However, this first-century vision of St. John takes the reader into the 21st century and beyond! Written in down-to-earth language, this work enables even the reader with limited Bible knowledge to understand God's message for these last days. "Behold, He Cometh..." provides a valuable guide for Bible Study groups, especially teens, by answering many questions and generating thought-provoking discussions. Also, those who are looking for a practical way to present the Gospel to friends and loved ones will find this book to be a gift that will speak to the heart.



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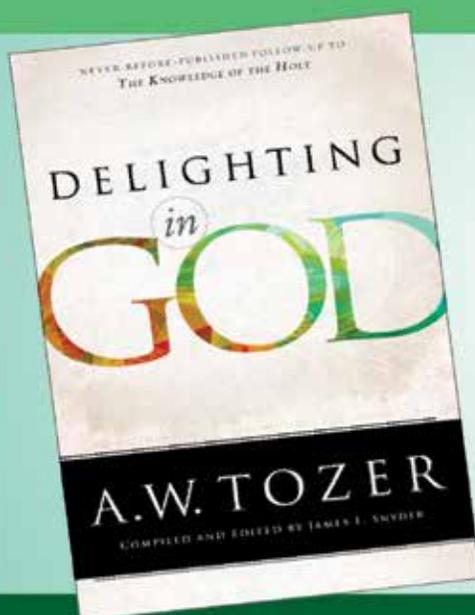
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Delighting in God

by: A.W. Tozer,
James L. Snyder



Understand Your Life's Purpose by Better Understanding God

"My worship grows and grows as my perception of God grows. God cannot grow. My perception of God grows as I experience Him day after day. I should be more capable of worshiping God today than I was ten or twenty years ago."

Delighting in God is the message A.W. Tozer intended to be the follow-up to *The Knowledge of the Holy*. He demonstrates how the attributes of God--those things God has revealed about himself--are a way to understand the Christian life of worship and service. Because we were created in the image of God, to understand who we are, we need to understand who God is and allow His character and nature to be reflected through us.

We are here to serve and adore Him, and we can only fulfill that role by acknowledging who He is. This is the essence of the Christian life and the source of all our fulfillment, joy, and comfort.

Available on bakerpublishinggroup.com



Tribute to Keith M. Bailey:

A Friend and Mentor
Cornerstone Dunkard Brethren Church
Covington, Ohio

Thank you so much for the lunch. My appetite and I had a conference this afternoon, we voted unanimously to move here. Just in the summer.

Standing behind this pulpit is a great honor, and I should not tell you this but I will. I was born wearing a necktie. Walking down a beach one day, I noticed people staring at me and then I realized I had my tie on. I go nowhere without a tie.

Out of respect for him and for you, I have sacrificed my necktie. My publisher could not get me to take my tie off when they were doing videos for promotion and so forth and so it means nothing to you but believe me, it means a lot to me.

My story is a story of someone who Keith M. Bailey spent time with, this big man of God spending time with a little unknown preacher.

When I was young, I wanted to be a writer. That is all I wanted to do, just write. Then God called me into the ministry and God and I had a little tussle about that. In going into the ministry my assumption was I needed to put on the altar my writing. I did not know that writing could be a ministry. I did not know that, nobody told me that. And so I went into the ministry in 1973 with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. My first General Council was 1975. The speaker at this Council so enraptured my heart that to this day I have never quite gotten over it. His name was Keith M. Bailey and I just fell in love with his presentation, his preaching, his attitude, his passion and wherever he was speaking, I was there if I could make it.

Eventually, I moved to a church near Harrisburg where brother Bailey was the managing editor of Christian Publications, Inc., and so we were not too far apart. That year he was the speaker at our district conference. You know how God sometimes brings things together? Everybody was crowded around him. He was a spiritual superstar. There was

one moment when nobody was around him and I went up to introduce myself. I mumbled something like, "I sure would like to be a writer" and expected him to shake my hands and say, "God bless you brother. I'll pray for you." That is what I thought he would do. However, he took me aside, sat down with me for a half hour or was three hours, I am not sure. But he talked to me. "Why do you want to write? What do you want to write?" Then he talked about what he wanted in his publications. He was publishing at the time a quarterly mission's publication and wanted me to do an article. When I left, I did not need shoes because I was walking in the clouds.

My grandmother was Church of the Brethren and told us we could never dance. Boy, did I ever come close to dancing that day. In a couple of weeks I got my first assignment and my wife could not put up with me. It was a turning point in my ministry.

Finishing my first article I had this choice; I could take a \$.29 postage stamp, put my assignment in an envelope and mail it or I could save the \$.29. We Pennsylvania Dutchmen love to save money. I could save \$.29 and spend \$5 in gas and hand-deliver it. That was the best \$5 I ever spent. I went down and hand-delivered it.

this came out quarterly, so I had two months in between and I am planning in my head that I need to connect with this person at least once a month. There is the telephone, but you know how expensive telephone calls are?

It would take me two or three weeks to come up with a question I needed him to answer for me. I would go down, go into his office and within five minutes I had forgotten exactly what that question was. It was just wonderful and he spent a lot of time with me. Either he had nothing to do or he was investing a lot of time in me.

Once I went down to the publishing house. I was going in and just as I was going in, he was driving off and was leaving. On the right

side of the building was the bookstore and on the left side were the editorial offices. I thought, "Well, I missed him." So I went into the bookstore and in a few moments I heard a familiar voice, "Hey, did you want to see me?"

Being the idiot that I am, I said, "Do you have any time?"

He took the time. I do not know what he sacrificed to spend time with a little country preacher. I met with once a month and we talked and it was wonderful. Then he moved to Louisville, Kentucky and I moved to Glen Burnie, Maryland.

One thing we talked about a. W. Tozer. I thought I should write a biography of A. W. Tozer, and he encouraged me. I called the publisher and their response was, "We don't think there's much of a market for that." My heart sank and so I called Brother Keith and told him the story. He said, "I'll tell you what to do. Write a couple articles for magazines on A. W. Tozer, get them published and see what happens."

The biggest magazine that bought one of my articles was the Fundamentalist Journal, by Jerry Falwell. Within two weeks of the publication of that magazine, I got a call from the publishing house and they said, "We've been thinking that maybe there is a market for an A. W. Tozer book. But, you're not the one to do this because you never went to college."

When God called me into the ministry, somehow He forgot to send the memo "Go to college" and I never went.

"You've never gone to college," they argued, "you have no degrees, nobody knows you and you're not the one to do it. Then they said something that stunned me. "We will buy your research for \$1500."

I really did not know what to do. So I called my friend and explained it to him.

He said, "Here's the situation. If you sell your research to them, it no longer belongs to you and you can never use that again. And

if you want to use it, you will have to get their permission. Secondly, I know the publishing house and I know they don't have the resources at this time to write the book, the chance of that book getting published is pretty nil."

He said something I have never forgotten. "Are you writing for ministry or for money?"

And so I turned them down and they reluctantly said, "Okay, we'll let you do it."

Don't you love God and don't you love His sense of humor? That was the only book that publishing house ever won an award for.

Here is what brother Bailey said, "People will not buy that book because of who's writing it, but they will buy that book because of A. W. Tozer."

And so God has used brother Bailey more in my life all these years.

I moved to Greenville and when he retired, I spent a lot of time in his house, visiting and so forth and so on. Then when I moved to Florida I started calling him by trying to think of some question I needed answered. Soon I forgot about that and just called him, soon he was calling me and so we were talking quite a bit.

Do you know what one of the great privileges of my life was? A couple years ago, I did an AW Tozer book, "Preparing for Jesus' Return," on the book of Revelation. The next year brother Bailey wanted me to help him with a book on Revelation. I did the transcription and the first draft then helped him get it published. Isn't it interesting that an unknown person helped this great man of God publish his last book? Doesn't God have unique ways in which to use people?

Here is my last thought. That which I thought I had to surrender and give to God in order to go into the ministry, God used Keith M. Bailey to bring back into my life and mentor me in such a way that I have over 30 books published now, most are AW Tozer

books. Without his mentoring, help, and encouragement I probably would be a writer but not that level of writer. whenever I got a book done, I would send it to him and ask to make sure this is Tozer's voice. I want the Tozer voice, I want people who have heard Tozer say, "That's what Tozer would've said."

Keith M. Bailey was very great and so here is a man who took the time to mentor someone who is insignificant in comparison. I think the greatness of a man is his willingness to help the smallest person because anybody can help the top level.

And so my necktie is off to Keith M. Bailey and I thank you for allowing me to be here.

The Man Who Believes the Word Of the Lord

Paul Rader

"And the Word of the Lord came to him (Elijah)." 1 Kings 17:2.

Wonderful is the coming of springtime, with its glad bird-songs, and wild flower perfumes from the hills. Delicious is the smell of bursting buds and blooming orchids. But it means the putting in of the plow. It is just so with the coming of the Word of the Lord. The coming of that Word means refreshment and delight; new days and new knowledge; but it means also turning and overturning, seed sowing and hoeing. The Word of God, when it comes, acts like springtime, pulling you close to God as the sun pulls the earth; bringing you out of the cold lifelessness of winter into the warm producing season of spring. Remember, when it comes if there is not plowing, seed sowing and hoeing, there will be weeds. Then the winter of judgment will find you without provision for its long cold days.

When the Word of God comes, it is sent by Him to be obeyed; and if it is obeyed, great blessing always follows. If His Word is not obeyed, there begins what the man of literature would call Nemesis. That is, there springs up at once a force that makes for judgment. When a man has broken the law of God, or disregarded the Word of God, seed is sown that when harvested will be a deadly poison, shaped for that man's undoing.

The playwright and the novelist delight

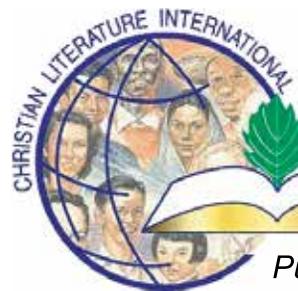
to weave their stories around the outworking of this principle of sin, or of disobedience, or of injustice. They love to follow the law of retribution; showing that as a man soweth so shall he also reap.

Here a plot starts. There are two children, and a fortune is left to them. One covets all and schemes to get all, and finally, by breaking every law of God, he succeeds. The "Word of the Lord" coming to such a one would say: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." By disobeying that word, he does not allow his heart to be opened up like good soil, and be broken to receive the seed; consequently, the weeds of judgment spring up and inevitably come to a harvest. The novelist follows this character down the days and brings us to the period when these wrongly gotten riches eat like leprosy; and leave the man standing naked and undone in the biting blasts of God's judgment. When "the Word of God" comes to you, be sure you go to plowing and planting. In other words, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Let your heart soften in His presence. Let the tears come, if they will, to water the clods of your heart; and then plant the Word from the Lord deep within your heart saying, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."

