

# The Great Illuminator

by A.W. Tozer

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*A.W. Tozer emphasizes the necessity of divine illumination for true understanding of theology and the experience of revival in the Christian life.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:16

**Topics:** "Spiritual Revival", "Divine Illumination"

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## Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the distinction between the natural mind and the divinely illuminated mind, illustrating that true understanding of Christ comes not from human reasoning but from divine revelation. He cites Peter's confession of Christ and Paul's assertion that acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord is only possible through the Holy Spirit. Tozer warns against 'dead orthodoxy,' where one may possess theological knowledge without spiritual vitality, and highlights that true revival occurs when individuals experience a quickening of their spiritual life, igniting a deeper understanding of familiar doctrines. He asserts that revival is rooted in truth and that illumination is essential for genuine faith.

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## Transcript

The New Testament draws a sharp line between the natural mind and the mind that has been touched by divine fire. When Peter made his good confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), our Lord replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (16:17). And Paul expresses much the same thing when he says, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3).

The sum of what I am saying is that there is an illumination, divinely bestowed, without which theological truth is information and nothing more. While this illumination is never given apart from theology, it is entirely possible to have theology without the illumination. This results in what has been called "dead orthodoxy," and while there may be some who deny that it is possible to be both orthodox and dead at the same time I am afraid experience proves that it is. Revivals, as they have appeared at various times among the churches of the past, have been essentially a quickening of the spiritual life of persons already orthodox.

The revivalist, as long as he exercised his ministry as a revivalist, did not try to teach doctrine. His one object was to bring about a quickening of the churches which while orthodox in creed were devoid of spiritual life. When he went beyond this he was something else than a revivalist. Revival can come only to those who know truth. When the inner meaning of familiar doctrines suddenly flashes in upon the heart of

a Christian the revival for him has already begun. It may go on to be much more than this but it can never be less.

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