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THE THOUGHT OF AIDEN WILSON TOZER: AN ANALYSIS AND
APPRAISAL WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON HIS MYSTICISM AND
CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO THE WORLD

New York University

Ph.D.

1980

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THE THOUGHT OF AIDEN WILSON TOZER

An Analysis and Appraisal with Special Emphasis
on His Mysticism and Conceptual Approach
to the World

ELEANOR K. HARRIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the School of Education,
Health, Nursing, and Arts Professions
New York University

1980

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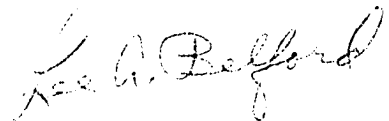
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Date October 22, 1979
October 22, 1979

Sponsoring Committee: Professor Lee Belford, Chairman
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Professor Carl Schmidt

An Abstract of
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ELEANOR K. HARRIS

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lee A. Belford".

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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1980

ABSTRACT

There has been a growing interest in Mystic spirituality during the twentieth century, partly because of the influx of Oriental mysticism. However, there is a viable tradition of Christian mysticism going back to the early days of Christianity, which has been developed mainly in the non-Protestant branches of the Church. However, some mysticism has been found among Protestants.

This research is a study of a Protestant pastor and writer of the twentieth century, who was influenced by mystical prayer. It aims (1) to indicate the significance of this development both within Protestantism as a whole and also within the mystical tradition; (2) to indicate the relationship advocated by Tozer between the inner, Godward, and the outer, man-oriented aspects of life, and also (3) to indicate an approach which may be meaningful to those caught under the *mélange* of outside pressure and wishing to escape their slavery. Tozer wrote numerous books and was for thirteen years the editor of The Alliance Witness, the publication of his denomination, The Christian and Missionary Alliance. These publications have been the basis of this research.

The study first surveys briefly the life and times of Aiden Wilson Tozer (1897-1963) so as to provide a background in understanding him and the milieu from which he developed and its influence upon his thought. The mystical orientation of A.B. Simpson, the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, has a substantial role here.

The basis of the method employed in analyzing Tozer's thought is the following. A year after Dr. Tozer's death, David J. Fant, a close friend and associate, published a biographical memoir, A. W. Tozer, A Twentieth Century Prophet, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1964. On the last page, Fant placed a list of books recommended by Dr. Tozer, "For those who would know 'the deep things of God.'" These thirty-five works, including John of the Cross' Dark Night of the Soul, represent some of the major classics of Western Christian mysticism. Predominantly medieval and favoring northern writers, the list also includes a few Protestants. Fant has indicated by personal letters to the researcher that Tozer possessed a copy of every work on the list.

The researcher has used this list as a frame of reference for examining Tozer's type of mystical approach, though other works with a mystical orientation have occasionally been referred to also.

The basic hypothesis which this study has substantiated is that Tozer, although a Protestant from the conservative Fundamentalist wing, is clearly in the mainstream of the mystical tradition in Western Christianity, though possessing characteristics distinctive of Evangelicalism. These include a strong Biblical emphasis, Christocentrism, marked moralism, and the tension between living in the world, though not being of the world, unlike cloistered, silent celibates generally found in Catholic mysticism. Tozer's central idea is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:27.

Tozer wrote with a strong, pragmatic purpose, aiming especially at laity, hoping to initiate into the mystical life. However, specifics of technique are not spelled out. A pure passivity, a pure Quietism, is not favored. An oblique reference to one-word prayer suggests some approval of this technique. The goal is union with God in Christ, not fusion.

Withdrawal, while necessary for the mystic, is limited in Tozer's view, for there is the imperative of service. That along spiritual lines is favored. Tozer believes that if man is right with God, his behavior will rectify itself. Hence he favors spiritual growth of the individual rather than an emphasis on rectifying social, societal sins.

Tozer, then, though peripheral to Protestantism with respect to his mysticism, is nevertheless central in terms of the total Christian tradition of mystic spirituality.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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In a substantial project such as this, the aid of numerous individuals has been necessary, and though it is not possible here to list them all by name, their helpfulness has been appreciated.

The author, however, wishes especially to indicate her gratefulness to her mother, Karin Elizabeth, for first introducing her to the mystical mode of consciousness.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Need for This Study

Mysticism occurs in all the major religions of the world. At various times it has had significant development in Roman Catholicism. However, partly because of the rationalistic focus in Protestantism, mysticism has been only a minor strand in it. Today there is in this country and the rest of the Western world an increasing interest in mysticism. Numerous colleges and universities have recently begun offering courses on it.¹

Several authorities indicate that during the twentieth century there has been a revival of interest in mysticism which is growing in intensity.²

1 For example, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle; University of California at Santa Barbara; and Indiana University, Bloomington.

2 S. K. Ghose, "Mysticism," The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1974 ed., Macropedia, 12, 786; Sidney Spencer, "Christian Mysticism," The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1974 ed., Macropedia, 4, 545; Rufus M. Jones, "Mysticism, Protestant," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, 9, 103; E. Royston Pike, "Mysticism," Encyclopedia of Religion and Religions, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1951, 269; the most recent survey indicating this is Robert Ellwood, Supernatural and Religious Groups in Modern America, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976.

Evelyn Underhill in the preface to the twelfth edition of her work on the subject stated that, since the book first appeared, the study of mysticism has been almost completely transformed; from being regarded as a byway of religion, it is now increasingly accepted as representing in its intensive form the essential religious experience of man.¹

During the twentieth century there has been a substantial influx of Eastern mysticism into Western culture. In the United States, it is especially strong on the West and East Coasts. In recent decades there has been the enormous popularity of Transcendental Meditation (TM) in both Europe and America, especially among younger people. The bringing of flowers to a Hindu god is part of the TM process. The chanting of the name of a Hindu deity so as to relax is for someone with a substantial Christian commitment not a desirable option.

The Christian laity and indeed most of the Christian clergy are hardly aware that there has existed for centuries a viable tradition of Christian meditation and mystical prayer. It has been restricted largely to monasteries and convents. That is, it has been found mainly among Catholic "professionals,"

¹ Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, 1911, New York: Meridian, 1955, "Preface," 1930, vii.

such as clergy and "Religious," especially within a few Orders, often Enclosed (having extremely limited contact with the outside world), the Carmelites and the Cistercians being two of the Orders significant in this respect. The Eastern branch of Catholicism has had a somewhat different pattern of meditation than that found within the Roman Church and perhaps a less restricted awareness of mystic spirituality.

Even less known is that a strand of Christian meditation has existed in Protestantism, less developed than that in the Catholic Church. Protestant meditation has been even rarer than Catholic, and when found has probably not been carried to the extent that it has at times within Catholicism. The Protestant emphasis on reason instead of feeling as well as the lack of contact with an established meditative tradition, and the lack of group support as found among the members of a Catholic Order may be responsible for the less highly developed mysticism that has occurred within Protestantism. The Quakers, alone among Protestant groups, seem to have attempted to cultivate something approximating a meditative pattern comparable to that developed elsewhere. Their Inner Light has distinct parallels.

In any case, since meditative techniques are being adopted by so many, it seems unnecessary for Christians to feel they have no other choice than to

adopt non-Christian methods when somewhat similar techniques can be found within the Christian tradition.

Aims

The purpose of this research is the examination of a twentieth century figure operating within a very conservative segment of Protestantism who was influenced by mystical prayer. The position which Aiden Wilson Tozer reached may be of value to others also having to cope with the multitudinous pressures of contemporary life especially in an urban environment. Such a position can offer an option to succumbing to a religious tradition alien to one's background and/or convictions in order to secure inner peace.

The two principal significances of this study then are the following. First, it is of value to examine an individual in contemporary Protestantism who wrote within the tradition of Western Christian mysticism, rather than on the periphery, so as to indicate the characteristics of this development both within Protestantism as a whole and also within the mystical tradition. While Tozer does not have the brilliant verbal virtuosity of a Thomas Merton, yet he is significant partly because he had the inner strength to develop a mystical approach even though largely unsupported by a group of persons similarly oriented. The strength to hew such an

approach is a remarkable development especially within Protestantism.

A second significance of this study is to indicate an approach whose use may be meaningful to others caught under the mélange of outside pressures and wishing to escape their slavery. Another use is to present to those with a deep love of Christ an opportunity for developing this inner love in a way of safety even with relatively little outside guidance.

A third significance concerns the fact that Fundamentalism, like most Protestantism, has had a substantial "this-world" orientation. A concern for mysticism, which involves an inward/Godward orientation away from objective relationships, is not common to it. Yet Tozer, a Fundamentalist and a member of the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination, had a definite interest in mystic spirituality.

Since this is unusual in Fundamentalism, but not contradictory to certain basic characteristics of it, it is appropriate to examine and assess this development. It is helpful to ascertain the particular type of mysticism characteristic of Tozer's thought; the forms and varieties of mysticism are legion. Further, it is desirable to see how Tozer combines mysticism, so often non-worldly, with a "this-world" approach. The standard statement in Evangelical circles is "In the world, but not of it."

Many Fundamentalists are unsympathetic to the encroachment of mysticism. Recently the investigator heard the president of a Fundamentalist seminary state: " . . . [religion is] not mystical, but relational."¹ This lack of sympathy may be due in part to a misunderstanding of mysticism and its various forms. It is possible to be mystically oriented and also concerned with this world, to be mystical and relational, for it appears that Tozer's work exemplified this combination.

Subject and Method

This research, a study of the works of Aiden Wilson Tozer (1897-1963), consists of an analysis and appraisal of his thought with special emphasis on his mysticism and conceptual approach to the world. The study first surveys briefly the life and times of Tozer, so as to provide a background of understanding for those unfamiliar with him and an understanding of the milieu from which he developed and its influence upon his thought. The principal concern of the study is to analyze Tozer's mystic spirituality, his concept of mysticism, including man's relationship to God. Since mysticism involves a withdrawal from the world, temporary or otherwise, consideration must

¹ Dr. Myron Augsberger, President, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Commencement Address at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, June 6, 1976.

also be given to Tozer's concept of man's relationship to the world; Tozer, though aware of mystic withdrawal, lived a busy life out in the world as pastor of a major urban church. The study also attempts to draw together the two strands, relationship to God and to the world, so as to clarify Tozer's position and its emphasis.

Tozer wrote numerous books and was the editor of The Christian Book of Mystical Verse. For thirteen years he edited The Alliance Witness, the publication of his denomination, and wrote editorials for it regularly. These were translated into a number of other languages. He was pastor of the Southside Alliance Church in Chicago from 1928-1959.

The basis of the method employed is the following. A year after Dr. Tozer's death in 1963, David J. Fant, a close friend and associate, published a biographical memoir.¹ On the last page Fant placed a list of books recommended by Dr. Tozer, "For those who would know 'the deep things of God.'"² These thirty-five works, including John of the Cross' Dark Night of the Soul, represent some of the major classics of Western Christian mysticism. Predominantly medieval, the list has only one writer from the

1 David J. Fant, Jr., A. W. Tozer, A Twentieth Century Prophet, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1964.

2 Ibid., 181; see this Ms, "Appendix A," 228.

twentieth century, the Quaker Thomas Kelly, and one from the nineteenth century, the French sociologist and spiritual director¹ Henri de Tourville. Several Protestant writers from earlier centuries are listed, including the famous hymn writer Isaac Watts, not usually thought of in connection with mysticism. Fant has indicated by personal letters to the researcher that Tozer possessed a copy of every work in the list.² Also, his sons, Lowell and Stanley, now possess many of their father's copies.³

The researcher has used this list as a frame of reference for examining Tozer's type of mystical approach. The assumption is that Tozer's possessing copies of these works and recommending them indicates a basic rapport with their approaches and that Tozer's position has significant similarities as well contrasts. The researcher has examined all thirty-five works on the list and has compared them with Tozer's own works so as to produce a focus on and clarification of Tozer's approach. Examples will be cited. Other works in addition to the thirty-five

1 A spiritual director or director of souls is a spiritual adviser or counselor, frequently found in Catholic religious orders. The director is usually consulted regularly and frequently by those seeking spiritual advancement.

2 See "Appendix B" and "Appendix C," 229, 230.

3 Telephone interview with Rev. Stanley Tozer, Palatine, Illinois, February 20, 1979.

are to be referred to from time to time insofar as they contribute to a clarification of Tozer's approach.

The basic hypothesis which this study has substantiated is that Tozer is in the mystical tradition of Western Christianity though possessing characteristics distinctive of Evangelicalism.

Definition of Mysticism

Some important definitions must be introduced. "Mysticism" itself must first be examined. The term has recently fallen into some disfavor. The recent influx of Oriental (Eastern) mysticism, such as Zen Buddhism, Hinduism including yoga and the simplified form Transcendental Meditation, has caused confusion and antipathy by many towards the term "mysticism." Some Catholics and Fundamentalist Evangelicals, wishing to dissociate themselves from a non-Christian tradition, now use the terms "mystic spirituality," "mystical prayer," or "spirituality" so as to distinguish such orthodox Christian meditation from other mystical forms, conventional or otherwise. This study is concerned with a person's interior life or interiorism, but for convenience will mainly employ the traditional term "mysticism," which may be defined as the experience of a direct relationship and potential union of the human soul

with Ultimate Reality;¹ it is an intuitive and emotive apprehension of Spiritual Reality.²

Christian Mysticism refers to an experience of interior meeting and union of a person with the divine infinity which sustains him and all other being (essence/existence), namely, with the personal God through Jesus Christ.³ The complexity of the concepts of "mysticism" and "Christian mysticism" is such that they require considerable explication.

There are, however, many conceptions of mysticism, or perhaps it should be said that the word "mysticism" is used very broadly, especially on the popular level. In this research, however, mysticism does not refer to occult philosophy nor to psychic or psychophysical phenomena. Instead, a much narrower definition or area of definitions is employed.

This research deals only with theistic mysticism, specifically only with Christian mysticism; it will not consider non-Christian mysticism except as this bears on Christian mysticism. In other words, only spiritually focused mysticism is involved, and only

1 Rufus M. Jones, "Mysticism, Introductory," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 9, 83.

2 John Wright Buckham, "Mysticism," An Encyclopedia of Religion, 513.

3 Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, Theological Dictionary, Cornelius Ernst, ed., trans. by Richard Strachan, New York: Herder and Herder, 1965, 301.

that referring to the triune Christian God--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This delimitation of the definition will be carried even further. Mysticism herein refers only to that within orthodox patterns of doctrine and behavior as substantially recognized by established Christian denominations. It is concerned with the rather rare instance, the mystical saint as it were, the sane and mature mystic, as recorded in the masterpieces of mystical literature.

The principal characteristic of such mysticism is that it involves a union with God in Christ, a pervasive awareness of the presence of God. However, there is a lengthy process involved, with a gradually increasing experience of oneness with God. What occurs is an inner transformation of personality, uniting man with God in the depths of his spirit. By a process of inner purification, there occurs a progressive closeness to God. Mysticism then is something that happens, rather than something that is said.

Mysticism typically involves a certain method. The word "mysticism" has been held to come from the Greek myein, to close the eyes and mouth or lips. The mystic shuts off the input of sensory data by concentrating the thoughts, the consciousness on God. Thus, the mental energy formerly going into

processing sensory data is now available for other mental purposes. It operates to release material from the unconscious into consciousness. The unconscious involves both darkness and light, the former attested to by the psychoanalysts and the latter by the mystics. As William James expresses it, both snakes and seraphs are present.¹ The mystic gradually eliminates the former so as to maximize the latter.

This closing off of the outside is accomplished by prayer, especially praising and adoring of God, not for his gifts, but for his glorious nature.

Subjectively viewed, the mystical process can be described as a falling in love with God and a pressing on toward a union with him. The elation and joy of love may culminate in a spiritual ecstasy. The word "ecstasy" comes from the Greek word, ekstasis, the standing outside of or transcending oneself.

The goal of Christian mysticism then is union with God in Christ. Some non-Christian systems move toward complete identity with the Absolute in the sense of Thou art That. Most Christian types of mysticism involve a union but without absolute fusion. There is an imitation of Christ on an internal level. Certain results occur: changed perceptions, so that

¹ William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, 1902, New York: The Modern Library, n.d., 417.

things have an importance, a holiness--the presence of God is found everywhere, both in the heart and in historical reality; changed modes of behaving and greater energy occur.

Thus, mysticism is not a mere flight from the world; it leads to a transformation of the world.¹

Mysticism can be regarded as a mode of knowing, involving what gets known and how it gets known; it is, however, primarily a mode of being, and the how is contingent on a person's participating in the mode of being.

If there is any doubt as to the area encompassed by the use of the term "mysticism" in this research, the reader is referred to "Appendix A," p. 228, which gives the bibliography of mystical writings recommended by A. W. Tozer himself as found in David Fant.²

Comparison of Mystic Process with Psychoanalysis

The process of inner transformation produced in mystic spirituality can be examined further.

This process can be said to involve distinct parallels

1 Derived from W. H. Auden, "Introduction," in Anne Fremantle, ed., The Protestant Mystics, New York: New American Library, 1974; Saint Charles Seminary, Overbrook, Pa., "Mysticism," Encyclopedia Americana, 1958 ed., 19, 665-70; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1910 ed., 1968 ed., 1974 ed.; James; and Underhill.

2 Fant.

to psychotherapy. In both dynamisms, there is a diminution of outside stimuli. In mysticism there is a quite marked tuning out of the outside world, of attempting to silence sensory input and of also focusing the mind in a certain channel, usually religious. This exterior silence and interior narrowing tend to give rise to a process whereby much rises from the unconscious, becoming conscious though perhaps in a symbolic form. Once conscious, this powerful material can then be integrated more effectively into the personality instead of operating below the surface of the personality and with little conscious control. By a process of stripping away such outer layers in the unconscious, the mystic moves to the valuable inner core, the "ground of being" as it is termed in some traditions. Here powerful constructive elements in the personality are located and can be amplified. The mystic develops the ability to withdraw quickly into contact with this central and sustaining core.

Psychoanalysis also may be considered a procedure whereby unconscious elements rise, but in the form of 1) transference of love and hate and 2) dream symbols, the interpretation of both these by the therapist contributing to the therapeutic aspect. In psychotherapy, however, it is quite questionable whether the process typically progresses to the

stage of contact with the central core. Instead, the therapeutic process concentrates on liberating repressed but troublesome subconscious elements and thus promoting greater effectiveness in daily living.

Both the mystical process and the psychoanalytic operate in the context of personal relationship. But in psychotherapy the personal relationship is with an actual human. In Christian mysticism the person, God, is, at least in the earlier stages, held in the mind or consciousness. Repetition of the name, vivid imaginings, reflections on the person, feelings of love of and devotion to the person are all methods for producing this intense consciousness of the person. Though the person is not present in flesh and blood to the mystic, yet there is a powerful reality operating.

Also Christian mysticism, at least in the monasteries and convents, usually employs a spiritual director with whom the individual must discuss regularly the details of his spiritual state. The director counsels on the steps to be followed in the immediate circumstances.

In the case of both the psychoanalyst and the spiritual director, the counselor is customarily one who has been through the process himself and with other individuals. However, the analyst becomes the love object, a human object with human limitations

and his own dark elements which though partially understood may still operate unconsciously in the relationship and produce undesired effects.

In mysticism the director is not at all the love object--God is. The director merely has an auxiliary role of advising and directing. The main relationship is between the soul and God. Here no human element with its ambivalences can mislead the soul. Pure goodness is in the object. Consequently, there is less possibility of adulteration, of side-tracks. While in the secular processes there is a love experience via the transference phenomena, yet it operates largely on the erotic level. Still, love is love, and the parallels are substantial. However, there is probably a less intense experience in the case of the secular procedure, for the Christian mystic usually lives his life in a whole atmosphere of love devoting much of his time to his inner relation with God and developing an extraordinary, passionate love for God, the intensity of which is beyond customary experience.

An additional contrast between psychotherapy and mysticism concerns the personality structure of the neurotic and the saint. "Snakes" may be held to hold a larger influence in the personality of the neurotic. In the potential saint, already the seraphic aspect is considerable. Since the typical

adult has been said to have approximately twelve billion nerve cells through which his personality operates,¹ the amount of purification which the neurotic would typically require is much greater than in the case of the mystic, and he is on a different level than the mystic saint. He commences the purificatory process on a different level.

The role of images in the process must be clarified. Contemporary psychology has repeatedly affirmed that the subconscious mind thinks largely in images, and the analysis of dreams is an important aspect of psychotherapy.² The role of visions in the mystical process is analogous. A Protestant seminary student recently commented of Teresa of Avila, the tutor of John of the Cross: "She's bananas! She goes into a closet for a month and has visions!" The visions, however, constitute the presentation to consciousness of subconscious processes. In the purifying stages the "dark" quality of certain images, the "snakes," to use James' term, will rise to consciousness, and unpleasant even frightening images

1 For a discussion of neurophysiology, the following works are helpful: Roger Eckert and David Randall, Animal Physiology, San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1978; Peter H. Lindsay and Donald A. Norman, Human Information Processing, Second Edition, New York, Academic Press, 1977; J. Z. Young, Programs of the Brain, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

2 See David Ballin Klein, "Dream and Dreaming," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1973 ed., 7, 664-68.

may dominate for awhile. Nevertheless, by attempting to keep his mind consciously fixed on God the mystic finds that the dark images gradually disappear not only from his consciousness but also from the depths of his personality. The rising into consciousness of the seraphic-type image then can be regarded as a manifestation that an inner purification has occurred. Thus, Teresa's having visions constitutes a device for and evidence of the purificatory process. As all of a person's behavior must filter through his neurological apparatus, it should be apparent that such a purification is thought to have favorable effects upon his behavior, and that the absence of such purification has an inevitable clouding of certain favorable characteristics. This discussion, however, by no means implies that mysticism is but a psychological phenomenon. It has definite supernatural aspects but these are beyond the purview of this study.

Other aspects of the process itself will now be examined. As Frieda Fordham states, " . . . once a thing is faced and known, there is at least some possibility of changing it, whereas in the unconscious nothing changes."¹ The mystical process has

¹ Frieda Fordham, An Introduction to Jung's Psychology, Third Revised Edition. Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, Inc., 1966, 51.

certain parallels. By actually experiencing the inner temptations of the devil but not succumbing to them, one has demonstrated a conquest of them. By allowing them to rise to awareness, to consciousness, one liberates them.

Fordham states that the self unites opposing elements and in so doing transmutes them. This necessitates acceptance of the inferior, irrational, and chaotic in one.¹ Acceptance is a form of love, and mysticism is primarily a love experience. Mysticism does not attack the bad elements inside one, but by an intense concentration on the good and a passive calmness in the face of the bad the good comes to prevail.

Another way of considering the liberating process is the following. Neural circuits or rings of attached neurones exist in the neurological structure, and energy has a tendency to continue traveling around the circuit.² There is an access of inner energy because of temporarily closing off the outside during the mystical/therapeutic process. This additional energy may augment the energy operating in the circuit and perhaps enable it to carve a pathway out, thus quieting down the circuit, or producing

1 Ibid., 62.

2 See the works on neurophysiology previously listed.

"mortification" as John of the Cross refers to it.¹

That is, by the energy coming out, the nerve cells not having this energy any more go into a dormancy and the pathways atrophy. Or perhaps it is that the energy carves new channels, and the diminution of energy supplies to the old circuits quiets them down. In any case, there is produced a "mortification" of the old desires and affections, as John of the Cross describes it.²

The goal of both the mystic way and the psychological journey of psychotherapy can be examined. Both procedures involve a narrowing of one's range of desires so that there is a diminution of frustration and of its consequent hate.

The goal in mysticism is the finding of God within in that the mystic's personality becomes like God in many of its characteristics: goodness and love abound, hate has largely evaporated as a reaction pattern. One's own inner qualities have been transformed to those similar to God's. In this sense, there is a God within.

That is, in the depths of the personality there are both good and bad. Both processes, psychoanalysis and mysticism, aim to liberate deep

¹ John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul, Third Revised Edition, trans. and ed. by E. Allison Peers, Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1959, 148.

². Ibid.

forces. By accepting (that is, not hating) the bad as they rise, they are freed of their energy and power. Thus, as the good arises, its energy becomes the focus for a new orientation of the personality.

Hence, both mysticism and psychoanalysis can be considered to have a similar goal: to raise the level of the personality and its functioning. Both apparently have similarities in basic technique: liberating material from the depths of the personality about which a purified, more effective personality emerges.

Role of Consciousness

The significance of consciousness must be considered. To a contemporary product of Western culture with its emphasis on the rationalistic approach, on materialism, and on the scientific focus, on examination of the empirical, it is difficult to understand the significance of consciousness, a major factor in mysticism. Western reasoning is essentially linear or sequential, one step being followed by another. It also is categorical, disjunctive. The Western emphasis on the empirical as the criterion of reality assumes that what one perceives through the outward senses is the real. The mystic mind operates quite differently. It is not sequential in its basis as is the pattern in logical

reasoning, but rather promotes an intensity in consciousness. This intensity serves to activate various forces. That is, the attitude actualizes, evokes reality. An attitude of lovingness evokes a whole spectrum of loving reactions both within the individual and in his outside relationships. That is, the empirical approach assumes the primacy of sense objects. The mystical approach assumes the primacy of consciousness.

A principal factor within consciousness can be demarcated as the will. That is, a consciousness oriented around good will tend to actualize goodness, while one oriented around bad will tend to actualize bad effects. Thus, a will toward goodness is a primary reality.

Hence, the mystical perspective is that it makes a difference what one thinks, for such eventually tends to be actualized. The typical Westerner assumes that reality is a relatively self-contained entity uninfluenced by one's personal viewpoint and is quite objective in nature. For the mystic however, consciousness is the essential; for the non-mystic sense objects.

During the course of subsequent discussion, these points will receive amplification.

Definitions of Fundamentalist,
Evangelical, World

Other terms require definition. Aiden Wilson Tozer was a pastor of a Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, which falls under that branch of Protestantism variously referred to as "Fundamentalist" and "Evangelical."¹ These terms refer to a theologically conservative group of Protestant churches. The term "Fundamentalist," because of certain pejorative associations attached to it, has been replaced in some instances by "Evangelical." Those churches still considering themselves "Fundamentalist" are apt to be ultra-conservative, being more strict in their interpretations than evangelical churches.²

Fundamentalist and evangelical churches constitute a mixed group of theologically conservative Protestant churches stressing full, and often verbal, inspiration of the inerrant Bible and its complete authority over faith and practice. They preach that felicitous eternal life is won only by God's grace through a radical conversion and commitment to Christ

1 For a fuller discussion of the meaning of these terms, see George Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon," Church History, June 1973, 46:2, 215-232.

2 Ernest R. Sandeen, "Fundamentalist and Evangelical Churches," The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1974 ed., Macropedia, 7, 777-80; Micropedia, 3, 1009-10, 4, 357.

as Saviour. They oppose the Liberals or Modernists who have accepted Biblical criticism and have favored social action.

The term "Fundamentalism" is derived from a series of twelve pamphlets entitled The Fundamentals, which attacked then current theories of Biblical criticism and reasserted the authority of the Bible. They were published (1909-1915) by the American Bible League, founded in 1902 to defend the inerrant Bible.

Fundamentalists favor the following doctrines: the inerrant inspiration of the Bible, virgin birth, the propitiatory Atonement, Resurrection, miracle-working power of Christ, and a sudden eschaton.

During the 1940's many Fundamentalists began to call themselves Evangelicals. Those who still retain the Fundamentalist label tend to be markedly conservative. The term "Evangelical," however, goes back to the Reformation and has been used with a much wider range of meaning than indicated herein.¹

Present-day Episcopalians, for example, refer to themselves as Catholic Evangelicals. This dissertation, however, will use the term "Evangelical" solely to refer to the Fundamentalist Evangelical.