The king before whom Elijah stood, and to whom he brought the Word of the Lord failed to do this; and Elijah pronounced God's judgment in these words: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there

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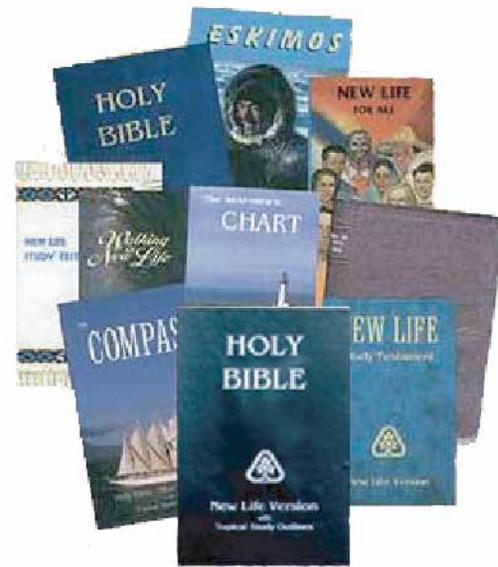
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shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

Elijah thus announced the coming harvest of weeds, and at once God withdrew him to a lonely place. God knew that Ahab in his rage, when the judgment broke upon him, would seek to destroy the man who had brought God's Word to him. Thus has it ever been with the prophets of God. How foolish of the wicked heart to think it can stay the judgment of God by putting to death the announcer of that judgment. It is just as if you were to run into a house that just caught fire, warning the occupants that the house was in flames, only to have the whole family chase you up the street and beat you to death. Presently they return to their house only to find it burned to the ground. How silly and criminal the effort of trying to destroy the announcer instead of trying to stamp out the fire.

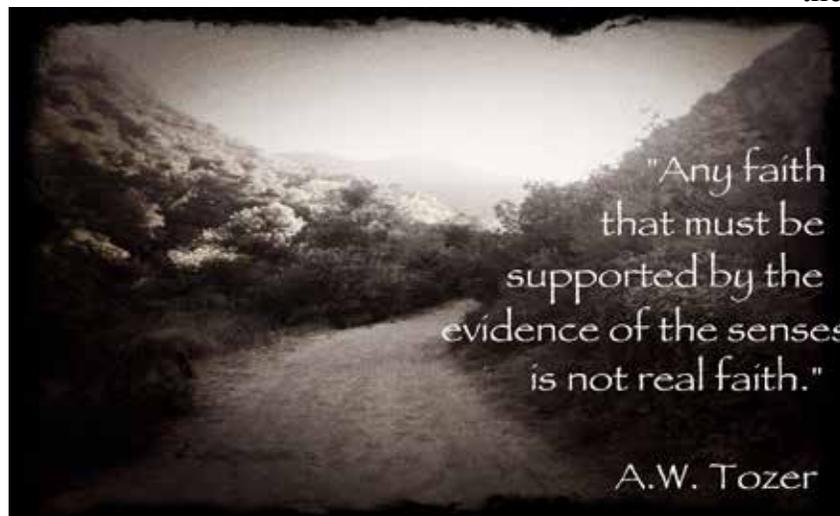
The critics of the Bible are of this breed. They do not like the announcement of hell. They despise the tidings of a soon-coming tribulation; of the judgment of nations and individuals; of the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth to take to Himself His great power and reign. They despise and reject any supernatural interference with the natural. Miracles, which are described in the Word of the Lord, nauseate them. They proceed—following, as they say, scientific methods—to put this Bible out of the way. At first, they operated on its tongue and teeth, to keep it from speaking so plainly of the workings of God in supernatural power. Then they went a little lower to weaken its throat that it might not put force into its sayings. Then they dived to the heart to take from it the work of the Cross of Christ and His atoning Blood. But this will not change the Word and edict of God, which has gone forth.

Why do men think they can change the act of God by tearing the Word of the Lord to pieces? Any man who thus treated the proclamation of the United States in the late World War was considered a fool. In vain he ripped that proclamation to pieces before a crowd and stamped on the Stars and Stripes. Did that stop the war? Nay, it went on to the end, and those poor fools got jailed and worse. The crowd knows such a man will get judgment, and they pity him for his idiotic acts. Our attitude toward the critics of the Bible of today is the same. God says: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth, it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." No amount of criticism can change the announcement of God or destroy the announcer.

There is only one starting point for all

progress, and that is faith in the unchangeableness of the Word the Lord. This is the utterance of God. "God is not a man that He should lie; neither the Son of Man that He should repent; hath He said and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?" All the thinking, which builds upon this foundation, will lead out of doubts into knowledge; out of uncertainty into a clear realization of God, His will and His ways. It will also lead men to forsake sin, assured that sin is inevitably followed by judgment. It will lead men to mind God at knowing that there is no escape from the punishment of disobedience; and that every transgression and disobedience will receive its just recompense of reward.

Ahab should have built on this foundation, but he preferred rather to play the fool and to lay the blame on Elijah. I love to hear God's prophets talk from their rock-ribbed pulpits of power, rooted and fixed in the never-changing "say-so" of God. Here is an inspiring dialogue between Elijah and Ahab: "And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?' And he answered, 'I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy



father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord.'" Any man is a troublemaker in the church, in the nation, or in the home, when he has forsaken the commandment of the Lord.

Ahab was the leader of Israel. He had made the trouble. Now Elijah called for a final "show-down," between the sureness of the Word of the Lord and the man-made schemes of the false prophets. He cried, as we ought to cry to our generation: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow Him but if Baal, then follow him."

There is a peculiar truth concerning the one who is able to say as Elijah did, "As the Lord God of, Israel liveth, before whom I stand;" and who dares to announce, as the result of that intimacy, the Word of the Lord. It is shown in this seventeenth chapter: "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith." Here He we see the banishment that is connected with wholly following the Word of the Lord. The saints who have pursued the pathway of full obedience to God have found all down these

two thousand years—since the Savior went away into the Glory—that loneliness is part of the price of uttering the Word of the Lord.

How Satan has tried to bind the lips in testimony by telling men that they will be misunderstood and left alone by their old friends if they dare to speak the Word of the Lord. I have known preachers by the score who will not testify in their own pulpits. They have allowed Satan to restrict their utterances. They have become wonderful in cold knowledge; but from saying out the things the Holy Spirit utters to the seeking heart, they draw back, afraid of criticism, desertion and banishment, until the Holy Spirit speaks no more in the tender throbs of utterance. They are in a measure true to the gospel; their doctrine is sound; but that bright glow which comes from the chamber prayer; that manifestation of the Holy Spirit that melts hearts is theirs no longer. They thought it was unbecoming for a dignified preacher to shed a tear in public. They thought it altogether beneath their exalted position to open their heart and confess to their hearers the weaknesses, compromises and mistakes to which the Holy Spirit had so faithfully called their attention in the secret place. The fresh, savory Word of the Lord they refused to pass on to the people, because Satan suggested that it would be casting pearls before swine. It would be so humbling. So they drew back from such a ministry, and the One Who is meek and lowly in heart did not seem so close to them after that; their utterances grew dry and cold though they were the utterances of truth.

Yes, it costs something to give out the Word of the Lord. It means a trip to the brook Cherith. Have you pulled back from Cherith? "I love to go down to the Mission to preach," said a minister to me. "Why," I ventured to ask. "Oh, it's free, down there," he replied. "That is a dangerous thing you have said," I answered. "You have said virtually that you draw back from letting your heart loose in your own pulpit because you would be misunderstood and criticized by your own people; and you dare not pay the price of the withdrawal of their approval. You love, however, to go where some fellow has paid the price and picked a free field in the city. There you can frolic in freedom, uttering in a perfectly natural and excellent manner the Word of the Lord." It is because so many dare not face the trip to Cherith brook that their ministry has lost its glow and power.

You sit in your prayer meeting. The time comes for you to pray. You fall in with the cold spirit about you, and utter your petitions in carefully selected terms, conscious every moment of the ears about you. You hear the Word of the Lord challenging you to pour out your heart before Him; but you draw back, promising to do that in your own room later on. You saw Cherith's loneliness ahead of you and fearing, you drew back. Probably if you were talking to me just now, you

would say: "I don't quite know what is the matter with me. I love the Lord. But I have no joy like I hear others have." Will you dare the next time, will you dare now, to give the testimony He asks you to give before friend or stranger? Will you dare to pray out your heart's cry, regardless of those about you? Then the waters of Cherith will become at once the sweetest you ever tasted.

Yes, there is a loneliness in going all the way with God as Elijah did, but He feeds you there in a way you have never been fed before. You will enjoy supernatural strength, which you never thought could come your way. The ravens God sent to Elijah at the brook Cherith brought "bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening."

It must have been a great experience to see the ravens stop their flight at the brook. This supernatural marvel must have given a wonderful relish to the food. The first great joys and experiences that come from wholly minding the Lord are often spectacular and romantic. But we must go a little farther down the road of humiliation if we intend to walk closely with God. With Elijah, this experience of supernatural supplies ceased: "The brook dried up." Elijah was withholding rain at the command of God. To keep this Word, God must let the brook dry up. If we stand by the Word of the Lord, God will bring it to pass and its very fulfillment will mean trouble for us.

Here is a couple who have prayed for their boy, standing on the promises of God. God answers by sending judgment to that young life. That judgment hurts the hearts of the father and mother. Their brook dries up. Will they ask God to remove His prophet like Elijah? If he is the messenger of God, but did not God command someone with plenty in that city to feed him? No, that would be up the road, and a rich man would get the glory. But the prophet must go down the road, and this widow woman possesses next to nothing. God loves to take the next to nothing and make more than enough out of it, Thus he blesses the widow who let go all that she had and shows his prophet that God can make a way where there is no way and that He is not shut up to man's resources. God loves to prove that the path, which seems lonely and forsaken, is crowded with the angels of God. When once a saint has learned this widow-feeding plan of God's, he can truly sing: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

Are you afraid of this road to the widow's house? Then you know nothing of shouting in the empty flour-barrel. It is very humbling, this feeding at the widow's house—but, oh, it is soul-fattening, and produces great heart-freedom and liberty to the lips in testimony and prayer!

The widow had almost run out of meal. It was not God's desire for her that she should be so low; and it displeased Him greatly to think that she should eat what little was left and then look for death. There was no faith here, and without faith it is impossible to

please God. Hers was a sad state. Yes, and I find many in this state today, ready to throw up the whole thing and quit. They are up against it, and they say, the way is too hard. They can see the bottom of the barrel every hour, but they cannot see God. I not only mean that many are having this experience financially, but spiritually. Do you want to know how to get out? Then look at the example of the widow and mark, "the Word of the Lord to the widow," especially this last word, for it is the Word of God to you. Take it, plow and plant and hoe it now, or the weeds will come to harvest. Here is the Word of the Lord through Elijah: "Make me a little cake first."

Now just look back. When the money came in, did you take God's portion out of it? Answer God now! When your talents were working, did you take God's part out first? In business, does God's call come first? Or is your answer: "I'm sorry, I can't do it; but my business is so pressing that it rushes the life out of me?" Answer God now, Mr. Business Man! Most businessmen in the church are

useless to God, excepting as they send their check. You could not trust them with God's business. It would drag along from week to week and end up in an awful mess. Yet that same businessman, to whom God has given a task, would go wild if any man in business dared to say, he did not attend to business. He attends to his own business, but he has never yet obeyed when God said: "Make Me a little cake first: His spiritual barrel is bare, and he wonders why. I have known of dear saints of God, greatly blessed and greatly kept in His will. I have dug down to their testimony and have always run against this rule of God's little cake first. Oh, it is so little He asks! They have testified that this widow-woman's experience has been theirs: "And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she and he and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the Word of the Lord which He spake by Elijah."

