

life spent with God increase, and the moments of separation from God decrease.

To cleave unto the Lord with all the heart and soul and consciousness is then at first a heavenly joy which may be tasted only once in a whole month. Gradually it becomes a communion of soul without which no week passes. By degrees it becomes an elevation of soul which repeats itself almost daily. Going on this way, this happy joy in God returns several times a day, so that even by night, upon waking, the nearness of the Lord is consciously felt. And though even so, the highest still remains beyond our reach, cleaving unto God begins to occupy ever wider room in our lives. And not intimacy with God in solitude, but intimacy with God in the midst of our busy lives becomes the booty of the soul. Then it is no more a singing after Asaph: "It is good for me to be near unto God," but it becomes a singing like Asaph from blessed experience of heart.

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"SAMUEL DID NOT YET KNOW THE LORD."

When it is asked of a person whether we know him, the meaning can be twofold. Casually, it may mean whether we would know him if we met him. With respect to his character it may mean whether we understand him. He, who on the eve of your departure for Java, entrusts an important document to your care, for some one living there, merely intends by the question whether you know him, to prevent your handing the same to the wrong person. When, however,

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some one consults his father about a business scheme with some man, the father's question in reply: "Do you know him," will mean: Are you sure that he is honorable, reliable and trustworthy as to his business ability?

This two-fold significance of knowing anyone personally must be reckoned with in Scripture and in knowledge of God. To know is always fundamentally an observation of difference. He who is not conversant with botany, only sees trees and shrubs; while he who observes the difference between oak and beech trees, oleander and rhododendron, jasmine and snowball, begonia and heliotrope, recognizes what he sees and rejoices in the wealth of it. The same is true among people. In the business street of a foreign city we see nothing but people who pass us by without speaking, while in our home town every one is familiar to us, and we even know the name sometimes of the smallest child. But this goes no further than the difference between A and B. We know people from one another. We know the difference between them. We do not mistake them in passing. Their appearance is familiar. We know them at first sight. But if we mean that closer and more intimate knowledge which enables us to form some idea of a man's character, inner life, endeavors and aims, another difference is at stake. Not the difference in clothing, facial features and outward appearance, but the distinct knowledge of a man's bearing, utterances and feelings. Such knowledge becomes a testing; an entering into the inward existence of such a person.

Where it is told of Samuel that he did not yet

know the Lord (I Sam. 3:7), it means exclusively this first outward knowledge; and not the deeper knowledge of the Divine Being, which only springs from secret communion. By night Samuel heard himself called by name. He heard it as clearly and plainly as though Eli had called him. But he did not yet know the difference between a call by name from God and a call by name from a man. Three times therefore he went to Eli, saying: "Thou didst call me." And only when Eli assured him, that he had not called him, and at last told him that it might be a call from God, a new light arose upon Samuel, and in that voice he recognized the voice of God. The voice is a wonderful mystery. Every person has his own voice. Even in the dark we recognize father, husband or brother at once by the voice. The wonder is equally great that as each man and child has a voice of his own, we are able to distinguish between them. And so has the Lord a voice of his own and it is for us to recognize the voice of God in distinction from the voice of man. He who does not understand this difference, does not know the Lord as yet. He who understands it, knows the Lord. This provisionally outward knowledge of God leads of itself to the more intimate fellowship of the Lord, whereby gradually the full, rich knowledge of the perfection of God is attained, which is eternal life.

In this knowledge of God there is a twofold dispensation. The first in Old and New Testament was the portion of patriarchs, prophets and apostles. They received a special revelation from God. God spake with them in dreams, visions and appearances, but also by internal address in

their hearts or by external address to their ears. Of course this might have been continued, so that we, everyone personally for himself, might have heard the voice of God. But it has not pleased God so to do. It has seemed good to him first to give his revelation personally to prophets and apostles, with audible voice or by visible appearance, and lastly in the incarnated Word.

Afterward, however, this has changed. Revelation given up to that time has been collected in the Scripture, and therein it has become the common good of all believers, the permanent, enduring treasure of the whole church of Christ. This does not mean to say that now there is no more secret fellowship with God, nor that God can not give anyone now personal leading and direction; but nothing more is added to revelation. To revealed truth nothing more is added. And sentimental mysticism which dreams that this is yet possible, has not been able these nineteen centuries to add a single line to the Scripture.

