

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

BY THE LATE JOHN KAY,

I INSIST upon it, that there is but very little knowledge of God, spiritually, and as pertaineth to salvation, in the world. I have known much of him in past times by natural judgment and understanding, and through knowledge of the Bible. But what is all that? It is all cut down by that passage, “Builded an habitation of God *through the Spirit*.” If you pare off from multitudes of experimental Christians all their letter learning and natural faith, you will find but very little left. “A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.” These words will, as a measure to measure up experimental Christians, cut down strangely the bulk they measure themselves to be of. Not stretching ourselves beyond our measure, even that measure distributed to every manifested elect soul; distributed, I say, by the hand of God himself, in living experience, in a knowledge of self, and a knowledge of Christ; all besides this is chaff. It is sacrifice to the *unknown* God. Saving religion is a secret; (Ps. 25: 14;) a mystery; (1 Tim. 3: 9;) something hid, (1 Cor. 2: 7,) buried, (Luke 6: 48,) deep, (1 Cor. 2: 10,) unsearchable to the eye of carnal nature. (Job 28: 21.) A great deal of what is called knowledge of God, (and amongst experimental Christians too,) is the veriest chaff that can be. I believe no manifested elect soul knows one hair’s-breadth more of Christ than he knows of himself. We know no more of salvation than we know of what we have to be saved from, outwardly and inwardly. Measure experimental Christians by this, and you will find the need of the rule, to think soberly and not more highly than one ought to think of oneself. To talk of an unneeded Christ is only amusing oneself and trifling and mocking before the Most High. Wherein, then, does a knowledge of God and Christ consist? The kingdom of God is in power. What is power? For all these things, in the tongue, are only words, and not only words, but mysteries too. I firmly believe, from my own experience, that power is in darkness as well as in light; in a knowledge of one’s self as well as of Christ—like scales to weigh with, one set over against the other; and not one finally heavier than the other; the song of Moses and the Lamb; a knowledge of our own sins, and of salvation and redemption from them; our own unfathomable fall and ruin, and God’s unfathomable love in redemption. And all beyond this just weight, which is God’s delight, (Prov. 11: 1,) in a knowledge of self and a knowledge of Christ, by the Spirit’s teaching alone, by inward manifestation and revelation from time to time, I call chaff, head-knowledge, letter-learning, and mere Bible instruction—sacrifice to an unknown God.

Lord, what is man? I feel that divine knowledge to answer this question lies at the foundation of all saving religion. And there are but few that know anything of it. I grant that there are many who know something of it *naturally*—by natural

conscience and reading of it in the Bible. What! say you, is not the Bible the word of God? Yes, it is but it is only the map drawing out on paper what the Spirit actually builds and makes to live and really be in the souls of the elect. The Bible is only a *history* of what is done in the souls of the elect by the Spirit of God.

The sin-reproving, judgment-reproving Comforter, in the inside of a man, in his heart and reins, is what but very few indeed know anything of. The kingdom of God is within you, and not without you. To have Christ built on the ruins of self is a great and rare thing. I find but few beggars on the dunghill affected with the dead leprosy of their own nature, outwardly in their past life, and inwardly and woefully day by day, that can pray with the Spirit in groanings in this manner. Multitudes I can find that can offer excellent sacrifice to an unknown God they have heard and read of in the Bible; thus, built up in the letter, in word, in shadows, and outwardly. But I can find only a very few Hebrews of the Hebrews, Jews inwardly, not in the letter, burdened in the tabernacle of their sin and death, groaners, whose praise is *not of men* but of God; who know Christ by their feeling need of him, and who know the holiness of God and their own unholiness by the Spirit's teaching, and are confounded thereby, and are driven and drawn thereby into self-abhorrence, penitence, and hope in the mercy of God, which is shown only to the sick, and lost, and broken-hearted.