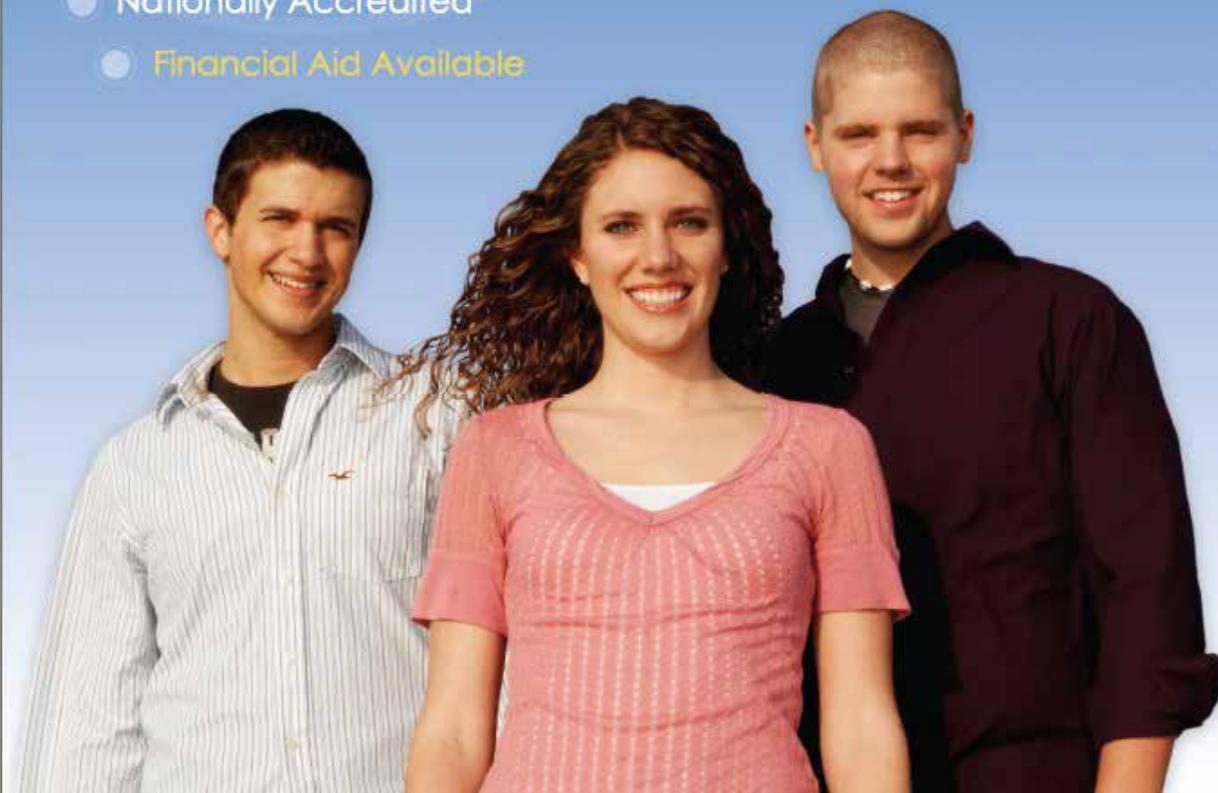
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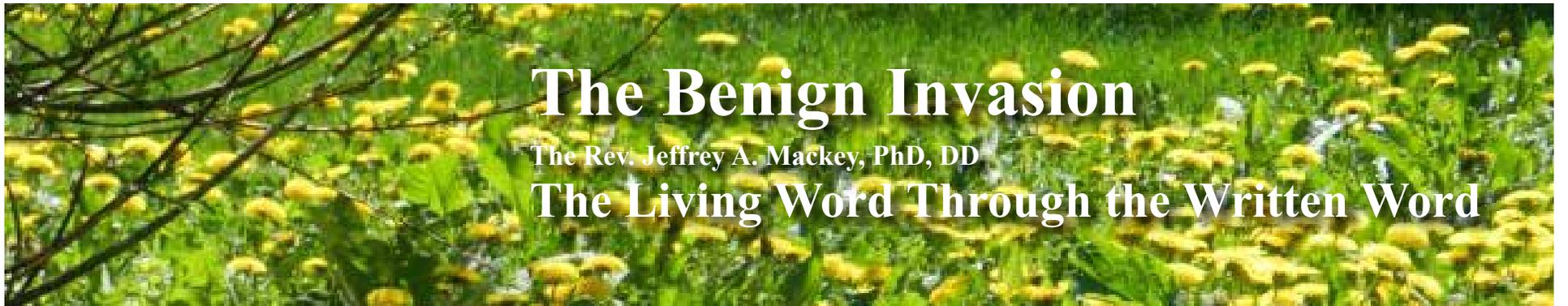
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The Benign Invasion

The Rev. Jeffrey A. Mackey, PhD, DD

The Living Word Through the Written Word

There are two legitimate claims to the title Word of God, each of which we encounter in the Holy Scriptures. First, of course, beginning our reading in canonical order, either in Genesis or the Gospel According to Saint Matthew [and very much so in the Gospel According to Saint John], we sense what people mean when they speak about the Word of God: The Bible. This is by far, in Christian and unchurched people's minds the direction their thoughts go: to a book; usually black leather (or bonded "leather"); too large to handle easily; and filled with, just that: words from God. And the further connotation of the "Word of God" written is that popular consideration, all those "words from God" are somehow legally "no!" and that the Bible is a book of immense dictatorial fences one must have around one's life so as to not be "like the world."

Honestly though, for those who do not consistently read the words of Scripture, there is a "missing out" of love the person and work of Christ therein revealed. Such persons miss the breadth and width of God's supernal revelation: Grace, faith, love, hope, promise, future, and the celebration of humanity in the Old and New Testaments. They miss so very much for there is a famine in the land when it comes to Biblical literacy, and yet the Bible, more than in any other holy books of any other faith or belief system has a book with the God of Grace as its fullness, and no one needs to learn Greek, Hebrew or

Aramaic to comprehend what God is saying through the text. By that I mean, we ordinary people can approach and read with our options open and God's Holy Spirit then speaks to us through the words Holy Spirit initially inspired and revealed. We then are illumined by Holy Spirit, who in turn takes those truths which are God's and allows us Godly knowledge, and if we will, Holy Spirit will grant us wisdom as well as a measure which seems absent in so many corners of Christian orthodoxy.

I and many others, call this, the active, instructive and enlightening facts of truth, "The Word of God" (written). It is a literary impartation of truth unequalled in all the world. One divine of the 19th century said, "It takes a Christ to invent a Christ." This truth is attested to II Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

Another wise preacher of the 20th century said, "As profitable for teaching, Scripture reveals what is right; as profitable for reproof, Scripture reveals when we are not going right; as to being profitable for training in righteousness, it reveals, how to 'get' right; and finally, as training in righteousness, we are told how to remain right. This is both dynamic and benign."

Some of you, my readers, will begin soon to ask "Why did this author choose to use the word, "benign?" And this is where the fasci-

nation begins when we stop seeing that word as having to do with bodily issues and cancer diagnoses. The fullest definition of "benign" is important, and no other word describes God's Word, Written, for this word than that which has invasion rights into the willing heart and mind; as this Word, "Benign."

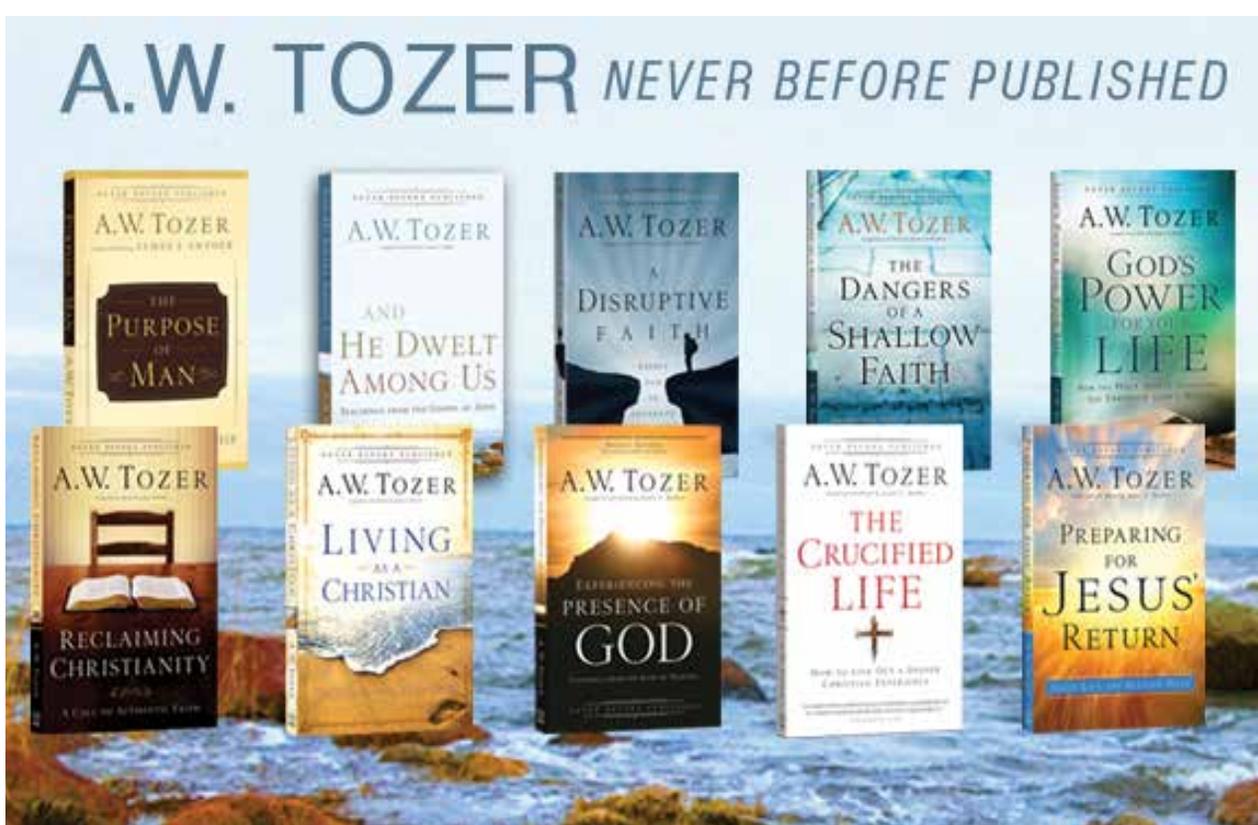
"Benign" is an adjective, meaning: gentle or kindly. Synonyms include: kind, warm-hearted, good-natured, friendly, warm, affectionate, agreeable, genial, congenial, cordial, approachable, tenderhearted, gentle, sympathetic, compassionate, caring, well disposed, benevolent.

Is this not the type of written invasion of the human heart and mind we all fall in love with when we read the Bible for its ultimate purpose (to testify of Jesus Christ) before we read it for any subordinate purpose?

The Bible's major purpose is made clear by Jesus to those around him saying, "You read and search the Scriptures because in them you believe you will find eternal life; and they testify to me" [John 5:39]. The supernal nature and purpose of the Holy Scriptures is to testify to the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is in him that we find the second use of the four words, "The Word of God."

The Gospel according to Saint John begins with the invasion of the concept and reality of the Living Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was the God. He was in the beginning with God...in him was life, and the life was the light of men" [John 1:1,3]. Here is the invasion of this world by its creator! We may, as Paul writes, "see through a glass darkly, but then (when the Kingdom has come) face to face" [I Corinthians 13:12]. It is not what face we will see, but whose face we shall see. This is none other than the dynamic Word of God, testified to by the written Word of God.

And we do diligently study the Scriptures because we have been convinced that it is in the Written that the Dynamic Word is found and ultimately experienced. Someone coming to Jesus in initial belief described their experience this way, "I turned expecting a proposition and I found a person." To which do we bow the best and therefore the most? Turning to a proposition or an argument is to make the Bible an object of worship and we become idolaters—that which the Bible itself commands us never to be. Our "Idol," is the Living Word of which the Written Word gives full and complete loyalty and honor.