¹ Derived from Ernest R. Sandeen, "Fundamentalist and Evangelical Churches," The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1974 ed., Macropedia, 7, 777-80; Micropedia, 4, 357.

A final term to be defined here is that of "world." As used in "this-world," "non-worldly," it refers to the practical everyday world of ordinary experience, the life of average people, that is, physical and social existence.

Limitations

Certain limitations apply to this study. First, neither non-Western nor non-Christian mysticism nor pantheistic mysticism has been the concern of this study. Occasional reference will be made to these so as to elucidate characteristics of Christian mysticism.

Second, only Tozer's published works, especially the books he published during his lifetime, have been analyzed.

Third, the works of mystics are limited primarily to those in the list of "Dr. Tozer's Recommended Books."¹ Though many, indeed most of the works are in languages other than modern English, the research has been restricted to English translations since this is the form in which Tozer read these works. Occasional reference will be made to mystics other than those in Tozer's list when they seem relevant to a discussion of Tozer's concept of mysticism.

1 Cited in Fant. See this Ms, "Appendix A," 228.

CHAPTER II

TOZER--THE MAN AND HIS CONTEXT

By way of prelude to a discussion of the concepts of A. W. Tozer, this chapter will attempt to give some understanding of the man himself. Both his personal life and the broader environment which contributed toward shaping him will be examined. A full-fledged biography is not intended, however, merely an indication of salient aspects relevant to the principal concerns of this study.

While the factual data about Aiden Wilson Tozer are mainly of value, the researcher has also attempted to collect through interviews and correspondence some of the subjective elements. These include reactions of friends, colleagues, members of his congregation, and even his own children, and indicate the way that they perceived Tozer. Such judgmental elements can often enrich the picture of a personality beyond a presentation of strictly objective statements.

The Man

Aiden Wilson Tozer's grandfather was Gilbert S. Tozer, an Englishman who came to America in the

earlier nineteenth century.¹ He spent some time in New York State and then settled in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, in 1830. Bison roamed the area then, and their natural clearing of the growth gave Clearfield County its name. Gilbert Tozer died in an accident on the Susquehanna River in 1878 when he was sixty-eight. He was married to Margaret Weaver, one of seven daughters of Captain Weaver. She was an active member of the Presbyterian Church. They had eight children. The fifth child and second son was Jacob S. Tozer, the father of A. W. Tozer. Jacob (d. 1924) married Prudence Jackson (d. 1940) and had six children: Zene (a boy), Essie (a girl), Aiden (born 1897),² Margaret, Mildred, and Hugh.³

The origin of the name "Tozer is of interest since names can be revealing of personal background.

The name Tozer comes from the Scotch word "thistle." A tool used for carding flax was called a thistle because it was rough, and the workmen were said to "tease" the flax. Because a dog had sharp teeth

1 David J. Fant, Jr., A. W. Tozer, A Twentieth Century Prophet, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1964, 11.

2 There is not complete agreement on the date of A. W. Tozer's birth. The birth certificate has it listed as April 25, 1897. However, Tozer's wife asserts that Tozer was born on April 21. Letter from Cecelia Odam (formerly Mrs. A. W. Tozer), n.d., to Rev. Robert W. Battles, Secretary, The Christian and Missionary Alliance, Nyack, New York, in his personal file.

3 Personal file, Rev. Robert W. Battles.

it was called a "teaser" or "towser," and from this came the name.¹

Aiden's maternal grandmother, who was German, was not religious, knowing little about the Bible, but the paternal grandmother often talked to the children about God. The maternal grandmother, however, was the principal source of other knowledge which Aiden had until he was about fifteen years old. Aiden long held this German grandmother in high regard as the intellectual member of the family. She taught the children that money does not mean anything and that they should "get something in their heads."²

There was dirt poverty on the farm located in the hill country northeast of Pittsburgh. Even so, the mother saved pennies to hear the famous opera singer Amelita Galli-Curci. According to Wendell Tozer, son of A. W. Tozer, this appreciation for excellence and unwillingness to compromise with anything but the best might have contributed to Rev. Tozer's subsequent exploration of the saints.³

Tragedy early struck the family. When the homestead burned to the ground, the ten-year-old Aiden

1 Fant, 11.

2 Telephone interview with Wendell Tozer, son of A. W. Tozer, Winnetka, Illinois, February 25, 1979. The biographical data referring to A. W. Tozer in Chapter II was checked for accuracy by Wendell Tozer, April, 1979.

3 Ibid.

led his younger brother and his sisters to safety in the woods. Since the older brother had departed shortly before the fire to work at the Goodrich Rubber Company in Akron, Ohio, and because his father was in a state hospital for a year or so, young Aiden was left to do a man's work on the farm.¹ According to Dr. Robert Battles, this early curtailment of the playfulness of childhood may have conditioned Aiden to the renunciation of self-indulgent pleasures characteristic of his later life.

A new house was built and the Tozers remained on the farm for five years. Aiden completed only the grammar grades of schooling, but he spent Sundays reading the few books available.

In 1912, when Aiden was fifteen, the family moved to Akron to join the older brother. Aiden, his sister Essie, and his father secured employment at the Goodrich rubber factory. Aiden worked nights, and as he did very monotonous work with his hands, he would put up a book of poetry in front of him and memorize it as he worked.²

At Akron the family had the first opportunity to attend church. Aiden with his younger brother and

1 Personal interview with Dr. Robert W. Battles, Secretary, The Christian and Missionary Alliance, Nyack, New York, August 30, 1978. Dr. Battles was a long-time friend and colleague of Tozer.

2 Wendell Tozer, interview.

sisters went to Sunday School. Shortly before his eighteenth birthday he was converted by the preaching of an elderly man on a busy street corner, who inspired him to seek his attic and wrestle with God. Soon, he joined Grace Methodist Church.¹

Aiden, the first of his family to be converted, began street preaching himself and also holding neighborhood prayer meetings. But he would also frequently withdraw from others for Bible study and prayer, finding the basement a quiet space. Often he would lie prostrate on the floor, using a piece of paper to keep his face clean.² As a youth Aiden was shy and reticent. When company came, he would flee out of doors or retreat to the kitchen often eating alone. This introversion remained throughout his life, but his companionship with the Lord was a constant feature.³

In 1915 an important event occurred. Cecelia, his future wife, reminisces in a letter to Rev. Robert W. Battles, July 21, 1973: Her father had farmed in Ohio, and at the corner of the farm was a small Methodist church which her mother and she attended. After the family moved near Akron, she

1 Fant, 14.

2 Ibid., 15-16.

3 Ibid., 24.

went with her mother to the Methodist church there where she met Aiden.

On the Sunday I joined that church. He was an usher and it was he who took me to the front to join. I was a green Country [sic] girl and was very embarassed [sic] to go with him and said to a girl I was sitting with. That was worse then [sic] a wedding, which he overheard. Oh he was a handsom [sic] cleancut young man of eighteen and I was not yet fifteen . . . ¹

There was a Young People's Group meeting that afternoon, and he asked to bring her home.

Aiden and Ada Celia Pfautz were married in April, 1918, just after his twenty-first birthday. Seven children were born: Lowell, Forrest, Aiden, Wendell, Raleigh, Stanley, and Rebecca.² Mrs. Tozer always took a minor role outside of the home, and did not share in her husband's intellectual interests. Her family kept her very busy. She had forty-six

1 Letter from Cecelia Odam to Rev. Robert W. Battles, Nyack, New York, July 21, 1973.

2 Lowell is now head of the English Department, San Diego State University; a Quaker. Forrest, "Bud," an attorney, resides in Flossmoor, Illinois. A University of Chicago graduate, he lost a leg in the Korean War. He is a devout Presbyterian. Aiden was shot down in World War II; he is a Baptist. Wendell, also a Presbyterian, resides in Winnetka, Illinois. Raleigh was originally named Rolland, but changed his name when he became an actor. He has been a partner with George Wilson, the former coach of the Miami Dolphins, in a real estate venture. Stanley attended the University of Chicago Divinity School and is now a Presbyterian minister in Palatine, Illinois. Rebecca was the youngest by nine years, born in 1939 when Tozer was forty-two. While a student at Nyack College, she was described as very out-going. She is now Mrs. Richard H. Michaels and resides in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

shirts to do every week in an era before the advent of "wash and wear" fabrics. Even with a mangle this was a heavy load.¹ She said her husband's sin was buying books when with six sons she would have liked a refrigerator that worked.²

In the period after his conversion, since Tozer's lay preaching was not appreciated by church officials, he transferred in 1916 to a church in The Christian and Missionary Alliance (hereafter referred to as The C&MA). Here, the pastor fostered his spiritual growth, to which his pious mother-in-law also contributed. He quickly led his parents and two sisters to Christ. The first summer after his marriage was spent with his sister Essie's husband, John S. Jeffers, holding evangelistic meetings in West Virginia. In September, 1918, he was called to serve in the United States Army, but was discharged in December of the same year.

In February, 1919, without formal training he took his first church in Nutter Fort, West Virginia, and was ordained at Beulah Beach, Ohio, in August,

1 Personal interview with Mrs. Louis (Esther) King, wife of the President of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, Nyack, New York, September 1, 1978. She came to Tozer's church when she was age thirteen and was active there until age nineteen when she went to college in Nyack.

2 Wendell Tozer, interview.

1920. Several pastorates followed: Morgantown, West Virginia, 1919-21; Toledo, Ohio, 1921-23; Indianapolis, Indiana, 1923-1928. Then came his major place of ministry, the Southside Alliance Church at 7010 S. Union Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 1928-1959.

J. Francis Chase, an artist and subsequently Tozer's most intimate friend, writes of Tozer's first sermon:

I was stunned and so was everyone else by his splendid voice and diction, a whole and different approach with superior language and phrases--so simple and yet so grand that we were all speechless.¹

. . . one could early detect a great anointing [sic] . . . ²

Many a man has come to me, asking what was the secret, how did he start--what was [sic] his habits and methods--all we can say the Holy Ghost took him over.³

Tozer came to the Southside Church with the understanding he would be a preacher, not a pastor. Most other jobs, such as weddings, funerals, and pastoral calls, were left to assistants. He did do the dedication of babies, for then "he just beamed, he was in sheer delight."⁴ Committees and programs

1 Letter from J. F. Chase, Lockport, Illinois, to Dr. Robert W. Battles, received January 21, 1974, 2.

2 Ibid., 3.

3 Another letter from Chase to Dr. Battles, 1974, n.d.

4 Personal interview with Rev. Clifford Westergren, Director of the Alliance Press, Hong Kong; on leave

so often found in present-day churches, were not the pattern then. Also, Tozer did not participate in certain other activities, such as greeting members of the congregation at the close of the service, or counseling those responding to an altar call.

Since Tozer's ministry matured and flourished at the Southside Church, the characteristics of this congregation must be examined. The church was in what was then regarded as a nice neighborhood (though changing urban patterns necessitated a move some distance west during the 1960's).

Originally, the church was like a tabernacle in that there was a Sunday afternoon service and an evening service. A tabernacle is a place for evangelistic services scheduled at times not in conflict with regular church services. In the area were many who went to the nearby Dutch Reformed Church in the morning and then to Tozer's church for its two services. In later years Tozer's church had a morning service. It was not an extremely large church, Tozer preferring quality in his congregation to quantity. He was not interested in evangelism per se, thinking that many evangelists left their converts as babies in diapers. Instead Tozer's

at The C&MA Headquarters, Nyack, New York, September 1, 1978. Westergren was under Tozer's ministry during the four years of high school and then while on vacation from college at Nyack.

church was a place to foster growth in the Christian life. According to Ms. Pearl Fardig, a long-time member of Tozer's congregation, the people who were in Tozer's church for many years were people of spiritual depth and strength that were unique.¹

Tozer's son, Rev. Stanley Tozer, commented that the congregation was different from any that he has ever known. People were drawn to Tozer from a fairly wide area, and it was a church focused on him. If there were any problems in the congregation, the son did not know of them.²

In ethnic characteristics, the largest single group in the church was Dutch, and there were also some Swedes. The Dutch were usually manual laborers, doing cement work, and Tozer felt that many of them did not have as serious a Christian commitment as others in the congregation. There were many quite intelligent people in the church, though only about fifteen percent had college degrees. Tozer attracted people who wanted their minds stimulated as well as their souls.³

1 Telephone interview with Ms. Pearl Fardig, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, February 26, 1979.

2 Telephone interview with Rev. Stanley Tozer, Palatine, Illinois, February 20, 1979.

3 Telephone interview with Mr. Harry Verpleough, Wheaton, Illinois, March 22, 1979. He was a member of Tozer's congregation for many years and also a personal friend.

Women's prayer groups which met on Wednesdays were important in the life of the church. They had the same slogan as the mailman: neither rain nor sleet could interfere with their meeting. Some of the women worked, but took their day off on Wednesdays so that they could come. Some were so poor that they had to walk. Even on holidays they would meet. Mornings they worked on prayer requests, and afternoons they prayed for missionaries. They upheld Tozer in prayer.¹ Tozer said that if he had any success in the ministry, he owed it in great part to these women.²

Tozer also received support from a very small inner core who were the elders and guides and his intimate friends, including J. Francis Chase.³ According to Clifford Westergren, each of these persons was characterized by two things: 1) each had a feeling for art, in a broad sense, whether verbal or visual; and 2) each had a special spiritual capacity. These people felt that they were part of the making of this man. This inner core would accept

1 Personal interview with Mrs. Gladys Moore, Nyack New York, September 1, 1978. Mrs. Moore was for many years a member of Tozer's congregation. Her son David is now in foreign missionary service with The C&MA.

2 King, interview.

3 Stanley Tozer, interview.

some newcomers, but not others,¹ apparently because the latter were not sufficiently committed.

A long-time member of the congregation, however, stated that Tozer had no close friends, for that would be favoritism and then he could not preach to them.² Also he was shy and rather a "loner." She thought he would have preached the same wherever he was. She observed that he liked art and good music. Tozer had a reputation for being caustic and was not super-sweet. If Tozer believed someone on the church Board was not living as he should, he would be taken off the Board. However, according to Ms. Pearl Fardig, the Holy Spirit was so prevalent at the church that you could feel it when you walked in.³

Tozer enjoyed students, and his church attracted many of them. Carloads and busloads would come in later years. Tozer had to stay current and well read to keep up with them. Their bright, inquiring minds were a stimulation to him and kept him young in attitude.

Another major factor in his development was his love for books. A voracious reader, he explored secondhand bookstores wherever he went. He favored the unusual and the excellent. Especially attractive

1 Westergren, interview.

2 Fardig, interview.

3 Ibid.

to him were the ancient writers, particularly the church fathers and Christian mystics.¹ He referred to Dame Julian of Norwich, the fourteenth century mystic, as his girlfriend.² But, as is typical of Evangelicals, top place was accorded the Bible of which he had forty versions. Through his reading, Tozer had contact with the great minds and spirits of many centuries. They unmistakably enriched his ministry immensely.

The characteristics of this ministry may be considered. Primarily a preacher and a teacher, it is his sermons which are the significant element of his church work. However, in physical presence, Tozer's preaching was not distinctive. About five feet, ten inches, in height at his tallest and of wiry build, Tozer in his earlier years moved from one end of the platform to another, always in motion. Not graceful, he was told by his father, "You look like you're always falling down or just getting up."³ He had "an ungainly walk . . . (Francis Chase said he looked like he was pulling his feet out of glue)."⁴ In addition to his mode of movement, his appearance

1 Fant, 21-22.

2 Battles, interview.

3 King, interview.

4 Letter from Wendell Tozer to Dr. Battles, September 11, 1973.

can be characterized. "Homely in a Lincolnian way, but bright eyes that saved the face."¹ " . . . he was slight with plenty of hair."² The inner vitality of Tozer is suggested by the bright eyes and plentiful hair. Though visually Tozer did not make an especially favorable impression, yet his voice was very pleasant. He would blow balloons to make it better.³

The significance of Tozer's preaching then lay in the content, not in physical qualities of delivery. There were several characteristics distinguishing the sermons. First was the depth of insight, both into the Bible and into human nature. Second was the strong Biblical orientation of the preaching, typical of Fundamentalists. Tozer had Biblical weights on his feet, and though he might lean to the right or left, they always brought him back to the center, for he always came back to the Bible. Or to phrase it differently, he had a Biblical ramrod in his spine which always brought him back to the center.⁴

Third, his mode of preaching was philosophical. He taught spiritual principles, rather than exegeting

1 Ibid.

2 Letter from J. F. Chase to Dr. Battles, received January 21, 1974.

3 Fardig, interview.

4 Westergren, interview.

verses. The preaching made very plain the applicability to everyday life so that a person had something he could really live by. However, Tozer did not emphasize the moral and ethical, for he believed that if one established a right relationship between man and God those things would take care of themselves.

Fourth, his central theme was "Do you know God Himself?" The emphasis was on loving and knowing God, though that generation probably needed a little more stress on the knowing of God.¹ Important was "the Holy Spirit, a submitting yourself to God."²

Fifthly, Tozer related in an effective way to his congregation in his sermons. Those who were members of the congregation describe it in the following ways. "He knocked you down. He took away the props. He took you to the edge of the cliff, but he never left you there."³ He facilitated a person's making a decision on God's terms. "He had a way of making you want what God wanted, no matter what the cost. He did not 'sugarcoat' it."⁴ "He always brought you to a point of decision. You were forced to make a moral decision. He didn't let you off

1 Ibid.

2 Fardig, interview.

3 Westergren, interview.

4 King, interview.

the hook."¹ He preached in a way that reached people's vulnerabilities. "His preaching was always so exciting. Around Thursdays I'd try to get myself in line so he wouldn't hit me so hard on Sunday, but he did anyway. I had more upset stomachs on Sunday nights--from the tension. I was relieved when he was preaching on something that didn't hit me."² "His method of preaching was negative, realistic. But when you left, you were on Cloud 9. He gave you great comfort."³

Sixth, the methods utilized to present his points can be characterized. He was a master of illustration, usually making one up, often on the spot as he could think on his feet. Remarkable was his humor. Westergren, a former member of Tozer's congregation, characterizes the humor:

It was not joke humor or slapstick humor, but largely humor by exaggeration. His humor would roll people in the aisles. People would laugh so hard they couldn't stop. It was so true to life you'd automatically identify with it. He also used irony as humor. He would play on human nature. You could always tell when he was tired. He was more humorous when tired.⁴

1 Westergren, interview.

2 King, interview.

3 Fardig, interview.

4 Westergren, interview.

He rarely reverted to gimmicks. He had an aversion to anything artificial. Nor did he utilize alliteration. However, he had tremendous logic in his messages. One could always follow. He did not rely on other techniques.¹ He kept the level of his sermons high.

He never preached down to people. He kept the quality of sermons up and made people reach up to it. He stayed current. If something happened twenty minutes before, he would put it in the sermon.²

According to Westergren, the greatness of Tozer's preaching then

. . . was not that he was saying something new but was saying in a fresh way what the Bible is trying to say, and when he was finished you'd say to yourself, "That's true." He said it so well, so logically and with such strength that you'd have to agree even if you didn't want to.³

Many of these qualities of Tozer's preaching are also found in his writing.

Professional recognition came steadily. However, Tozer refused to serve on any boards except the Board of Managers of The C&MA, where he served from 1941 until his death. He was elected vice-president in 1946, but resigned that office in 1950. At that time he was elected editor of The Alliance.

1 Ibid.

2 Telephone interview with Mr. Richard Sandrok, attorney in Wheaton, Illinois, February 15, 1979. Mr. Sandrok was in Tozer's church from ages one to seventeen.

3 Westergren, interview.

Weekly, the denominational publication, a post in which he continued until his death.¹ The name was changed in 1958 to The Alliance Witness and publication became biweekly. Tozer gained much renown for his editorials. He received two honorary doctorates, a Doctor of Letters degree from Wheaton College in 1950 and a Doctor of Law degree from Houghton College in 1952. He had a regular half-hour Saturday morning radio broadcast over WMBI, the station of Moody Bible Institute, which rated it one of its most popular programs.² From coast to coast he was a speaker at missionary conferences, Bible conferences, and meetings of clergymen.³

Tozer published many books, mainly through his denominational press, Christian Publications, Inc., now headquartered in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. His

1 Fant, 21.

2 Ibid., 22. Tapes were made of these broadcasts. Also, according to an interview with Rev. John Sawin, archivist at Simpson Memorial Historical Library, located at The C&MA Headquarters, Nyack, New York, July 12, 1979, tapes were made of many of Tozer's sermons by a member of the congregation, a Mr. Ericson. His son, Mr. Burton Ericson, a lawyer who resides in Naperville, Illinois, drew up a legal contract between himself, Moody Bible Institute, and Christian Publications, Inc., so that Moody Bible Institute has a complete set of the tapes available for anyone to listen to, and Christian Publications, Inc., is to have a duplicate set and is to begin publishing materials from the tapes. In addition, the Simpson Library has a list of 238 taped sermons.

3 Fant, 20.

first book, Wingspread, a biography of the founder of The C&MA, A. B. Simpson, was written in a lively, picturesque style. Another biography followed, Let My People Go, of Robert A. Jaffray, a C&MA missionary to the Far East. Thereafter, Tozer's books focused on God. There have been numerous translations of his works, which have appeared in foreign languages such as Indonesian, French, Spanish, and Dutch.

Wendell Tozer relates that he and his brother Forrest took their father to lunch one day. The publishing firm of Harper and Row had been trying for seven years to get Tozer to do a book for them, but he had steadily refused because he was not in business to make money. At lunch the two sons said that they wanted their children to know that Tozer's books had been published by an established, intellectually recognized firm, that they wanted their children to have something to be proud of. Tozer said nothing, but subsequently went ahead and did a book for Harper and Row, The Knowledge of the Holy. He was working on two more books for Harper and Row, sitting up until 2 A.M., at the time of his death. Since then, collections of his sermons, editorials, and broadcast messages¹ have been published, and more will undoubtedly follow.

¹ Wendell Tozer asserts that his father never allowed his spoken messages to be published during his life-

By 1959 the neighborhood surrounding the church had deteriorated substantially, subsequently becoming a slum. Thus, a program would have to be launched for building elsewhere. Tozer felt younger hands should take on this responsibility. As a result, he became preaching minister of the Avenue Road Church of The C&MA in Toronto, Canada, where he had a flourishing ministry for several years.

The end was sudden. Though physicians at Mayo Clinic had earlier insisted that he must slow down because of a heart condition, he still maintained a heavy schedule. According to his former secretary, Ms. Betty Brown, "He went day and night, didn't eat or rest properly. He never spared himself."¹ His son, Wendell, states:

He burned himself out for Christ. That's the way he wanted to go.²

He knew the end was coming. He talked about it matter-of-factly. He was ready. He knew Christ was in him, and what happened to him was up to God. And as long as A. W. was true to that he had no concerns, no worries.³

time because "You don't write the way you talk." Also, when Harper and Row wanted to publish a collection of his editorials, Tozer refused because he did not have time to rewrite them. Letter to Eleanor Harris, April 23, 1979.

1 Telephone interview with Ms. Betty Brown, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, February 22, 1979. Ms. Brown was at Tozer's church throughout his ministry.

2 Wendell Tozer, interview.

3 Ibid.

At 3 A.M. on Mother's Day, 1963, a heart attack occurred, and Tozer was taken to the hospital. His former secretary, Betty Brown, and her roommate, Pearl Fardig, had come to Toronto for a visit. He talked with Betty on the telephone from the hospital in the afternoon. But at 4 A.M. the next morning Mrs. Tozer telephoned to say that he had passed on.¹

She wrote to Dr. Robert Battles on March 4, 1976, that the little headstone on the grave, " . . . has just A. W. Tozer, A man of God."²

The Context

Characteristics of the context in which Tozer lived affected his personality and his thought. Both the era and the specific religious environment conditioned his development.

The Times

Tozer emerged into the adult world at the end of World War I, taking his first church in February, 1919. At this time, enormous changes were underway. The transition to the modern world, though heralded over many preceding decades, now exploded with cataclysmic force. The Roaring Twenties saw vast social and cultural changes. These affected the Christian

1 Brown, interview, and Fardig, interview.

2 According to Wendell Tozer, this was chosen in advance by Tozer himself.

church, much of which attempted to stand as a bastion for traditional values in the midst of these new developments.

Perhaps one of the most significant changes in Tozer's case was the phenomenon of urban migration. The exodus from the farms, to some extent worldwide, was accelerated by the emergence of modern technology and various social-economic pressures. By 1920, for the first time over half of the population in the United States lived in cities of 2,500 or over.¹

The shift to urban centers generated values often counter to those in agrarian societies, and those individuals who made the transition from one context to the other often maintained a composite array of both agrarian and newly emergent values.

In Tozer's case, the shyness with people, which had developed in a setting where few people were about, continued even in a busy city pastorate. A habit of dependence upon personal contacts had not been necessitated in the isolation of the farm. Instead, a self-reliance developed when Tozer had to take over the running of the farm at the age of ten. Individualism was strengthened on a farm, but in the large aggregations of people characteristic of modern

¹ Sidney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, 2 vols., Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1975, II, 191.

life, as in the corporation and the labor union, the individual has an insignificant role. Individualism, then, is a liability in city life. But mysticism is inherently individualistic, for it is the individual who establishes a relationship to God. Other persons are not directly involved.

Further, a rural life is unimpeded by complex, personal pressures and affords ample opportunity for reflection. Tozer's early background on a farm is likely to have formed a tendency to meditation and produced a mode of thinking in him not sharply dictated by outside pressures. Even the monotony of subsequent factory work left his mind free.

However, the city offered cultural advantages to those lured there for economic reasons. The availability of few books on the farm made them precious. In the cities, vast numbers were available and could be readily purchased for a modest price at second-hand bookstores. ("Paperbacks" were not widely available in the United States until after World War II.) Thus, Tozer, subject to deprivation of reading matter in his youth, could satisfy this need by wide reading in later years. Through this passion for books, Tozer encountered a whole world of new ideas.

Also, the large number and variety of people available in a metropolis presented opportunities for

significant contacts and consequent growth. It was in the city that Tozer first attended church and Sunday School. Other than his work in West Virginia, his pastorates were all urban.

Rural dwellers are perhaps less aware of distant needs, such as foreign missions. But with urbanization, people may be more able to relate to such needs. Tozer's denomination had been founded in New York City in 1881 for the specific purpose of fostering missionary activity. And the missionary convention was the highlight of the church year during Tozer's ministry.

The work ethic and Puritanic suspicion of play hitherto dominant, and in rural life often essential, saw a steady erosion in the cities. In Tozer, however, the older values continued: he hardly ever took a vacation.

Rapidly improving medical care and facilities, particularly in the cities, reduced death rates, especially for the young; hence, the churches and Sunday Schools had many who could both stimulate Tozer by their lively minds and who could respond to his ministry. Also, the development and expansion of Sunday schools in American Protestantism had produced a maturity in the laity unequalled in Christendom.¹ Such people could relate to the spiritual richness Tozer offered in his messages.

1 Ahlstrom, II, 199.

In rural areas, during the period of Tozer's youth, for those of limited means a college education was rarely available even to very bright people. However, Tozer's children had an opportunity for such training, several of them studying at the University of Chicago which was nearby. Tozer, being largely self-taught, had the advantage of being able to follow his own bent. However, he lacked a certain type of discipline which contact with sophisticated, trained minds might have produced.¹

In the rural areas, there was considerable ethnic and cultural homogeneity. In the cities, however, one was confronted by masses of immigrants with alien ways. One reaction would be to retreat to an inner stability.

