

Our Ultimate Teacher

A.W. Tozer:

When we think about spiritual things there is always danger that we think like men instead of like God. Theological truth cannot enter the mind as a separate substance or as an experience complete in itself. It must be grasped by the mind in an act of response; and the response is conditioned by everything that has gone before in the learner's life. Whether or not we are conscious of doing so, we invariably add something to the truth as it enters (or take something away) to make it fit into the total body of ideas we hold and call "truth."

To show how this works let us imagine two men reading the same passage of Scripture, one a Calvinist who has been brought up on Calvinistic theology from his youth, the other reared in the Arminian tradition and thoroughly indoctrinated in Arminianism. The passage they read is Hebrews 6:4-6, "It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance." The impressions the Calvinist receives from these words will differ radically from those received by the Arminian, yet neither one will be conscious of adding to, subtracting from or otherwise altering the passage in any way. Each will understand the words to mean exactly what he has been taught that they mean. The meaning he sees there will appear to him so natural, so logical and right that he will wonder how anyone can see any other. (And sadly enough each will more than likely think the other a hypocrite who receives his teaching from the devil. But that is not pertinent to this particular argument.)