Person Before Proposition

The Rev. Jeffrey A. Mackey
A Recognition Of The Relationship
Between The Written And The Living Word

Looking honestly into the Scriptures with the intention of discovery and the promise of illumination, there is no limit to what we will find, or better yet, what will find us. We know and celebrate and trust the power of the written Word, for why else would missionaries be so anxious to place at least the New Testament into the hands of tribes without Bibles, and many without a written alphabet. Within that book we call the Bible, we find from beginning to end, a witness, a promise to Abraham, which his offspring shall be as the sands of the sea. But we must move backward to the text where we find the description of the beginning of that which only Christ can complete: Eve and Adam steal and eat of the tree; Christ at the end is nailed on a criminal's (those who steal) cross.

The first indescribable mystery of God's redemptive Grace is seen in every step and around each unseen corner. God tells Adam that he will need now to till the ground where there will be thistles and thorns, and Jesus make His presence know by wearing a thorn crown made by the jailers to manifest the end of such work when the Kingdom, which has come, is still coming. And our work as Christians is to plumb the depths of the redemptive history and see that it is impossible to arrive at the full work of Jesus Christ without seeing that He is indeed the second "Adam."

Such a string of golden thread is what ties the Holy Scriptures into an essential whole which testifies of Christ. Christ in All of Scripture is one of many books in my library, and I also possess the entire Christ in the Bible series, both old and new editions. These were written by the founder of The Christian & Missionary Alliance, Dr. A. B. Simpson. For these men and for many other men and women, the Bible is always pointing "spiritually north," so that one's life can find conversion, the fullness of Holy Spirit, and the reality of the indwelling Christ who promised us he is "all and in all." The obvious danger is that in the book in which we seek Christ Jesus, himself, we get mired down in the study of Scripture and fail to meet the Savior. One writer has penned these words: "The Bible has become Christianity's most acute problem....we have installed an idol..." There is certainly a branch of Christianity in western culture which is certainly guilty of this.

Yet, as this writer pens: "Jesus Christ is what God 'speaks' to the whole creation. Christ is God's own self-disclosure," which we have traditionally termed, "Special Revelation." That Special Revelation always, not sometime, but always testifies of the Son, from Eve's offspring bruising the serpent's head, to the enthronement of the God-man on the eternal throne of the Kingdom of God.

We dare not settle for a page [agreed it is God's Special Revelation], when God has

offered us a person, his only begotten son.

Central to Christianity is the one who gives his life so that we might live as well: Christ, the Jewish Messiah, and a light to enlighten the Gentiles.

A second danger is that of trusting, trying, scientifically explaining a story as a chemical equation. The "Jesus Seminar" gathered by sole intent, all intent to find a Jesus who never existed; a Jesus who spoke pious platitudes but who made no claims on anyone's life. Cloaked in the shelf worn jacket of rationalistic explanation that Jesus can be known historically without a preceding and very real relationship with the center and circumference of "Jesus Studies," Jesus, himself."

Thomas Jefferson is probably the most noted of biblical violators. So committed to the words of Jesus, he cut up two Bibles, to rid them of anything hinting at the supernatural, and published instead "The Jeffersonian Bible," a chaotic reading of what "Jesus said" with his uncanny insights! Years after, Arthur Guiterman [1871-1943] would react to such rewriting of the Bible, that he, himself penned these words:

First dentistry was painless,
Then bicycles were chainless,
Carriages were horseless,
And many laws enforceless.

Next cookery was fireless,
Telegraphy was wireless,
Cigars were nicotineless,
And coffee caffeineless.

Soon oranges were seedless,
The putting green was weedless,
The college boy was hatless,
The proper diet fatless.

New motor roads are dustless,
The latest steel is rustless,
Our tennis courts are sodless,
Our new religion — godless.

The late Robert Farrar Capon speaks to this danger when he writes: "Now we have deconstructionists and assorted other literature hackers whose most recent bright idea has been the printing of the Gospel record in four colors to indicate the degree of authenticity they feel can be ascribed to the several passages. There is, of course, a certain legitimacy to all this. No one except a rabid fundamentalist can ever say we have the ipsissima verba of Jesus in their original form: even the "original" Greek of the Gospels is a rendering of the Aramaic of Jesus, of which we have no record at all. More than that, not even believers in the inspiration of Scripture can overlook the fact that the various communities of faith which the Spirit co-opted into the writing and acceptance of the Gospels were left quite free to put their individual (and sometimes wildly differing) stamps on the accounts we have. But the quest for a "historical" Jesus lurking somewhere behind these accounts and discoverable only by critical diligence remains a supremely iffy pursuit. However brilliantly the biblical critics may reconstruct the "historical" Jesus, what they come up with is not histo-

ry but postulation. For my money, the only historical Jesus there is, for better or worse, is the Jesus the Holy Spirit has disclosed to us on the pages of the New Testament - every word of which, one way or another, represents something the Spirit thought supremely worth mentioning about Jesus. If that view gives us problems, and difficulties, and even contradictions (and it does in many places), it simply enjoins upon us the labor of interpretation that all historical documents call for.

Therefore, my beloved reader, I invite you to bow with me, before the Christ of the Book; the Theme of the Book; the Source of the Book; its beginning and its culmination, I give you Jesus.



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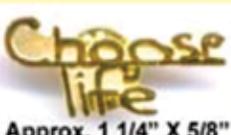
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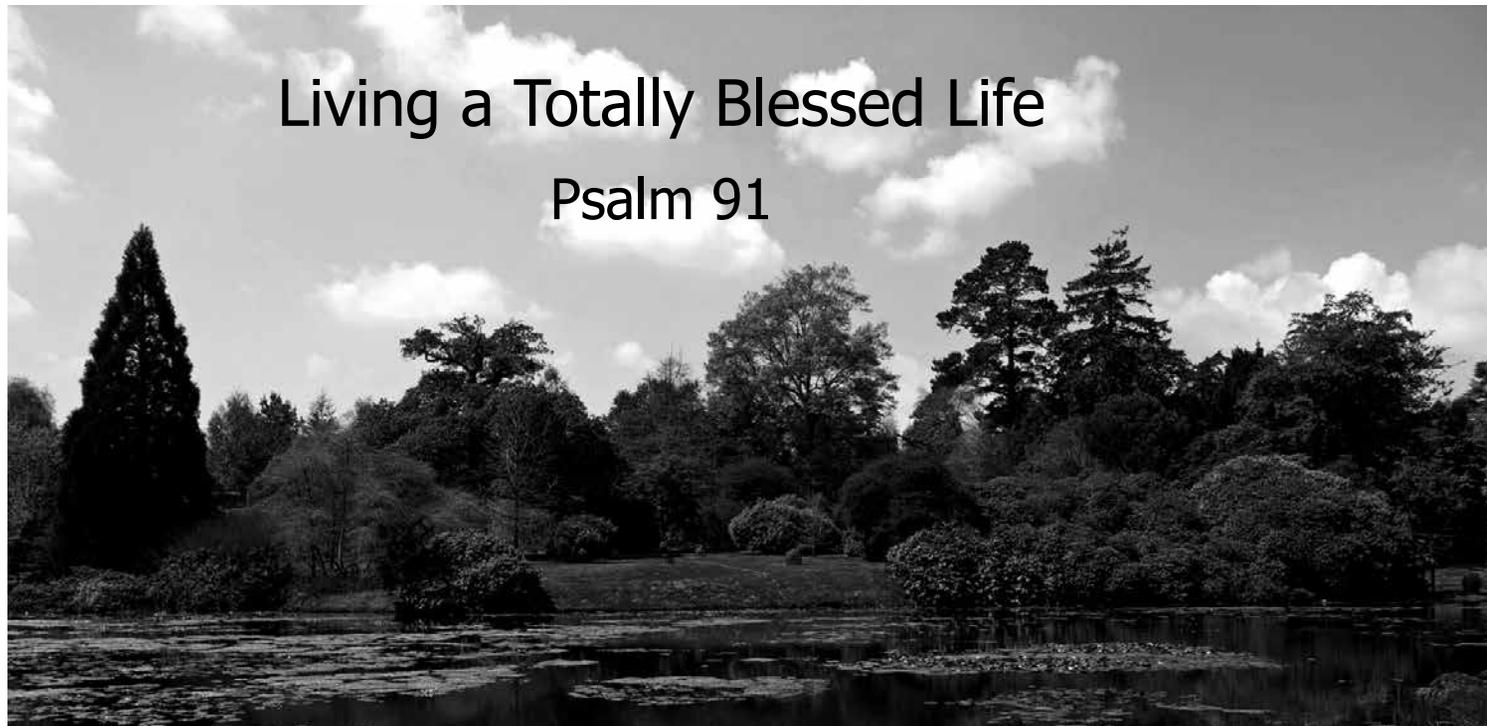


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Living a Totally Blessed Life

Psalm 91

their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

To understand this “promise” we need to see the context. (2 Chronicles 7:11-22). This was a promise to Israel and yet behind this our principles God works by with all his people. Understanding these principles will enable us to effectively appreciate God’s promises and appropriate them into our own life.

With this promise comes certain consequence. We often forget about the consequence. What we sometimes do not understand

A. W. Tozer once said to his congregation, “If everybody here today were dressed physically to the level of their spiritual life there would be many people wearing diapers and sucking their thumbs.”

One tragedy, especially in the Christian world, are so many people living below their spiritual potential. There are three categories of Christians.

1. Those wallowing in the Swamp of life and each day sink deeper into the quagmire of despondency.

2. Those just making it through the week ending in an exhausted heap. “Thank God I made it.”

3. Those who are living the blessed life and not only get through the week victoriously, but have enough blessing left to bless other people. It is this group that does all the ministry in the church.

This third group is not many.

Most people are just getting through life with little to show at the end of the day.

David, in this Psalm is celebrating what I will call the “Totally Blessed Life.”

There is too much in this Psalm to cover in one sermon. So what I want to do is focus on the primary message David is giving us in this Psalm.

God has made it possible for us to live a Totally Blessed Life in the world in which we live.

I think God understands our world today better than we do and has made adequate provision in light of the condition of our world. We do not live up to the level of our world, rather, we are living in this world in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

Someone put it this way, “If you can explain what God is doing in your life, probably God is not doing it.”

God works according to His agenda and not ours. This is hard for us to understand.

From a political sense, we think we can pull God into America to help make America great. I hate to say this, but God

is not interested in making America great. God’s focus right now is on the “church.” By church, I am not talking about a religion or denomination, but rather a body of believers, both on earth and in heaven and that is the focus of what God is doing.

When I say, “Blessed,” it needs to be explained. The definition is not from man’s point of view, but rather God’s. It is not what you define “blessed” to be, but what God defines it to be. God will not be operating according to your definition, but rather His. He wants to pull us into His world, never the reverse.

In this Psalm, David points out three aspects of this blessed life. And I need to emphasize that it is all from God’s perspective. David is centering in on God’s perception of what a blessed life is all about.

We need to turn our back on the world for a moment and allow ourselves to see what God is intending for His people.

The first aspect of this blessed life...

I. The Promises of God (1-10)

Everybody believes in promises and yet few people understand what a promise is. Then, once we get a promise, we don’t know how to apply to our personal life.

There is a little chorus we sing in Sunday school:

EVERY PROMISE IN THE BOOK

Every promise, in the book, is mine

Every chapter, every verse and every line

All are blessings, of his love, divine

Every promise, in the book, is mine

This is true, and yet it is not true. Not every promise in the Bible is mine, but every promise in the Bible can show me what God desires for me.

Let me give an illustration.

2 Chronicles 7:14 - “If my people, which are call name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from

that with a promise comes a warning and you had better know what that warning is.

Let us embrace the promises of God, but let us know what we are doing.

