

TO KNOW GOD

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The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Dan. 11:32).

There is a primary knowledge of God which is general—an instinctive apologetic within every honest heart which, if heeded, will quickly dispose of the atheist who declares that God is nonexistent, the agnostic who insists that God is unknowable, or the pantheist who states that He is nonpersonable. It is only the fool who says in his heart, "There is no God."

There is a possessive knowledge of God which is more rare. It comes by a personal participation in saving grace and is registered within the soul by an inward witness of the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16 R. V.)

There is a progressive knowledge of God, which few, even among His own professing people, seem to understand, a going into the depths with Him and appropriating and absorbing the hidden wisdom which only His own may know, for it is written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:9, 10).

To know God thus is to share a life.

That life is not natural to us; it is eternal life, or the life of the Eternal. It is inseparably connected with the person of Christ for it is written, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). It is to live into and be possessed by the very nature of God.

To know God is to enter into a fellowship.

"Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son . . ." (1 John 1:3). It is entered only through a deep and complete cleansing; it is maintained only through a continual abiding; it is manifested always through a recognized anointing; it is a life lived within the Holy of Holies in unbroken fellowship with God. Within this range of unbroken fellowship, the soul will adoringly behold the divine glory, being ever more deeply transformed into the divine image. It will absorb the divine nature, escaping the corruption of the world. It will increasingly understand the divine will, walking under the direction of God. It will comprehend the deep things of God.

To know God is to explore a possession.

What greater treasure-trove was ever discovered than the soul's possessions in God? Paul had this concern: ". . . That I may know Him . . ." (Phil. 3:7-10).

It is possible to own yet not to enjoy; to have a possession yet not to possess it; to hold the deeds yet not to live on the estate. Many a man testifies to faith in God for salvation and sanctification who knows nothing of that progressive appropriation which only a deep abiding life in God can bring. Often sorrow must drive men there; trial, perplexity, and suffering must do their work; yet some people suffer much more than they need. A fiery baptism with the Holy Ghost which purges out sin will open the way to vast possessions of grace which only the Spirit-filled soul can comprehend.

In how a deep a measure do you know your God?

This knowledge of God is not for personal enjoyment alone. It is soon manifest for all

to see, being evidenced in many ways.

Concerning such a life two things especially will be noted:

There will be standing power.

"The people that do know their God shall be strong."

Being rooted and grounded in love, they will not be overthrown by the enemy's sudden onrush nor torn from their position by the roughest gale. The proffered dainties from the king's table will not allure them, the sevenfold heated furnace will not scare them, neither will the hungry lions turn them aside. With unswerving purpose and determined spirit they will stand, strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

There will be striking power.

"They . . . shall be strong, and do exploits." These people are not only uncompromisingly defensive; they are determinedly aggressive: as were the prophets—Elijah and others, turning back nations to God; as were the apostles—shaking continents; as were the reformers and the martyrs—willing if need be to burn, but refusing to bend.

The weak spine and palsied arm within the church of the present day is a poor comparison with these mighty heroes of faith. Evidently we have lost something—it is the deep wrought knowledge of God. It is time to take to our knees until that knowledge is regained.

To know God is to conquer. Shall we be content with less than this?—Heart & Life .

I OUGHT TO PRAY . . .

By Commissioner S. L. Brengle

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint," (Luke 18:1).

That little "ought" is emphatic. It implies obligation as high as heaven and as deep as hell, and is inescapable. Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray," and then added, "and not to faint." Men ought to pray; they ought to pray always; and they ought not to faint or grow fainthearted and cease praying.

A thousand times that text has encouraged me to pray. I confess I do not always feel like praying. There are times when my feelings are numb, when I do not seem to have access to the Heavenly Father in prayer, when I find it difficult to pray; and if I judge by my feelings, then there is no one listening to my prayer. Then these words have stirred me to pray. I ought to pray; I ought always to pray; and I should not grow faint in praying.

Prayer is more than saying words. It is the expression of earnest desire. Sometimes I have felt that my desires were not earnest, and then I have searched myself and have realized that while emotionally my desires were not earnest, volitionally they were. In the depths of my being, deeper probably than my emotions, I desired the things for which I was praying.

I have been helped to pray, by this assurance: "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Paul tells us in Col. 4:12 that Epaphras labored fervently always in prayer for his brethren, that they might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

Prayer, then, is a form of work. In my early years I worked, and worked hard, and I often went to my work not feeling a bit like working; but I expected results from my work regardless of my feelings. The farmer plows his fields often when he does not feel like it, but he confidently expects a crop from his labors, and he realizes that he ought to plow his fields. Now, if prayer is a form of work, and if our labor is not in vain in the Lord, then we ought to pray, regardless of our feelings.

If we can pray fervently with warm emotion, and that I must not cast away my confidence, should still pray, and not grow faint-hearted.

Recently when I knelt for morning prayer I felt a sort of deadness in my soul—no fervor, no access in prayer—and just then, the "accuser of the brethren," the devil, became very busy; he reminded me of things that had long since been put under the Blood, and shot fiery darts at me. I could only cry to God for help. Then the blessed Comforter reminded me that the Blood had long since covered my sins and washed me clean from their guilt and pollution, and that I must not cast away my confidence; and that my great High Priest was pleading my case, and that I must come boldly to the throne of grace. This I did, and the enemy was routed! My emotions were liberated, my spirit was free, and, oh, what a blessed time of communion I had with my Lord! I found prayer easy. If I had fainted instead of fighting the good fight of faith, the battle would have been lost, gloom would have settled upon me like a thick cloud and enshrouded my soul, and I could not have reaped, because I had not sown; I could not have received wages, because I had not labored fervently in prayer.

William Bramwell, an early Methodist preacher whose ministry was mightily used and who was mighty in prayer, said that he never went to secret prayer without reluctance, with feet that dragged, with a spirit that drooped; but as he labored in prayer, his spirit revived, and he found it often difficult to cease praying, and that his feet became like hinds' feet (see Psalm 18:33).

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