H. Richard Niebuhr sums up the relationship between Fundamentalism and rural culture:

" . . . Fundamentalism was closely related to the conflict between rural and urban cultures in America. . . . Furthermore, fundamentalism in its aggressive forms was most prevalent in those isolated communities in which the traditions of pioneer society had been most effectively preserved and which were least subject to the influence of modern science and industrial civilization." ²

1 Rev. Stanley Tozer, interview.

2 H. Richard Niebuhr, "Fundamentalism," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1938, 5, 527; cited in Ernest R. Sandeen, The Origins of Fundamentalism, Toward a Historical Interpretation, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968, 2.

Advances in technology generated in the cities mechanized transportation systems, facilitating larger congregations and the assembling of kindred souls from substantial distances. Another technological development, the radio station, also increased subsequently the audience for Tozer's ministry.

The decade of the Twenties closed with the onset of the Depression in 1929. Distress brought people closer together, and during the Thirties conservative, revivalistic Christianity flourished. But by the outbreak of the Second World War, Fundamentalism had lost the support of the great "moderate middle."¹ In 1942 The National Association of Evangelicals was founded, replacing agencies of the old Fundamentalist movement.²

World War II produced massive disruptions of life. Peace however initiated an age of affluence and a frantic rush for acquisition of material possessions. Secularization of society also increased. The urban migration by 1950 had caused two-thirds of the American population to be living in metropolitan regions. This led to an expansion of the suburban population which became three times greater than that of the central cities.³ Mobility, both geographic

1 Ahlstrom, II, 425.

2 Ibid., II, 455.

3 Ibid., II, 446.

and social, became increasingly frequent, reducing the stability of long-established, close-knit groups. Technological developments, such as mechanization of agriculture, improvement in roads and automobiles, and television, accelerated the spread of urban mores. Yet in the decade and a half following the war, there was a popular resurgence of piety so that by 1960, 69 percent of the population were members of a church, a growth from the 49 percent of 1940.¹

The Religious Context and Mystical Elements

A consideration of external influences operative upon Tozer must of course consider his Protestant context and mystical elements in it. Even at the beginning of the Reformation, the Protestant movement was not anti-mystical. Bengt R. Hoffman propounds that

Martin Luther's faith-consciousness was significantly molded by mystical experience and that western dependence on rationalism has obscured or eclipsed this mystical light.²

Luther admired Tauler's sermons and Theologica Germanica,³ which was first edited by him.

1 Ibid., II, 448.

2 Bengt R. Hoffmann, Luther and the Mystics, Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976, 18.

3 Rufus M. Jones, "Mysticism (Christian, Protestant)," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 9, 102.

Ernst Troeltsch observes that Protestant mysticism could see itself as the logical outcome of Protestant ideas: laicism, priesthood of all believers, individualism.¹ Mysticism, a deeply internal ecstatic experience, is above all individualistic.²

Today, the Fundamentalist Evangelical world is oriented in a direction aligned with the mystical:

Clark states that there is

. . . the fundamental assumption which lies at the heart of evangelical theology --that God may be directly apprehended and that he reveals himself to man through the feelings. The sects follow Wesley in the theory that "I know because I feel."³

Tozer's denomination, The Christian and Missionary Alliance, undoubtedly had a major role in shaping his thought.

The C&MA can be characterized. Using Troeltsch's classification, the C&MA is a sect rather than a church: a voluntary society of strict believers who have experienced "the new birth." They live apart from the world, setting up the Christian order

1 Cited in Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973, 20.

2 Ibid., 25.

3 Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America, Revised Edition, Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, Copyright Renewal, 1965, 221.

based on love.¹ The priesthood of all believers, the universal call to sanctity, and a serious pursuit of personal holiness are characteristic.² The believers' churches balance Word and Spirit, ignoring tradition; whereas the mystic typically emphasizes Spirit and separation from the church, excluding Scriptures.³ The believers' churches center everything on the Word, prayer, and love. The voice of revelation must always be tested by the Word, for the inner and outer word are one in essence.⁴ The sects are characterized by intensity of commitment.

The C&MA has a Fundamentalist background, though presently it can be classified as "establishment evangelicalism," along with the Southern Baptists, Missouri Synod Lutherans, etc.⁵ Fundamentalism is a twentieth century movement tied to the revivalist tradition of mainstream Evangelical Protestantism that has militantly opposed modernist theology. It emphasizes the supernatural, seeing historical change

1 Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Believers' Church, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968, 23.

2 Evelyn Underhill, Worship, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937, 299.

3 Durnbaugh, 30.

4 Ibid., 33.

5 Richard Quebedeaux, The Young Evangelicals, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974, 29.

as explained by divine control.¹ The British have not had the Fundamentalist controversy which occurred in the United States. American Fundamentalists are found especially in rural regions, where there are lags in communication and where individualism is strong. England, being smaller, is more centralized; it also accepts more easily tradition as mediated through the universities and established church.²

Being a mission organization, The C&MA is focused on evangelism, using the ministry of the Word. Supplementation with institutional aid, such as medical and educational, is only a minor phase of the work. The C&MA does not attempt to convert the world, but to gather a people in His name. It is a pioneer movement, sending the gospel to the most destitute corners of the world,³ the Congo and Indo-China being its most successful mission areas. Though a small denomination of about 100,000 members, yet it is among the ten largest North American agencies in overseas personnel and in reported income for over-

1 George Marsden, "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon," Church History, June, 1977, 46:2, 215.

2 Ibid., 217-20.

3 Missionary Atlas, A Manual of the Foreign Work of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1964, 1-4.

seas ministries.¹ In 1974 the Alliance had one thousand missionaries on foreign fields, one for every 105 members. Its church membership on the various mission fields is far greater than its membership in the United States and Canada, for its money and energy have been largely employed in the regions beyond.

It is a paradox that a denomination so heavily focused on outreach should at the same time have a mystical element, an inner phenomenon. Perhaps the outer intensity in missionary activity is correlated with the inner intensity of love that mysticism involves. That is, the strength of outreach is based on the strength of love which underlies it. Only those who could love so much could give so much

Simpson's Mystical Orientation

In any case, one might wonder how Tozer, a Protestant and a Fundamentalist Evangelical, could have become heavily interested in mystical experience and thought. The answer lies to some extent in the founder of the denomination, Dr. A. B. Simpson, who gave it this focus. This was the root from which Tozer developed.

¹ Edward R. Dayton, ed., Mission Handbook: North American Protestant Ministries Overseas, Tenth Edition, Monrovia, California: Missionary Research Library, 1973, 89

Simpson was born in 1843 on Prince Edward's Island, Canada, the fourth child of nine, into a very happy home. Because the first-born had died as a toddler, the fourth child (second surviving son), was given his name Albert. Simpson's ancestors had come from the highlands of Scotland to Prince Edward Island in 1774. When Albert was age three, the family moved to Ontario. Subsequently, Simpson became the brilliant, young pastor of a major Presbyterian church in Toronto, but because of health problems he moved to Louisville, Kentucky, and in 1880 to New York City, where he began publication of a missionary magazine. In 1887 he founded two affiliated organizations, the Christian Alliance and the International Missionary Alliance, which merged in 1897 into The Christian and Missionary Alliance. This was not a denomination originally, but an inter-denominational alliance of missionary-minded Christians. The C&MA was thus primarily a missionary movement.

The underlying motive of Christian mysticism is love of God and

. . . the underlying motive of foreign missionary effort, as of all true Christian service, is the love of God. The heart of the founder, Dr. A. B. Simpson, was so enlarged in the love of God and the compassionate yearning of the Holy Spirit for the souls of men that he longed with intense desire to send messengers speedily

to every neglected corner of the earth that the Gospel might be given to all those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death.¹

Thus, Ekvall has indicated the relationship in Simpson between his love of God and his missionary outreach. This love of God is, in Simpson's case, related to his mystical element.

From his Celtic background, Simpson acquired the facility for seeing the invisible. He was both truly mystical and thoroughly evangelical, an evangelical mystic.²

When we speak of A. B. Simpson as a Pauline mystic we mean that he followed Paul in his comprehension and declaration of the divine mysteries . . . going directly to Jesus and John and Paul for his teaching. and herein he was an evangelical mystic.³

Paul's mysticism was crystallized in the phrase, "Christ in you the hope of glory." This became the very heart of A. B. Simpson's message.⁴

Salvation is then identification with Christ in His very death. The coming of the Lord was not so much an event as a Person, an eternal and inseparable union with Christ.⁵

1 Robert Ekvall, et al., After Fifty Years, A Record of God's Working through The Christian and Missionary Alliance, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1939, 70.

2 A. E. Thompson, The Life of A. B. Simpson, New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing Company, 1920, 171-73.

3 Ibid., 171.

4 Ibid., 176.

5 Ibid., 175-78.

Simpson himself in some of his writings unmistakably reveals his mystical orientation.

It is Christ Himself who comes to imitate Himself in us and reproduce His own life in the lives of His followers. This is the mystery of the Gospel. This is the secret of the Lord. This is the power that sanctifies, that fills, that keeps the consecrated heart. This is the only way that we can be like Christ.¹

Even the teachers of holiness are in danger of substituting it for Him, a clean heart for the divine nature.²

This is not a beautiful figure of speech, but it is a real visitation of God. I wonder if we know what this means. Does it seem an awful thing to have God visit us?³

In one of Simpson's most widely scattered leaflets,

The Power of Stillness, he confesses that from the Quietists he learned " . . . that God was waiting in the depth of my being to talk with me if I would only get still enough to hear Him."⁴ Simpson explains: "There is in the deepest centre of the soul a chamber of peace where God dwells, and where, if we will only enter in and hush every other sound, we can hear His still, small voice."⁵

1 Cited in Thompson, 180.

2 Cited ibid.

3 Cited ibid., 181.

4 Cited ibid., and reprinted in The Christian and Missionary Alliance, August 5, 1905, 24:30, 482.

5 A. B. Simpson, The Holy Spirit or Power From on High, Part I, The Old Testament, New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1895, 215.

Simpson explains further:

A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a little book which became one of the turning points of my life. It was called "True Peace." It was an old mediaeval message, and it had but one thought, and it was this--that God was waiting in the depths of my being to talk to me if I would only get still enough to hear His voice.¹

Simpson states that as he tried to become still, there came a conflict of cares, but that God said, "Be still."² He continues:

And as I listened and slowly learned to obey and shut my ears to every sound, I found that after a while, when the other voices ceased, or I ceased to hear them, there was a still, small voice in the depth of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, and the voice of wisdom and the voice of duty, and I did not need to think so hard, or pray so hard, or trust so hard, but that "still, small voice" of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God's prayer in my secret soul, was God's answer to all my questions. . . .³

Thompson, Simpson's biographer, adds:

He had also learned that the secret of maintaining this union with Christ is the Mystery of Faith. "It means staying in God. When the dear Lord led me into this place, I entered it without any feeling whatever, and simply trusted Him for everything. But after several months I found there was a great change in my

1 Ibid., 215.

2 Ibid., 215-16.

3 Ibid., 216; also cited in Thompson, slightly edited, 182.

feelings. Then I immediately turned around and trusted the change and became happy and buoyant because I was changed."¹

Further characteristics of the method to be employed are that the abiding must be established by a succession of definite acts of will, and of real, fixed, steadfast trust in Christ, and repeated until it becomes a habit.² Moreover, one must constantly study to have no confidence in self, but suspend his own will and seek the Lord's will.³ Simpson indicates further:

Again, if you would abide in Christ, you must cultivate the habit of always recognizing Him as near, in your heart of hearts, so that you need not try to find Him, reaching out to the distant heavens and wondering where He has gone. He is right here; His throne is in your heart; His resources are at hand. There may be no sense of God's presence, but just accept the fact that the Spirit is in your heart, and act accordingly. Bring everything to Him, and soon the consciousness will become real and delightful. We do not begin with feeling--we begin with acting as though He were here. So, if you would abide in Christ, treat Him as if He were in you, and you in Him; and He will respond to your trust, and honour your confidence.⁴

Further, if you would abide in Christ, you must recognize that Christ

¹ Thompson, 182.

² A. B. Simpson, The Christ Life, London: Morgan & Scott Ltd., 1911, 90.

³ Ibid., 94-95.

⁴ Ibid., 96-97.

is in everything that comes in your life; and that everything that occurs in the course of Providence is in some sense connected with the will of God.¹

However, Thompson observes that Simpson did not fully favor Quietism: "No one who knows Dr. Simpson's life would accuse him of holding the errors of Quietism."²

The relationship to the sense world, according to Simpson, necessitates being very watchful of one's senses, for it is letting the world in that separates a person from the presence of the Lord.³

Simpson indicates that if one would abide in Him one must cultivate the habit of internal prayer, communing with God in the heart.⁴ He asserts:

This habit of silent prayer, not in words, but in thought, is one of the secrets of abiding. There is an old word the mystics used--"recollection." We would call it a recollected spirit.⁵

There are significant results produced by this process. One's understanding and intellect must be filled with God, for He must possess a person Himself and put in him His thought and mind as well as His

1 Ibid., 97.

2 Thompson, 181. The italics are in the original.

3 Simpson, The Christ Life, 100.

4 Ibid., 101.

5 Ibid., 101-2.

spirit and grace¹ so that he may say, "I am thinking God's thoughts after God."²

Simpson characterizes the resultant peace:

The peace of God is nothing less than the very heart of God so transfused into our heart that we enter into its perfect rest and enjoy His own deep, divine, and unutterable peace. It is the very peace which He Himself enjoys as He dwells in the eternal calm. . . . ³

This peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds. It fills the whole of our inner being. . . . not even a wandering thought or troubled imagination shall be permitted to drive our little ship from its anchorage of peace.⁴

Simpson discusses the end results.

The prayer of words grows into the deeper prayer of silence, and the heart pours out its life and need into His bosom, who understands the artless thought and inarticulate breathing of His child. Such souls are characterized by depth, mellowness and force . . . ⁵

Two of Simpson's poems express aspects of the mystical process: 1) the fiery love which develops, and 2) the calmness of trust and non-reliance on the surface aspects of hands and brain.

1 A. B. Simpson, Wholly Sanctified, New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing Co., n.d., 96.

2 Ibid., 97.

3 A. B. Simpson, The Life of Prayer, Second Edition, New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1915, 111.

4 Ibid., 113.

5 Ibid., 134.

THE PASSION FIRE OF LOVE DIVINE

O LOVE that gave itself for me,
 Help me to love and live like Thee,
 And kindle in this heart of mine
 The passion fire of love divine.

Set all my ransomed powers on fire,
 Give me the love that naught can tire,
 And kindle in this heart of mine
 The living fire of zeal divine.

O Holy Ghost, for Thee I cry,
 Baptize with power from on high,
 And kindle in this heart of mine
 The living fire of power divine.

Help me to pray till all my soul
 Shall move and bend at Thy control,
 And kindle in this heart of mine
 The living fire of prayer divine.

REFRAIN:

O Love divine, O Love divine,
 Revive this languid heart of mine
 And kindle in me from above
 The living fire of heavenly love.¹

RESTING

ONCE my hands were always trying,
 Trying hard to do my best;
 Now my heart is sweetly trusting,
 And my soul is all at rest.

Once my brain was always planning,
 And my heart, with cares oppressed;
 Now I trust the Lord to lead me,
 And my life is all at rest.

Once my life was full of effort,
 Now 'tis full of joy and zest;
 Since I took His yoke upon me
 Jesus gives to me His rest.²

¹ A. B. Simpson, D.D., Songs of the Spirit, Harrisburg, Pa., Publications, Inc., 1920, 79.

² Ibid., 37.

The mystical element in Simpson's writings should have become very evident by now to the reader. However, the researcher in skimming over a dozen of Simpson's books saw no reference to names of traditional writers on mysticism as is the case with Tozer. Simpson does, however, have constant reference to Biblical elements as well as having written books directly on parts of the Bible itself. In other words, Simpson's mysticism has an overwhelming Biblical emphasis.

Tozer himself later wrote a biography of Simpson in which he refers to the God-intoxicated, the mystics of the Kingdom.¹ Simpson is described as an enraptured Christian, preoccupied with the loveliness of Jesus, and brooding over the whole earth with love² because of his concern for reaching the masses, even on distant shores with the message of Christ's love. According to Tozer, Simpson was admittedly a mystic.³

Here, then, is the seed from which Tozer emerged. He entered the ministry of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1919, which was also the year of Simpson's demise at the age of seventy-six. The mystical influence was thus transmitted indirectly

1 A. W. Tozer, Wingspread, A. B. Simpson: A Study in Spiritual Altitude, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1943, 72.

2 Ibid., 116-17.

3 Ibid., 131.

but unmistakably. Repeated interrogation by the researcher of those who knew Tozer as to the source of his interest in mystical literature has produced only vague answers of little relevance. Perhaps through reading Simpson's books or through contact with mystically oriented colleagues, Tozer fed his own mystical tendencies. It is interesting that both men came from isolated rural areas but spent the bulk of their ministry in major metropolitan centers. Perhaps the quiet which the mystic seeks was in part a return to the earlier peace each had known in country life and in sharp contrast to the hurly-burly of the metropolis.

Summary

Thus, it should be apparent that Tozer's mysticism is not an isolated phenomenon, but is compatible with certain, even early tendencies in Protestantism, obscured in much of mainline Protestantism. Mysticism can be regarded as an extension of Pietism, an intensification of its religion of the heart. Tozer is significant, as is Simpson, in being an Evangelical mystic who walked farther on the mystic trail, or at least publicly so, than is characteristic of most Protestants, at least in recent years, especially in the Evangelical wing. The only other continuing Protestant strand of mystical focus is that of the Quakers with their "Inner Light."

Tozer's realm of service was especially in verbal communication--through his books, editorials, sermons, and speeches--all enriched by his vast reading; whereas Simpson's gift was in the initial vision of reaching the lost for Christ, even in the most primitive regions of the earth, and the administrative skills to embody the vision as well as in the communicative skills involved in his books and sermons. Tozer was significant in that he was able to lead the Evangelical world--and a broader readership--to deeper realms of the interior life than had been customary in such circles. Unlike the Catholic contemplative orders--Carmelites, Cistercians--where a long-standing tradition and an enclosed community life with mandatory silence facilitate a practice of the presence of God, it is remarkable that Tozer was able to encourage such amidst the press of secular life in a busy city and with no substantial Protestant tradition to sustain it. Also unusual is the availability of the Christian mystical experience to those with an active family life, unlike the Catholic orders where celibacy is a prerequisite. Tozer, thus, communicated to a wider audience what has usually been for a select few--a pioneering venture. This can be regarded as an extension of the Protestant principle of the priesthood of all believers, whereby the deeper realms of spiritual experience are brought to the attention of laity.

The mainline of Protestantism has emphasized the rational and the ethical, these contributing heavily to its strengths. However, intellect and deed may be regarded as not central to religious life. Attitude and feeling, the inner life, are the fountain from which deed flows. The Western mind with its analytic characteristics¹ is preeminent in its rationalistic skill, which can be helpfully applied for an understanding of the religious experience. Yet it is not a substitute for the experience, which is in part trans-rational or super-rational, or a-rational, non-rational, however one wishes to view it. Tozer is of value in elaborating upon the essential inner dimension, which has been somewhat obscured by the predominant ethicism and rationalism of Protestantism. And of course the inner life is not easy--not easy to follow nor even to grasp. This difficulty is another factor in the hitherto relative unavailability of this type of inner life for Protestants. Tozer has repeatedly declared its importance, issued the call to follow, and indicated the introductory steps.

1 For a discussion of the contrast between the Greek mind and the Hebrew, see Thorleif Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek, trans. by Jules L. Moreau, New York: W. W. Norton, 1960.

CHAPTER III

TOZER AND MYSTICAL THOUGHT, I

Psychosynthesis or "Photosynthesis"? Mysticism--A Brief Consideration of Its Nature and Characteristics

Next is a consideration of mysticism. Before discussing this aspect of Tozer's thought, it is necessary to explore further the nature of the mystical experience, as presented by various theorists and also by those who have walked a distance along the mystic way, having personally experienced some of the phenomena.

There are numerous varieties of mysticism with many variations in detail, yet certain features are fairly constant. Not only is this similarity true of various types of Western Christian mysticism, but these types have characteristics in common with the mysticism of Eastern Christianity and even with the various forms of Oriental mysticism, Hindu and Buddhist. Friedrich Heiler, a Christian writer on prayer, states this parallel:

Although the descriptions of the stages of prayer, their number and their characteristics, vary, yet there is no essential difference between the neo-Platonic, Sufi, Hindu, and Christian

mystics; their basic psychological character is identical even with the stages of absorption in the Yoga and in Buddhism, though in the latter every notion of prayer, that is, communion with God, is excluded.¹

Basically, mysticism is an interior phenomenon operating in the mind and affecting consciousness. It involves a control of thoughts, so as to alter consciousness, states of mind. By retraining attention, it changes awareness. It shifts energy from one locus to another.

In Christianity, the practice of mysticism is regarded as a form of prayer, protracted and with a type of intensity. Eastern Christianity and some Oriental forms typically use a word or phrase constantly repeated. In the Eastern Church the Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner," has been used for centuries. In Hinduism, repetition of a name of God is found. Swami Akhilananda states:

The repetition of the name of God is
helpful in the practice of meditation
... 2

1 Friedrich Heiler, Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion, trans. by Samuel McComb, New York: Oxford University Press, 1952, 194.

2 Swami Akhilananda, Hindu Psychology, Its Meaning for the West, New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1946, 118.

"His [God's] manifesting word is Om."
 "The repetition of this (Om) and meditating on its meaning is the way."²

The constant repetition operates to close the consciousness to external, sense phenomena, and to activate lower levels of the mind, the additional access of energy apparently propelling them into consciousness. That is, there is a relatively constant amount of energy available to the nervous system. That which ordinarily is occupied in processing data from the sense world becomes available for interior processes once the sense processes are temporarily closed off. By means of this additional energy, after a period of time, often years, one level after another gets opened up to consciousness, the process reaching lower and lower levels. Eventually, the Christian mystic may reach the inner core, the ground of the soul, where God as love is said to abide. By the mystic's carefully nurturing contact with this core, it grows in its ability to rise to higher levels and reach consciousness. Johnston states: "This stirring of love . . . will develop into a raging fire, possessing his whole being and governing his whole life."² This mystical

1 Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali, I:27-28, and Works, I, 217-20, cited in Akhilananda, 118.

2 William Johnston, The Still Point, Reflections on Zen and Christian Mysticism, New York: Fordham University Press, 1970, 29.

love permeates the mystic's consciousness, controls his perceptions, and governs his actions in relation to others. Above all, it makes him love God intensely. The goal of the Christian mystic then is to actuate this extraordinary intensity of love so that he becomes like God in his pure lovingness, or, in fusion mysticism, becomes God. The Reality is love, and by love one has contact with Love. It is by experience, not by a mental perception.

Western mystics have less typically used the method of repetition but by devotion or, in the case of the Quietists, by passivity have reached similar results.

However, the way of descent into the unconscious, into the depths of the mind, is by no means easy. Inner resistances have to be overcome. The process requires considerable time for the various shifts to occur. The principal problem, however, is the release to consciousness of elements repressed because of their unsuitability. Unhappy memories, fears, primitive passions, and various horrors must come to the surface of consciousness. The mystic is advised to ignore them as much as possible. Eventually they expend their energy, wither, and die, freeing the mystic from their domination, previously hidden. The mystic's whole-hearted concentration on God and his knowing that God loves him help him from

becoming sidetracked by these experiences; his trust in God enables him to bear up under them in the hope that liberation from their power will come.

The net effect of this rising to consciousness of the repressed is a catharsis or purification of the personality. The mystic traverses these dark realms, freeing himself from them, and thus hopefully reaches the golden shore of pure love. Here, in a state of spirit where words and images no longer exist, he experiences an identity with God in the case of fusion mysticism, or a Christ-likeness in the case of typical Christian mystics.

Thus, there is a psychosynthesis,¹ a merging of the unconscious with the conscious, so as to effect a liberation and purification. But in addition there is a synthesis in light. The personality has now been purged of the dark. The new synthesis is one of light. The light in the ground of the soul has been brought out and dominates the personality of the mystic. Light governs his perceptions. He is able to see God as omnipresent in the universe. He sees the radiance suffusing things. He sees the good in a situation. He sees the presence of love abounding. And seeing the light, he himself is able to radiate light also. He is in love with the whole world.

1 Nicholas Berdyaev, Spirit and Reality, trans. by George Reavey, London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1939, 160.

The psalmist points out this seeing of Light:

In Thy Light do we see Light.¹
 Psalm 36:9

Maloney also indicates the role of light:

Man begins to experience God not through knowledge where the mind looks at God through the medium of a mental picture but through God's pervading presence as light.²

Not only is the result a synthesis into light, but there is an analogy between the mystical process and the process of photosynthesis in the plant world. In the latter, there is a synthesis of a new compound with the aid of light. In the mystical experience, there is a synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements into a new compound, occurring with the aid of the light of the Holy Spirit. Underhill states this process in the following ways:

. . . the coming forth into consciousness of man's deeper, spiritual self . . . must be evoked by an energy, a quickening Spirit which comes from beyond the soul . . .³

That is, "those deeper layers of personality . . . are fused with the surface personality by . . . transcendent love."⁴ Further, as sunlight purifies

1 Unless otherwise indicated, all Biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

2 George A. Maloney, The Breath of the Mystic, Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1974, 67.

3 Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, 1911, New York: Meridian, 1955, 122.

4 Ibid., 366.

what it touches, so the light of the Spirit has a purifying effect on the soul. Moreover, as the plant process of photosynthesis produces a substance which is food and can sustain life, so the mystic process of photosynthesis, synthesis into light, produces a personality which can be nutritive to others, which by its givingness enhances the life of others.

This development can be expressed in another way. In the mystic process, the self, the ego must die. One's own will, personal desires, must be replaced by a complete acceptance of the will of God. The past must be expunged. A purification of memory is necessary. The remedy lies in forgetting. Only God must be in the focus of one's mind. This seeing of God in the mind's eye is called contemplation. Eventually, as the mystic is transformed into Christ-likeness, Christ sees through his eyes.¹ And the mystic sees the world as in Christ.

This inner transformation is accompanied by an outer transformation. That is, the change in the mystic's personality produces a change in his reactions to the outer world and thus a change in his experience of the universe. His changed reactions evoke a different type of reaction from others, giving him a change in his experience of them. As Goleman

¹ Johnston, 147.

observes, " . . . his external reality flows from his internal universe. . . . "¹ Thus, while the mystic undergoes a temporary withdrawal from the world, this is not a flight from the world, but leads to a transformation of the world.

Some additional observations may be made. The essence of meditation is attitude, not technique.² While the technique may facilitate, basic to the meditational experience is an attitude of offering least resistance to God.

Grace, infusion, the supernatural are believed to operate in Christian mystics and to contribute substantially to the results achieved. Nevertheless, the experiential stages are mediated through the neurological apparatus. If the mystic process were but a purely psychological phenomenon, however, it would not be likely to attain the lofty, supernal heights which, it is believed, supernatural grace enables.

As the presence of love evokes joy, and the mystical experience generates an intensity of love, there may be an intensity of joy, an ecstasy. Robert E. Ornstein, a physiologist sees the process as an attempt

1 Daniel Goleman, The Varieties of the Meditative Experience, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977, 37.

2 Claudio Naranjo, "Meditation: Its Spirit and Techniques," Claudio Naranjo and Robert E. Ornstein, On The Psychology of Meditation, New York: The Viking Press, 1971, 72.

. . . to detach the effect--the resultant internal state--from the usual cause, the stimulus object. The person works then within himself to attempt to generate the internal state directly.¹

. . . detachment and concentration on these internal centers can be considered as an attempt to stimulate internally the structures that are usually associated with the experiences of dishabituation, pleasure, etc. We can consider the process as learning to stimulate the "reward" circuits of the brain.²

That is, one learns to generate one's joys internally and from God, rather than from the outside world where an attempt to secure them might produce negative side effects. The mystical methods are free from such side effects.