There are two phases to a promise of God.

There is the immediate phase of particular people God had in mind at the time.

Then behind this promise are certain things about God applicable to us today.

That is what we really need to embrace.

Every promise of God does two things...

A. Every promise reveals something about God that He wants us to know; His nature and character. God will promise nothing that will in any way be contrary or contradict His nature and character. Every promise reveals something about God He wants me to know. I need to find out what this promise is saying to me about God.

B. Every promise also reveals God’s interest and intent for me, how God actually sees me. God always gives a promise that enables us to be what he wants us to be. It is crucial that I understand God’s interest in my life. God created me for a purpose. I need to find out what that purpose is.

We need to understand the blessed life and what it looks like from God’s perspective. Otherwise, the Bible makes little sense.

All of us have encountered angels “unawares” in our life.

II. The Provisions of God (11-18)

Here David introduces something rather interesting in association with the blessed life. He is introducing angels as one provision of God enabling us to appropriate the promises of God.

With so many misconceptions about angels, I am almost tempted to do a whole series on the subject. David mentions angels about 11 times in the Psalms.

Angels have always had an important role in God’s work.

David and Mary Livingstone were young

missionaries going into Africa to preach the gospel to some unreached villages.

They arrived at a certain place, built a home and began laying the foundation for their ministry in that village.

The “witch doctor” felt threatened by what they were doing. Someone came to David and said some were planning to kill him and his family that night.

All day and all night David and Mary spent time in prayer.

Under the leadership of the “witch doctor” the Warriors surrounded the house and were about to go in when they stopped and went back to the village.

After this incident, God moved in that village and many of the people were converted, including the “witch doctor.”

Several years after this David was talking to some of the elders of the church, which included the “witch doctor,” and he mentioned about that night and what happened or what didn’t happen.

The witch doctor looked at him and said, “What we want to know Mr. Missionary is where did you get that army that surrounded your house that night?”

“What army?” David said.

“Don’t fool us,” the witch doctor said, “we saw all those warriors surrounding your house that night and we knew we could not defeat them.”

David said, “I didn’t know they were there, but I know who they were.”

How many times has our life been in a situation for an angel to step in and do something? All of us have encountered angels “unawares” in our life.

Hebrews 13:2 - “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

David outlines three things in this passage that angels do for us.

1. “Care for you...”
2. “Keep you in all your ways...”
3. “Hold you up...”

This is just one provision God has for us to appropriate the promises of God and make them a reality in our life. We cannot do it on our own, and God does not expect us to.

In verse 13, David talks about “the lion and the snake.” These were the most vicious enemies to a man if he came into contact with them. David said that the Angels will protect us from the worst harm the world can put to us.

Through God’s provisions, we can appropriate the promises of God in such a way as to bring glory and honor to God in our life. The work of the Holy Spirit in my life is to bring me into harmony with God in his nature and charac-

ter.

The third aspect of this blessed life is...

III. The Priority of God (9, 14-16)

When I know the promises of God and how He has provided for me to appropriate those promises into my present life I need to know how to wrap them all together.

In order for me to wrap this all together, I need to understand the priority of God. If I fail here, nothing else works in my Christian life.

I am wondering if maybe this is where most Christians are failing to experience A Totally Blessed Life.

They read all the promises of God and seemed to understand them to a point.

They have availed themselves of the provisions of God to make these promises a reality.

However, the key ingredient is missing. That key ingredient is PRIORITY.

What I mean here is that many Christians think they can set their own priorities. This is where we fail.

We need to understand God’s priority and then accept that and adjust our lives to that priority. This is a very difficult thing for us to do. We want to do the Christian walk our way and to quote a famous psychologist, “How’s that been working for you?”

What are we doing to adjust our lives to God’s priority?

Two phrases here bring this to light.

A. “Because...”

“... You have made the Lord your safe place, and the most high the place where

you live.”

“... He has loved Me [a reference to God]”

“... He has known My name [a reference to God]”

This is our position before God. This is God’s priority for our life.

Then, if that is true...

B. “I will...”

“... bring him out of trouble.”

“... set him in a safe place on high.”

“... answer him.”

“... be with him in trouble.”

“... take him out of trouble and honor him.”

“... please him with a long life.”

“... show him my saving power.”

When we accept God’s priority as our priority, we will begin to experience A Totally Blessed Life.

When our priority is God’s priority, we can appropriate everything God has promised us.

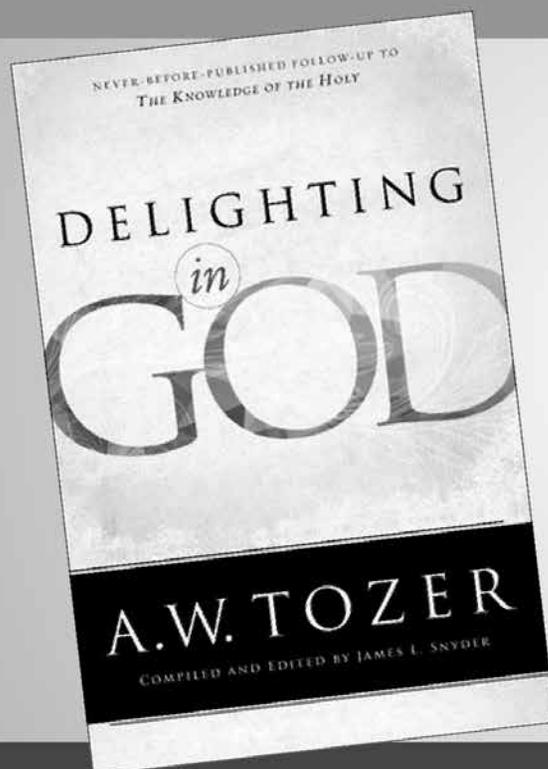
The question is, how are you appropriating God’s promises? Are you truly enjoying a Totally Blessed Life? If not, it is not God’s fault. God has made available to us everything we need to be all that God wants us to be.

Every promise, in the book, is mine
Every chapter, every verse and every line
All are blessings, of his love, divine
Every promise, in the book, is mine

Your Christian life is a testimony of God’s faithfulness. Do you think God is happy with your testimony? Do you think God is well represented through your life?

Delighting in God

by: A.W. Tozer,
James L. Snyder



Understand Your Life's Purpose by Better Understanding God

"My worship grows and grows as my perception of God grows. God cannot grow. My perception of God grows as I experience Him day after day. I should be more capable of worshiping God today than I was ten or twenty years ago."

Delighting in God is the message A.W. Tozer intended to be the follow-up to The Knowledge of the Holy. He demonstrates how the attributes of God--those things God has revealed about himself--are a way to understand the Christian life of worship and service. Because we were created in the image of God, to understand who we are, we need to understand who God is and allow His character and nature to be reflected through us.

We are here to serve and adore Him, and we can only fulfill that role by acknowledging who He is. This is the essence of the Christian life and the source of all our fulfillment, joy, and comfort.

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The House of Onesiphorus

“The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain” (2 Timothy 1:16)



A home for pregnant and at-risk girls. A 5,500-square-foot house!

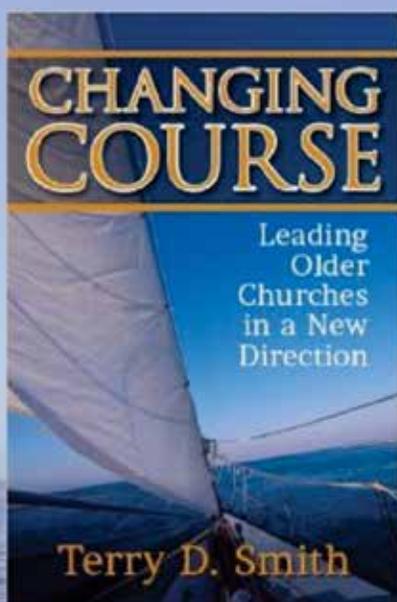
Prayer Requests: House mother to supervise the girls



ITEMS

- 10 Twin Bed's with frame
- Living room couches and comfy chairs
- Coffee table
- 6 stools for the kitchen area
- Recliner or comfy chair for the house mother
- Shower curtains (3)
- Garbage containers for the girl's bathroom, house mother, kitchen and hallway bathroom
- Toilet bowl brushes
- Twin bed sheets and blankets.
- Large area rug for under the dining room table.
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“The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain” (2 Timothy 1:16)

Do You Live The Word Beyond the Page Serena Berthoud

Are they only words on a page
Can others see through your life
That it's much more than hype
Are you truly remade

Do you walk knowing he lives
That you are joint heir with Him
That he has covered your sin
Do you know he gave all there was to give

Or do you just talk the talk
Pretending you know the savior
But you really had not met your creator
Is your talk also your walk

Do you live the word beyond the page
Because the journey is not for the faint of heart
But take strength the Lord stands with us from the very start
He will be with us every step of the way

Take the word into your life
Let it live and breathe
To that alone we should cleave
Through His children shines his light

Others will know there is something different about us
A special thing they cannot explain
The Holy Spirit claimed us and we will never be the same
In the Father we have put our faith and trust

We know what we were created for
The word has walked off the page
And lives within us each day,
As we praise Him and give Him glory

Do you live the word beyond the page
Will you stand for Him
When sin comes stealthy in
Or will you fall and lose it all?





Fellowship of

The **Authority of GOD** *Rests on the Bible*

A. W. Tozer

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Remembering
A.W. Tozer

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The Mystery
of the Word
Made Flesh

The subject of the Bible's authority is crucial. Authority is the ability to do something along with the desire to do it. Never has it been more important to understand the scope of the authority of God's Word. As part of my doctrinal creed, I believe...

"The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice."

Every Protestant throughout the world in every generation believes something similar to this. The Word of God is central to what we believe. It is more than just a centerpiece; it is the source of authority, not only in my creedal life but also in my daily life. We are, after all, sons of the Reformation.

To go back to the beginning of the Reformation we must realize the real issue at the time was the place of the Bible. Coming out of the Roman Catholic position were the protesters or as they later became known, Protestants. There was Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wycliffe, Ulrich Zwingli, John Huss just to name a few of the major leaders in the Protestant movement.

Their issue with the Roman Catholic Church had to do with the Bible. Here the battle was fought and won. We who are the sons of the Reformation have lost sight of the real issue at stake at that time. All other differences they might have had were secondary at best while they focused on the position of the Bible. After all, everything they lived for rested on the authority of the Bible. If this was not God's Word, all else was lost.

The fundamental advantage of the Reformation was not to give the Bible to the masses only, but rather establish its authority in the church. This authority was to be above tradition, interpretation, priest or preacher. Nothing was to take precedence over the Word of God. It stands alone and above all other authorities in the world. Everything in their life and ministry was to flow out of the

Word of God under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Some of those old men of God would be quite discouraged if they were to come back and see how the authority of God's Word has significantly deteriorated among today's so-called Protestant churches almost to the point of reversing the tremendous work of the reformers in this area. Certainly, the Bible has some authority in most of these churches but not supreme authority. The authority of God's Word succumbs to interpretation and sometimes even the translation of the Bible, which changes from one generation to another. What one generation agrees to be biblically prohibited, the next generation repudiates as though truth was flexible and fluid. Keep in mind, whatever is true is not new and what is new cannot be true.

Even now, the traditions of the church seemed to have more authority than the word of God. Every tradition has a beginning, a time when it was not done, then someone did it and it became tradition. Today some are establishing traditions not based upon the clear teaching of the Scriptures. One generation's tradition is the next generation's brazen serpent.