I believe all else to be sacrifice to an *unknown* God. For, (Ps. 51: 17,) "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." As if he *would* despise everything else.

A knowledge of self, then, as the preparation, through the Spirit, for a knowledge of Christ, is the most dreadful thing possible to human nature; it is never fulfilled to any but the elect; and to every one of them it is and must be fulfilled. Thou turnest elect men to corruption. Again, thou sayest to all such chosen, chastened, scourged jewels, (polished in a fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, washed in the baptism wherewith Christ was baptized, and steeped in the bitter cup that Christ drank of, "Return, ye children of men.")

All sacrifice to Jehovah from the elect is not to an unknown God; but is the costly, and painful, and sole workmanship of God the Holy Ghost, co-equal with the Father and the Son. It consists in groanings, in prayer, and singings, through manifestations of faith, and hope, and grace to the soul. Groanings are the Spirit's prayers. Does a man groan for nothing? No. Thus teachings in power, in might, in strength, from God himself, concerning the saint's own heart and life, through the reproving's of the Comforter, as regards sin, judgment, and self-righteousness, are so powerful, wonderful, and painful, that he feels himself cut down in the shadow of death; and to such both the prophet Isaiah and Matthew say, "light is sprung up." (Isa. 9: 2; Matt. 4: 16.) "Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, *therefore* have I hope." (Lam. 3: 19, 21.)

The blood and righteousness of Christ to such are wonderful in the extreme,

like unspeakably sweet heavenly music, overwhelming, desirable far above thought, or word, or any such thing. And why? Because such a man as I have been here describing is one not having transactions with an unknown God, but with one who has slain him. “I kill and make alive again, saith the Lord.” (Deut. 32: 39.) And, therefore, to such the Saviour is dear indeed, and to such only.

A person of this kind is a city set on a hill, and an epistle read and known of all men for humbleness, contrition, and godly sorrow of soul for sin, finds the fulness of Christ only a supply to his amazing ruin, fall, unworthiness, helplessness, misery, and woe. Thus, Christ is to him *really* the bread and water of life.

This person has no communion with the empty-headed prayers of any but groaners. For the Spirit maketh intercession with groanings, and Christ has transactions with none but these sick and lost souls, for *he* hath wounded them, and he will heal them.

What an amazing difference there is between such blessed persons as I have here described, and the vast swarm of those who, reading the history, description, and map of these things in the Bible, are, with the help of natural conscience and Satan, as the false Christ, coined up into a counterfeit experience, like Ahithophel, and yet are only twice dead, once in their Christianity, and once by nature!

Such blessed persons as I have here described are God’s husbandry. (1 Cor. 3: 9.) Which is not offering sacrifice to an unknown God; but to him whose eternal co-equal Spirit has ploughed, harrowed, and gathered the weeds of their outward life, and day by day, of their indwelling corruptions, and is burning them in paining experience before their very eyes, and in their heart. Sin reviving; fulfilling, alas, what is written, “We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.” And O wretched man! To such Christ is precious. They are made manifest unto God, and God unto them, by, as it were, Jacob’s ladder, want and supplies, ascending and descending. Digging deep, thus, by “the spade of necessity,” by the reprovings of the Comforter, manifesting violent want on one hand, and Jesus on the other. You will find but few characters of this kind. The religion of the generality is built by natural conscience, reading the Bible, and the help of the false Christ, Satan; and therefore, being the fruit of nature, is sacrifice to an unknown God; for God is a Spirit, and the Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son. And his reprovings are deep, wonderful, vast, and amazing. And there are few that have them. And they that have them have hope and faith inwardly manifested by the Spirit also, sooner or later. When the world was drowned, there were but eight people saved, and they not all good, for Ham was of the evil one. When Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, there was but one of those sick sinners. And there are now but very few *real* lepers, elect strangers, scattered abroad, like two or three berries on the outward branches; like the gleanings, and as a very small remnant, after the natural vintage to an unknown God is crushed.

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