The joy, the ecstasy, has in the mystic the effect of unifying aspects of his personality. Intense concentration of energy operates as a powerful force when it is discharged along a particular path, for there is a concentrating of energy onto the ideas or elements being focused on and a fusing of them.³

However, the mystic has a price to pay for his joys. He must undergo the Dark Night of the Soul and its multiplicity of tribulations. He must learn to

1 Robert E. Ornstein, "The Techniques of Meditation and Their Implications for Modern Psychology," Naranjo and Ornstein, 208.

2 Ibid., 209.

3 Underhill, 363-79.

accept pain rather than repress or avoid it. He must regard it as a cross to be borne. Nevertheless, mystics are incurable optimists.

According to Jim Finley, a "novice" at Gethsemani Monastery under Thomas Merton for two and a half years, the mystic sees all things as they really are--as in God.¹ He becomes conscious only of the presence of God. Evil has an unreality. One is liberated from a concentration on oneself.²

A Hindu writer asserts:

Behind the mind of which we are aware is a subtle, spiritual mind, existing in seed-form. Through contemplation, prayer, and japam [repetition of the name of God], this mind develops and with its unfoldment a new vision opens.³

A noted psychologist observes that in letting imagery unfold without conscious interference a certain progression may be noted:

. . . [People may] notice a gradual shift in the quality of their imagination. While not unlike habitual daydreams at first, their productions will tend to resemble more and more those of the natural dream in their spontaneity and apparently irrational quality. Finally, as this level is also left behind, fantasies of a mythical quality, reflecting the archetypal level of the mind, become more prominent.⁴

1 Jim Finley, Conference on Thomas Merton, Chicago Theological Seminary, February 24, 1979.

2 Ibid.

3 Akhilananda, 154.

4 Naranjo, Naranjo and Ornstein, 116.

Recent study has indicated that deep meditation produces changes in the electrical activity of the brain.¹ Of the four principal types of brain waves, Alpha is associated with advanced meditation and mysticism. It is of a lower frequency (eight to twelve cycles per second) than Beta (thirteen or more cycles) which is most common in waking hours. Alpha is generally found in a state of relaxed awareness.² Alpha can be of high or low amplitude (voltage strength of impulse). High amplitude alpha brain waves are associated with mysticism.

The mystic way of the Western Christian mystic typically involves several stages: 1) Purgation, in which the self is detached from things of sense and acquires virtues which, as Evelyn Underhill expresses it, are the ornaments of the spiritual marriage;³ 2) Illumination, which brings a sense of the Divine Presence, a state of happiness; 3) the Dark Night of the Soul, in which there is a sense of Divine absence and in which there is a purification of the self; and 4) Union, in which the Divine Presence is not merely perceived, but the Self is one with it.

1 William Johnston, Silent Music, The Science of Meditation, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974, 23.

2 Ibid., 33.

3 Underhill, 169.

Oriental mysticism has a further stage, annihilation or reabsorption of the individual soul into the Infinite, a loss of self. This is not normative in European mysticism, where the individual soul retains an identity, a transformed identity. Fusion mysticism, as in Meister Eckhart, is an aberration in Biblically-based mysticism, where, as Martin Buber indicates, God is God and man is always man. Buber states that in mystical ecstasy, the relationship of the most intimate reciprocity remains a relationship, for unshaken is the relation to a being, which can not be identified with our being:¹ "Never, in the eyes of the soul has this God become to such an extent its God, the God of the soul, that He would cease to be the God of Sinai."²

Also, European mysticism generally aims at a return to activity, bodily and intellectual--to work, for others.³ Western mysticism, thus, is an activist mysticism.

Differences between the Eastern and Western forms of Christian mysticism can be considered. Vladimir Lossky attempts to explain certain aspects of Eastern spirituality, the nature of the personal

1 Martin Buber, Hasidism, New York: Philosophical Library, 1948, 199.

2 Ibid.

3 Underhill, 169-71.

experience of the divine mysteries. He contrasts two ways to sanctity: in the West, through the cross; in the East, through the light of the Transfiguration.¹ He cites St. Isaac the Syrian who distinguished three stages in the way of mystical union: penitence, purification, and perfection. The way of the imitation of Christ is never practiced in the spiritual life of the Eastern Church. For Eastern spirituality, conformity to Christ occurs through the grace which is given by the Holy Spirit.² Thus, Lossky has indicated the distinctive aspects of mysticism in the Eastern Church in contrast to that in the Western Church: the Dark Night of the Soul, the "cross" experience of Christ, is found only in Western mysticism.

However, a monk of the Eastern Church states that the Dark night is mentioned in the tradition of the Orthodox Church, though in a less precise and less technical manner, for Eastern spirituality has not much emphasized the night of the soul.³ He also

1 Vladimir Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church, 1944, trans. by Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, London: James Clark & Co. Ltd., 1957, 227.

2 Ibid., 243.

3 A Monk of the Eastern Church, Orthodox Spirituality, An Outline of the Orthodox Ascetical and Mystical Tradition, Published for The Fellowship of SS. Alban and Sergius, London: S.P.C.K., 1945, 54-55.

points out that the Orthodox think that the first duty of man is to achieve the kingdom of God in his own soul.¹

Nicholas Berdyaev, a prolific twentieth century Russian writer, observes that Eastern mysticism has as its object of contemplation not the humanity, but the divinity of Christ.² God is the love permeating men.³ Berdyaev also points out that the relation between spirit and soul is that spirit is the highest quality of the soul.⁴

Hesychasm in the Orthodox Church is comparable to the school of Spanish mystics in the sixteenth century. The four main characteristics of the hesychastic method are 1) striving toward total rest or quiet, 2) repetition of the Jesus Prayer, 3) concentrating the mind by various practices, and 4) feeling an inner warmth and perceiving a light.⁵ A strict and permanent control of the imagination is insisted on.⁶

The principal contrast between Eastern and Western Christianity can be stated:

1 Ibid., 16.

2 Berdyaev, 157.

3 Ibid., 158.

4 Ibid., 39.

5 A Monk, 19-20.

6 Ibid., 52.

. . . emphasis on the luminous is perhaps what most strikingly differentiates the Christian East from the Christian West.¹

Tozer's Mystical Thought--
General Characteristics

Mysticism as it relates to Tozer's works will next be discussed. First, the nature of Tozer's thought in general as well as its mode of expression will be examined.

Education and Reading

Though of a very limited formal education, Tozer was unusual in the breadth and amount of his reading. Being a preacher rather than a pastor, his time was less encumbered with the usual ministerial responsibilities and more time was available for study. In contrast to many whose reading lies heavily within denominational boundaries, Tozer read greatly outside standard evangelical materials. Quality, not just the customary, attracted him. And yet the fruit of this wide reading was fitted into his evangelical framework. He did not depart significantly from this orientation. Not only Western culture, but the Church Fathers, still important today in the Eastern, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and other churches, interested him.

In addition to his reading in religious classics, Tozer had a deep love for literature, especially

¹ Ibid., 102.

poetry, memorizing much. Not only did this enrich his mind, but in his early youth it purified his thought and expression, continuing to contribute so in later years, according to a friend who knew him.¹ Hymnody was also a major interest. Not only Western literature attracted him, for he even memorized Indian poetry.² Russian writers also appealed to Tozer.³ Though Tozer read in philosophy and especially liked Schopenhauer,⁴ his primary orientation was experiential not intellectual. That is, the vision of God, not theological quibbles, fascinated him.

Thus, Tozer is considerably broader in his intellectual contacts than the researcher had earlier supposed. However, since Tozer knew no foreign languages (though he was able to work with a lexicon in reference to Biblical passages), his extensive reading always involved English translations. A very occasional reference in his writings to the world of Eastern Christianity and of the Oriental mind reflects an interest in and some degree of familiarity with these modes of thought.

1 Telephone interview with J. Francis Chase, Orland Park, Illinois, June 21, 1979.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

Simplicity

Another salient characteristic of Tozer is his simplicity, though not a simpleness. This perhaps reflects an education unencumbered with intellectual appurtenances. Since Tozer had only five grades of formal schooling, he was not forced to learn much material not really relevant to his subsequent mystical focus, leaving a greater freedom to his mind to develop in a manner congenial to its own natural bent. His mind was less conditioned into certain molds or modes of thought customary amongst highly educated, rationalistic Western minds. Also, Tozer's simplicity of style perhaps reflects the mystical focus on simplicity, one-pointedness of thought. In any case, Tozer's thought is presented with an unusual clarity and directness. Somewhat reminiscent of the eighteenth century neo-classics, Tozer's style is sparse, laconic, unadorned, but lucid; elegance and the flourish of Romanticism are not there. The verbal brilliance and exuberance of a Thomas Merton, his contemporary in American mysticism, are in sharp contrast. Instead, a mildly castigating tone directed at shallow, lethargic Christians is frequently evident. A calmness in his expression perhaps reflects a mystic inner calm. Experimental, innovative structures often found in twentieth-century writing do not occur in Tozer, for his conservative bent manifests

itself in an essential adherence to turn-of-the-century, traditionally-styled prose. His diction, within the range of the average man, tends toward the abstract rather than the metaphorical or analogical mode of expression. Imagistic usages are not much in evidence. The passion and charm of a poetical type, such as Suso, are not evident in Tozer's writing, nor the force and vigor of John of the Cross. Yet his sentences have a rhythm and a balance in their structure, perhaps reflecting his feeling for the poetic. Verbal ornamentation such as alliteration is rare. Primary always is a concern for the message; words are but the instrumentality and must not overshadow the spiritual.

Orthodoxy, but Not Provinciality

In spite of the breadth of Tozer's thought, it has an essential evangelical orthodoxy. It does not depart significantly from basic Evangelical positions.

Yet as provinciality is absent from his thought, it is absent from his expression. Evangelical "lingo" is eschewed in favor of a broader applicability.

Approach to God--Tozer's Mysticism: General Characteristics

Having examined some general characteristics of Tozer's thought as well as its expression, this study next will make some general observations about Tozer's

approach to God and the nature of his mysticism. Consideration will now be given to characteristics which are features commonly found in the world of the Fundamentalist Evangelical and also to those rare therein. Aspects often found in Roman Catholic mysticism, but not in Tozer will be examined briefly.

Fundamentalist Evangelical

Markedly Evangelical, both denominationally and theologically, Tozer has distinct Evangelical characteristics in his mysticism. First, as the Bible is primary in the Evangelical world and traditionally has been so in Protestantism, it is hardly surprising that Evangelical mysticism has a powerful Biblical orientation, or rather a Biblical control, for nothing is acceptable unless it can be found to be warranted by a Biblical passage. Tozer always insisted that the intuitive must be backed up with Scripture. If he had a vision of an angel, he wouldn't believe it unless it were verified in the Bible.¹

A verse that served as a theme for Tozer, as it did for Simpson, was "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:27. David Linge has observed:

¹ Personal interview with Dr. Robert W. Battles, Nyack, New York, August 30, 1978.

Today we have largely lost our ear for the strikingly mystical quality of a host of biblical passages but their confirmation of mystical expectations was hardly lost on medieval hearers of the Word.¹

The researcher has selected certain Biblical passages that definitely have a meaning quite consistent with mysticism:

The importance of the interior elements is shown.

God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Phil. 2:13

The kingdom of God is within you. Luke 17:21 (alternate reading)

"What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man." Mark 7:20-23

Methods of prayer are given.

"But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Matthew 6:6

"Be still and know that I am God," Ps. 46:10

We take every thought captive and make it obey Christ. II Cor. 10:5 (Today's English Version)

Pray constantly. I Thess. 5:17

Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. Eph. 6:18

¹ David E. Linge, "Mysticism, Poverty and Reason in the Thought of Meister Eckhart," Journal of the American Academy of Religion, December, 1978, 46:4, 467.

The role of Jesus in the interior experience is indicated.

Looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Heb.: 12:2

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus. Phil. 2:5

For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. Eph. 2:18

Worship must be in spirit and truth.

The true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. John 4:23-24

The relation between the love through the Son with the Father is indicated.

He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. John 14:21

As we try to be put right with God by our union with Christ. Gal. 2:17 (Today's English Version)

Some are blind.

If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. II Cor. 4:3-4

Results are indicated.

If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation (alternate reading, creature). II Cor. 5:17

Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened. Eph. 1:18

Who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. II Cor. 4:6

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:7

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. I Tim. 4:4-5

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows--and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. II Cor. 12:2-4

And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. II Cor. 12:7-9

Christ is speaking in me. II Cor. 13:3

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. Gal. 2:20¹

Tozer's mysticism was firmly rooted in Scripture.

In his Harper and Row publication, The Knowledge of Holy, a list is given of the sources of Biblical quotations used. There are fifty-eight listed. The

¹ For further discussion of mysticism in the New Testament, see Margaret Smith, An Introduction to Mysticism, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, 25-33.

devotional classic, The Pursuit of God, written on a train trip from Chicago to Texas with but a Bible at hand,¹ uses a Bible verse to open each chapter. Rev. Clifford Westergren, director of the Alliance Press in Hongkong, spent several years as a youth in Tozer's church. He stated that Tozer's Biblical discipline is the key to why Tozer avoided other mystical traditions,² which are characterized by sharp separation from the world and the use of verbal repetition as a means of closing of the mind. Further, Tozer would feel that one could cleanse one's unconscious by the Word, letting it sink into one's mind.

However, a Biblical orientation to Christian mysticism is by no means restricted to the Evangelicals. Raymond Bailey, a Baptist writing on Thomas Merton, Tozer's Catholic mystical contemporary, cites Merton's statement that in his later years he would have relied less on the Scholastics and more on the Scriptures and the Fathers.³ Merton himself said:

The main thing is to establish contact with God by loving faith. This implies at least enough awareness for the mind to be alive to the presence of God,

1 J. Francis Chase, write-up of a tape to Dr. Battles; Chase, interview.

2 Personal interview with Clifford Westergren, Nyack, New York, September 1, 1978.

3 Raymond Bailey, Thomas Merton on Mysticism, Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1976, 157.

and to the nearness of Jesus to our souls, and whatever keeps that awareness fresh in our hearts must be sought and encouraged. Hence, we must love the Holy Scriptures, and read them assiduously.¹

A second Evangelical factor in Tozer's approach to God is its Christological character. The motto is "Christ in me." In many of the Catholic mystics, the relationship is to God the Father. In the Pentecostals, the emphasis is on the Holy Spirit.

A third distinctive characteristic of Tozer's mysticism is its marked moral orientation, again a pronounced Protestant feature. In The Knowledge of the Holy Tozer indicated six conditions for attaining to knowledge of the holy God. The first is that we must forsake our sins.² Tozer states in Of God and Man:

If redemption is a moral restoration to the divine image (and it must be that ultimately), then we may expect one of the first acts of God in the Christian's life to be a kind of moral tuning-up . . .³

Cultivation of virtues is, to be sure, customary in the early stages of the mystical pilgrimage. Tozer observes that when the Holy Spirit invades the human

1 Thomas Merton, What Are These Wounds? The Life of a Cistercian Mystic, Saint Lutgarde of Aywières, Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1950, 95.

2 A. W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1961, 122.

3 A. W. Tozer, Of God and Men, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1960, 66.

heart, only "moral evil is forced to withdraw";¹ and "The Holy Spirit is first of all a moral flame."² Tozer points out that Christianity is an invasion from above, bringing a moral potency so as to meet the moral need.³ He states that " . . . God's first concern for His universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness."⁴

A fourth characteristic of Tozer's approach to God is a common feature of Evangelicalism: the tension between living in the world and yet not being of the world. Unlike the cloistered Catholic orders of silent celibates, Evangelicals carry on occupations in the secular world. The pressure is toward marrying and raising a family, rather than avoiding such. However, the restriction on worldly amusements operates to effect a substantial social separation. Customary is a proscription of smoking, drinking, and dancing. Card-playing, gambling, movies, the theater, and in the 1950's even television were to be avoided. In ministerial homes today, television still is not likely to have a major role. Of course, the use of drugs is hardly viewed

1 A. W. Tozer, The Divine Conquest, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1950, 69.

2 Ibid., 99.

3 Ibid., 88.

4 A. W. Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1966, 110.

sympathetically. Pleasing but rather conservative dress for women is another element differentiating socially.

Also, the church is a focus of much of the members' social life, and related religious institutions, such as colleges and church camps, provide for other needs. In some areas Evangelically operated grade schools and high schools are available. Certain communities attract a substantial percentage of Evangelicals so that there often is a geographical concentration.

Thus, by means of these various social mechanisms, the devout Evangelical has rather limited contacts with "outsiders." He "lives" in a religious community. However, in the 1970's with increasing mobility and shifting of the population, the aggregation in vast megalopolises, working wives and the increasing need to relax via an "easy" means such as television, and intensified peer pressure on "teenagers," many of these older restrictions are giving way somewhat, especially among the young.

The purpose of these various regulations, however, was not primarily social separation, but rather separation in spirit from the worldly. Contact with the "unsaved" so as to reach them for Christ was constantly stressed.

Tozer in his personal life especially evidenced

this combination of "in and out" in reference to the world. He married at the age of twenty-one, producing six sons and then, after an interval of nine years, a daughter. He read a newspaper daily.¹ He regularly rode public transportation four miles between his office and home. He thus had human affectional relationships, knowledge of outside events, and travel time regularly. However, interviews with many who knew him indicate he spent a good deal of his time alone, in prayer and study. He did not socialize much. Also indicated is that he had a certain degree of detachment from personal contact. For example, at the end of a church service, he did not stand at the door to greet departing worshippers, a frequent practice by other clergy. Nor did he go into the prayer room to deal with those who responded to an altar-call. Instead he had layment, elders, take care of these responsibilities.² For when he came to the Southside Church it was with the understanding he would be a preacher, not a pastor. His Minister of Music, Rev. Raymond McAfee, took on most of the responsibility for visitation and weddings, etc., and occasionally a youth minister was hired to work with the young people.

1 Telephone interview with Rev. Stanley Tozer, Palatine, Illinois, February 20, 1979.

2 Westergren, interview.

It seems that in his relation with his family members there was a certain psychological distance, as though God took priority over them. His youngest son, Rev. Stanley Tozer, presently a pastor of a Presbyterian church in Palatine, Illinois, a suburb northwest of Chicago, remarked that Tozer's oldest son had commented that Tozer was a monk in a hair-shirt in the way he related to his family. Stanley Tozer observed that Tozer psychologically distanced himself from most human contacts--he was there and he wasn't there; that Tozer didn't understand people who needed human relationships. Stanley Tozer's view was that for Tozer his family members were not a significant part of his life, that it was easier for him to love God than men.¹ Stanley Tozer was educated at the nearby University of Chicago Divinity School, a highly intellectualized and liberal institution. Undoubtedly, this would be at variance with his father's devotional and conservative orientation. To the researcher Stanley Tozer appeared to be making a marked effort to be fair to his father's memory, stating that he did not wish either to idolize or to defame him. However, his views as stated above may have been colored by his liberal, intellectualized attitude.

¹ Stanley Tozer, interview.

The researcher has interviewed several of Tozer's "spiritual" children, brought up under his ministry and permanently influenced by it: Rev. Clifford Westergren; Mrs. Louis King, wife of the President of The Christian and Missionary Alliance; and Rev. David Moore--all three have spent time on the foreign mission field of The C&MA. Dr. Robert Battles, presently Secretary of The C&MA, regards Tozer as a "spiritual father." While there may be some question as to the degree of effectiveness of Tozer's relating to his physical children, there is no question that he generated spiritual offspring of substantial significance. This, of course, is not even considering those produced through other contacts, such as his writing.

Another son, Wendell Tozer, discussed the matter of separation from the world in the following way:

They were to be a people apart. Worldliness was considered sin; it could be defined as anything not focusing on godliness. Some degree of worldliness was necessary in regard to the things one must do to exist, such as working at a job, taking a train, but such activities should be completely bathed in prayer, in communion.¹

Tozer rode to the Southside Church an hour a day on the street car, but never considered it boring, for he was either praying or reading.²

1 Telephone interview with Wendell Tozer, Winnetka, Illinois, February 25, 1979.

2 Ibid.

One more characteristic of Tozer's approach to God may be mentioned that perhaps can be said to be typical of Evangelicalism, at least in the white churches in the northern United States during his time. Tozer's emphasis is on the experiential, the actual knowing of God, the devotional aspect, a religion of the heart. Yet in contrast to the writings of some of the Latinate mystics--Italian, Spanish, for example--or of the Sufis, Tozer being of an utterly different temperament with his English and German ancestry is rather the reflective type, not the exuberant, enthusiastic, passionate. While the love may be there, it is not manifest in conspicuous displays. That is, there is not a vivid emotionalism, but a more cold, sober tone, fitting perhaps the temperament of those of north European ancestry who predominated in northern, white Evangelical churches, during that era, certainly in Tozer's own church.

However, Tozer was probably somewhat ahead of his time in his emphasis on the Spirit. Then, the Evangelical church laid heavy stress on the person of Christ and the necessity for emulating Him. The researcher recalls hearing a sermon at Moody Memorial Church, Chicago, Illinois, in the late 1950's explaining what the third person of the Trinity was--not an It, but a He, a person to whom one could pray.

In other words, at even a leading, world-famous Evangelical church it was necessary then to instruct the congregation on the nature of the Holy Spirit. In the 1960's and 1970's the sharp rise of Pentecostalism has brought increasing awareness of the Spirit.

To be sure, in the earlier part of the twentieth century a considerable number of Alliance congregations defected to Pentecostalism. A. B. Simpson, however, could not condone speaking in tongues as the necessary sign of the Spirit.

Non-Evangelical

The next consideration is of ways that Tozer's approach departs in some degree from customary Evangelical elements. The most conspicuous is his constant reference to the Catholic mystics. In a period when ecumenicity was rare, especially in the socially separatist Evangelical circles, transcending the boundary between Catholic and Protestant was indeed extraordinary. However, the contact was only through books, not on the social level.

The researcher has repeatedly questioned members of Tozer's congregation about people's reactions to his mentioning various Catholic writers. They all indicate a bland acceptance. Tozer tactfully minimized use of titles, such as saint, sister, bishop,

etc., though he repeatedly passed out Brother Lawrence's little book to individuals interested in the deeper spiritual life. In his writings, however, Tozer frequently referred to Brother Lawrence by his secular name of Nicholas Herman so as to mitigate any possible antipathy. The list in Fant's biography of "Dr. Tozer's Recommended Books" avoids all use of titles except in the case of Brother Lawrence and St. Augustine.

Since the Evangelical churches aim at a return to the New Testament type of church, references to the writings of the Church Fathers would seem to be more appropriate than those of the medieval Roman church and more readily acceptable. Tozer liked both and freely referred to both.

Tozer's congregation undoubtedly appreciated his ministry to such an extent that they were quite willing to accept the innovation of references to Catholic mystics.

Another aspect of Tozer's approach which does not seem fully in line with standard Evangelical practice concerns content of prayer. Extensively used in Eastern Christianity and also used in Oriental mysticism is the practice of verbal repetition, The Jesus Prayer by the Eastern Orthodox, and "OM" by some in India. In The Knowledge of the Holy, Tozer recommends practicing "the art of long and loving

meditation upon the majesty of God,"¹ but he does not suggest any verbal technique. Those who knew him suggest that he spurned anything "gimmicky" as artificial. Thus, it is significant that toward the end of Chapter One in The Pursuit of God he quotes from the medieval English mystical classic, The Cloud of Unknowing:

If we would have religion "lapped and folden in one word, for that thou shouldst have better hold thereupon, take thee but a little word of one syllable: for so it is better than of two, for even the shorter it is the better it accordeth with the work of the Spirit. And such a word is this word GOD or this word LOVE."²

However, Tozer does not specifically suggest the repeating or chanting of such a word. Perhaps he was wise enough to be aware of the serious psychological dangers attending the use of repetition by the immature and the unsupervised. There is no indication whatsoever of any reference to the use of breathing exercises, for a long time basic to the use of the Jesus Prayer in the Eastern Church, and also extensively used in the Orient.

Another aspect of Tozer's thought which is not typical of Evangelicals is an orientation towards Quietism. A Jesuit explains Quietism in the following way:

1 Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, 123.

2 A. W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1949, 19.

. . . a doctrine of Christian perfection which disturbed the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in Italy and France, in the 17th century and was condemned as a heresy. Quietism, in general, holds that perfection consists in passivity (quiet) of the soul, in the suppression of human effort so that divine action may have full play. Quietistic elements have been discerned . . . even in certain doctrines of Martin Luther. But Quietism is, strictly speaking, the doctrine of Miguel de Molinos . . . [who holds that the] . . . soul remains in dark faith, excludes all definite thought, and abstains from all interior action.¹

Molinos' system was officially condemned by the Catholic Church in 1687; subsequently, a milder form of Quietism appeared in France, propagated by Mme. Guyon. She gained the support of Fénelon, who developed a doctrine of pure love sometimes called Semi-Quietism, which was condemned by the Pope in 1699.²

Another writer discusses the subsequent history of Quietism:

From the opening of the 18th cent. Protestant mysticism in Europe, especially in England and Holland, was strongly influenced by Quietism as expressed in the works of Molinos, Mme. Guyon, and Fénelon. This Quietistic influence is most noticeable in the ministers and leaders of the Society of Friends (the Quakers) of that century, who greatly admired the writings of this group of mystics.³

1 Rev. Edward A. Ryan, S.J., "Quietism," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1969 ed., 18, 963.

2 Ibid., 964.

3 Rufus M. Jones, "Mysticism (Christian, Protestant)," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 9, 102-3.

The closing years of the 19th and the opening years of the 20th centuries have been marked by a wide-spread popular revival of mysticism among Protestant denominations . . . ¹

Quietism in contrast to other forms of mysticism, then, does not advocate mental activity even in the early stages, but rather a passivity: self action must be suppressed to allow free play to divine action.

Tozer's works abound with references to the Quietists. His long-time friend, Harry Verploegh, stated that Tozer liked Madame Guyon, Thomas á Kempis, and Brother Lawrence.²

The Quietistic orientation can be regarded as in line with the freedom and individualism found in Free Church polity in that rigid modes of procedure are not imposed upon the Soul, but it can open itself freely and completely to the influence of God.

Perhaps the interest in the Quietistic approach may explain Tozer's absence of reference to the Jesus Prayer and other aspects of Eastern Orthodoxy even though he liked Patristic literature, much of which is from the same area though earlier in time. The active use of verbal repetition, customary with the Jesus Prayer, would contrast with Quietist passivity.

¹ Ibid., 9, 103.

² Telephone interview with Harry Verploegh, Wheaton, Illinois, March 22, 1979.

It is rather surprising that as ecumenical a mystic as Tozer should have ignored mystical masterpieces of Eastern Christianity such as the Philokalia and The Way of A Pilgrim. However, the interest in such works and in ecumenical relationships with the present-day Eastern Christian Church emerged somewhat after Tozer's formative period.

One might ask how a Quietistic interest relates to the use in prayer of a word of one syllable as previously cited from The Cloud of Unknowing. Tozer, however, is not a theologian, but interested in the experiential. Perhaps for novices unsupported by an established system, and not provided with a Spiritual Director, he felt it wisest not to advocate publicly methods of verbal repetition which could lead to unwise results even though he might personally have been aware of their utility, through his own experience or that of others encountered in their books or personally.¹

Contrast with Some Characteristics of Catholic Mystics

Characteristics of Tozer's mystical approach to God can be contrasted with those often found in Catholic mysticism.

