

Welcome to Holy Trinity

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Whether or not another such return may be expected before the coming of Christ is a question upon which Christians are not fully agreed, but that is not of too great importance to us now. What God in His sovereignty may yet do on a world-scale I do not claim to know. But what He will do for the plain man or woman who seeks His face I believe I do know and can tell others.

Let any man turn to God in earnest, let him begin to exercise himself unto godliness, let him seek to develop his powers of spiritual receptivity by trust and obedience and humility, and the results will exceed anything he may have hoped in his leaner and weaker days.

-From A.W. Tozer's, *The Pursuit of God*, pp. 70-71.

A. W. Tozer

Aiden Wilson Tozer was born April 21, 1897, on a small farm among the spiny ridges of Western Pennsylvania. Within a few short years, Tozer, as he preferred to be called, would earn the reputation and title of a "20th-century prophet." Able to express his thoughts in a simple but forceful manner, Tozer combined the power of God and the power of words to

nourish hungry souls, pierce human hearts, and draw earthbound minds toward God.

When he was 15 years old, Tozer's family moved to Akron, Ohio. One afternoon as he walked home from his job at Goodyear, he overheard a street preacher say, "If you don't know how to be saved . . . just call on God." When he got home, he climbed the narrow stairs to the attic where, heeding the preacher's advice, Tozer was launched into a lifelong pursuit of God.

In 1919, without formal education, Tozer was called to pastor a small storefront church in Nutter Fort, West Virginia. That humble beginning thrust him and his new wife Ada Cecelia Pfautz, into 44-year ministry with The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Thirty-one of those years were spent at Chicago's Southside Alliance Church. The congregation, captivated by Tozer's preaching, grew from 80 to 800.

In 1950 Tozer was elected editor of the Alliance Weekly now called Alliance Life. The circulation doubled almost immediately. In the first editorial dated June 3, 1950, he set the tone: "It will cost something to walk slow in the parade of the ages while excited men of time rush about confusing motion with progress. But it will pay in the long run and the true Christian is not much interested in anything short of that."

Tozer's forte was his prayer life which often found him walking the aisles of a sanctuary or lying face down on the floor. He noted, "As a man prays, so is he." To him the worship of God was paramount in his life and ministry. "His preaching as well as his writings were but extensions of his prayer life," comments Tozer biographer James L. Snyder. An earlier biographer noted, "He spent more time on his knees than at his desk."

Tozer's love for words also pervaded his family life. He quizzed his children on what they read and made up bedtime stories for them. "The thing I remember most about my father," reflects his daughter Rebecca, "was those marvelous stories he would tell." Son Wendell, one of six boys born before the arrival of Rebecca, remembers that, "We all would rather be treated to the lilac switch by our mother than to have a talking-to by our dad."

Tozer's final years of ministry were spent at Avenue Road Church in Toronto, Canada. On May 12, 1963, his earthly pursuit of God ended when he died of a heart attack at age 66. In a small cemetery in Akron, Ohio, his tombstone bears this simple epitaph: "A Man of God."

Some wonder why Tozer's writings are as fresh today as when he was alive. It is because, as one friend commented, "He left the superficial, the obvious and the trivial for others to toss around. . . [His] books reach deep into the heart."

His humor, written and spoken, has been compared to that of Will Rogers--honest and homespun. Congregations could one moment be swept by gales of laughter and the next sit in a holy hush.

For almost 50 years, Tozer walked with God. Even though he is gone, he continues to speak, ministering to those who are eager to experience God. As someone put it, "This man makes you want to know and feel God."

If you would know what Tozer knew.... besides giving yourself to prayer, try subscribing to the email service that gives you a daily portion. Go to:

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Three Faithful Wounds by A. W. Tozer

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend," says the Holy Spirit in Proverbs 27:6. And lest we imagine that the preacher is the one who does the wounding, I want to read Job 5:17,18: *"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole."*

You see, the one who does the wounding here is not the servant, but the Master Himself. So with that in our minds, I want to talk to you about three faithful wounds of a friend.

In order to get launched into my message let me introduce a little lady who has been dead for about six hundred years. She once lived and loved and prayed and hadn't much light and she hadn't any way to get much light, but the beautiful thing about her was that with what little Biblical light she had, she walked with God so wonderfully close that she became as fragrant as a flower. And long before Reformation times she was in spirit, an evangelical. She lived and died and has now been with her Lord nearly six hundred years but she has left behind her fragrance of Christ.

England was a better place because this little lady lived. She wrote only one book, a very tiny book that you could slip into your side pocket or your purse, but it's so flavorful, so divine, so heavenly, that it has made a distinct contribution to the great spiritual literature of the world. The lady to whom I refer is the one called the Lady Julian of Norwich.