My stand is simply that anything not clearly based on the authority of God's Word does not have God's blessing. This may explain the absence of divine blessing in many evangelical, Protestant churches today. To understand the authority of God's Word from God's perspective I need to lay it out a little bit for you.

We must start with the authority of the Old Testament.

In Judaism God laid a firm foundation for redemption. Nothing was left to chance or caprice; God was very careful to lay down a foundation that would carry on to the cross of Christ and beyond. This foundation was established with an eternal perspective. Everything God does fits into eternity and rings in full harmony of God's will.

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall

the Burning Heart

worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

God showed Moses His plan and warned him, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25:40). The plan God laid down did not need any of man's improvements, it was perfect as given by God. Every generation for some reason feels the need to change or improve upon God's plan. We must purge ourselves of this terrible God-complex in our own generation. Accept God's Word as He gave it regardless of any personal inconvenience. My experience has been, although the Bible is wonderful, it is at the same time the most inconvenient book you can read in the area of its demands.

The foundation was not of such a nature as to be improved upon. God was quite clear to Moses that he was not to expand upon the plan, change, or modify any of it. The parts of that plan that did not make sense to Man was not to be altered because it was God's plan, after all and not offered to man for his critique or approval. It was born in the heart of God and no man dare infringe upon God's heart.

The message was final as far as it went and there was to be no amending. When groups get together and have their annual meetings they like to have amendments. They like what has been proposed, they just want to add their amendment to it or personalize it. God's plan does not need an amendment nor man's approval or any modification to make it easier for any generation.

Furthermore, there is no room in God's plan for compromising. It was as God said it was even though it did not seem to be rational from man's point of view, it was God's plan and God has never been in the compromising business and there is no indication he will begin. That is how men get along with one another. Each one gives a little here, a little there and by the time all of that giving has taken place they end up with something far removed from what they started with. God is not going to allow man to chip away at His plan compromising here and compromising there ending up with something altogether different from God's original plan. It was God's plan, not man's.

There is no room in God's plan for excusing. Some aspects of God's plan seemed harsh at first reading. We think of the sacrifices, of all the things that were in the Old Testament plan of God. Sometimes we are wont to take what God has done and make

excuses. "Oh yes," someone might explain, "God said that but He really didn't mean it that way." Then comes a long explanation of what they think God meant. If you have to explain it, you simply do not believe it. By faith, we can accept from God what we may not understand. That is the dynamic of faith.

God does not need someone to make excuses for His plan as though it had something missing. This plan takes in every possible consideration and needs no adjustment for the times. Nothing takes God by surprise and nothing is ever done by God capriciously, He knows the end from the beginning and all His plans take that into consideration.

The authority of the Old Testament had final authority over the conscience and the conduct of the people. What good is it to have authority without any personal application? The authority of the Old Testament is final with no appeal above that authority. It determined how men were to act and what would happen to them if their conduct did not align with the Word of God. It was to apply to all men without exception. "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:11).

The message in its finality carried with it the authority of God. Jesus said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). That was an illustration

of the authority God gave to the Old Testament. That is what Jesus believed and the Holy Spirit emphasized that authority in the New Testament.

Then we come to the authority of the New Testament.

All through the Gospels we see that Jesus always spoke with authority. Not like the scribes and the Pharisees but an authority that supersedes human authority. "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29). The Old Testament had granted this authority.

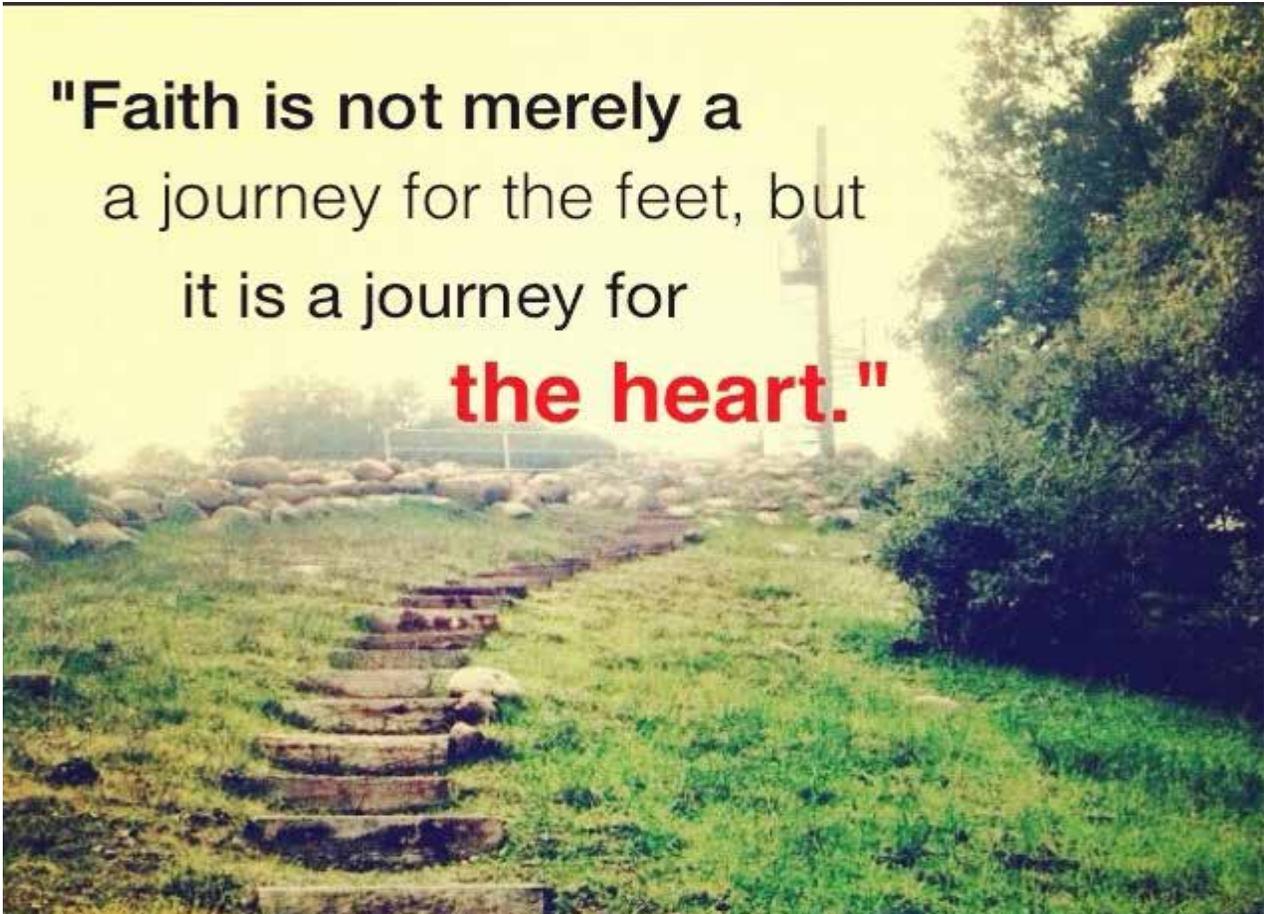
"15The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

17And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

18I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

(Deuteronomy 18:15-18).

The authority Jesus operated under was established in the Old Testament. What Jesus was doing was a carryover from the Old



"Faith is not merely a
a journey for the feet, but
it is a journey for
the heart."



Fellowship of the Burning Heart

Testament.

For example. Read through the book of Acts and you will find it to be a record of Bible preaching in the early church. You will find Peter and Stephen and the apostle Paul preaching. Look at their preaching and you will discover how they reasoned, how they taught and how they appealed to the Old Testament Scripture. There was no New Testament at the time; God's Word to them was the Old Testament. As they preached the Old Testament, they did so under the authority of Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, the Old Testament unfolded all its glory. The Old Testament prepared the way for Christ and transferred to Him all power and all authority. In Christ was the fulfillment of everything established in the Old Testament.

The church birthed on the day of Pentecost was literally a product of the Word of God. It sprang out of it and rested upon it for its existence and sustenance. Take the Word of God away from the church and it ceases to be a movement of God with authority. Sometimes it is easy to forget that spiritual authority does not lie in institutes, colleges or seminaries. Only the Word of God under the direction of the Holy Spirit can empower the church today.

The truth of this is seen throughout church history and how important the Word of God was in each generation.

For example, those churches that stayed closest to the Word of God were the truest churches in that sense of the word. Out of the Reformation came a great commitment to the Word of God, this resulted in the con-

servation of orthodoxy. The main truth of the Reformation was putting the Scriptures, the Word of God, in the center focus making it available to all peoples. The Bible was not just for the elite but rather for those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. Many of the leaders of the Reformation sacrificed their lives making the Word of God available to the people.

After the great Reformation came the revivals. The revival under the leadership of John and Charles Wesley are most remarkable and, in effect, took the Bible to the people. Often, because he was not permitted to preach in the churches, John Wesley stood in the open marketplace and proclaimed the Word of the Lord. I am sure he would not have thought of that on his own but because of the situation it became a necessity. The common people heard him gladly and out of his ministry flowed a revival lasting many years, and according to some historians, saved England from collapse.

These revivals have been most dramatized. The problem with the revivals of history is that they have usually been temporary and at best only a brief flash of lightning. Not taking away from their importance, but pointing out the fact that the church of Jesus Christ does not rest upon these dramatic revivals but rather upon the simple Word of the Lord declared in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Those churches are the truest that stay the closest to the Word of God. Even to this day, this is so. Often it carries a price many are not willing to bear.

Then we come to the teachers and the

preachers. Those teachers and preachers most honored are those who honored the Word of God the most. I feel it is very important that a man in the ministry limit himself to the Scriptures. With so many other things that may gain a person's attention, the man of God must constantly focus on the Word of God. When a man puts his focus completely on the Word of God and limits himself to the Scripture, God invariably gives such a man authority.

It has not always been easy. The snare of brilliance in the pulpit has been the downfall of many a preacher. Down through the years there have been mighty orators that have risen above the crowd and unfortunately have risen above the plain teaching of the Scriptures. The pulpit is no place to exhibit a man's brilliance rather, it is a place simply to declare, "Thus saith the Lord."