Typical in "free" churches is the absence of

¹ The matter of Quietistic influence will be discussed further in Chapter V.

liturgy and sacraments. Tozer's spirituality thus is not focused around these elements. Instead of the Eucharist, the Evangelical churches have the Lord's Supper, usually once a month. The Divine Office, the chanting at prescribed times during each day, is not part of Evangelical practices. Also, the cycle of events in the church year, other than major events such as Christmas and Easter, was not a means for crystallizing Tozer's spirituality.

Psychophysical phenomena, sometimes found along with the mystical orientation, are visions, ecstasies, stigmata, a sweat of blood, miracles, levitation, etc. There is absolutely no evidence in Tozer's books of such. With the dominance of the scientific mind in twentieth century America, it is not likely that Tozer would have found palatable anything obviously at variance in view of the absence of such phenomena from the Protestant tradition. Tozer was not a stigmatic: he did not have a stigma, a mystical wound in the heart, or an actual wound in the hands and feet emitting blood. There is no evidence of love of martyrdom, though Tozer speaks of the necessity of the cross and frequently refers to the Dark Night of the Soul. Tozer was ascetical to a degree, but did not seek suffering. He was unlike the Cistercians, where a cross in their life is the absence of human consolation, necessitating a walk

in pure faith, depending entirely and blindly on God; no natural relaxation, no recreations, no amusements, no diversions existed.¹ There is no escapist reading, no escapist conversation.² One is not to be chained to the past, via its residues in one's unconscious. Nor is one to condemn the present and live in the future. Instead one must be fully present, present to the present, fully aware.

Tozer allowed himself but little of the escapist. He hardly ever took a vacation, had very little social life. He did occasionally play a bit of golf, as his friend Harry Verploegh mentions.³ He liked rather plain food, but always remained slender, not overeating. He did not use food as a substitute for other gratifications. He condemned frivolity, fun, and entertainment, especially if found in the churches. The superficial and trivial he eschewed. As a Catholic seminarian asked the researcher recently in reference to her heavy schedule, "What do you do to relax?" Tozer might perhaps have been expected to reply, "I relax in the Lord."

1 Merton, 82.

2 Finley, conference.

3 Verploegh, interview.

Summary

Tozer's ascent to God and the consciousness of Him was especially fostered by a sense of the grandeur of God. He frequently castigated Evangelicals for having too low a conception of God. Adoration of Him should be contrasted with humbling of one's self, personal abasement. Tozer's awareness of God's mighty power must have been intensified by the knowledge that God had taken him, a simple, country boy with but a fifth-grade education, and raised him to a national editorship, two honorary doctorates, and numerous books, including one published by the prestigious Harper and Row.

The guidance of God's Spirit and the Bible were Tozer's mainstays on the road to God--Christ in him. This, however, did not result in complete absorption in the divine to the extent of losing his own personality or his essential role in the world. Tozer continued as a husband and father and as a preacher and writer. He believed in the sacramental quality of everyday living.¹

¹ Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 126.

CHAPTER IV

TOZER AND MYSTICAL THOUGHT, II

For what is a man but his thoughts and
his loves?

Walter Hilton,
The Scale of Perfection¹

Take Jesu in thy thinking, His love He
will thee send.

Richard Rolle, Hymn²

Having just examined some of the general characteristics of mystic spirituality and of Tozer's mode of relation to God, this study will next present a more detailed examination of Tozer's work especially in relation to the thirty-five works on the list, "Dr. Tozer's Recommended Books."³ The objective is further to elucidate Tozer's emphases and also to indicate somewhat the parallels as well as contrasts which exist with the recommended works. Both methods used in the mystical process and results obtained will be examined.

1 Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, ed. and with an Introduction by Evelyn Underhill, London: John M. Watkins, 1948, 211.

2 Cited in Richard Rolle, The Amending of Life, A.P., ed., trans. by Richard Misyn, London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1927, v.

3 See "Appendix A," 228.

Tozer's penchant for being alone with God was evident fairly early in his career. In 1925, less than six years after having entered the ministry and at the age of twenty-seven, he published an article advocating "constant and habitual waiting upon God in the secret chamber" and "loving to be alone with God."¹ He stated that by two wings "we are lifted heavenward--the study of the Word and prayer."² Thus, a predilection for the mystical was already established early in Tozer's professional life.

However, it was not until after almost thirty years in the ministry that the major part of Tozer's writing, other than his biographical works, began coming out. His basic position had evidently crystallized long before that, especially as the direction had been set by the founder of The C&MA, A. B. Simpson, whose life overlapped somewhat with Tozer's. The biographical works, Wingspread and Let My People Go, The Life of Robert A. Jaffray, appeared in the 1940's, the former in 1943 and the latter in 1947. His first devotional book, The Pursuit of God, appeared in 1948. Tozer's editorship commenced in 1950. Thus, the bulk of his publications occurred in the last fifteen years of his life

1 Rev. A. W. Tozer, "Making Good in the Christian Life," The Light of Life, January, 1925, 1:1, 3.

2 Ibid.

after he had passed the age of fifty. Consequently, it is not surprising that Tozer's writings do not indicate any significant shift in his thought. Possibly an examination of his sermons might indicate some minor modifications over the years. The sermons, however, are beyond the scope of this research.

The List of Recommended Books

From the list of thirty-five books and from reading Tozer's writings, the researcher had earlier presumed that Tozer's range of intellectual contacts in reference to religion was that of Western Christianity and of Patristic writings. Though, as indicated previously, his range of interest is substantially broader than that represented by the thirty-five works, nevertheless, this research is primarily confined to a consideration of the thirty-five.

The researcher earlier had wondered at the congregation's accepting its preacher's repeated references to Catholic mystics. Since they were presented tactfully and as the congregation strongly revered Dr. Tozer, one can understand how such acceptance was generated, especially as A. B. Simpson had also made similar though much less frequent references. But it is much more difficult to understand how a published work directed at a larger audience could also command such an acceptability.

Since all of Tozer's editorials and almost all his books were issued under denominational auspices, they thus carried a certain weight of authority from denominational backing. Numerous short articles appeared in various Evangelical publications, which presumably would have had editorial approval.

It is interesting to note that the list of thirty-five works was not published by Tozer himself during his lifetime, but was placed at the end of the biographical memoir published a year after his death by his friend and colleague, David J. Fant. The researcher has twice written to Fant, wishing to ascertain whether Tozer himself formulated the list. Fant's replies indicate that such was the case, and that the list resulted because of many inquiries made to Tozer. Fant also states that there was a copy of each book in Tozer's personal library and that they were a part of his library in Toronto.¹

Since during Tozer's lifetime the list was formulated in response to inquiries, those who were interested enough to inquire would already have had sympathetic attitudes. Further, the list as published in Fant includes a qualifying statement that "Dr. Tozer did not mean to put his stamp of approval on the entire contents," and that "if any doctrinal

¹ See "Appendix B" and "Appendix C," 229-30, for copies of Fant's letters.

defects should appear these would be far overbalanced by the spiritual verities."¹

Next to be considered is an examination of the list itself which has several interesting characteristics. First, the list emphasizes writers of major importance. Even though many of the names are probably unfamiliar to most Protestants, yet in the area of mystical writing, most are figures of considerable importance. This is especially so of the Catholic continental mystics included. The literary figures and the writers in English are not necessarily of this rank. Watts, best known for his hymns, is not ordinarily regarded as a mystic. The poems of Faber, while definitely mystical, are not well known in the literary world. Traherne's Centuries was found in a London bookstore only at the end of the last century. Andrewes, a Protestant writing in English, and Tersteegen, a Protestant writing in German, are not well-known figures, though Tersteegen is strongly mystical. The Quaker, Kelly, who died in 1941 at the age of forty-seven, is the only American. The only person of the nineteenth century is de Tourville, the French sociologist and director of souls.² The researcher had much difficulty

1 See "Appendix A," 228.

2 See Chapter I, p. 8, footnote 1.

locating his Letters of Direction and information on him, though he writes with excellent insight.

The emphasis in the list then is on earlier writers, especially medieval. Of the Fathers, only Augustine and Athanasius are included. The Catholic writers are mainly from the pre-Reformation period; the principal exceptions being the Spanish "giant," the disciple of Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, in the sixteenth century; the Italian Scupoli, and de Sales, upon whom Scupoli had much influence; de Tourville, as previously mentioned; and the Quietists, Molinos and Fénelon, of the seventeenth century whose doctrines were proscribed by the Roman Catholic Church; and Brother Lawrence, who reflects the passive tendency of French mysticism. The German Protestant, Tersteegen, two of whose works are on Tozer's list, owed much to Quietism. These writers showing Quietistic influences early found favor with Protestants, especially among the Quakers.

The most striking feature of the list is its northern character. That is, many of the writers are Germanic or English, perhaps reflecting Tozer's own ancestry and some congeniality of temperament. The Germanic include the Fleming, Ruysbroeck; and the Rhineland mystics, Meister Eckhart, Tauler, Suso, and the authors of Theologica Germanica and of The Imitation of Christ; Nicholas of Cusa, born in

Germany, educated in part in Holland and Germany, though much of his life was spent elsewhere; and Tersteegen of the late seventeenth century.

The English writers include the important four who wrote during the fourteenth century: Richard Rolle, the anonymous author of The Cloud of Unknowing, Walter Hilton, and the Lady Julian of Norwich; Anselm, who became the Archbishop of Canterbury in the eleventh century; and the three literary figures, Watts, Faber, and Traherne. The fourteenth century writers are from areas north of London, Rolle being from Yorkshire and Julian probably also.

The writers who come from among the southern or Latin peoples are Spanish, Italian, and French. In Spain, scholasticism was less influential than elsewhere, and this condition facilitated the emergence of the affective approach which constitutes mystic spirituality. The sixteenth century Spanish writers include Bernardino de Laredo, who influenced Teresa; Teresa's disciple John; and Molinos, the founder of the movement called "Quietism," who spent his later years in Rome. The Italian is Scupoli of the early seventeenth century. The French are better represented. Francis de Sales was strongly influenced by Scupoli's Spiritual Combat. Fénelon further developed and modified the Quietistic method. Other French include Bernard of Clairvaux, the twelfth century

Cisterican; Brother Lawrence; and the nineteenth century de Tourville.

Of the Catholic religious orders, representatives of both Dominicans and contemplative orders such as the Carmelites and Cistercians are found. The Dominicans include Eckhart, Tauler, and Suso; the Carmelites, John; and the Cistercians, Bernard and Brother Lawrence. Also found is the dweller in solitary, such as Rolle and the anchorite Julian of Norwich, and Hilton, the solitary turned Augustinian canon.

An additional focus of the list is its pragmatic character. While some of the material is concerned with the theoretical aspects or with the fruit of mystical experience, many of the works aim primarily at providing guidance.

Another way to characterize the list is to consider omissions. First, it is interesting to observe that no feminine names are listed. Julian of Norwich is actually a woman, even though her name does not suggest such a fact. It is quite surprising that Teresa of Avila is omitted. Accorded the high title of "Doctor of the Church" by the Roman Catholic Church, she is undoubtedly one of the most important writers on Christian mystical experience. In addition, she writes with captivating charm. Also, in view of Tozer's sympathy for Quietism, it is sur-

prising that Mme. Guyon is not represented in the list though Tozer frequently refers to her in his writings. Numerous other women mystics have written. Among them are Bridget of Sweden, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Catherine of Genoa, Catherine of Siena, Angela of Foligno, and Gertrude More.

In explanation one may consider that the Evangelical world places strong reliance on the Bible and thus on its statements about the place of women which put them in a subordinate position. Even today ordination of women is not viewed sympathetically by most Evangelicals. Perhaps in view of such factors Tozer omitted female names from the list.

A second omission is that of modern Catholic mystics. Especially significant is the omission of Tozer's American contemporary, Thomas Merton, a brilliant and productive writer. Ten other recent Catholic mystics are discussed in Hilda Graef's Mystics of Our Times.¹ Perhaps Tozer felt the more distant would be the more acceptable.

A third omission concerns the fact that the Protestant writers, except for Kelly, are all early also: Boehme, Andrewes, Traherne, Tersteegen, and Watts. George Fox and the eighteenth century William Law are not included, nor are any other than Kelly of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

¹ Hilda Graef, Mystics of Our Times, New York/Paramus, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1963.

Another type of omission is that of works dealing with the mechanics of the process. Since Tozer disliked "gimmicks" or set procedures, works emphasizing such matters are not represented. Also, material focusing on physiological aspects is omitted.

A Protestant, observing works cited in footnotes and bibliographies by editors of works by Catholic mystics, becomes aware that there is a voluminous mystical literature, of which Protestants rarely have cognizance, much less ready access. In view of the substantial scope of the material available, it is especially significant to note what Tozer omitted and what he selected for inclusion in his list.

Analysis of Tozer's Ideas

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

II Cor. 3:18

An analysis of Tozer's ideas so as to see more clearly his basic stance is the next subject. A basic principle undergirding his works will be considered first.

Basic Principle

Tozer, typical of a mystic, emphasizes the interior nature of religion. That is, liturgy, ritual, and other outer manifestations are not the significant

aspects. He says in the "Preface" to The Divine Conquest:

The argument of this book is the essential interiority of true religion. I expect to show that . . . that That which is external must become internal; that the objective Reality which is God must cross the threshold of our personality and take residence within.¹

This interiority involves an understanding of the significance of thoughts and the role that consciousness, awareness, and attention play in the spiritual life. The mystic's basic assumption is that it makes a difference what one thinks, an enormous difference. Tozer states:

We all live in two environments, the one being the world around us, the other our thoughts about that world. The larger world cannot affect us directly; it must be mediated to us by our thoughts, and will be to us at last only what we allow it to be.²

That is, our thought structure conditions the reality which we experience. "External things and events are the raw material only; the finished product is whatever the mind makes of these."³ Tozer argues that the Christian's thought structure should reflect Christ's Spirit: "The mental stuff of the Christian can be and should be modified and conditioned by the

1 A. W. Tozer, The Divine Conquest, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1950, 14.

2 A. W. Tozer, That Incredible Christian, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1964, 85.

3 Ibid., 96.

Spirit of Christ which indwells his nature."¹

Tozer points out further: "In our journey through this evil and hostile world many thoughts will be forced upon us which we do not like and for which we have no moral sympathy."² He continues:

Ordinary awareness of the doings of our fellow men will bring thoughts repugnant to our Christian souls. These need affect us but little. For them we are not responsible and they may pass through our minds like a bird through the air, without leaving a trace. They have no lasting effect upon us because they are not our own. They are unwelcome intruders for which we have no love and which we get rid of as quickly as possible.³

Thus, though unwelcome thoughts may reach us, we need not be captive to them, but have a way of discharging them from our minds.

Wendell Tozer states that his father was a mystic in the best sense of the word: One could be suffering with anything and live a completely triumphant, joyful life in the midst of this if he had a relationship with Christ. It was a lifting oneself out of the ugliness and physical pain, social problems, whatever, by focusing one's mind and attention on something of spirit.⁴

1 Ibid.

2 A. W. Tozer, "We Must Think Right If We Would Be Right," The Alliance Weekly, July 6, 1955, 90:27, 2.

3 Ibid.

4 Telephone interview with Wendell Tozer, Winnetka, Illinois, February 25, 1979.

Thus, by means of one's thinking one could free oneself from the impact of negative influences in the outside world. One need not be enslaved by them. In an age when one lives in a crowded world subject to a complex web of personal interactions, electronic media, and numerous trying experiences, one need not be controlled or dominated by them. By a focusing on the spiritual, one can successfully transcend them and their limited power.

Tozer points out further the significance of one's thinking:

Except for that conduct which springs from our basic natural instincts, all conscious behavior is preceded by and arises out of our thoughts. The will can become a servant of the thoughts, and to a large degree even our emotions follow our thinking.¹

Thinking stirs feeling and feeling triggers action. That is the way we are made and we may as well accept it.²

In The Root of the Righteous, Tozer clarifies his concept of mind, as derived from Paul's:

. . . when Paul refers to the "mind" he is referring to the sum of our dominant desires. The mere intellect is not the mind: the mind is intellect plus an emotional tug strong enough to determine action.³

1 Tozer, "We Must Think Right," 2.

2 Ibid.

3 A. W. Tozer, The Root of the Righteous, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1955, 116.

When our dominant desires are bad the whole life is bad as a consequence; when the desires are good the life comes up to the level of our desires, provided that we have within us the enabling Spirit.¹

The blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse . . . the very inward desires so that we will not want to sin.²

In The Divine Conquest, Tozer indicates that our thoughts limit our awareness:

. . . we are not alone. Our trouble is that we think of ourselves as being alone.³

But better far is the sense of Someone there.⁴

And the power of that conviction to arrest attention and hold it for a lifetime, to elevate, to transform, to fill with uncontrollable moral happiness . . . has been one of the wonders of history . . . ⁵

In The Root of the Righteous, Tozer insists on one's having the correct concept of God:

It is most important to our spiritual welfare that we hold in our minds always a right conception of God. If we . . . hold Him to be kind and understanding our whole inner life will mirror that idea.⁶

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., 118.

3 Tozer, The Divine Conquest, 23.

4 Ibid., 24.

5 Ibid.

6 Tozer, The Root of the Righteous, 14.

He is all love, and those who trust Him
need never know anything but that love.¹

A different aspect of this role of the interior
is presented by Professor M. Montague, S.J.: "If
you can control your images, you can control your
intellect."² Tozer, however, is less visually
minded. There is more of an abstract quality to
his thinking.

In That Incredible Christian, Tozer observes
that there must be a certain deep focus of the mind.

If our faith is to have a firm founda-
tion we must be convinced beyond any pos-
sible doubt that God is altogether worthy
of our trust. This conviction . . . must
penetrate the profoundest depths of our
spirits . . . ³

In The Pursuit of God, Tozer makes clear that one can
contemplate God, can see Him, can have a vision of
Him:

You can see God . . . if your mind is set
to love and obey Him.⁴

Thus, because of one's mind-set one's personality
becomes filled with a different spirit so that one has
different thoughts--one is aware of different things
than formerly or aware of them in a different way.

1 Ibid., 15.

2 Course--History of Christian Spirituality: Six-
teenth Century Spanish Mystics, Jesuit School of
Theology, Chicago, Illinois, Spring Quarter, 1978.

3 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 26.

4 A. W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God, Harrisburg, Pa.:
Christian Publications, Inc., 1948. 95.

Detailed Study

Having examined Tozer's basic principle of interiority, this study will now commence a detailed analysis of Tozer's thought. This, however, will not attempt to systematize all of Tozer's thought, which is not itself a system, but will highlight significant aspects; it will indicate principal emphases. The study, then, is a presentation so as to see Tozer's approach and emphases.

As a mystic is dealing with that which is beyond thought, beyond rational categories, Tozer being mystically focused is not markedly occupied with rationalistic or speculative thought per se. Nor is he a speculative mystic such as Eckhart and John of the Cross, concerned with crystallizing out the principles and characteristics of the mystical experience. Tozer had only five grades of elementary schooling and was otherwise self-taught. He is not an academician nor a theoretician. He never articulated a formal metaphysics nor formulated arguments for such. He was not strongly concerned with theology per se. Instead, he has an anti-speculative tendency. Eckhart in contrast was both a theologian and a mystic.

However, so as to provide a mode for grasping Tozer's orientation, the presentation will examine his thought in terms of various categories. The categories emerged from a reading of the works on

mysticism, both Tozer's and the recommended thirty-five. The latter are significant in suggesting aspects congenial to Tozer's thought. Consequently, some reference will be made to these thirty-five so as to elucidate similarities to and contrasts with Tozer. The examples from the thirty-five works are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely illuminative of similarities and contrasts.

Since a written work is ordinarily a means of communication having a purpose in relation to an intended audience, the first main category to be discussed, the rhetorical, will deal with Tozer's principal purposes and the type of audience for which he wrote, as these affect which aspects of his thought were to be communicated. Secondly, there will be an examination of the context in which Tozer as a mystic is operating. Since there are a considerable number of parallels in mystical experiences occurring to those in a variety of religious traditions around the world, the context to a considerable extent conditions the way the mystic interprets his experiences and possibly also to some degree which type of mystical experience is engendered. The context certainly is influential in affecting which methods are used. Next, as the mystical experience is sequential in nature, the discussion will be divided into a consideration of methods employed in the mystical procedures and results occurring.

Rhetorical Focus

Tozer's books and editorials were intended for public consumption, not for just private use. Thus, it is necessary to explore more fully his purposes in writing and the type of readership he had in mind.

As an active minister throughout his professional life, Tozer was mainly oriented toward helping others in Christian growth. He was not concerned just with developing and articulating his personal experiences. Tozer's list of recommended books was originally formulated and used by Tozer for the purpose of promoting others' growth. Tozer's writing then has a practical orientation, not a theoretical; it is pragmatic, not speculative. His wish was to initiate into the experiential.

Tozer wrote for those living in the secular world. Also, he never appears to orient himself towards the clergy at the expense of the laity. Rather he wrote for the full body of Christians, both full-time Christian workers and all other sincere Christians. However, he probably wrote more in terms of the laity than the professional. Tozer's editorials appeared in the national organ of the denomination and thus were intended for the whole membership, which would of course be mainly laity. Some of the material in Tozer's books was originally formulated as sermons, and thus addressed to laity.

Tozer's work, then, is for those who are, more or less, beginners in the deeper life, beginners on the mystical flight. His aim was transformed lives. That he succeeded is evidenced by the fact that several members of his congregation now have major positions in the life of The C&MA, one being the wife of the present President of the denomination, and another being in charge of The C&MA press in Hong Kong. A "spiritual" son is now Secretary of the C&MA. The attainment of a position of substantial leadership in the world of the spirit can be regarded as a sign of an inner spiritual strength achieved.

Tozer's stance is one of gently hinting at what lies beyond. He is, as it were, standing at the open door, inviting to enter and giving glimpses of what is inside. There is not a full-blown expression of mystic spirituality. It would have been too controversial to be acceptable to his audience, probably incomprehensible. Tozer then writes simply and practically. There is a certain repetitiveness in his topics.

Thus, Tozer's work is a guide to life and practice; it is not for full clarification of mystical experience nor on the theological aspects of spirituality.

Several of the works on Tozer's list were also written for those in the early stages of the mystical odyssey, or became a favorite of laity. Among these

are 1) de Sales' Introduction to a Devout Life, written for the wife of a relative for whom he was a spiritual director; 2) Laredo's Ascent of Mount Sion, which indicates that contemplative prayer is available to all, including the laity and the married; 3) Suso's Little Book of Eternal Wisdom, written especially for beginners and very popular in the Middle Ages; 4) Theologica Germanica, believed to have been written by a member of the "Friends of God," where there was belief in the presence of the Spirit of God in all Christians, both laity and clergy; 5) Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection, a favorite of the laity; 6) The Cloud of Unknowing, which though probably not written for laity is a practical guide to the first stages of mystical experience; and 7) Kelly's A Testament of Devotion, also a practical guide.

Other works listed by Tozer are concerned with spiritual guidance: 1) de Tourville's Letters of Direction recommend the avoidance of severity but the application to every moment of everyday life; 2) Scupoli's Spiritual Warfare; and 3) The Spiritual Guide by Molinos, who was chosen by Queen Christina of Sweden, then living in Rome, to be her spiritual director.

Other works on Tozer's list aimed at a more restricted audience. John of the Cross' treatises are too detailed and technical for popular readers.

Eckhart's Talks of Instruction were intended for an audience composed mainly of Dominican nuns, though others were present. The treatise by Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Love of God, was written for his friend, Aimeric, Chancellor of the Roman Church.

Thus, Tozer's writing is not primarily for religious professionals, much less just the members of a contemplative order. Nor has his written work substantially changed its audience since its formulation. Tozer is still not very well known outside the circles of Fundamentalist Evangelicalism.¹

Context

The rhetorical focus of Tozer having been examined, the next major category to be examined is that of the context or framework in which he is operating. For a mystic working within the framework of a substantial tradition, this category would be called "tradition." Two aspects will be considered: those in reference to God, and those in reference to man.

First in reference to God is the factor of validation. The type of authority which the mystic accepts and to which he is obedient must be investigated. In Tozer's case the validation is Biblical, or as Tozer would probably have phrased it, God's Word. The Pauline tradition rather than the Johannine is empha-

¹ See Chapter I, 23ff., for a discussion of this term.

sized. Others on Tozer's list having a substantial Biblical orientation include Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Rolle, and The Imitation of Christ. For most Catholic mystics, the authority of the Church is central. In the most developed mysticism, the authority usually is the Spirit. Also, in Molinos' Quietism the stress is on inward authority. For Tozer there must in addition be the external authority of the Word, seen as being God's revelation.

A second aspect of context in reference to God concerns the "school" of theology favored. Essentially non-Scholastic and favoring the medieval neo-Platonics, Tozer is sympathetic to the Dionysian stream of spirituality introduced during the twelfth century into the mainstream of Western spirituality by the two Victorines, Hugh (a German) and Richard (Scotch) of St. Victor.¹ Emphasizing the fourteenth century of the medieval period, Tozer also favored some writers in the Counter-Reformation and in Quietism. Tozer favored those post-Reformation non-Protestants who have been sympathetically viewed by Protestants in the past, i.e., the Quietists and Brother Lawrence. Contemporary theologians and mystical theorists are largely ignored in Tozer's

1 "Benjamin Minor," Masterpieces of Christian Literature, ed. by Frank N. Magill, with Ian P. McGreal, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963, 221.

writing and list of recommended works. Tozer did, however, read Kierkegaard well before such gained currency.¹

There is in Tozer a considerable influence from Eastern Christianity. He at times indicates his liking of Patristic literature. Augustine, whome Tozer often cites, was aware of Eastern Christianity. In addition, Tozer refers to three Carmelite writers, Teresa, John of the Cross, and Brother Lawrence. The Carmelite order was founded in Syria in the twelfth century and was brought from the East after the First Crusade.

Of special significance is Tozer's inclusion on his list of recommended works of Scupoli's Spiritual Combat, published in the late sixteenth century. After the Turks conquered Greece in the fifteenth century, Greek Christians studied in Italy, the practice continuing until the eighteenth century. At this time Nicodemus, a monk on Mt. Athos, translated the Spiritual Combat into Greek, calling it Unseen Warfare. During the nineteenth century Theophan translated the Greek version into Russian. Both made changes so as to accommodate the work for Orthodox usage, since the Orthodox Church has more ancient traditions in the life of prayer, going back to early desert Christianity

¹ Telephone interview with Stanley Tozer, Palatine, Illinois, February 20, 1979.

prior to Pseudo-Dionysius. It was Nicodemus who was the compiler of the famous Philokalia, anthology of Eastern Patristic writings, and Theophan who translated it into Russian.¹

It is interesting that Tozer refers to the work by its Western title rather than Eastern, even though the Eastern version might be of greater value. There are no works of Eastern Orthodoxy on his list. Thus, Tozer saw the value of a work which has been accorded prominence in the Eastern Church.

Further, the only twentieth-century work in Tozer's list is A Testament of Devotion by the Quaker Thomas Kelly, who was long interested in Oriental thought, having taught at the University of Hawaii so as to afford himself contact with Chinese and Japanese scholars and to teach courses in Chinese and Indian philosophy.

A third factor of context concerns attitude towards the Trinity. A major question is that of the transcendence or immanence of God. The Judaeo-Christian tradition stipulates the transcendence of God. In Jewish mysticism as Martin Buber has observed, God is God, and man is man. The final stage of

1 H. A. Hodges, "Introduction," Unseen Warfare, being the Spiritual Combat and Path to Paradise of Lorenzo Scupoli as edited by Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain and revised by Theophan The Recluse, trans. from Theophan's Russian text by E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1952, 13-67.

mystical experience, fusion, where man loses his identity completely and becomes God, forfeits the transcendence aspect, for God is no longer above man. The mystical concept of God being in the core of the soul is clearly a form of immanence. Eckhart and some of the Sufis and Orientals see the soul as being so fused with God that the person has become God; in Eckhart's case the person has become Christ. Tozer, being a non-fusionist mystic and Biblically-based, favors both the transcendence and immanence of God. Eckhart, in contrast, sees God as "an impersonal, absolute unity which transcends all relations."¹ A number of Eckhart's teachings were officially condemned by a papal bull.

