

of God's unfathomable mercies glisten ever more gloriously.

Thus there is a knowledge of God which we learn and derive from Christ. But there is a far greater knowledge of God which He himself imparts, which He brings, and makes fully clear to us in the hidden parts of the soul. The mystical part of it is, that he who is the Image of the invisible God, not only shows us this image, and fascinates us with it, but he chisels this image in us. Our inner life is made conformable to the inner life of Christ. His image is imprinted upon the saints of God. The highest knowledge of God that we can obtain in the earth is, when the image of God in Christ renews the image of God in us.

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“HALLOWED BE THY NAME.”

True knowledge of God does not come from storing the memory. It only becomes this when it finds its startingpoint in the things, which the soul inwardly discerns and experiences. Everything here must go out from personal contact between us and God. There is no knowledge of light possible for one who was born blind. And as long as we do not perceive and discover God in ourselves, and are consciously affected by workings that go out from him, true knowledge of God is impossible. This is not felt by the sense of touch, but in our own immediate spiritual perception, so that not from reasoning, and not from what others have told us, but immediately from our own selves we know that God is and that God is great.

In times when defence of the faith called for

heroic sacrifice, our fathers steadily held this in front. They insisted on the fact that God had implanted the sence of himself in man (*sensus divinitatis*), and that this was the seed of all religion (*semen religionis*). But when persecution ceased, this real spiritual background of all true knowledge of God was wantonly forsaken, and far too much place was given to intellectual abstractions. Abstract knowledge of the true God superceded the knowledge which is eternal life, with the necessary result that book-learning supplanted true godliness, and that the life of the church become enervated and weak.

The Church stood not alone in this. The retreat from reality to the paper-world of abstract inventions of the mind became noticeable in every department of the higher life. Even art, and with it poetry, became at length infected with this evil virus. Forms, words, phrases, rhymes and poetastry took the place of golden speech, which springs up from the fountain of life itself. This was inevitably followed by an equally one-sided reaction, which brought nothing but emotions, simple impressions, pure sensations, with the necessary result that the consciousness was dimmed, inner perceptions became vague, thought became confused and utterances chaotic. Such was the case in poetry and literature, and such also in religion. Nothing remained except perceptions, sensations and impressions, which with unbelievers led to a return to polytheism, and made believers lose themselves in sentimental Mysticism.

For let it be well understood, all this is dominated, in every domain, including that of religion, by strong currents in all of human life.

Things are only right when the workings of the emotions and of the intellect unite in proper equipoise and in pure harmony. But sin can not tolerate this. It continually breaks the equipoise and banishes harmony, so that first, there is a time when the intellect kills the feeling, and then there is a period when the feeling sentences the intellect to silence. And in the face of it all, it is ever the sacred calling of preaching to form just estimates of every abuse, and to jealously urge the restoration of equipoise and of pure harmony.

In these meditations on the knowledge of God, we have first considered, therefore, the working of the hidden fellowship from every side. We have seen what the imagination, inspiration, the working of the will, love, the impressions obtained from nature, from man, and finally from Christ, contribute to the true knowledge of God. The reality of the secret walk with God had first to be made palpable. This was done the more easily because it harmonizes with the trend of the age.

Emphasizing the reality of inner sensations agrees with current notions of the times. Barren trifling with ideas in religion has at length also repelled the common mind. Men crave the things that can be felt and handled and immediately enjoyed, and that can pleasantly affect the entire personality. But it would be an unpardonable fault, which would soon avenge itself, if this were all. The Scripture does not allow it. The Church enters its protest against it. Every child of God asks for more.

In Scripture the significance of the name is profound and far-reaching. The name of the

Lord calls us out from the flood of emotions to higher and clearer consciousness. The feeling is a gift of God, but the gift of consciousness as a feature of the image of God in us far excels it. Feeling can do no more than furnish the material which the consciousness thinks upon, classifies and transposes into clearness of form. Even the plant is sensitive. In an animal feeling is sometimes exceedingly fine. But neither plant nor animal received the glorious capacity of the higher consciousness, which enables man to take in everything, to scrutinize and to estimate things in their significance, to appreciate, and to mirror them in his own thought. Consciousness makes man a King. In feeling he suffers and endures.