The method of knowing the Lord has thereby become different for us from what it was for Samuel. For us the Word is the voice of God. We do no longer hear ourselves called by name. We receive no more by audible voices new light from above. Nevertheless the same difference goes on in our behalf. The Scripture speaks to every man, but with this difference, that one does not hear God's voice in it, because he does not know God, while another in reading Scripture hears God's voice from the same, because grace has brought him to the knowledge of God.

This is hard to understand. You, who have been permitted to grasp the mystery of the Word,

and day by day are subject of the blessed, mystical operation of the same, and thereby have come to fixed, unshakable faith, you are amazed that in many families the Bible has been laid aside; that he who still reads it, finds nothing special in it; and that you are bitterly resisted, when you maintain that everyone is duty-bound to subject himself to that Word. And yet nothing is more simple. They who have broken with the Scripture, do not know the Lord. They do not recognize his voice, and do not perceive, that in the Scripture Almighty God calls to them and addresses them. This makes the separation; this digs the abyss; this divides in the same country one part of the population from the other. This causes bitterness, because they who do not know the Lord, and do not hear his address nor his voice in the Scripture, are baptized members of the Church of Christ; they not only want to be called Christian, but pride themselves on the fact that they honor Christianity as a purely moral power; so that they stand on higher vantage ground and are more enlightened, than narrow adherents of barren creeds.

This leads to ever sharper distinction between people and people. They who do not know the Lord, who do not hear his Voice, and reject his Word, are not able to put themselves in the place of their fellow-countrymen, who delight themselves in the knowledge of the Lord, who refresh themselves in listening to his voice and who have in his Word the fixed ground of their faith. While on the other hand they who know the Lord, may bear witness to the same, may openly confess it, and defend the ordinances of

God; but they are not able to impart their faith to others, and to open the inner ear of their fellowmen to the holy mysticism of our God.

There is a difference here. Among those who do not know the Lord, there are enemies of God who have stopped their ears to every voice of God; but there are also seeking, wandering spirits, who envy you your faith, and who would thank you if you might be the means in God's hand to bring them to it. Of the first, Jesus said: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine" (Matt. 7:6). Nothing can be done with them but to resist them; to suffer their scorn, and to show them the power of faith. But of the others Jesus said: "He who is not against me, is for me." On them the service of seeking love must be expended.

They are the spiritually sick, who wait for spiritual nursing of a twofold character. First that we shall treat them every one according to the nature of his spiritual malady. John the Baptist had a proper word for everyone that came to him, and Jesus administered appropriate medicine to every spiritual invalid. This implies the condemnation of those who deal with all unbelievers alike, and who thereby show that they know neither their way nor their time. And secondly this spiritual nursing posits the no less imperious claim that as believers we shall spare them offense. Nothing is more repulsive and more continuously offensive to those who have not faith, than the unspirituality of believers, their formal profession without moral and spiritual fruit, their zeal without an holy background, their bold assertions without corresponding seriousness of life. They

are inclined to accept the sacred mysteries, provided they but discover that sacred power goes out from you. When they see no such power; and perceive that fruit remains wanting; that there is no higher seriousness of life; when they hear on the contrary, of hypocrites who behind fair exteriors prove themselves inferior in character to unbelievers, they are offended, and this keeps them back from Christ.

Such was the case in the days of Samuel, when Hophni and Phineas transgressed in holy things, and Eli lacked moral courage to make serious protest. Such is the case now when he who calls himself a believer appears to be at heart a child of the world. Then the struggle becomes very fierce. O, that the children of God might understand their sacred calling, to confess their faith heroically, but above all else, by means of their family life, of their social activities, and of their seriousness of purpose; in brief, in all of life, to be preachers of Jesus Christ.

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“THEY MAKE HIM A WELL.”

In countries like ours, where water abounds, it is difficult to form an adequate idea of thirst. Hence words of Scripture like “thirsting after righteousness,” or “thirsting after the living God,” are ordinarily taken in far too weak a sense. On a hot day, after a long walk, or in times of feverish emotion, we may reach out eagerly after a cup of cold water, but this is by no means yet the thirst that overtakes people in mountainous districts, when not metaphorically, but actually, the tongue cleaves to the roof of the mouth, the