Another matter in relation to the Trinity is Christocentric focus. This is marked in Tozer, as is typical among Evangelicals. However, Christocentrism is not found in all Christian mystics. Molinos, for instance, emphasized God the Father. Teresa of Avila, on the other hand, developed a personal relationship to Christ. Bernard of Clairvaux is also Christocentric, though possibly moving through Christ towards an ultimate. Incarnationalism, encounter with God through Christ, is characteristic of Christian mystics. Tozer's, as well as A. B. Simpson's motto, was "Christ

¹ Masterpieces of Christian Literature, 249.

in me, the hope of glory." Yet for the Evangelical mystics man never fully becomes Christ, but only approximates, with a varying degree of closeness, a Christ-likeness. Tozer states this in Of God and

Men:

. . . the practicing Christian . . . is in very reality an incarnation of Christ as Christ is the incarnation of God; not in the same degree and fullness of perfection . . . but as the fullness of the Godhead was and is in Christ, so Christ is in the nature of the one who believes in Him in the manner prescribed in the Scriptures.¹

This is for Tozer the extent to which Reality is reached. Eckhart and John of the Cross go further, attempting to reach an ultimate.

Among Catholic mystics, meditation is frequently on the historical, human Christ and often involves a specific imitation of his words and deeds. Tozer certainly dwells on the human aspects. In the Eastern church, meditation is on the divinity of Jesus.

In relation to a consideration of the Christocentric focus, one must examine Tozer's attitude towards the function of Christ in the Atonement. Mystical theology places an emphasis on Incarnation rather than on the Atonement, on the inner process of purification rather than on the external work by

1 A. W. Tozer, Of God and Man, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1960, 58.

Christ. Christ is reborn in the soul, which thus has a purity. Tozer, however, does not indicate the attaining of a complete identification with Christ, and thus atonement by Christ still is necessary. Towards the end of his book, The Knowledge of the Holy, Tozer indicates the necessity for atonement: " . . . through the work of Christ in atonement, justice is not violated but satisfied when God spares a sinner."¹ However, Tozer says little elsewhere about Atonement. In this respect, he is less typical of the Fundamentalist Evangelical tradition, which at least in earlier decades, placed considerable emphasis on this theological aspect.

The inclusion of Anselm on the list of those recommended by Tozer raises the question of his having been included in view of the importance of his discussion of the atonement in his work, Cur Deus Homo. However, in recent times some theologians have argued that Proslogium, the work by Anselm on Tozer's list, is an essay in mystical theology which states in rational terms his mystical vision of God.²

The third Person of the Trinity, the Spirit, plays a lesser role in Tozer's thought than does Christ. Nevertheless, Christian mysticism, being

1 A. W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1961, 94.

2 Masterpieces of Christian Literature, 201.

regarded by its mystics as more than a psychological phenomenon, asserts the role of the Spirit in accomplishing mystical growth. It is indwelling and directional. While some human effort may or may not be involved, depending on the particular type of spirituality involved, essential is the role of the Spirit which, especially in the later stages, accomplishes the changes. They are beyond human ability, and the gifts of the Spirit making them possible are not given to all. These mystical gifts from the Spirit are not necessarily those enumerated in I Corinthians 12, but may lead to those Spirit-inspired forms of service.

The next theological underpinning of Tozer's thought to be examined involves the concept of man. To a non-fusionist mystic, personhood is important, as is individuality. For Tozer, man has the potentiality for becoming Christ-like, and this must be cultivated--"Christ in me, the hope of glory." However, rational methods of self-examination and self-exertion towards moral amendment would be appropriate for beginners and a subject for sermons. But basic to the effectiveness of such methods is the will. And it is this which Tozer focuses on--the desire for God. Until the longing for God is established and strong, the rational methods would be of limited efficacy. Yet it is God and His grace which draw

the will towards Him. Though as a result the person becomes Christ-like, yet he still retains an individuality of characteristics from his culture even though his essential being has moved toward the divine.

The other aspect of context affecting Tozer deals with relationship to man. First must be an indication of communal framework. The medieval mystics usually operated within a religious order, and many of the men were university trained. Rare indeed since the desert monks of early Christianity is the self-taught mystic, such as Jacob Boehme. Most received training and discipline from an established group spiritually oriented.

In the case of Tozer, he is largely a self-taught mystic, apart from what influence he may have received from the founder of The C&MA, A. B. Simpson, and others mystically inclined within the denomination and related organizations. Through his reading, a temperament gifted with mystical proclivities, and a deep devotion, he attained mystical insight, not dependent on a mystically-developed group for orientation and support in such a pursuit. This self-development is perhaps more difficult than development having external guidance, yet it has the advantage of providing greater freedom for the soul to develop along the lines most suited to it.

In the Catholic religious orders, various types

of communal framework exist, ranging from the semi-eremetical to the cloistered and silent cenobite to a less austere mode of group living. Tozer's list includes works by two who lived eremetically: Rolle; the anchoress Julian of Norwich; and Tersteegen, who was largely so. The cloistered include the Carmelites, such as John of the Cross and Brother Lawrence. Several of the writers on Tozer's list were involved in administrative responsibilities for the Church, thus being non-cloistered, namely, Augustine and de Sales, being bishops; Anselm, an archbishop; Nicholas of Cusa, a cardinal; Athanasius, a patriarch. Bernard of Clairvaux was abbot of his monastery.

Tozer's life-style was obviously none of these, but rather that of a non-celibate living in a family household within the secular world. And yet within the privacy of a room and his thoughts, he maintained a degree of distance for the cultivating of God.

Unlike Rolle who left theological training at Oxford University after a year so as to seek God in the loneliness of a hermitage, Tozer continued within the framework of a church and ecclesiality. The C&MA was initially a movement not a church, and thus there was not a strong concept of a church originally. Also, The C&MA is now less than a century old and thus not one of the historic Protestant denominations. Still relatively small in size, the denomination is

not cumbered with a large membership to which it must remain responsive, but has some degree of flexibility. The C&MA has a free church polity giving each congregation substantial freedom and a non-hierarchical authority structure. Tozer as pastor and leader of the congregation was thus not rigidly confined within external structures, but had considerable latitude to follow where the Spirit led. Not only was Tozer a minister, but he was editor for thirteen years of the national denominational publication. Here, however, he had a wide readership and could not deviate too far from customary expectations.

Though by the end of his career he was not center-of-the-road within The C&MA in terms of customary denominational perspectives, yet he managed effectively to blend his mystical orientation in ways largely compatible with Evangelical theology, conforming thus to the ecclesiality in which he functioned. Interestingly, though having read widely in Catholic mystics, Tozer does not seem to have absorbed any Catholic elements into his thought. The discipline of a weekly pulpit undoubtedly kept him in touch with the realities of the Evangelical world. The ecclesiality being non-liturgical and non-sacramental and emphasizing preaching favored the development of Tozer's teaching gifts so that he could infuse his mystical learning into sermons for the edification of

others. Unlike other traditions having ecclesiastical intermediaries between man and God, such is not to be expected in "low-church" Protestantism, where the priesthood of all believers may be assiduously cultivated.

This completes the discussion of the first two main categories being used for analysis of Tozer's thought, the rhetorical focus, and the context or framework in which Tozer functioned.

CHAPTER V

TOZER AND MYSTICAL THOUGHT, III

The next consideration is to see how Tozer's basic principle, his rhetorical focus, and his context or background operated in practice. The discussion will be organized in terms of two main categories, methods and results. A number of sub-categories will be presented.

As was indicated in the discussion of basic principle, Tozer places heavy stress on the inward, on thoughts which he asserts have an emotional "tug." As with medieval contemplatives, one must direct these thoughts and desires so as to increase awareness of the presence of God. God is present, but awareness is limited by sin-blurred minds so that one can not see His presence. One's mind must become unclouded so that he can see the radiance of the sun's light suffusing all creation.

The mystical process is intuitional, a loving experience, not merely or primarily a conceptual perception. It is an approach to God by loving rather than reasoning. Intention is primary, as is also what Tozer would call "commitment" and other mystics "fervor."

In considering the mystical process, so as to see the development, one must first note the initial state, that of natural man, then discuss methods in the earlier stages, and also the methods in the purificatory stage.

The Natural Man

The natural man has a "sinful preoccupation with visible things."¹ It is a veil obscuring his vision. Because of a sin-damaged mind,² one sees as man sees; one has low views. Tozer spends little time discussing the natural man, but follows his own advice and devotes himself to attaining knowledge of God.

Methods in the Earlier Stages

Tozer indicates various aspects initiating the movement to God. Basic is a longing for God. He cites Frederick W. Faber's "a jubilant pining and longing for God."³ He continues:

I believe that God wants us to long for Him with the longing that will become lovesickness, that will become a wound to our spirits, to keep us always moving toward Him . . . ⁴

1 A. W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1948, 72.

2 A. W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1961, 43.

3 Cited by A. W. Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1966, 107.

4 Ibid.

There can be nothing more terrible or more wonderful than to be stricken with love for Christ so deeply that the whole being goes out in a pained adoration of His person, an adoration that disturbs and disconcerts while it purges and satisfies and relaxes the deep inner heart.¹

As in human love, one's mind becomes filled with the thought of the loved person. Tozer indicates one must also cultivate this state. He quotes Francois Malaval: " . . . think continuously of Him, as if we had no one but Himself."² One must exercise his will to set his course.³ There must be "remembered blessings, thankfulness for present favors and praise for promised grace."⁴ One must give time to God so as to know Him.⁵ One's thought must be trained by long periods of daily prayer.⁶ "Talking to God inwardly as we work or travel . . . will help to form the habit of holy thought."⁷ One must fill one's mind with God, forget oneself. Tozer observed: "It is hardly possible to overstress the

1 A. W. Tozer, That Incredible Christian, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1964, 130.

2 Ibid., 97.

3 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 103.

4 A. W. Tozer, Of God and Men, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1960, 125.

5 A. W. Tozer, The Divine Conquest, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1950, 22.

6 A. W. Tozer, Born After Midnight, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1959, 47.

7 Ibid.

importance of unceasing inward prayer on the part of the one who would live the God-conscious life."¹ One must let Him be the God in one's mind that He is in His universe.²

Some additional factors in relation to cultivating the inward must be examined.

The affectivity involved in prayer can be passionate and intense as in some of the Southern Christian mystics and Sufis; or rhapsodic as in Augustine and Suso. There is no evidence of either of these in Tozer, but rather a quiet but absolutely committed devotion seems to prevail.

Mental prayer can be done in private or in a group. In Tozer's case, it was private: The C&MA has a powerful tradition of group vocal prayer, usually petitionary prayer, mainly for missionaries, unlike the Quaker Meeting where group silent prayer is the principal activity or amongst some monks, both Catholic and Buddhist, who also practice mental prayer in common.

The degree of solitude and of silence is limited in the case of Tozer by church and family responsibilities. In contrast is the regimen of a Trappist monk, such as Thomas Merton, wherein one rises every-day at 2 A.M. in the dark, communication is ordinarily

1 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 67.

2 Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, 42.

by sign language if at all, and enclosure is required. The word "monk" comes from a word meaning "alone."

The degree of detachment is also limited for Tozer. Obligations in the world must be fulfilled. In contrast a novice in an enclosed order might be told, "You have no parents. You have given yourself up to God." Though Tozer could recommend The Cloud of Unknowing, it would be only up to a point: complete forgetting of the earthly by obliteration as with a cloud he could not advocate. Nevertheless, some degree of introversion is essential.

The degree of asceticism is also not marked. Undeniably self-denying in many ways, Tozer by living in the world was obliged to maintain at least minimal conformity to certain norms of appearance and behavior. Abstention from the use of an automobile, eating of plain food, wearing a favorite sweater though the elbows were worn out from frequent praying, turning down an offer from the congregation for a badly needed decorating job at his parsonage, refusal to do a book for Harper & Row until urged to do so for the sake of his family--are all self-denials which Tozer practiced. Keeping his salary low and yet giving a substantial amount of it back to be used for the cause of Christ indicate the poverty to which he committed himself. The royalties from his writings were signed over to the denomination

rather than to his family. In reference to other forms of self-denial, there is no indication of Tozer's use of fasting or deprivation of sleep as formal mortifications, these not being customary Protestant observances. Minimal socializing, no vacations, and only occasional outings in the fresh air for a game of golf suggest that escapist activity was not part of Tozer's agenda. Reading and prayer were probably his principal pastimes.

A non-liturgical church does not engender a sacramental base for corporate or private worship in prayer in contrast to the liturgical element in some Protestant traditions, such as the Anglican and Lutheran, and in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox. Heavy appeal to the senses via rich vestments, patterned movements, lighted candles, and frequent censuring is eschewed in favor of austere simplicity and reliance on the auditory appeal of the preached Word and the, at times, rousing gospel song. These then are the elements which contributed to the nourishing of Tozer's spirituality.

While emphasizing the internal, Tozer does not minimize the external, the obligation of obedience: " . . . we should kneel in adoration before the pierced feet of Him who is the Truth and honor Him by humble obedience to His words."¹

¹ Tozer, Born After Midnight, 79.

Technique

Concerning the major matter of technique, spiritual exercises if any, Tozer does not dwell on these matters, usually burying discussion of them near the end of a book.

Characteristic of the mystic is a deliberate shutting off of "sense and notion," as T. S. Eliot expresses it.¹ In Of God and Men Tozer lists practical details in relation to this: one must spend time alone each day in a private spot and tune out surrounding noises, listening for the inward Voice. One must never let the mind remain scattered for very long, but call home the roving thoughts. One must gaze on Christ with the eyes of the soul, practicing spiritual concentration. All this presumes "a right relation to God through Christ and daily meditation on the Scriptures."² In speechless silence, however, when the mental powers are not in command, a flash of divine knowledge can occur.³ The process of a new life entering man's nature involves an act of God; it is not just a human phenomenon.⁴

1 Thomas Stearns Eliot, "Little Gidding," Four Quartets, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943, 32.

2 Tozer, Of God and Men, 106.

3 A. W. Tozer, The Root of the Righteous, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1955, 146.

4 Tozer, The Divine Conquest, 43.

In The Knowledge of the Holy Tozer lists six conditions for attaining a transforming vision of God: 1) We must forsake our sins; 2) there must be an utter committal of the whole life to Christ in faith, involving a volitional and emotional attachment to Him accompanied by a firm purpose to obey Him in all things; 3) there must be a reckoning of ourselves to have died unto sin and to be alive unto God in Christ Jesus, followed by a throwing open of the entire personality to the inflow of the Holy Spirit; 4) we must repudiate worldly values, becoming completely detached in spirit from them, allowing ourselves "only the simplest enjoyments of nature which God has bestowed alike upon the just and the unjust;"¹ 5) we must practice long and loving meditation upon the majesty of God, humanism having to be reversed by a deliberate act of the will and kept so by a patient effort of the mind; and 6) as knowledge of God becomes more wonderful, greater service of deeds of mercy to one's suffering fellow man becomes an imperative.²

A comparison of these six conditions with those in other mystics on Tozer's list will now be made. Customarily, mystics in the central stream of Christianity insist on an abandonment of sin, though

1 Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, 123.

2 Ibid., 122-23.

some heretical groups have ignored this. In the Catholic faith, entering the priesthood and/or joining an order involves a whole-life committal by formal vows and a heavy obligation of obedience to one's superiors as representative of God's will. In Tozer's case the committal and obedience apply directly to God without human intermediaries and without necessarily a formal external commitment other than that involved in the ordination process for those who are clergy.

Tozer's third point of opening the whole personality to the inflow of the Holy Spirit is not a conspicuous feature of the thirty-five works. Perhaps in view of the revision of the Western creed in earlier centuries by the addition of the et filioque phrase so that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son rather than just from the Father, the Holy Spirit has not been as prominent in Western Christianity as either the Father or the Son. In view of the fact that The C&MA saw the defection of many of its congregations to a Pentecostal position early in the twentieth century, there is apparently a greater leaning towards the Holy Spirit in C&MA thinking than has been customary in other Protestant circles. One wonders whether Tozer's insistence on opening the whole personality reflects some awareness of the thinking of twentieth century

theoreticians dealing with the psychological depths who have advocated opening up not just the conscious mind but also the unconscious to some extent.

The fourth item in Tozer's list of conditions, detachment from worldly pleasures, is a standard stipulation in mystical theology. Effectiveness in the mystical pursuit necessitates an intense concentration of all one's emotional energies, and their dissipation upon worldly trivia would hamper this pursuit. It is interesting that Tozer does allow for "the simplest enjoyments of nature." For a former country boy buried in a metropolis such a view is certainly understandable. This is not characteristic, however, of most other mystics, who in their writings seem largely oblivious to non-personal aspects of the phenomenal world.

It should be observed that Tozer castigates an ascetisim vilifying the body:

That monkish hatred of the body which figures so prominently in the works of certain early devotional writers is wholly without support in the Word of God. . . . in His incarnation our Lord . . . sweeps away forever the evil notion that there is about the human body something innately offensive to the Deity.¹

Tozer's fifth point, practicing long and loving meditation, is the crux of the endeavors in the mystical process. However, throughout his writing Tozer

¹ Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 120.

evidences a lack of specificity about the technicalities of meditative practice. Other mystical writers develop this aspect in great detail. The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises are well known and widely used. The Cloud of Unknowing gives a substantial amount of advice, as does de Sales Introduction to a Devout Life and the other works of guidance previously mentioned. Scupoli deals extensively with strategies for coping with spiritual enemies within and without.

Since Tozer was a pioneer in introducing mystic spirituality to the twentieth century common man in Protestantism, the bulk of his reading audience would not have been ready for advanced advice. His list of recommended books was formulated to aid those who sought this. One of his later books, Of God and Men, published in 1960 only three years before his death, has a page crammed with practical details¹ perhaps reflecting requests for more specific guidance.

It is of interest that Tozer recommends meditation "upon the majesty of God." A more characteristic focus in other mystics would be upon the lovingness of God or on His goodness. In view of Tozer's personal history and his rise from a lowly position and also his Biblical orientation with its focus on a transcendent God, one can gain some under-

1 As discussed above, see Chapter V, 146.

standing as to why Tozer emphasizes God's majesty.

Tozer's final point, the imperative of service, is certainly a requirement in the Protestant world where the priesthood of all believers living in a secular atmosphere easily leads to efforts to spiritualize such an atmosphere. A protracted mystic withdrawal from such responsibilities would draw heavy censure. One of the clichés frequently leveled at mystics is their supposed escapism from everyday responsibilities. Some detachment and withdrawal, however, are inescapable because of the nature of mystic development, but advanced mystics can be distinguished for their extraordinary fertility of accomplishment in the world once they emerge from the temporary stage of marked withdrawal. Tozer himself is a case in point--his remarkable communication of spiritual insights is evidence of his effectiveness in the world.

Especially in a denomination heavily weighted towards service via the demands of the mission field would the requirement of usefulness in the outer world be mandatory. Further, the emphasis on the Biblical perspective, which is embedded in the concrete, the historical, would contribute to a relationship of service to it.¹

¹ The matter of relation to the world will be discussed further in Chapter VI.

In reference to technique, the matter of Quietistic influence must be further examined. Tozer has frequent mention of the Quietist authors, Molinos, Guyon, and Fénelon. Tozer's friend, Harry Verploegh, reports that Madame Guyon was one of Tozer's favorite mystical writers.¹ Also, the long acceptance of Quietism among a Protestant group, the Quakers, suggests an acceptability of their methods to a Protestant such as Tozer as well as to Simpson. Further, the absence of all but a few specifics of meditational directives suggests a Quietistic approach: be quiet before God. Tozer describes method in his earlier book, The Pursuit of God:

. . . God says, "Be still, and know that I am God," and still He says it, as if He means to tell us that our strength and safety lie not in noise but in silence.

It is important that we get still to wait on God. And it is best that we get alone, preferably with our Bible outspread before us. Then if we will we may draw near to God and begin to hear Him speak to us in our hearts. I think for the average person the progression will be something like this: First a sound as of a Presence walking in the garden. Then a voice, more intelligible, but still far from clear. Then the happy moment when the Spirit begins to illuminate the Scriptures. . . Then will come ability to see and rest in and embrace Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and All.²

1 Telephone interview with Harry Verploegh, Wheaton, Illinois, March 22, 1979.

2 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 80-81. The parallels between this passage and that quoted from A. B. Simpson in Chapter II, 60, should be evident.

The probabilities thus point substantially to a Quietistic orientation. Yet in view of Tozer's extensive reading in non-Quietistic mysticism, it is not unreasonable to assume he may have personally used other methods to some extent even though not publicly recommending them. Especially significant in this regard is his citing in the opening chapter of The Pursuit of God, published in 1948, early in his career, of a passage from The Cloud of Unknowing which advocates using in prayer a word of one syllable, such as "God" or "love."¹

When Tozer's sons were questioned about their father's methods of prayer, they stated the following: he used "no magic formulas"; "mesmerizing of the brain would not be like him" as "he was a non-conformist who would be non-conformed with the mystics too."² Tozer's colleague, Dr. Robert W. Battles, stated that there was no use of chanting.³ Ms. Anita Bailey, managing editor of The Alliance Witness while Tozer was editor, stated that Tozer did not use repetition as a method of prayer, that the focus was on God Himself, not on any external things

1 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 18-19.

2 Telephone interview with Forrest Tozer, Flossmoor, Illinois, February 25, 1979; telephone interview with Stanley Tozer, Palatine, Illinois, February 20, 1979.

3 Personal interview with Robert Battles, Nyack, New York, August 30, 1978.

like a mantra, that Tozer was "too practical and too realistic ever to open himself up to that sort of thing."¹ In any case, the principle of simplicity in mystic prayer is basic.

Tozer himself never directly suggests the use of one-word prayer. But by citing the passage from The Cloud of Unknowing, he seems to imply some degree of sympathy for such a method. And in view of the usage of one-word prayer all the way back to the early days in Christianity, the extensive development of one-sentence prayer in the hesychasm of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the use of one-word or one-sentence prayer in some non-Christian traditions, there is some probability that Tozer may have favored such methods somewhat. In any case, the absence of explicit statements by Tozer on this subject allows only speculation on the part of the researcher.

Since there are dangers in immoderate use of repetitive prayer whereby descent into the unconscious is too rapid and more material is released than the person can safely manage,² and in view of

1 Personal interview with Ms. Anita Bailey, Nyack, New York, July 12, 1979.

2 The Mother Alexandra, Mother Superior, Orthodox Monastery of The Transfiguration, Elwood City, Pennsylvania, Retreat at Saint Stephen's House, Chicago, Illinois, January 14, 1978.

the unavailability in the Protestant world of spiritual counselors experienced in navigating such shoals, Tozer may have recognized the wisdom in not encouraging widely a practice with potential harm. The passivity of a Quietistic type of method may evoke a slower release of unconscious material and in this respect be safer.

Though Quietism in view of its absence of certain ascetical and moral demands has been condemned by the Roman Catholic Church, yet perhaps there may be something in the Protestant temperament which makes those demands less necessary for its mystical development or for the type of service to the world which Protestant mysticism usually favors.

Material in two of Tozer's editorials indicates that pure passivity is not advocated:

The work of the Spirit in the human heart is not an unconscious or automatic thing. Human will and intelligence must yield to and cooperate with the benign intentions of God. I think it is here that many of us go astray. Either we try to make ourselves holy and fail miserably as we certainly must, or we seek to achieve a state of spiritual passivity and wait for God to perfect our natures in holiness as one might sit down and wait for a robin egg to hatch or a rose to burst into bloom. So we work feverishly to do the impossible or we do not work at all . . . ¹

The New Testament knows nothing of the working of the Spirit in us apart from

1 A. W. Tozer, "Our Tendency Toward Religious Lopsidedness," The Alliance Witness, March 9, 1960, 95:5, 2.

our own moral responses. Watchfulness, prayer, self-discipline and intelligent acquiescence in the purposes of God are indispensable to any real progress in holiness.¹

There is repetition that is not vain, but oft-repeated prayers become vain when they have lost their urgency. We should examine our prayers every now and again to discover how much sincerity and spontaneity they possess. We should insist on keeping them simple, candid, fresh, and original.²

Other factors related to technique or spiritual exercises can be considered. The role of praise and thankfulness must be examined. These are central in some traditions where monks may spend several hours every day chanting the Divine Office,³ and the entire Psalter may be recited in a week. While Tozer does discuss these matters, they are not given as much of an emphasis as might have been expected. In The Root of the Righteous, Tozer has a chapter on "Thankfulness as a Moral Therapeutic." He states:

Whole days may be spent occasionally in the holy practice of being thankful. We should write on a tablet one by one the things for which we are grateful to God and to our fellow men. And a constant

1 Ibid.

2 A. W. Tozer, "How to Keep from Going Stale," The Alliance Witness, May 17, 1961, 96:10, 2.

3 The Divine Office is a public prayer service in the Roman Catholic Church. Though one is commanded in Luke 18:1 to praise God continually, public prayer can not do so; hence, the Divine Office is at set hours of each day. P. Salmon, "Divine Office, Roman," New Catholic Encyclopedia, 4, 917-20.

return to this thought during the day as our minds get free will serve to fix the habit in our hearts.¹

In Of God and Men, Tozer has a chapter, "Praise in Three Dimensions," where he states there should be "remembered blessings, thankfulness for present favors, and praise for promised grace."²

No set, specific details of technique, such as a deliberate focusing of the will into a consciousness of God or a deliberate pattern of thoughts about God in the consciousness, are given by Tozer, contrasting with the substantial specificity of Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises. Perhaps Tozer is here reflecting his freedom from what he would have felt were "gimmicks," or perhaps he felt each soul should have the freedom to seek out what would be most beneficial to it.

Evelyn Underhill has observed that the "orderly technique of interior prayer, with its discipline of formal meditation, affections, and acts, as we find in the great spiritual teachers of the Latin Church"³ is absent from Eastern Catholicism, which relies instead on "prayer of the heart," using the famous "Jesus-prayer." She refers to the "Western Catholic

1 Tozer, The Root of the Righteous, 124.

2 Tozer, Of God and Men, 125.

3 Evelyn Underhill, Worship, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937, 273.

preparing his three-point meditation by making 'a picture in his mind' of the subject on which he is to dwell."¹ There is no indication in Tozer of either the former formal method or the use of the mental picture.

Tozer does, however, recognize a role of the image or mental picture. He states: "The mind receives ideas, mental pictures of things as they are. These excite the feelings and these in turn move the will to act. . . ."² Yet Tozer does not suggest the utilization of images in prayer. It is revealing that he refers to mental pictures as mental ideas. Perhaps this reflects the rationalistic emphasis in Protestantism.

Further, in reference to technique, it should be pointed out that in Tozer there is no discussion of physiological or psychophysical phenomena. Breathing exercises, for example, which have been used in hesychastic and some Oriental mystical techniques, are nowhere referred to. Nor are the swoon, levitation, etc., mentioned.

In concluding the discussion of methods in the earlier stages, it should be observed that for Tozer primary in the mystic process is the role of the Spirit. Tozer states this in The Pursuit of God:

1 Ibid., 272.

2 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 48.