Consciousness has all sorts of forms. A form for art. A form for the moral, and a form for the religious life. But of all these forms it is always consciousness first, in which man finds himself back again, becomes capable of mighty action, and lifts himself up to the spheres of the eternal Word. One-sided absorption in mysticism has therefore always ended in degeneration. Hence the Church must ever and anon send out the sacred summons to elevate the treasure of our religion to the height of our consciousness. Mysticism without more is darkness, and chaos. In our consciousness is the light.

In behalf of the knowledge of God this light is first kindled by the Name of the Lord. This is at once understood, when on our knees before the Eternal, we first address him in general as God, and then proceed to call him Abba, Father. He who in addressing God quietly, with emphasis

and attention calls him: My dear Father, perceives at once, that by this name a world of thought passes through his heart, and that from the high and holy places God comes nearer to the soul. The name is what I call someone, and I can only name him whom I know. The name is immediately connected with the knowledge of the person. It is the summary in a single word of what comes before me in the person. And though our human names are thread-worn, so that they no longer express anything, yet we look differently upon the man whom we hear addressed by name, than upon the stranger who passes us in the street.

This can be applied to God in a far higher sense, in so much as the Name of the Lord is the expression of his Being. Call him by the covenant name of Jehovah, by the patriarchal name of God Almighty, as child call him Father, or address him by the full name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the Name always expresses the being. God's name is no human invention. God has given it to himself and has revealed it unto us. It conveys to us a summary knowledge of God, and brings him closer to us. It carries him into our consciousness, and explains him to us.

Without the Name of the eternal Being, religion and idolatry merge into one another; everything terminates in a dark religious perception; the ocean of polytheism presents itself to us; and personal knowledge of the personal God is more and more lost. But with the Name of the Lord, distinction presents itself. Antithesis becomes plain between false and true religion. We come personally to stand before the personal God,

and learn to know with whom we have to do, provided always that we do not allow this Name to run dead in empty sound. Sin also accounts for this. The "Our Father" is said without any thought of him, or of what the Father name implies, as though it were a dead term. It is the curse of custom, which by continuous repetition dulls the spiritual consciousness. Thus there is hasty, thoughtless and senseless use of sacred sounds, until in a moment of seriousness you turn in upon yourself, reverently repeat these holy names putting your soul into them, and you become surprised at the riches that glisten in them.

When this becomes the case, the Name of the Lord is a torch that is lighted in the consciousness, and from the darkness of the emotions, gradually and of itself the hidden being of God looms up before you with ever increasing clearness. Then you stand personally before God, and his Name always explains as much of his being, as at that moment the heart needs. And thus thoughtful consciousness can not and must not be content with stammering the Name. For then the name becomes the occasion for thinking out what it implies, and for explaining God as far as possible to the consciousness. Not every one can do this equally well. The capacity of the consciousness to absorb is very limited with one, and wonderfully great with another. Indeed there is no advance save as each one acquires knowledge of God according to the measure of his consciousness. That we should in this wise acquire knowledge of the things of the world, and of the several departments of science, and that with respect to the Name of the Lord

we should neglect the same, can never be allowed. The name of the Lord must be hallowed. Indifference with respect to this is irreconcilably opposed to the hallowing of God's Name.

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“THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND
OF THE SON, AND OF THE
HOLY GHOST.”

In our intercourse with the world and with society, intimacy is wonderfully deepened by the permission of calling a person by name. This intimacy becomes closer still, when the family name gives place to the baptismal name. Children do not know this transition. Rules of politeness only come in force when the shoes of childhood have been outgrown. These rules but intend to heighten the unconventionality of childlife, and to elevate it to nobler forms, which purposely create a certain distance between man and man, and allow individuals to develop themselves more freely. When in later years, however, closer acquaintance leads to friendship, or association in a common pursuit lessens the distance, and titles fall away, and for the first time we call one another by name, the method of intercourse modifies itself entirely. We feel ourselves at once drawn closer together, and it seems that mutual confidence but waits the chance to reveal itself.

As a rule, the higher the station of the person who allows us to call him by name, the greater the leap from the estrangement to the more confidential intercourse. It is great indeed when we call a man by his family name. It is greatest when we address him by his personal name.