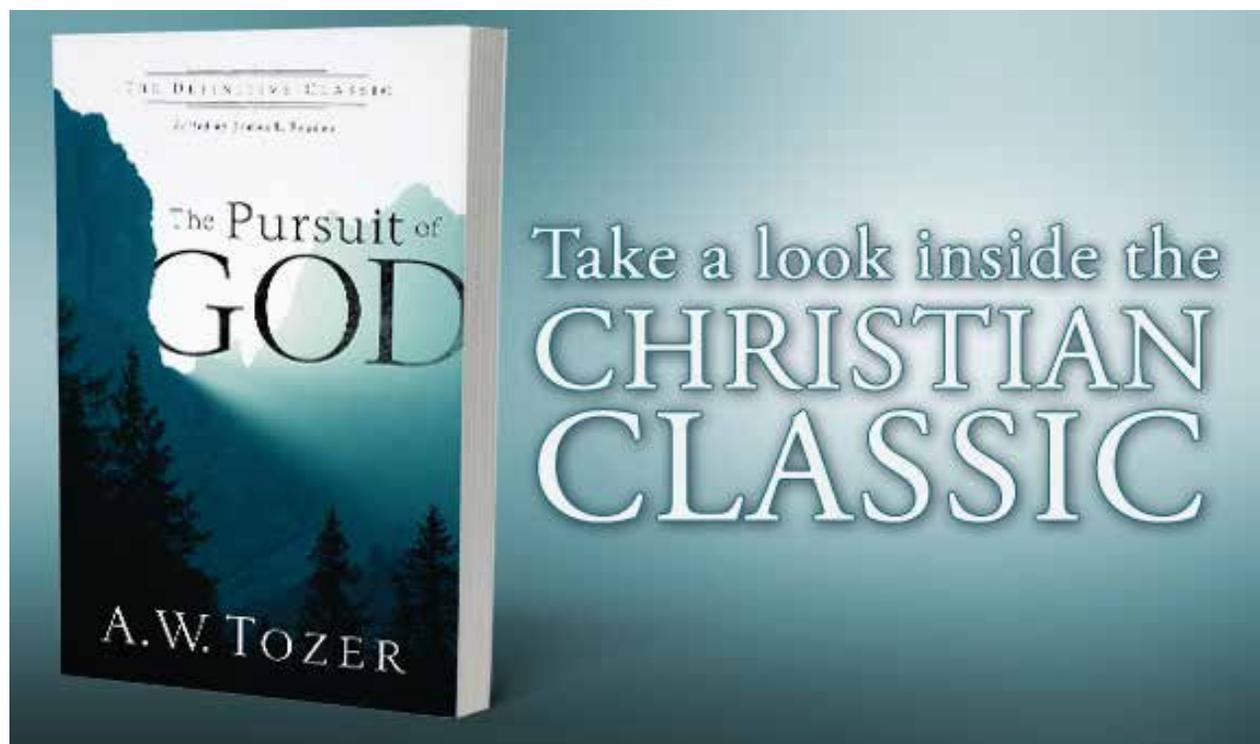
The trap many fall into is preaching about the Bible instead of preaching the Bible. This is about the same as a man talking about eating rather than actually eating. No matter how much you talk about eating it never satisfies the appetite. No matter how much you talk about the Bible it never ministers to the heart that pants after God. To teach about the Bible instead of teaching the Bible is substituting for a golden calf. It may look pretty and brilliant and receive many compliments but it is not the real thing. Happy is the congregation whose pastor knows the difference.

God's judgment upon these is that he has left them barren. Here is the danger of taking things for granted. Believing that I am preaching the Word when I am only preaching about the Word. It may not seem like much of a difference, but it means a great deal as far as the Holy Spirit is concerned.

Jesus understood that when he said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

Then we have the awful words of Jesus when he said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

To defy this authority of the Word in our life or ministry is to offend the blessed Holy Spirit who begins to back off from that person and ministry. I for my part, desire to honor God in my life and ministry by establishing the undisputed authority of God's Word in my life regardless of the cost or inconvenience.



THE MYSTERY OF THE WORD MADE FLESH

A. W. Tozer

“And He Dwelt Among Us”

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (JOHN 1:14)

The word “mystery” is often used carelessly and, consequently, has been misused. There is mystery in the sense of a Sherlock Holmes mystery. Simply collect all of the clues and you can solve the mystery. But when the word “mystery” is used in the sense that I have used it in relation to Christ, it has to do with that aspect of Christ that can never be discovered. The apostle John attempts to lift us into the mystery of God and into the circles of deity far beyond the pursuit of man. Realms so high, lofty and noble that it is impossible to us to follow to its conclusion. All I can hope to do is gaze heavenward in wonder and long after the mystery of God.

The phrase that stirs up the sense of mystery is, “And the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14). In six simple words, the apostle states the most profound mystery of human thought—how deity could cross the gulf separating what is God from what is not God. Although man in all of his scientific advancement has made the world very complex, John the apostle breaks down the entire universe into two things: God and not God. To explain this mystery in as simple words as possible, let me say that the universe is made up of that which is God and that which is not God, and all that which is not God was made by God, but God was made by none. The mystery is compounded by the fact that between that which is God and that which is not God is a great and impassable gulf.

The most profound mystery of human flaw is how the creator could join Himself to the creature. How the “Word,” meaning Christ, could be made “flesh,” meaning the creature, is one of the most amazing mysteries to contemplate. Some may not think it is so amazing, but those who have meditated on this will be amazed at the unbridgeable gulf between God and not God. A gulf is fixed, a vast gulf of infinitude, and how God managed to bridge that gulf and join Himself to His creatures and limit the limitless is beyond our comprehension. In the language we hear more properly, how can the infinite ever become the finite, and how can that which has no limit deliberately impose upon Himself limitations?

It is the arrogance of man that believes that he is, or at least acts as though he is, the only

order of being. The Bible clearly teaches that humanity is only one order of God’s creation. There are angels and cherubim and seraphim and creatures and watchers and holy ones and all of these strange principalities and powers that walk so darkly and brightly through the passages of the Bible. In light of this, why would God favor one above the other? In the book of Hebrews, we read, “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham” (Heb. 2:16).

Were we doing it, knowing humanity as we do, we might have been tempted to select the order of angels or seraphim, supposing that it would not be quite as much a step down as it would be with man. Abraham certainly was not equal to an angel. The mystery of it all is, He came down to the lowest order and took upon Himself the nature and seed of Abraham. Even Paul, who is declared one of the six greatest intellects of all time, threw up his hands and said, “Great is the mystery of godliness” (1 Tim. 3:16).

I often think of the wise words of John Wesley: “Distinguish the act from the method by which the act is performed and do not reject the fact because you do not know how it was done.” In coming to the mystery of that which is Christ incarnate, we reverently bow our heads and confess, “It is so, God, but we don’t know how.” I will not reject the fact because I do not know the operation by which it was brought to pass.

The Incarnation of Christ is shrouded in impenetrable mystery that we could never uncover with our finite thinking. But there is one thing that we can know for sure: The Incarnation required no compromise of deity. When the “Word was made flesh,” His deity did not suffer. Before His Incarnation, Christ was absolute deity; after His Incarnation, He was just as much deity as before. His deity suffered nothing when He became flesh. This mystery baffles us when we meditate upon the person of Christ.

The old Greek and Roman world was full of gods that were compromisers one way or another. But the holy God who is God, and all else is not God, that God who is “our Father who art in heaven,” would never compromise Himself. This mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished without any compromise of the deity. God did not degrade Himself by this condescension. He did not in any sense make Himself to be less than God. He remained God, and everything else remained not God; the gulf still existed, even after Jesus Christ had become man and had dwelt among us. So instead of God degrading Himself when He became man, He, by the act of Incarnation, elevated mankind to Himself.

God and Man Together

Personally, I like to think about those early ages of man. I read and meditate on those first chapters of Genesis with great interest. The thing that really charms my soul is the communion God enjoyed with Adam and Eve in the Garden. I am sure it went both ways. I read with great fascination that God came and walked in the Garden in the cool of the day, fellowshiping with Adam and Eve. That fellowship was customary for them, because God made man in His image and did not degrade Himself by communing with man.

As wonderful as that fellowship was, it was only temporary. “In the cool of the day,” the Scripture tells us, God was able to dwell with man; then something interrupted that marvelous fellowship.

In the beginning, God dwelt with man. That fellowship was wonderful, but Adam and Eve sinned, forcing God to drive them out of that garden setting, away from His presence. Following that, God never dwelt with man in quite the same way. Occasionally, He would appear in what theologians call a theophany, an appearance of the deity. But He dwelt in the Sheki-nah, hidden in the fire and the cloud.

We have many examples of God walking with man. But this was intermittent and temporary compared to what it was prior to the Fall.

Take for example, Enoch. The Bible says, “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (Gen. 5:24). I can just imagine the fellowship those two had together. Then one day the walk took longer than usual and God looked at Enoch and said, “My house is closer. Why don’t you come home with Me tonight?” And Enoch just disappeared.

Then there was Abraham, called the friend of God. “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God” (Jas. 2:23). I do not know any title I would prefer than “The Friend of God.” Just thinking about this causes cravings and desires in my heart toward God. What wonderful fellowship these two “friends” had together.

The Old Testament is filled with such examples, but these encounters were brief and for the most part veiled—when God showed Himself to Moses in the fire of the bush or while Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock. God only allowed the trailing parts of His garments to be seen. The eyes of men were not able to look upon the majesty of the deity.

God, who once dwelt only intermittently with men, suddenly came and “the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.” He now dwelt with men in person, and they called His

name Emmanuel, which means “God with us.”

I want you to take note of three prepositions here. Notice when He appeared as man, He appeared to dwell with men in person and to be united to men, then ultimately to dwell in men forever. So it is “with men” and “to men” and “in men” that He came to dwell.

The Glory of the Son

The apostle John said, “We beheld,” or “they beheld.” What was it that he is calling attention to? It is simply the glory of the Son. But what was that glory? When we look at the Son what is the glory that shines forth.

Is it the glory of His works? All of the Gospels depict the mighty works and miracles that Jesus performed. From that first miracle of turning the water into wine to the very last, Jesus was a wonderworker. His works included feeding the 5,000, healing the sick, raising the

dead, walking on water, casting out demons. All of these were dramatic miracles.

I am reminded of a grand hymn often sung in the church, “The Love of God,” written by Frederick M. Lehman (1868–1953):

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry.
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

Toward the end of his Gospel, John writes, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book” (John 20:30). Even John could not keep track of all the wonders and miracles that Jesus did. Everything our Lord did while walking among them was wonderful. But is this the glory that John speaks of? Is this what

captured his attention and admiration?

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, whatever He did was wonderful. How tender, how kind when the woman who was bleeding for more than 12 years received a sudden deliverance, and with a sudden word He stanching the debilitating flow of blood. She went away with a shining face to tell everybody that the hem of His garment had healing power in it. So the works of our Lord were always dramatic and amazing.

We Beheld His Glory

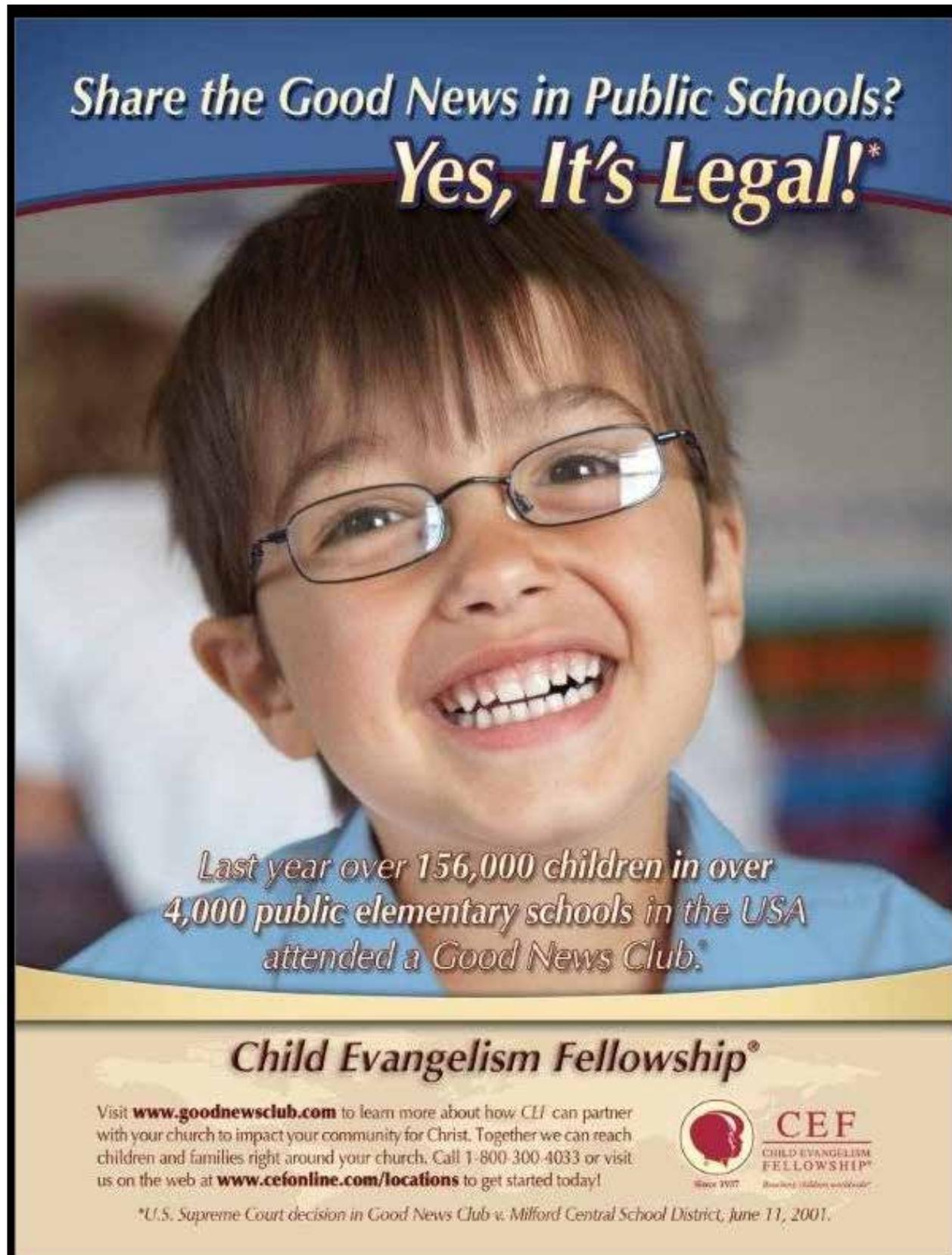
Often you will hear sermons on the radio making physical healing of the body and works of the miraculous everything. I wish that I could go along with such interpretation and say the glory of Jesus Christ lay in His ability to cast out devils, to heal the sick and raise the dead and still the waves. Undoubtedly, that was wonderful, and He did get some praise to Himself from those necessary acts of miracles, but I believe there was a greater glory than merely works of wonder, which our Lord manifested.