. . . we possess spiritual faculties by means of which we can know God and the spiritual world if we will obey the Spirit's urge and begin to use them. . . . They may be quickened . . . by the operation of the Holy Spirit . . . ¹

That is, it is the Spirit which makes one aware of Spirit. Tozer asserts further that "the Holy Spirit performs His blessed work by direct contact with the human spirit,"² though the Spirit may at times use other means, such as a song or sermon.³ It is the eye of the Spirit which enables one to see God.⁴

Methods in the Purificatory Stage

Once the mystical process is underway, there occurs a powerful experience of the cross, The Dark Night of the Soul, as it was termed by John of the Cross. The cross is the instrument of cleansing, a necessary one. Tozer asserts that those who refuse to believe on Christ will perish--they will suffer alone without hope. Christians instead

will suffer with Christ for a while, but in the midst of their suffering they enjoy his loving consolation and inward support and are able to rejoice even in tribulation.⁵

1 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 51.

2 Tozer, The Divine Conquest, 89.

3 Ibid.

4 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 66.

5 A. W. Tozer, "Faith Is a Journey, not a Destination," The Alliance Weekly, November 6, 1957, 92:45, 2.

There must be a thorough emptying of the self so that God can subsequently fill the soul, a painful stripping and detachment from the temporary so as to throw the soul back upon the eternal. Tozer points out the following:

Self is the opaque veil that hides the Face of God from us. . . . We must invite the cross to do its deadly work within us.¹

If we cooperate with God He will take away the natural comforts which have served us as mother and nurse for so long and put us where we can receive no help except from the Comforter Himself.²

In the ministry of the Dark Night of the Soul, all that one has trusted will go. For the "common pleasures that have up to that time supported your life and made it zestful"³ must be removed from the heart. One must learn "the healing action of faith without supporting pleasure."⁴ Tozer states: "The way to deeper knowledge of God is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and abnegation of all things."⁵ There must be removed a possessive clinging to things, a perversion of love.⁶

1 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 46.

2 Tozer, The Divine Conquest, 125.

3 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 122-23.

4 Ibid., 124.

5 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 23.

6 Ibid.

Tozer prays:

Father, I want to know Thee, but my coward heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding. . . . Please root from my heart all those things . . . so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival.¹

Tozer characterizes somewhat this period of separation:

. . . I doubt whether anyone ever received that divine afflatus with which we are here concerned who did not first experience a period of deep anxiety and inward agitation.²

Tozer does not particularize on the emergence of "snakes," as William James puts it,³ but does offer some guidance for testing the spirits as they emerge. In his chapter, "How to Try the Spirits," he states the test:

This new doctrine, this new religious habit, this new view of truth, this new spiritual experience--how has it affected my attitude toward and my relation to God, Christ, the Holy Scriptures, self, other Christians, the world and sin.⁴

Yet though "the way leads temporarily through the blackened hills,"⁵ nevertheless God-lovers can "endure the cross for the joy set before them."⁶

1 Ibid., 31.

2 Tozer, The Divine Conquest, 124. The italics are in the original.

3 William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, 1902, New York: The Modern Library, n.d., 417.

4 Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God, 121. The italics are in the original.

5 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 44.

6 Ibid., 45.

Wendell Tozer states that the hymn, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" was used every other Sunday in one of the two services, that for his father the only real joy was the joy of Christ inside one, that people pursuing entertainment would never be fully satisfied.¹

However, suffering was not an emphasis of Tozer. "He wasn't morbid. It was just a natural part of life and Christian life."² Balance was Tozer's great strength. He always balanced his feeling of the depravity of man by a tremendous reverence for man made in God's image. We have to bridge the gap by bringing man back to God's image.³

Tozer's former secretary states that the cross, suffering, was not Tozer's main thrust, for he went on to glory, resurrection. "He never left you in the dumps, but pulled you up and made you a worshipper."⁴ A former member of the congregation stated that Tozer's view was that we are not born to be happy, but to glorify the Lord.⁵

1 Telephone interview with Wendell Tozer, Winnetka, Illinois, February 25, 1979.

2 Personal interview with Clifford Westergren, Nyack, New York, September 1, 1978.

3 Ibid.

4 Telephone interview with Ms. Betty Brown, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, February 22, 1979.

5 Personal interview with Mrs. Gladys Moore, Nyack, New York, September 1, 1978.

The cross then is an instrument for the death of the self and its supplanting by the divine image.

Results

While Teresa of Avila gives a detailed analysis of the stages of mystical prayer, the "itinerary of perfection," Tozer does not dwell much on the stages. Though he mentions the term "Dark Night" and describes it briefly, his attention is centered on the resultant stage. Other writers on Tozer's list of recommendations focus on interpretation and analysis of experiences along the way, John having a whole book on the Dark Night. Sculpoli's Spiritual Warfare deals with modes of coping with such experiences.

Resultant State of Being

"In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

John 14:20

"even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you."

John 14:17

The state of being which emerges from the purificatory process can be examined. There has been a purging of the dark through the darkness of the Night. As Tozer expresses it, the soul has moved into "mansions of light."¹

¹ A. W. Tozer, "We Glory in Tribulations," The Alliance Weekly, June 3, 1953, 88:22, 2.

Tozer's mysticism is incarnational. "To know God it is necessary that we be like God to some degree. . ."¹ Man is not made in the exact image of God, however, for God has infinitude and sovereignty.² With a Spirit-indwelt mind, the Christian has Christ dwelling in his thoughts.³ God thinks his own thoughts in us.⁴ God's thoughts are always thoughts of peace, not of evil.⁵ Tozer also states:

God does not dwell passively in His people; He wills and works in them (Phil. 2:13 . . .).⁶

Thus, for our personality to be replaced by God's there must be, not just surface changes with selfishness still in control, but a new set of motives,⁷ new inward drives.⁸ Tozer states: "Each remains a separate being as before; the difference is that now the Spirit penetrates and fills our personalities and we are experientially one with God."⁹

1 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 84.

2 Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, 15.

3 Tozer, The Divine Conquest, 127.

4 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 43.

5 Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, 100.

6 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 42. The italics are in the original.

7 Tozer, The Divine Conquest, 33-34.

8 Ibid., 40.

9 Ibid., 70. The italics are in the original

Some new developments will occur:

We shall acquire a new viewpoint; a new and different psychology will be formed within us; a new power will begin to surprise us by its upsurgings and its outgoings.¹

The Holy Spirit comes as power.² Power is "an endowment of supernatural energy."³ Further, Tozer states:

The God who had appeared to them as fire throughout all their long history was now dwelling in them as fire.⁴

. . . our intellects are indwelt by the loving Fire . . .⁵

The approach of God is our increasing awareness or consciousness of divine Presence.⁶ It is the Spirit of God who shows it to us when we surrender to His Spirit.⁷ This awareness is like a new set of eyes which

. . . will develop within us enabling us to be looking at God while our outward eyes are seeing the scenes of this passing world.⁸

1 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 102.

2 Tozer, The Divine Conquest, 85.

3 Ibid., 88.

4 Ibid., 97

5 Ibid., 103.

6 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 65-66.

7 Ibid., 64.

8 Ibid., 96.

The value of the cleansed imagination . . . lies in its power to perceive in natural things shadows of things spiritual.¹

A purified and Spirit-controlled imagination . . . [has] the sacred gift of seeing, the ability to peer beyond the veil . . . ²

In contrast, fallen men have a fallen view of life.³

However, for the mystic, God is present and waiting for us to recognize Him.⁴ The spiritual Christian sees everything from God's viewpoint:

God looks at and through at the same time.⁵

The spiritual man is able to look through things as God looks and think of them as God thinks.⁶

The spiritual Christian has had his eyes opened so that he "may behold Thee in and around me."⁷ He thus has a kind of double vision or double-layered vision, operating on two levels at once. The mystic's vision is at the point of intersection of the vertical plane and the horizontal plane. He sees the horizontal plane through the vertical plane. He sees the world transfused with and in the Godly. He sees the Godliness in the world.

1 Tozer, Born After Midnight, 93.

2 Ibid., 94.

3 Ibid., 97.

4 Ibid., 102.

5 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 111. The italics are in the original.

6 Ibid.

7 Tozer, The Pursuit of God, 72.

Tozer asserts that the mind should be an eye to see with.¹ People see "the everblessed One not with their physical eyes but with the eye of the Spirit."² Since the Spirit is one of love, this means that one should see all through the eyes of love.

Another aspect concerns the "blissful center," the core of peace. The Spirit brings the total life into harmony with that "blissful center."³ There will be

. . . the comfort of the indwelling Spirit which will often spring up like a wall of water in the desert, not because you have sought it but have sought rather to do the will of God at any price.⁴

Tozer recognizes the mystic antipodes of joy as well as suffering. The mystic can be said to have "higher highs" and "lower lows" than the non-mystic. However, Tozer does not discuss ecstatic phenomena.

Nevertheless while the insight of the enraptured heart is important to Tozer, it must always be verified with Scripture.⁵

1 Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God, 150.

2 Tozer, That Incredible Christian, 66.

3 Tozer, Of God and Men, 66-67.

4 Tozer, Born After Midnight, 142.

5 Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God, 124-25.

Final Stage--Union or Fusion

As was indicated briefly in connection with the definition of mysticism in Chapter I, page , and Chapter III, page 80, there are two principal forms, union mysticism and fusion mysticism. In the former, the predominant form in Christian mysticism, the soul and the Absolute or God are united though not fused. In the Biblical tradition, as the Hasidic writer, Martin Buber, has pointed out, man is still man, and God is still God. There is proximity, not identity. Some human qualities are retained, but are thoroughly divinized. Man very clearly is not God. God is immanent in the creature, but God is also transcendent. This is the position held by Tozer.

In fusion mysticism, the soul's identity is lost to God, as a Sufi mystic exclaimed, "I am God," in the sense that his own individuality and being have been replaced by God, have been absorbed by God. There is no difference between the soul and God, or the That is Thou, as the Chandogya Upanishad states it.¹ Eckhart and John of the Cross lean toward fusion mysticism, though such is not officially approved by the Roman Catholic Church.

¹ Cited by Aldous Huxley, The Perennial Philosophy, Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1962, 4.

There is absolutely no evidence of fusion mysticism in Tozer. His strong Biblical base with its insistence on the transcendence of God would clearly preclude such. Man is in relationship with God. He has not become annihilated in God. There is a frontal encounter of two distinct beings, a meeting. Eckhart goes beyond the personal God to the Godhead, the metaphysical, the impersonal, the Absolute. Tozer retains the focus on the personal as asserted in the Scriptures. His union mysticism can be characterized as spiritual marriage; Eckhart's fusion mysticism as deification. The kind of activity characterizing the mystic's mergence with Reality is conditioned by the aspect related to: the personal and ardor-filled in relation to the Bridegroom, the impersonal and negative in the Abyss, the "'still wilderness where no one is at home.'"¹

Evelyn Underhill, however, propounds that these two forms of mysticism represent two aspects of reality that are yet One, and that the doctrine of the Trinity makes it possible for Christian mysticism to reconcile both:

All the mystics feel--and the German school in particular have expressed--Dante's conviction that these two aspects of reality, these two planes of being, however widely they seem to differ, are

1 Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, 1911, New York: Meridian, 1955, 346.

One. Both are ways of describing man's partial contacts with that Absolute Truth . . . that Triune Fact . . . which is God.¹

. . . it is of the essence of the Christian religion to combine personal and metaphysical truth . . . ²

Relation to the World

One of the big problems in reference to mysticism as far as the average person is concerned is that he sees it as a withdrawal from the world and condemns it for this. There are various "schools" of mysticism, and some of them do indeed advocate permanent withdrawal from the world, the Catholic enclosed orders such as the Carmelites and Trappists being examples. However, such permanent withdrawal is not inherent in mysticism, though some form of temporary withdrawal is requisite. The matter of relation to the world is contingent upon the extent of the withdrawal and its duration.

In Tozer's case, the withdrawal was limited and it continued so. The world then was not to be deserted, but sanctified. Nevertheless, the unbelieving non-Christian was not to be associated with in any significant degree, except to lead him to Christ, since his values and life-style would be incongruous with that of the devout believer. In

¹ Ibid., 344.

² Ibid.

this sense, the unbelieving world was a threat and for some perhaps a temptation.

So as to maintain a degree of withdrawal for a life focused on God, some psychological distancing appears to have occurred in Tozer, a reducing of personal interactions and a sort of emotional aloofness, even from his family. And yet he basically continued a life in the world, pastoring a church in the midst of a metropolis and raising a large family. The matter of relation to the world as it concerns Tozer's thought will be further discussed in Chapter VI.

Moralism

Tozer's marked moralism was pointed out in Chapter III during the discussion of his Evangelical characteristics.¹ However, Tozer does not devote a great deal of space to discussing moral development. He insists that if one is right with God, morality will fall into place.

Tozer is unlike Eckhart who insists that God transcends the difference between good and evil. Tozer, reflecting the Biblical perspective, does think in terms of good and evil.

¹ See pp. 87ff.

Emphasis on Action or on
Prayer and Suffering

For Fundamentalist Evangelicals the principal social concern can be said to be evangelism, reaching the lost for Christ. Tozer's denomination, The C&MA, is heavily focused on missions, especially in primitive places. Such an outreach becomes a mode of sanctification as well as a form of action. Tozer being in an American pastorate of The C&MA cooperated in its emphasis on missions, the missionary conference being the highlight of the church year. Yet Tozer did not actually write on missions, but rather on cultivating the state of spirit which would lead a person to the mission field, uphold him there, and produce fruit through him.

Tozer does not deal much with the type of good works which are acceptable, though presumably there are a variety which he would approve. Tozer's own life was not spent on the foreign mission field, but rather was a life with its "action" operating in terms of study, writing, preaching, and family. He tends thus towards the eschatological, the contemplative, rather than the incarnational, the active. But the antimonies of withdrawal and engagement are constantly there. His is a sanctification in but not of this world.

While he would undoubtedly favor one's being

Christ-like in performing works and thus setting a good example, there is no recommendation of a literal imitation of Jesus' words and deeds. Suffering as sought after is not the Protestant pattern. Accepting it when it comes is another matter. Thus, suffering does not have a major role in Tozer's mystical thought, unlike more emphatically ascetical traditions.

Summary

The distinctive features of Tozer's mystical thought can be stated. Most conspicuous are Biblical focus, Christocentrism, and moralism. It is a mysticism for those out in the world, including and perhaps primarily laity, and for those serving in the world. Thus, action, service is presumed. Withdrawal for prayer can not be complete.

The central idea is "Christ in me, the hope of glory." Theologically, Tozer's thought is in line with the Augustinian and Dionysian. Hence, it is neo-Platonic rather than Aristotelian. His ethnic or geographical emphasis is northern and somewhat eastern. Of post-Reformation writers he is most sympathetic to those that have long been accorded a favorable response from Protestants, such as the Quietists, or to writers with Protestant backgrounds especially literary writers.

His pragmatic purpose is strong--to initiate beginners into the path of deep spirituality and

to give a certain amount of guidance in reference to it.

As different "schools" of spirituality synthesize elements of contemplation and service in a variety of ways, one can raise the question as to what characterizes Tozer's synthesis. Less contemplative than the enclosed Catholic orders, but providing an external service which they forfeit is his basic position. Service is not necessarily restricted to certain channels, though favoring missions. One wonders if Tozer's similarities are most to the Augustinians, the Franciscans, the Dominicans--or the Mill Hill Missionaries.¹ He probably blends aspects of all in a unique synthesis.

¹ The Mill Hill Missionaries are devoted exclusively to the propagation of the Gospel among unevangelized peoples. For further information, see The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 9, 851.

CHAPTER VI
TOZER'S CONCEPT OF MAN'S RELATIONSHIP
TO THE WORLD

The active is not one of God's "darlings,"
but he is one of God's "friends."¹

Introduction

Having examined Tozer's conceptual approach to God, this study will next examine further his concept of man's relationship to the world.

It is a paradox that Tozer, whose whole emphasis was on the interior life, was a preacher in a denomination with an extraordinary outer focus, the foreign mission field. In 1955 The C&MA, though a relatively small denomination, was the sixth largest missionary society in the world.² The explanation for this paradox perhaps can be that it takes greatness of interior, spiritual strength to sustain the extensive outreach which missions, especially foreign

¹ Walter Hilton, The Scale of Perfection, I, xliv, pp. 107-8, cited in Joseph E. Milosh, The Scale of Perfection and the English Mystical Tradition, Madison, Milwaukee, and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966, 25.

² "Alliance Missions on the March," The Alliance Weekly, May 11, 1955, 90:19, 20.

missions, represent. Missionary activity can be regarded as a form of giving, a form of love, and requires an intensity of love to sustain it. Tozer, favoring the mystical inner intensity of love, reflects a climate of love in The C&MA undergirding the outreach. Thus, in The C&MA the inner intensity is paralleled by the outer intensity; the greatness of mystical inreach to the depths of the soul is here correlated with the strength of outreach to the far corners of primitive mission fields. The latter is in a way fueled by the former. Tozer thus is on one side of the coin, missionaries on the other; love manifests itself, and effectiveness in manifestation requires being based in the Spirit. This is not to say that missions constitute the only manifestation of the Spirit, but that they can be a particularly powerful manifestation.

Evelyn Underhill writing earlier in the century in England observed that it was a ". . . a day when all the emphasis falls on the busy saints, and on social action rather than spiritual depth. . ."¹ This emphasis has since become even more marked, especially in the United States. Yet Tozer has been one of a few voices sounding the appeal for spiritual

¹ Evelyn Underhill, "Introduction," Letters of Direction, Thoughts on the Spiritual Life from the Letters of the Abbé de Tourville, trans. by Lucy Menzies, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1959, 9.

depth. It must be examined how this concern for depth is related to the society at large.

As indicated in Chapter I, the term "world" refers to the practical, everyday world of ordinary experience, the life of average people." Tozer defines "world" as "the Bible name for human society"¹ and asserts that regenerated man is inwardly separated from society.² Thus, man lives in the world, at least to some extent, but is not of it.

Tozer's basic principle in connection with man's relationship to God is the priority of the internal. And the bulk of his writing is concerned with cultivating enrichment of the spirit. Comparatively little space is devoted to discussion of man's relation to society. Tozer's basic position is that if man is right with God he will be right in his relationships with men. Trying to foster correct relations with men without a good God-man relationship is regarded as essentially powerless. That is, effective service in the world is contingent upon being rightly related to God and possessing His Spirit. Even the Lord Himself did no work until he had been anointed with the Holy Spirit:

1 A. W. Tozer, Of God and Men, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1960, 40.

2 Ibid.

It is highly significant that our Lord, though He was very God of very God, did no work until He had been anointed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38). The Son did His work of love as a Spirit-anointed Man; His power derived from the Spirit of power.¹

Christ's gift of the spirit of love enables man to relate to a supernatural society. Christ may enter man's life and raise it through adoration and the cross.

Tozer in advocating primacy of the interior in one's relationship to man is consistent with his having accorded primacy of this in relationship to God. Further, he states that "our first responsibility is not to the public but to God and our own souls."²

Other writers hold basic positions which deny the contrast between contemplation and action; that is, it is not a matter of choosing one or the other. Teresa of Avila in the Seventh Mansion observes that " . . . the only repose that these souls enjoy is of an interior kind; of outward repose they get less and less."³ Johnston regards contemplation itself as

1 A. W. Tozer, "The Holy Spirit Is Indispensable," The Alliance Witness, March 7, 1962, 97:5, 2.

2 A. W. Tozer, "Religion Can Be a Front or a Fount," The Alliance Witness, September 8, 1954, 89:36, 2.

3 Teresa, Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, Ch. 4, cited in William Johnston, Silent Music, New York: Harper & Row, 1974, 87. The italics are in the original.

activity: ". . . the dichotomy between contemplation and action is a false statement of the problem since contemplation is activity--the highest form of activity. . ."¹ Tozer does retain the dichotomy. However, he insists on balance: necessary are both praying and working, worship and service; the problem is one of balance.² He asserts the necessity for the practical service of Martha and the adoring vision of Mary, both sisters present at once.³

In justification of the significance of the interior for promoting effectiveness in activity, John Tauler observes that mystical prayer generates a unified mind, and united forces are strongest.⁴ The Imitation of Christ states: ". . . of a clean heart springth the fruit of good life."⁵ Further, it points out that zeal and intent in doing good deeds are important.⁶ Hilda Graef observes that the

1 Johnston, 90.

2 A. W. Tozer, "There Are Two Sides to the Christian Life," The Alliance Weekly, December 1, 1954, 89:48, 2.

3 Ibid.

4 The Sermons and Conferences of John Tauler, the Illuminated Doctor, trans. by Walter Elliott, Washington, D.C.: Apostolic Mission House, 1910, 68.

5 The Imitation of Christ, ed. by Edward J. Klein, trans. by Richard Whitford, New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1943, 155.

6 Ibid.

image of God is at the root of all mystical theology.¹

Classification in Terms of
Niebuhr's Categories

Having indicated somewhat of Tozer's basic position, next will be an examination of it in connection with the five modes of relation between Christ and the world indicated by H. Richard Niebuhr in his Christ and Culture.² The first type, Christ Against Culture, is composed of those who reject the world of culture and largely isolate themselves from civilization. Radical Christians, as Niebuhr terms them, give exclusive loyalty to Christ. They include monastics and certain Protestant sects such as the Mennonites and Quakers. At the other extreme is the group favoring the Christ of Culture. Cultural Christians harmonize Christ and culture by simplifying the nature of Christ in a way not in the New Testament and by idealizing culture. They make common cause with non-believers and lose distinctively Christian principles. Emphasizing the social gospel, this type has been dominant in liberal Protestantism.

There are three types falling between the above extremes. The Christ Above Culture type, the synthesist, affirms both Christ and culture, adding

1 Hilda Graef, Mystics of Our Times, New York/Paramus, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1963, 236.

2 H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975.

Christ to a good civilization. Represented by Aquinas and medieval civilization, this type synthesizes ethics of culture and ethics of the gospel. The fourth type, Christ and Culture in Paradox, is a dualist position, involving "both-and." It holds together both Christ and culture, yet distinguishing between loyalty to Christ and responsibility for culture. The dualist lives in tension between two poles, having two closely related moralities. Examples are Paul and Luther. The fifth type indicated by Niebuhr is Christ, the Transformer of Culture. Closely akin to the dualist, the conversionist has a more hopeful attitude toward culture, which is converted by a regeneration of man's spirit. Christ can thus transform culture. Examples are John, Augustine, Calvin, and Wesley. Niebuhr observes that these five types are but constructs, and hence a given individual's type of thinking may have some traits from another group.

Tozer's position clearly rules out two of these five types. Tozer is unsympathetic to the second type, the cultural Christian who makes common cause with his culture. Evangelical restrictions on certain worldly amusements are one indication of distinction from the cultural Christian. Tozer's frequent condemnation of lukewarm Christians and of entertainment-covetous Christians also indicates his deviation from

this category. The third type, the synthesist, is not found in modern life according to Niebuhr, and thus would not apply to Tozer.

Of the remaining three types, Tozer most approximates the dualist. This position sees much sin in man and corruptness of human culture in view of the holiness of God, but God nevertheless in His grace sustains that culture. One of the paradoxes is that man is a sinner and yet righteous. There is a tension between wrath and mercy. As with Luther, Tozer's view is that Christ provides the principles of the moral life, the how, the direction; though He does not directly govern external actions, the what, the content, coming from culture. Cultural laws do not have quite the same importance as the laws of Christ. However, for cultural and synthetic Christians, the cultural law is obeyed. For Tozer, change is favored mainly in the religious aspect of life, not in the culture. For example, in reference to the problem of drinking, Tozer would advocate changing the individual, not the laws on drinking. Further, if man has a proper relationship to God, he would not be inclined to steal. Thus, Tozer advocates getting to the root of a problem by eliminating its cause, rather than just patching up the surface.

However, Tozer has some characteristics found in type one, the radical Christian. The C&MA would

be classified as a sect, a separatist group focusing on perfectionism. However, having a far less total rejection than the Amish, The C&MA functions within modern society though rejecting some portions of it, especially in entertainment. As with the radical Christian, Tozer emphasizes the individualistic ideal of soul-regeneration. The fifth type, conversion of culture, is not prominent in Tozer.

Augustine, who is on Tozer's list of recommended books, is mainly the third type, a synthesist. He sees Christ as restoring what has been perverted in culture. However, falling short of universalism, he yet has a dualism more radical than in the fourth type, foreseeing an eschatological spiritual society of the elect in eternal parallelism with the damned.¹ Tozer with his missionary orientation aims at offering the possibility of conversion to all and raising up an especially select group.

Tozer's Basic Position

The next consideration is to examine Tozer's basic position in somewhat more detail before moving to a contrast of it with some of the thirty-five recommended works in reference to certain basic categories.

Tozer's writings focus on God and on cultivating

¹ Ibid., 216.

spiritual uplift toward Him. He is not primarily or significantly focused on the world. He rarely discusses specific issues in the world such as labor laws, racism, and other forms of discrimination. Since the world is not his primary concern, his discussion of it is not as fully developed as is the spiritual and thus this aspect of his thought is not as readily accessible to the reader.

Tozer is typical of Fundamentalist Evangelicalism in putting chief emphasis on salvation of the individual, rather than on reformation of the sins of society, for it is believed by many Evangelicals that conversion of everyone would cure social and all other problems.¹ However, Tozer is against withdrawing from society so as to mortify the old Adam:

There have been those who have thought that to get themselves out of the way it was necessary to withdraw from society; so they denied all natural human relationships and went into the desert or the mountain or the hermit's cell to fast and labor and struggle to mortify their flesh. While their motive was good it is impossible to commend their method. For it is not scriptural to believe that the old Adam nature can be conquered in that manner. It is altogether too tough to be killed by abusing the body or starving the affections. It yields to nothing less than the cross.²

¹ William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, Revised Edition, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950, 355.

² A. W. Tozer, The Root of the Righteous, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1955, 65-66.

For Tozer the purpose of the Christian religion is to be like God so that one can act like God:

The supreme purpose of the Christian religion is to make men like God in order that they may act like God. In Christ the verbs to be and to do follow each other in that order.¹

But the acting like God in relation to the world is seen as primarily spiritual rather than social, societal. For example, The C&MA missions do not emphasize medical or educational service, but concentrate on spiritual conversion and growth so as to raise up a select people.

Tozer states that Christians are in the world to witness, to speak to men about God and to speak to God about men:

We Christians are left in the world to witness, and while we have breath we must speak to men about God and to God about men. How then shall we escape the snare of words without deeds?

It is simple, though not easy. First, let us say nothing we do not mean. Break the habit of conventional religious chatter. Speak only as we are ready to take the consequences. Believe God's promises and obey His commandments. Practice the truth and we may with propriety speak the truth. Deeds give body to words. As we do acts of power our words will take on authority and a new sense of reality will fill our hearts.²

1 Tozer, Of God and Men, 58. The italics are in the original.

2 A. W. Tozer, Born After Midnight, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1959, 35.

Tozer, however, does not rule out other forms of service. He asserts that when there is an evil in world conditions, one should make an effort to improve the conditions:

To "accept the universe" does not mean that we are to accept evil conditions as inevitable and make no effort to improve them. So to teach would be to cancel the plain teachings of the Scriptures on that point. Where a situation is contrary to the will of God, and there are clear promises concerning it in the Scriptures, it is our privilege and obligation to pray and labor to bring about a change.¹

Deeds of mercy to suffering humanity are appropriate for the Christian: "The more perfectly we know God the more we will feel the desire to translate the new-found knowledge into deeds of mercy toward suffering humanity."² These deeds of mercy are generally on a one-to-one basis rather than operating through an institutional framework.

Fant describes Tozer's position in this regard:

But while emphasizing the essentially spiritual approach to missions, Tozer would not neglect man's common needs. He protested that good people have frequently scorned the "social gospel" and have tended to forget the physical needs of their fellow mortals.³

1 Ibid., 65-66.

2 A. W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, New York: Harper & Row, Publisher, 1961, 123.

3 David J. Fant, Jr., A. W. Tozer, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1964, 101.

There is then for Tozer an imperative to service:

" . . . as the knowledge of God becomes more wonderful, greater service to our fellow men will become for us imperative."¹

However, in Tozer's view such service to the present age is not the Christian's first duty. Rather, sanctification of the person comes first.