Before she blossomed out into this radiant, glorious life which made her famous as a great Christian all over her part of the world, she prayed a prayer and God answered. It is prayer with which I am concerned tonight. The essence of her prayer was this: "Oh God, please give me three wounds; the wound of contrition and the wound of compassion and the wound of longing after God." Then she added this little postscript which I think is one of the most beautiful things I have ever read: "This I ask without condition." She wasn't dickering with God. She wanted three things and they were all for God's glory: "I ask this without condition, Father; do what I ask and then send me the bill. Anything it costs me will be all right with me."

All great Christians have been wounded souls. It is strange what a wound will do to a man. Here's a soldier who goes out to the battlefield. He is full of jokes and strength and self-assurance; then one day a piece of shrapnel tears through him and he falls, and whimpering, beaten, defeated man. Suddenly his whole world collapses around him and this man, instead of being the great, strong, broad-chested fellow that he thought he was, suddenly becomes a whimpering boy, again. And such have even been known, I am told, to cry for their mothers when they lie bleeding and suffering on the field of battle. There is nothing like a wound to take the self-assurance out of us, reduce us to childhood again and make us small and helpless in our own sight.

Many of the Old Testament character were wounded men, stricken of God and afflicted indeed as their Lord was after them. Take Jacob, for instance. Twice God afflicted him; twice he met God and one time it came as a wound, and another time it came actually as a physical wound and he limped on his thigh for the rest of his life. And the man Elijah, was he not more than a theologian? He was a man who had been stricken; he had been struck with the sword of God and was no longer simply one of Adam's race standing up in his own self-assurance; he was a man who had an encounter with God, who had been confronted by God and had been defeated and broken down before.

And when Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, you know what it did to him. Or take Ezekiel, how he went down before his God and became a little child again. And there were many others. Let's talk about these three wounds in their order.

THE FIRST IS THE WOUND OF CONTRITION. Now I've heard for the last thirty years that repentance is a change of mind, and I believe it, of course, as far as it goes. But that is just what's the matter with us. We have reduced repentance to a change of mind. It is a mental act, indeed, but I point out that repentance is not likely to do us much good until it ceases to be a change of mind only and becomes a wound within our spirit. No man has truly repented until his sin has wounded him near to death, until the wound has broken him and defeated him and taken all the fight and self-assurance out of him and he sees himself as the one who nailed his Savior on the tree.

I don't know about you, but the only way I can keep right with God is to keep contrite, to keep a sense of contrition upon my spirit. Now there's a lot of cheap and easy getting rid of sin and getting your repentance disposed of. But the great Christians in and out of the Bible, have been those who were wounded with a sense of contrition so that they never quite got over the thought and the feeling that they had personally crucified Jesus.

Let us beware of vain and over hasty repentance, and particularly let us beware of no repentance at all. We are sinful race, ladies and gentlemen, a sinful people, and until the knowledge has hit hard, until it has wounded us, until it has got through and past the little department of our theology, it has done us no good. Repentance is a wound I pray we may all feel.

THEN THERE IS THE WOUND OF COMPASSION. Now compassion is an emotion identification, and Christ had that in full perfection. The man who has this wound of compassion is a man who suffers along with other people.

Jesus Christ our Lord can never suffer to save us any more. This He did once for all, when He gave Himself without spot through the Holy Ghost to the Father on Calvary's cross. He cannot suffer to save us, but He still must suffer to win us. He does not call His people to redemptive suffering. that's impossible; it could not be. Redemption is a finished work. But He does call His people to feel along with Him and to feel along with those that rejoice and those that suffer. He calls His people to be to Him the kind of an earthly body in which He can weep again and suffer and love again. For our Lord has two bodies. One is the body He took to the tree on Calvary; that was the body in which He suffered to redeem us.

But He has a body on earth now, composed of those who have been baptized into it by the Holy Ghost a conversion. In that body He would now suffer to win men. Paul said that he was glad that he could suffer for the Colossians and fill up the measure of the afflictions of Christ in his body for the church's sake.

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-From A.W. Tozer's, *The Pursuit of God*, pp. 70-71.

The Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozer

Preface

In this hour of all-but-universal darkness one cheering gleam appears: within the fold of conservative Christianity there are to be found increasing numbers of persons whose religious lives are marked by a growing hunger after God Himself. They are eager for spiritual realities and will not be put off with words, nor will they be content with correct `interpretations' of truth. They are athirst for

God, and they will not be satisfied till they have drunk deep at the Fountain of Living Water. This is the only real harbinger of revival which I have been able to detect anywhere on the religious horizon. It may be the cloud the size of a man's hand for which a few saints here and there have been looking. It can result in a resurrection of life for many souls and a recapture of that radiant wonder which should accompany faith in Christ, that wonder which has all but fled the Church of God in our day. But this hunger must be recognized by our religious leaders.