It must always be kept in mind that what God thinks about a man is more important than what a man thinks about himself. As far as God is concerned, what a man is always is more important to God than what that man does. We judge a man by his performance, by what he can contribute. But God sees deeper inside and bores to the very core of what that man really is. God is looking for goodness. It is his character and personality that God looks for. God is never impressed by anything a man can do.

Now bring this over to Christ. What was it that made Him glorious? It was what Jesus was that made Him the glorious person that John writes about. His glory lay in the fact that He was perfect in a loveless world; He was purity in an impure world; He was meekness in a harsh and quarrelsome world. Everything that the world was, Christ was the exact opposite. That was what made Him glorious. “We beheld his glory” referred to the deathless devotion of Christ and His patient suffering and unquenchable life, and the grace and truth at work in Him. He was the glory of the only begotten Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. That was what made Jesus wonderful. That was His glory among men.

All of this is little known in the world today. Men and women in all their wild, money-inspired and profit-inspired revelries are not celebrating the great miracle of turning the water into wine. Neither are they celebrating all of the healing acts that Jesus did: the raising of the dead, the cursing of a fig tree, or any of the other miracles that Jesus Christ did (see Mark 11:12-14, 20-21; Luke 22:49-51).

The poor world around us, lost in the depravity of its own heart, with little remnants of religious instinct left, does not celebrate what Jesus was. The glory of the Son was that He was God walking among men. Here was something that was not man, but yet was man. Here was God among men. Here was a man acting like God in the midst of sinful men, and this was the wonder of it all.



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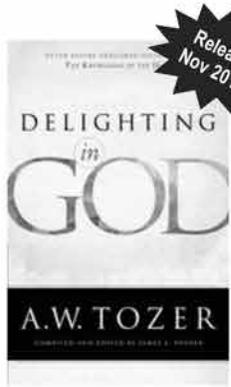
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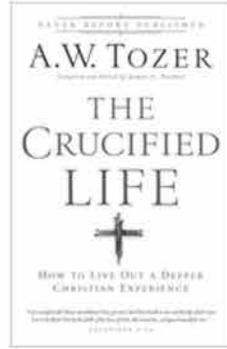
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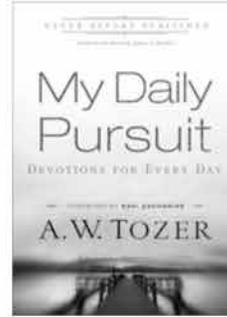
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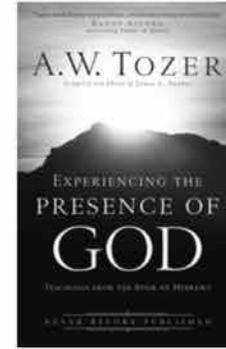
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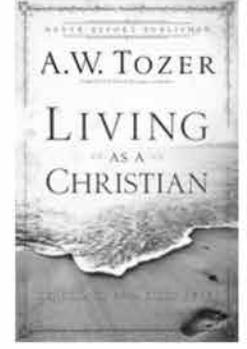
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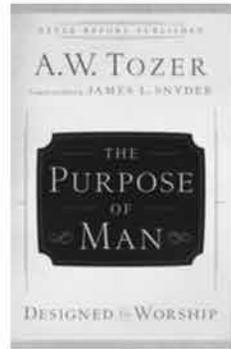
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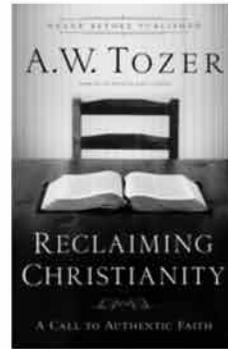
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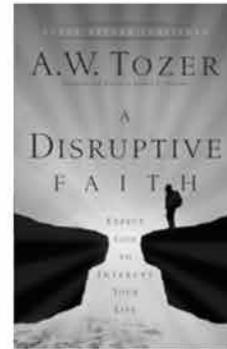
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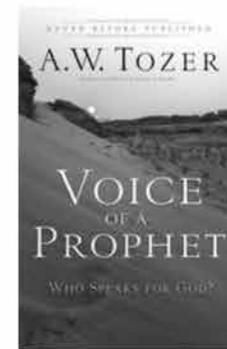
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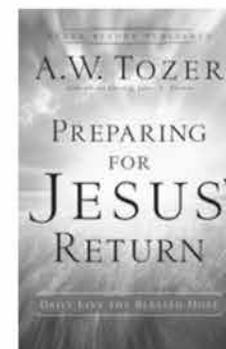
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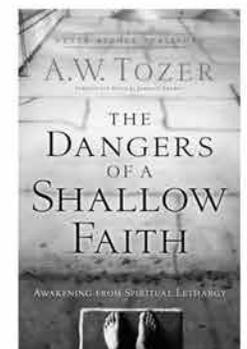
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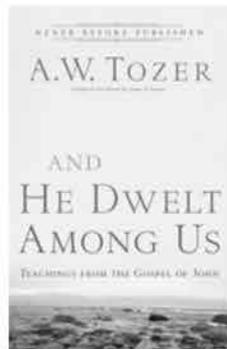
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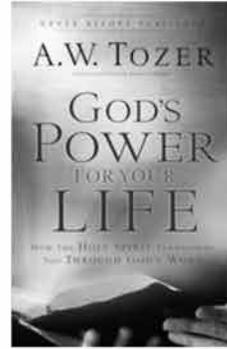
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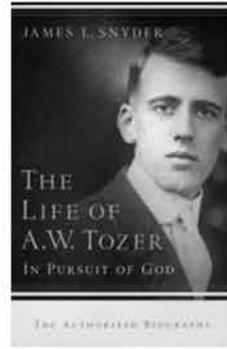
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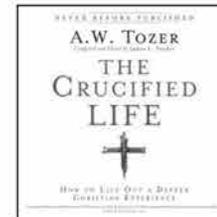
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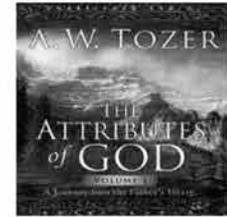
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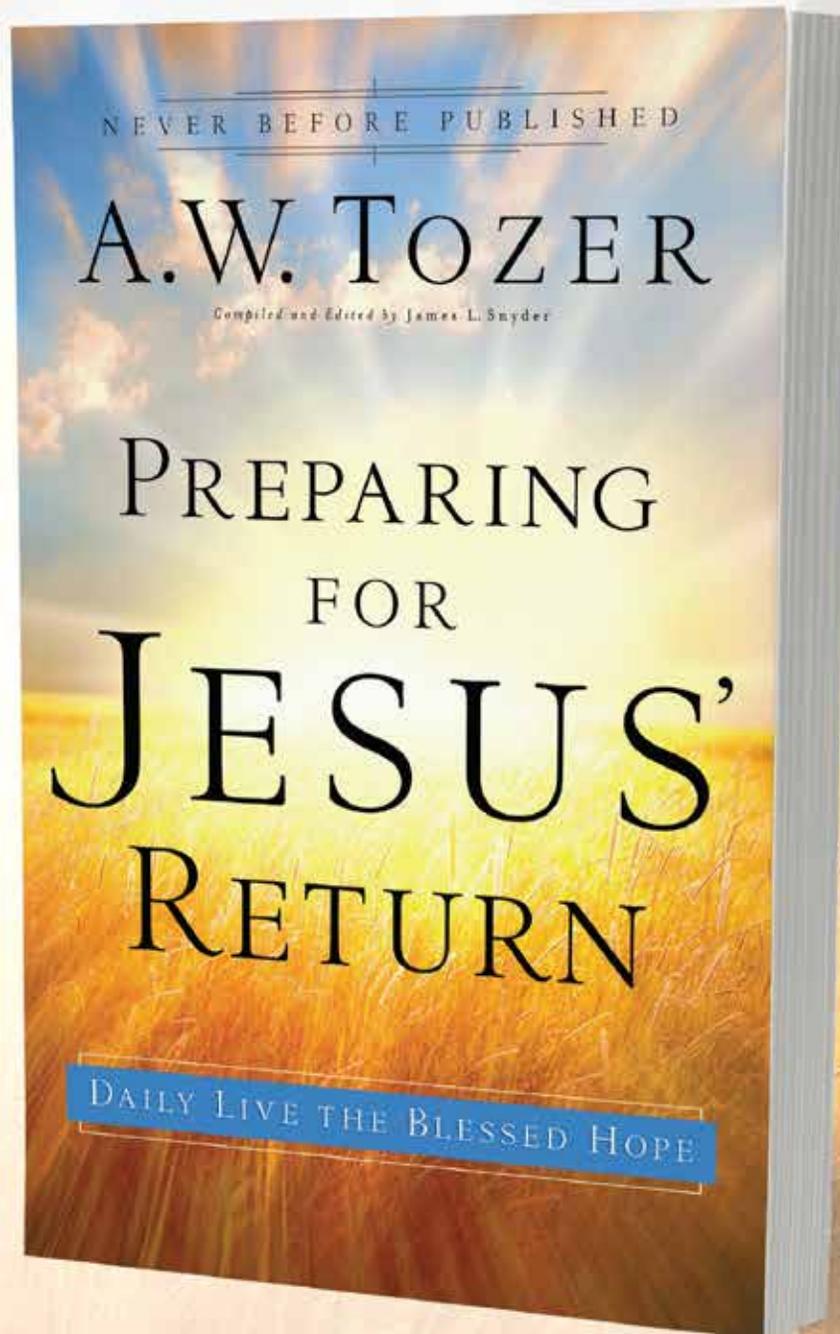
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