Now I have often tried to make the point that truths that are compelled to stand alone never stand straight and are not likely to stand long. Truth is one but truths are many. Scriptural truths are interlocking and interdependent A statement may be true in its relation to other truths and less than true when separated from them.²

To teach that the filling with the Holy Spirit is given to the Christian to provide "power for service" is to teach truth, but not the whole truth. Power for service is but one effect of the experience, and I do not hesitate to say that it is the least of several effects. It is least for the very reason that it touches service, presumably service to mankind; and contrary to the popular belief, "to serve this present age" is not the Christian's first duty nor the chief end of man.

As I have stated elsewhere, the two great verbs that dominate the life of man are be and do. What a man is comes first in the sight of God. What he does is determined by what he is, so is is of first importance always. The modern notion that we are "saved to serve," while true, is true only in a wider context, and as understood by busy Christians today it is not true at all.³

1 Ibid.

2 A. W. Tozer, The Incredible Christian, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1964, 36.

3 Ibid., 36. The italics are in the original.

Tozer continues:

To purge the stream it was necessary to purify the fountain; and to reform human conduct it is necessary to regenerate human nature. The fundamental be must be sanctified if we would have a righteous do, for being and doing are related as cause and effect, as father and son.¹

Tozer in Comparison with Works
on His Recommended List

Having presented salient aspects of Tozer's thought concerning man's relationship to the world, this study will next consider a comparison thereof with works on Tozer's list of recommended works so as to see some similarities and contrasts. Again, the aim of the presentation is to highlight, not to be exhaustive. The analysis will be in terms of categories, which were derived from an examination of the subject matter.

Why

The first category concerns why the Christian should have a relationship to the world. For Tozer as there is no Biblical authorization for withdrawal from the world, relationship to it is necessary. Further, he believes that it is the will of God that individuals be both holy and useful.

I do not believe that it is the will of God that we should seek to be happy, but

¹ Ibid., 37. The italics are in the original.

rather that we should seek to be holy and useful. The holy man will be the useful man and he's likely to be a happy man too . . . ¹

Tozer and most of the writers he recommended agree that service is not fully effective unless it is based upon contemplation, that it has greater power when united with vision of God. The Cloud of Unknowing, for example, asserts that one can not be fully active unless one is partly contemplative,² but adds that there will be no need for mercy in the world to come.³

John Tauler observes that one should do God's will--if He wants one to be passive, one should be so; and if He wants one to be active, one should be this.⁴ Francis DeSales argues that to prove one loves his neighbor, one must not fly his company.⁵

What

The next category concerns what mode of relationship one should have to the world. Tozer

1 A. W. Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc, 1966, 104.

2 The Cloud of Unknowing, trans. by Clifton Wolters, Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1961, 63.

3 Ibid., 80-81.

4 The Sermons and Conferences of John Tauler, 115.

5 Saint Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, ed. and trans. by John K. Ryan, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950, 135.

favors an inner separation from the world, manifest in part by prohibitions of worldly amusements. However, there is not to be isolation from the world, for one must live among his fellow man. The secular must be sanctified, and by means of our attitude towards it:

Some of the great saints . . . managed to achieve the sanctification of the secular, or perhaps I should say the abolition of the secular. Their attitude toward life's common things raised those above the common and imparted to them an aura of divinity. These pure souls broke down the high walls that separated the various areas of their lives from each other and saw all as one; and that one they offered to God as a holy oblation acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.¹

Thomas R. Kelly asserts that one can be in the world and also above it: "One walks in the world yet above the world as well . . . yet never losing the sense of Presence."²

John of Ruysbroeck favors a balance of action and contemplation. He observes that God's flowing out always demands a flowing back,³ an eternal outflow into charity and the virtues and an eternal return with inward hunger for the taste of God.⁴

1 Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God, 54.

2 Thomas R. Kelly, A Testament of Devotion, New York: Hodder & Stoughton Limited, 1943, 80.

3 John of Ruysbroeck, The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, ed. by Evelyn Underhill, trans. by Dom C. A. Wynschenk, London: John M. Watkins, 1951, 103.

4 Ibid., 124.

Brother Lawrence avers that he was more united to God in his outward employment than when in devotion in retirement,¹ adhering to God in time of action as in time of prayer.²

H. L. Hubbard in his Introduction to Richard Rolle's The Amending of Life points out that when Rolle reached the mystical unitive stage he left hermit life and became a missionary, telling his experiences to all who wished to follow.³

The Imitation of Christ asserts that God sends us into the world to have great battles, not temporal joys.⁴

Laurence Scupoli argues that " . . . in itself the conversion of souls is dearer to God than the mortification of an irregular desire. . ." ⁵

John Tauler propounds that man's likeness to God is in his power of combining interior restful joy with exterior activity.⁶ Also he asserts:

1 Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God, London: Samuel Bagster & Sons Limited, n.d., 28.

2 Ibid., 34.

3 H. L. Hubbard, "Introduction," Richard Rolle, The Amending of Life, A.P., ed., trans. by H. L. Hubbard, London: John M. Watkins, 1922, 27.

4 The Imitation of Christ, 153.

5 Laurence Scupoli, The Spiritual Combat, ed. and trans. by W. H. Hutchings, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1940, 6.

6 The Sermons and Conferences of John Tauler, 437.

For if when God calls me to His outward work and I turn inward, then the inner life avails me nothing; and if He would lead me inward and I yet go outward, then my outward labor for Him comes to naught.¹

Gerhart Tersteegen also argues that one must be active when God makes one active, but that one should act gently, calmly, without strain.² He does not advise against all intercourse with friends and books, but warns against excess.³

John of the Cross insists that the more completely one is annihilated for God's sake, the more united to God, the greater is the work one accomplished.⁴

How

The third category concerns in what manner one's relationship to the world should operate. Tozer believes one should be filled by God first so that one has something to give, service growing naturally out of an overflowing heart. Also, he who has some detachment from the world, Tozer argues, is more able to help it.⁵ One should serve in the useful ways

1 Ibid., 566.

2 Gerhart Tersteegen, The Quiet Way, trans. by Emily Chisholm, New York: Philosophical Library, 1950, 47.

3 Ibid., 50.

4 Saint John of the Cross, Ascent of Mount Carmel, Third Revised Edition, ed. and trans. by E. Allison Peers, Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1958, 194.

5 Tozer, Man: The Dwelling Place of God, 174.

outlined in the Scriptures.¹ Spreading the gospel, not setting up institutions per se, is the principal thing. Religious organizations, such as the church, mission boards, etc., may be used for spreading the gospel, but witnessing may also be on a one-to-one basis. In addition, Tozer asks how one can sanctify the ordinary:

How can we sanctify the ordinary and find true spiritual meaning in the common things of life? The answer has already been suggested. It is to consecrate the whole of life to Christ and begin to do everything in His name and for His sake.²

Resistance and opposition from the world are dealt with, according to Tozer, by means of the superior power and strength evoked through mystical development.

Bernard of Clairvaux insists upon prior filling with fraternal charity:

But care must be taken to expend upon one's neighbors only that charity which has been received in fullness from God, otherwise our poverty will soon be a burden to others: "Be a reservoir filled with love, and not merely a canal."³

In A Guide of True Peace, it is observed that

1 Tozer, "There Are Two Sides to the Christian Life," 2.

2 Tozer, Born After Midnight, 69.

3 M. Corneille Halflants, OCSO, "Introduction," The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux; On the Song of Songs I, 2 vols., trans. by Kilian Walsh, Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1976, II, xxv; Sermon 18:3, 6.

Martha did what was right, but because she did it in her own spirit, Jesus rebuked her.¹

Walter Hilton offers some excellent advice:

. . . whatso he do outward of worldly business, he have aye God in his mind, setting his thought and his intent aye to do his worship and that he shape him for to think, that God is aye present ghostly before his eyes, and seeth all that he doeth and thinketh.²

He indicates further that in dealing with one's fellow Christian, one should turn his soul to Christ, then abstain from beholding the outer man, and turn one's inner man to beholding the fellow's inner man as made to the image and likeness of God.³

Degree

The fourth category for examination concerns Degree. Tozer insists that a substantial degree of worshipping is essential before service can be effective:

. . . no one can be a worker who is not first a worshiper. Labor that does not spring out of worship is futile and can only be wood, hay and stubble in the day that shall try every man's works.⁴

1 A Guide to True Peace, compiled chiefly from the writings of Fenelon, Guyon, and Molinos, 1839, anonymous (William Backhouse and James Janson), ed., New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1946, 91.

2 Walter Hilton, The Goad of Love, ed. by Clare Kirchner, London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952, 103.

3 Ibid., 135.

4 Tozer, Born After Midnight, 125.

He states:

To be a Christian it is necessary that he serve his generation as well as his God.

The big problem is to keep the two elements of the Christian life in proper balance. Martha and Mary are sisters and we need both.¹

He continues:

Just now Martha is all over the premises, but where is Mary? I wish someone would find her soon.²

The degree of cultural aspects in the personal life of the "saved saint," according to Tozer, may be considered. As indicated in reference to his personal life, possessions are allowable, a supply adequate to meet one's needs which in actuality are not too large. One, however, must not be "possessed" by one's possessions, but must freely relinquish control of them to God. Human affections are natural and nowhere proscribed in Scripture. Hence, wife and children are not forbidden. Worldly pleasures do not satisfy and thus are regarded as a waste of time as well as detracting from one's "pursuit of God."

Conflicts in values, spiritual and cultural, would preferably be resolved by Tozer in putting God first in one's life. In cases where the resolution of a conflict was not readily apparent, he would

¹ Tozer, "There Are Two Sides to the Christian Life," 2.

² Ibid.

- favor 1) searching the Scriptures for an answer, and
2) seeking God's will by other means, such as prayer.

Distribution of resources, such as time, money, and involvement, for relation to God and for relation to the world should, in Tozer's thinking, be dealt with by making a total commitment to God and seeking His will in such distribution. This would, of course, include executing one's responsibilities and obligations. The doing all for God would spiritualize one's life in culture. Tozer offers no set formulas. One must seek God's will.

The extent of the envisioned remaking of the world is contingent upon the remaking of the individual in God. Such a process is preparatory to a purification of culture, this purification being directed by God in His way.

Francois Fénelon advises that one should change his actions less and change rather the disposition which makes him act.¹ Further, one should divide himself between two types of duties: those to others' needs, and those to our needs, the right balance depending on each person.² In writing to people at court, Fénelon states that they may par-

1 Francois Fénelon, Christian Perfection, ed. by Charles F. Whiston, trans. by Mildred Whitney Stillman, New York and London: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1947, 8.

2 Ibid., 19.

ticipate in amusements of the court in moderation and in sight of God, doing so out of friendliness and only when asked and only when consistent with piety.¹

Bernard of Clairvaux observes that it is good to save souls, but it is better to depart, and be with the Word.²

Where

The fifth category concerns Where. Tozer insists that one must have the fellowship of the brethren, one must be in a community of Christians:

. . . the Christian who withdraws from the fellowship of other Christians will suffer great soul injury as a result. Such a one can never hope to develop normally . . . We may and should go into our closet and pray to our heavenly Father in secret, but when the prayer is ended we should go back to our people.³

While not advocating such rigid restrictions as those in enclosed orders such as the Carmelites and Cistercians, Tozer does recognize the importance of interacting frequently with similarly committed Christians so as to provide a base of strength from which to reach out into the world.

1 Ibid., 7-12.

2 Life and Works of Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, ed. by Dom. John Mabillon, ed. and trans. by Samuel J. Eales, 4 vols., London: John Hodges, 1896, 4, 524.

3 Tozer, Born After Midnight, 113.

To Whom

The sixth category deals with To Whom. For Tozer, there must be "deeds of mercy to suffering humanity,"¹ and, secondly, a sharing of our increasing light with the fellow members of the household of God.²

Effects

The final category refers to Effects. According to Tozer, one manifestation of supreme love for God may be excellence: " . . . his farm may be the most productive, his business the best managed, and his mechanical skill the sharpest of anyone in his neighborhood."³ Power from the Spirit is that enabling one to excel. Bearing fruit, in general, is a sign of the Spirit of God.

Summary

Tozer's view of the Christian man's relationship to the world of secular man assumes the necessity of inner cultivation before effective service. Development of an adoring relationship to God must never be short-circuited for "busy" work. Service, however, is an imperative growing naturally out of the spiritual process. Service is to be especially oriented along spiritual lines, such as the witnessing of

1 Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy, 123.

2 Ibid., 124.

3 Tozer, The Root of the Righteous, 156.

Christ to the world and sharing our growing light with fellow Christians. But deeds of mercy toward suffering humanity will also be manifest, as may efforts to improve evil conditions. However, Tozer does not focus on specific social ills as targets for service.

Tozer's view of man's relationship to the world can perhaps be represented in the schematism of two overlapping circles, the world and the Christian. The latter lives in the world in part, and also outside the world in terms of his spiritual life. The overlapping area represents the Christian's spiritualized contacts with the world.

CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY, APPRAISAL, RECOMMENDATIONS,
CONCLUSION

This chapter will summarize briefly the emphases in Tozer's thought. There will then be a critical appraisal of Tozer's stance and contributions, as well as their implications for religious development. Finally, possibilities for further related research will be mentioned.

Summary

As is typical of writers on mystic spirituality, man's relationship to God is primary for Tozer. This is the emphasis in his thought. One's relationship to the world is secondary, but for Tozer it is nevertheless important, unlike the view of some other mystics. Worship precedes service, for it has greater significance. Hence, in cases of conflict man's relationship to God takes precedence.

In reference to techniques and methods for mystic prayer, Tozer as is frequent in Western Christianity advocates withdrawal. However, this is only for very brief periods, a portion of a day generally. Wholesale withdrawal from the world is

not the norm in Protestantism. Basically life in the world is the lifestyle advocated, including family life and the possibility of secular occupation.

Prayer, time with God, should in Tozer's eyes involve the open Bible. However, highly detailed modes of meditation and stages of prayer are not discussed in Tozer, for he writes mainly for the beginner, hoping to induce him to enter the mystic trail and indicating somewhat of the travail it entails. Repetitive prayer is not specifically advocated by Tozer, though a rather oblique reference to it is made. The utter passivity of pure Quietism is not recommended either. Some use of will to guide the process is seen by Tozer as advisable.

Appraisal

Next is a critical appraisal of Tozer's stance. The level of mysticism presented in Tozer's writings is not the most advanced, as in the Seventh Mansion of Teresa of Avila, nor is it fused mysticism, as in Eckhart. The reasons for this level of development are probably the following: 1) those living in the world, especially with family responsibilities and time necessary to provide for their needs, do not ordinarily have the freedom nor adequate opportunity to develop to those later stages; 2) Tozer is writing to introduce the mystical process to his reader, not

to guide those far along. Yet by recommending works which deal with the later stages, such as John of the Cross' Dark Night of the Soul, Tozer is presumably favoring a fairly high level of mystical development.

Also, it seems quite likely that Tozer experienced the realities of which he wrote. There is a ring of truth, an authenticity which mere head knowledge is not likely to generate. Further, members of his congregation¹ regarded him as a mystic, however they may have defined the term. Also, Tozer lists writers who he says helped him the most:

"Nicholas Herman and that other Nicholas of Cusa and Meister Eckhart and Fénelon and Faber."² Their works represented on his list of recommendations are clearly mystical in focus. However, it is impossible to ascertain from the written record to what stage Tozer may personally have progressed. His writing about the purificatory Dark Night suggests some encounter with it.

Probably a deficiency though understandable in terms of Tozer's audience and purpose is the absence

1 Personal interview with Clifford Westergren, September 1, 1978; telephone interviews with Ms. Pearl Fardig, February 26, 1979; Ms. Betty Brown, February 22, 1979; Forrest Tozer, February 25, 1979; and Wendell Tozer, February 25, 1979.

2 A. W. Tozer, The Divine Conquest, Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1950, 13.

of sufficient specificity in regards to technique. In view of the hazards in mystical experience, such would be advisable for those fairly far along. Simply securing advice from the recommended books is less desirable than receiving it from one's current mentor who can "tailor" it more effectively to the actual situation.

Next in this appraisal is a consideration of the contributions of Tozer to mysticism itself. Significant is his pointing out that the pious contemporary Protestant living in the world can be involved in mystic spirituality. While the Quaker, Thomas R. Kelly, propounded this in his A Testament of Devotion in 1941, yet the Quakers have traditionally aligned themselves with the Inner Light. Relatively infrequent in recent times is the advocacy of the mystic experience for more central Protestant groups.

Tozer's principal contribution is not so much a presentation of new insights, for more profound thought can be found elsewhere, as for example, in some of the medieval writers. Rather his significance lies in exploring for his generation and for his "world" of Fundamentalist Evangelical Protestantism the rich mystical storehouse of spiritual insight, both recorded and experiential. And further he is significant for his communicating by word, written and spoken, in a manner most readily accessible even

to plain folk--communicating both insights themselves as well as somewhat of methods for generating them.

It is an extraordinary step, introducing laity, living a secular life, to the mystic path, hitherto in Western Christianity mainly followed by full-time religious professionals, often walled in, separated from the world, and even separated by a wall of silence from each other. And to write in such a simple way that even the "man on the street" can follow is even more remarkable.

Tozer is important, secondly, for pointing his readers to writers in the mystical granary by frequent references to them and their works. He is significant for encouraging Protestants to read some of the works of superb spirituality written before the Reformation, even though not fully in accord with Protestant doctrines. He thus tends toward enlarging the horizon of Protestant thinking and enriching some aspects of practice. Tozer's list of thirty-five recommended works is indeed quite palatable to a Protestant, having much to say to those in the twentieth century wishing a spiritual depth and maturity. Some items are perhaps more helpful than others, those on guidance and theory than the literary. However, persons with literary sensitivities may respond more effectively to a literary mode of communication.

Thus, Tozer while hardly a popularizer can be said to be a transmitter, especially from one branch of Christianity to another and also from one epoch to another, a pioneer in this respect.

Tozer's advocacy and promulgation of mystic spirituality raises several questions as to religion today and tomorrow. First, there has been a considerable development of interest in mysticism during the twentieth century, an accelerating development, especially since the influx of Oriental forms of mysticism and the ready availability of a simplified version through Transcendental Meditation. Rather than have people chanting a mantra to a Hindu god so as to secure some degree of inner peace, it may be advisable for sincere Christians to produce somewhat comparable effects by utilization of Christian methods. Tozer has been an effective leader in his branch of Christianity. The question is how to spread the word much more widely in Protestantism about the availability of Christian mystical experience, cultivate some degree of understanding of it, and encourage people to consider commencing it. The complexity of contemporary life may well generate a need for the inner restfulness which this type of spirituality develops. And the maturity of spiritual insight it fosters is surely to be desired by the devout. Perhaps one obvious line of approach

would be to encourage more Protestant seminaries to consider offering material in the field. The researcher is aware of a few that already have: Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago offered recently a course on Luther and mysticism; Bethany Seminary, Lombard, Illinois, offered a course on the Mystic Spirituality of the Eastern Church; the University of Chicago Divinity School listed a course on Thomas Merton; a Methodist seminary in Boston offers a post-graduate course in mysticism, using in part materials by Plotinus and Georgia Harkness and taught by a librarian. Perhaps members of seminary boards and deans would need to familiarize themselves somewhat with the mystic mode so as to defuse skepticism, especially to become convinced that this type of spirituality does not negate traditional Christian practices.

By familiarizing seminarians with mystic modes of Christian development, one might open the door for introducing such to local congregations. Church schools, for example, might offer some opportunity for training in and practice of this type of prayer. In addition, even more ready availability of printed materials on the subject will increase awareness and hopefully generate interest.

Moreover, Tozer's recommending thirty-five Christian works of spirituality, the bulk of which

being pre-Reformation, is significant in breaching the gap between Christian literature of this earlier period and the Protestant world. The Protestant church has had an almost complete break with the prior stage of the Christian church, even though it has substantial treasures of spirituality, which could enrich Christian life and contribute to personal maturing. Christian education could benefit from an exploration of the classics.

Certainly in a day of highly educated young adults, when most have entered college even if not graduated from it, there is a need for a heavier diet of Christian reading material than was suitable at the turn of the century when most Protestants were fortunate if they even entered high school. Christian adults seeking a deeper prayer life would indeed find Tozer's list of value. Its thirty-five works should be quite acceptable to contemporary Protestants despite some doctrinal vagaries. Tozer's list is heavily composed of writers whose ethnic background is north European, the ethnic basis out of which Protestantism developed. Though the ethnic is not determinative of religious congeniality, yet it may offer some similarity of temperamental orientation which can strike a responsive chord. Especially in an ecumenical age there are perhaps some who are willing to explore by going past customary boundaries.

A second question in reference to Tozer's stance as to religion today and tomorrow concerns how there can be an adaptation of some of the methods being used presently in other traditions, such as Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Transcendental Meditation, and Zen Buddhism, so as to fit the theology, personality, character, lifestyle, and environment of present-day Protestants so that they may begin to experience some of the numerous benefits of the mystical way. Especially is this feasible in the rather ecumenical openness and intercultural contacts which are becoming increasingly prevalent in the latter half of the twentieth century.

A third question refers to the problem of providing adequate spiritual guidance on the mystic journey comparable to the spiritual director in Catholic and Orthodox traditions, for there are some serious hazards which the mystic must be protected against. Again, there is a role that the seminaries could play. Perhaps at some day in the future, Protestant seminaries will offer courses, offer a specialty in, or even require candidates for the ministry to take training in spiritual direction, which will include developing competence to supervise more advanced progression in Christian meditation and prayer. Such spiritual direction would not violate traditional Protestant postures, such as free

access to God without intermediaries, because counseling by the ministry on practical problems, such as family relationships, is widely prevalent, and spiritual counseling is but a further step and would have the advantage of tending to eliminate many of the practical problems.

Since this research was undertaken in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of Education in the School of Education, Health, Nursing, and Arts Professions, New York University, it might be advisable to point out that a basic problem in fostering mystic spirituality is education. Needed is an educating of both laity and professional into an awareness of the nature and advisability of mystic prayer; and educating through learning about others' satisfactory techniques and thus developing suitable methods of one's own; and educating by guiding in appropriate ways. However, a basic essential for producing mystic spirituality is a spiritual maturing. This can only in part be produced by education.

Recommendations

The final topic to be examined concerns possibilities for further research in the field. First, an analysis comparable to that produced by this research could be made of the mystic spirituality of

A. B. Simpson, founder of The C&MA, examining origin and development, so as to see parallels and contrasts with Tozer's. Secondly, some consideration could be made as to the effect of the mystical orientation of Simpson and Tozer upon The C&MA, as to whether there was some perhaps subtle though central influence or as to whether they were essentially aberrations as far as their mystical inclinations were concerned. Third, some investigation of other writers could be made as to the nature and extent of their mystical proclivities, if any, possibilities being the missionaries, Frank E. Laubach in the Philippines and E. Stanley Jones in India. One wonders what if any scholarly study has been done of the Quaker, Thomas R. Kelly, who died in 1941, or the earlier Rufus Jones. Women writers on mysticism constitute another area for possible examination, Evelyn Underhill and Georgia Harkness for example. One can but speculate as to whether there are any practicing Protestant mystics hidden in some obscure corner of American culture whose lives and works should be brought to greater visibility. Another possibility is to examine the mysticism of those originally American and Protestant, but no longer so, Thomas Merton having become Catholic and T. S. Eliot having spent most of his life in England, so as to see what needs may not have been met by the

American Protestant scene, or what mystical tendencies were originally fostered by it. Perhaps some research could draw together these threads, the Evangelical mystics, the missionary mystics, the Quakers, the women, and the migrants.

Conclusion

Protestant mysticism of the last century or so has been largely a non-typical, peripheral phenomenon, fostered frequently by a concatenation of unusual circumstances. Tozer, though peripheral to Protestantism with respect to his mysticism, is nevertheless central in terms of the total Christian tradition of mystic spirituality.

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Appendix ADr. Tozer's Recommended Books on Mysticism¹*Addendum*

DR. TOZER'S RECOMMENDED BOOKS

For those who would know "the deep things of God."

Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage	Jan van Ruysbroeck
Amendment of Life	Richard Rolle
Ascent of Mt. Carmel, The	John of the Cross
Ascent of Mt. Zion, The	Berdardeno de Laredo
Book of Eternal Wisdom	Henry Suso
Centuries of Meditations	Thomas Traherne
Christian Perfection	Fénelon
Cloud of Unknowing, The	Anonymous
Confessions	St. Augustine
Dark Night of the Soul	John of the Cross
Goad of Love, The	Walter Hilton
Guide to True Peace, A	Molinos and others
Hymns	Gerhard Tersteegen
Imitation of Christ	Thomas à Kempis
Introduction to a Devout Life	De Sales
Letters of Direction	de Tourville
On the Incarnation	Athanasius
On the Love of God	Bernard of Clairvaux
Poems	Frederick Faber
Poems	Isaac Watts
Practice of the Presence of God	Brother Lawrence
Private Devotions	Lancelot Andrewes
Proslogium	Anselm
Quiet Way, The	Gerhard Tersteegen
Revelations of Divine Love	Julian of Norwich
Scale of Perfection, The	Walter Hilton
Sermons	John Tauler
Song of Songs	Bernard of Clairvaux
Spiritual Combat, The	Lorenzo Scupoli
Spiritual Guide, The	Michael Molinos
Talks of Instruction	Meister Eckhart
Testament of Devotion, A	Thomas Kelly
Theologia Germanica (Winkworth Translation)	Anonymous
Vision of God, The	Nicholas of Cusa
Way of Christ, The	Jacob Boehme

In recommending these books Dr. Tozer did not mean to put his stamp of approval on the entire contents. Rather they were offered as products of men and women who ardently loved their Lord; if any doctrinal defects should appear these would be far overbalanced by the spiritual verities.

¹ Fant, 181.

Appendix BLetter from David J. Fant, July 25, 1977.

DAVID J. FANT
911 BETHSAIDA ROAD
RIVERDALE, GA. 30296

July 25, 1977. Until August 31
Independence, Va. Rt.1 24348

Dear Miss Harris:

Your letter of the 20th was forwarded to my summer address as above. Glad to be of assistance to you.

The recommended books listed on Page 180 of the biography was prepared by Dr. Tozer himself as a result of many inquiries. There was a copy of each in his personal library.

As to a letter of significance I would suggest you write Dr. Nathan Bailey, President of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Address Box C, Nyack, N.Y. 10960. He would be the top authority as highest officer in the Society. Second best would be Dr. Battles, both personal friends of Tozer. You might ask them to include a copy of the tribute to Tozer published in the Alliance Witness following Tozer's sudden and unexpected death. Dr. Bailey's sister Anita is Managing Editor of the paper and served under Tozer. She would be glad to cooperate I am sure. Feel free to tell them you are making the request at my suggestion. I would be glad to do it for you, but since you are using my biography your professor might prefer someone else.

If I can be of any further help feel free to contact me. My dear friend is worth of every encomium.

Success to you and best wishes,

David J. Fant

Appendix CLetter from David J. Fant, June 21, 1979.

DAVID J. FANT
911 BETHSAIDA ROAD
RIVERDALE, GA. 30286

June 21, 1979

Dear Miss Harris:

Glad to learn of the progress on your thesis.

No change is required on the enclosed letter of mine dated July 25, 1977.

The recommended books were prepared by Dr. Tozer and were a part of his library in Toronto.

Your letter came at an opportune time as I leave at the end of the month as usual for two months in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.

Excuse poor typing. Now retired, I hammer out my own correspondence.

Best wishes,

David J. Fant