

Articles and Sermons :: Knowing Jesus ~ Samuel Logan Brengle**Knowing Jesus ~ Samuel Logan Brengle - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2007/2/7 15:41****Knowing Jesus** by Samuel Logan Brengle

What an astonishing thing that we can know Jesus! And yet nothing is more clearly taught in Scripture or more joyously testified to in experience by godly people than this fact.

This is an age of specialists, when men devote their lives to the pursuit of special departments of knowledge. One learned professor will give fourteen hours a day for forty years to the study of fishes, another to the study of birds, another to that of bugs, and yet another to that of old bones. Another, more ambitious, devotes his life to the study of history, the rise and fall of nations, and yet another to astronomy, the origin and history of worlds. But to know Jesus Christ is infinitely better than to know all that has been learned or dreamed of by these professors, for He it was that 'made the worlds,' and 'without Him was not any thing made that was made' (John i. 3).

Personally, I am inclined to think that to know Edison would be worth more than knowing one or all of his works, and so to know Jesus Christ is the first and best of all knowledge. Amen!

The knowledge of the naturalist, the astronomer, the historian, may be of passing value, but in due time it will be antedated and fail. But the knowledge of Jesus Christ is of infinite value, and will never pass away. It is profitable for this world, and for that which is to come, and only by it does a man come to the knowledge of himself; without which it would be better never to have been born.

I. In this knowledge of Jesus is hidden the germ of all knowledge, for Paul tells us that in Him 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col. ii. 3). Am I eager for learning and knowledge? Let me then constantly seek to know Him, and in due time, in this world or in the next, I shall know all that is of value for me to know.

II. In this knowledge lies true culture of both head and heart; especially of the heart. In the words of one of the greatest living Christian philosophers, 'it enlarges the individual life with universal ideas, lifts time into the stream of an eternal purpose, and fills it with eternal issues; and makes the simplest moral act great as a real factor in the evolution of a higher order and an immortal character.' It makes a man patient with the ignorant and erring and wayward, courteous to his equals and superiors, kindly and generous to his inferiors, gentle and considerate in his own home, and to the woman who is now his wife -- as he was to her when she was his sweetheart. It makes him loving and forbearing with children, thoughtful and tender with the aged -- in fact, the knowledge of Jesus (not simply scraps of knowledge about Jesus) makes the possessor in his measure like Jesus. Glory to God!

The essence of this knowledge is love. John says, 'Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love' (I John iv. 7-8). This love is a heavenly thing. The sinner, farthest away -- from God -- loves his own, loves those who love him and do him good. But this love is that which pours itself out upon strangers, upon enemies, and upon those that despitefully use us and say all manner of evil against us. Thus we come to see that to know Jesus, we must be like Jesus, must have an affinity with Him, must be transformed into His image. In other words, we must be born again and sanctified by His indwelling Spirit.

Judas lived with Jesus in the intimacy of a disciple for three years, but if he ever knew Jesus he must have lost that knowledge before he could have gone out to betray Him with a kiss. So we may profess the knowledge of Jesus, but when by wicked tempers and unholy conduct, and deceitful and sinful character, we manifest a spirit contrary to His, we give the lie to our profession. In so far as we are unlike Him, to that extent we are ignorant of Him.

How then shall we come to the knowledge of Jesus?

I. We must utterly and for ever renounce sin, and seek forgiveness for past bad conduct trusting in the merits of His atonement for acceptance with God, singing from our hearts, 'Oh, the Blood, the Blood, is all my plea.' When we do this, we shall come into an initial knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. But we must not only renounce our sins; we must also renounce self. In an all-night of prayer, several years ago, I loo

ked at the great audience and queried of the Lord in my heart, 'How can all these people get to Heaven?' and in the depths of my soul sounded back the words, 'He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.'

And I saw how men get to Heaven, and how they gain the knowledge of Jesus. He gave Himself for us, and we must give ourselves for Him, and trust and obey, and wait expectantly until He comes to our hearts and reveals Himself to our wondering souls; for we only know Him as He reveals Himself to us, and this will He do when we seek Him with all the heart. He surely will.

Paul said, 'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ' (Phil. iii. 7), by which he referred to his lineage from Abraham, his exact fulfillment of the law, and his zeal for his church and adds, 'Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him . . . that I may know Him . . .' (Phil. iii. 8-10).

People who seek this knowledge without this sacrifice of self may flatter themselves that they know Him, but when the testing time comes, the hours of loneliness and loss, and sickness and pain, and disappointment and perplexity, and thwarted hopes and desolation, they will find their sad mistake. The fire will reveal their dross and sin. But to those who make and abide in this sacrifice, and, fighting the good fight of faith, steadfastly and joyously believe, furnace fires and lions' dens and dungeon cells but disclose more fully the loveliness of His face, the certainty of His presence, the unfailing strength and comforts of His love.

III. This knowledge, to be maintained, must be cultivated, which is done by communion with Him. It is possible for a husband and wife to live together for many years, and instead of increasing, except in the most superficial way, in the knowledge of each other, to grow apart, until after many years they are heart strangers to each other, with separate interests, conflicting desires and tempers and alien affinities. To really know each other they must be bound together by stronger ties than mere legal forms; they must commune with each other, live in each other's hearts, enter into each other's joys, and share each other's sorrows, counsel each other in perplexity, seek the same ends and cultivate the same spirit.

And so to know Jesus, there must be sympathy, fellowship, friendship, constantly cultivated. The heart must turn to Him, pour itself out before Him, share its hopes, its joys, its fears with Him, draw its consolations, its strength, its courage, its sufficiency, its life from Him, trust and obey Him and delight itself in Him as its everlasting portion.

Secret prayer must often bring the soul face to face with Him, and the Bible, God's record of Him, must be daily, diligently and lovingly searched, and faithfully applied to the daily life. Thus shall we know Him, and be 'changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord' (2 Cor. iii. 18), and people shall see and feel Christ in us, 'the hope of glory.'

O Jesus, Saviour, how I bless Thee that Thou didst seek me when lost and far from Thee and altogether unlike Thee, and didst woo me, and win me, and lead me to Thyself; and reveal Thyself to me, and make me to know Thee, and ravish my heart, and humble my pride with the joy and love and glory that that best of all knowledge brings! Still reveal Thyself; O Lord, to Thy people, that they may know Thee, and glorify Thee and be satisfied with Thy loving-kindness, and fill the earth with Thy fame!