Current evangelicalism has (to change the figure) laid the altar and divided the sacrifice into parts, but now seems satisfied to count the stones and rearrange the pieces with never a care that there is not a sign of fire upon the top of lofty Carmel. [See 1 Kings 18 for the allusions.-ccp] But God be thanked that there are a few who care. They are those who, while they love the altar and delight in the sacrifice, are yet unable to reconcile themselves to the continued absence of fire. They desire God above all. They are athirst to taste for themselves the 'piercing sweetness' of the love of Christ about Whom all the holy prophets did write and the psalmists did sing.

There is today no lack of Bible teachers to set forth correctly the principles of the doctrines of Christ, but too many of these seem satisfied to teach the fundamentals of the faith year after year, strangely unaware that there is in their ministry no manifest Presence, nor anything unusual in their personal lives. They minister constantly to believers who feel within their breasts a longing which their teaching simply does not satisfy. I trust I speak in charity, but the lack in our pulpits is real. Milton's terrible sentence applies to our day as accurately as it did to his: 'The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.'

It is a solemn thing, and no small scandal in the Kingdom, to see God's children starving while actually seated at the Father's table. The truth of Wesley's words is established before our eyes: 'Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is, at best, a very slender part of religion. Though right tempers cannot subsist without right opinions, yet right opinions may subsist without right tempers. There may be a right opinion of God without either love or one right temper toward Him. Satan is proof of this.'

Thanks to our splendid Bible societies and to other effective agencies for the dissemination of the Word, there are today many millions of people who hold 'right opinions,' probably more than ever before in the history of the Church. Yet I wonder if there was ever a time when true spiritual worship was ever a time when true spiritual worship was at a lower ebb. To great sections of the Church the art of worship has been lost entirely, and in its place has come that strange and foreign thing called the 'program.' This word has been borrowed from the stage and applied with sad wisdom to the type of public service which now passes for worship among us. Sound Bible exposition is an imperative must in the Church of the living God. Without it no church can be a New Testament church in any strict meaning of that term. But exposition may be carried on in such way as to leave the hearers devoid of any true spiritual nourishment whatever. For it is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself, and unless and until the hearers find God in personal experience, they are not the better for having heard the truth.

The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts.

This book is a modest attempt to aid God's hungry children so to find Him. Nothing here is new except in the sense that it is a discovery which my own heart has made of spiritual realities most delightful and wonderful to me. Others before me have gone much farther into these holy mysteries than I have done, but if my fire is not large it is yet real, and there may be those who can light their candle at its flame.

-A. W. Tozer Chicago, Ill. June 16, 1948.

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How tragic that we in this dark day have had our seeking done for us by our teachers. Everything is made to center upon the initial act of "accepting" Christ (a term, incidentally, which is not found in the Bible) and we are not expected thereafter to crave any further revelation of God to our souls. We have been snared in the coils of a spurious logic which insists that if we have found Him, we need no more seek Him. In the midst of this great chill there are some, I rejoice to acknowledge, who will not be content with shallow logic. They will admit the force of the argument, and then turn away with tears to hunt some lonely place and pray. "Oh God, show me Thy glory." They want to taste, to touch with their hearts, to see with their inner eyes the wonder that is God.

I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire.

Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long in vain. Every age has its own characteristics. Right now we are in an age of religious complexity. The simplicity which is in Christ is rarely found among us. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations and a world of nervous activities which occupy time and attention but can

never satisfy the longing of the heart. The shallowness of our inner experience, the hollowness of our worship, and that servile imitation of the world which marks our promotional methods all testify that we, in this day, know God only imperfectly, and the peace of God scarcely at all.

If we would find God amid all the religious externals, we must first determine to find Him and then proceed in the way of simplicity. Now, as always, God reveals Himself to "babes" and hides Himself in thick darkness from the wise and the prudent. We must simplify our approach to Him. We must strip down to essentials (and they will be found to be blessedly few). We must put away all effort to impress, and come with the guileless candor of childhood. If we do this, without doubt, God will quickly respond. We need not fear that in seeking God only we narrow our lives or restrict the motions of our expanding hearts. The opposite is true. We can well afford to make God our All, to concentrate, to sacrifice the many for the One. The man who has God for his treasure has all things in One. Many ordinary treasures may be denied him, or if he is allowed to have them, the enjoyment of them will be so tempered that they will never be necessary to his happiness. Or if he must see them go, one after one, he will scarcely feel a sense of loss, for having the source of all things he has in One all satisfaction, all pleasure, all delight. Whatever he may lose he has actually lost nothing, for he now has it all in One, and he has it purely, legitimately and forever.