

Knowledge of God Series – 1



# A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Ellen G. White  
Spirit of Prophecy

1894-1910



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OF GOD**

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## **A True Knowledge of God**

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself.

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character.

This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon a right knowledge of God. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come.

“The knowledge of the Holy is understanding.” Proverbs 9:10.

Through a knowledge of Him are given unto us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” 2 Peter 1:3.

“This is life eternal,” said Jesus, “that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” John 17:3.

“Thus saith the Lord,  
Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,  
Neither let the mighty man glory in his might,  
Let not the rich man glory in his riches:  
But let him that glorieth glory in this,  
That he understandeth and knoweth Me,  
That I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness,  
Judgment, and righteousness, in the earth:  
For in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”  
Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

We need to study the revelations of Himself that God has given.

“Acquaint now thyself with Him,  
And be at peace:  
Thereby good shall come unto thee.

Receive, I pray thee, the law from His mouth,  
And lay up His words in thy heart....  
And the Almighty will be thy treasure....  
“Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Almighty,  
And shalt lift up thy face unto God.  
Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him,  
And He will hear thee;  
And thou shalt pay thy vows.  
Thou shalt also decree a thing,  
And it shall be established unto thee;  
And light shall shine upon thy ways.  
When they cast thee down, thou shalt say,  
There is lifting up;  
And the humble person He will save.”  
Job 22:21-29, A.R.V.

“The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity.” Romans 1:20, A.R.V.

The things of nature that we now behold give us but a faint conception of Eden’s glory. Sin has marred earth’s beauty; on all things may be seen traces of the work of evil. Yet much that is beautiful remains. Nature testifies that One infinite in power, great in goodness, mercy, and love, created the earth, and filled it with life and gladness. Even in their blighted state, all things reveal the handiwork of the great Master Artist. Wherever we turn, we may hear the voice of God, and see evidences of His goodness.

From the solemn roll of the deep-toned thunder and old ocean’s ceaseless roar, to the glad songs that make the forests vocal with melody, nature’s ten thousand voices speak His praise. In earth and sea and sky, with their marvelous tint and color, varying in gorgeous contrast or blended in harmony, we behold His glory. The everlasting hills tell us of His power. The trees that wave their green banners in the sunlight, and the flowers in their delicate beauty, point to their Creator. The living green that carpets the brown earth tells of God’s care for the humblest of His creatures. The caves of the sea and the depths of the earth reveal His treasures. He who placed the pearls in the ocean and the amethyst and chrysolite among the rocks, is a lover of the beautiful. The sun rising in the heavens is a representative of Him who is the life and light of all that He has made. All the brightness and beauty that adorn the earth and light up the heavens, speak of God.

“His glory covered the heavens.”

“The earth is full of Thy riches.”

“Day unto day uttereth speech,  
And night unto night showeth knowledge.  
There is no speech nor language,  
Without these their voice is heard.  
Their line is gone out through all the earth,  
And their words to the end of the world.”  
Habakkuk 3:3; Psalm 104:24; 19:2-4, margin.

All things tell of His tender, fatherly care and of His desire to make His children happy.

The mighty power that works through all nature and sustains all things is not, as some men of science represent, merely an all-pervading principle, an actuating energy. God is a Spirit; yet He is a personal Being; for so He has revealed Himself:

“The Lord is the true God,  
He is the living God, and an everlasting King: ...  
The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth,  
Even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these  
heavens.”

“The portion of Jacob is not like them:  
For He is the former of all things.”

“He hath made the earth by His power,  
He hath established the world by His wisdom,  
And hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion.”  
Jeremiah 10:10, 11, 16, 12.

## **Nature Is Not God**

God’s handiwork in nature is not God Himself in nature. The things of nature are an expression of God’s character and power; but we are not to regard nature as God. The artistic skill of human beings produces very beautiful workmanship, things that delight the eye, and these things reveal to us something of the thought of the designer; but the thing made is not the maker. It is not the work, but the workman, that is counted worthy of honor. So while nature is an expression of God’s thought, it is not nature, but the God of nature, that is to be exalted.

“Let us worship and bow down:  
Let us kneel before the Lord.”

“In His hand are the deep places of the earth;  
The heights of the mountains are His also.  
The sea is His, and He made it;  
And His hands formed the dry land.”  
Psalm 95:6; 95:4, 5, A.R.V.

“Seek Him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion,  
And turneth the shadow of death into the morning,  
And maketh the day dark with night;”

“He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind,  
And declareth unto man what is His thought;”

“He that buildeth His spheres in the heaven,  
And hath founded His arch [Noyes’s translation]  
in the earth;”

“He that calleth for the waters of the sea,  
And poureth them out upon the face of the earth;  
Jehovah is His name.”  
Amos 5:8, A.R.V.; 4:13, A.R.V.; 9:6, margin; 9:6, A.R.V.

### **The Creation of the Earth**

The work of creation cannot be explained by science. What science can explain the mystery of life?

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Hebrews 11:3.

“I form the light, and create darkness: ...  
I the Lord do all these things....  
I have made the earth,  
And created man upon it:  
I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens,  
And all their host have I commanded.”

“When I call unto them, they stand up together.”  
Isaiah 45:7-12; 48:13.



In the creation of the earth, God was not indebted to pre-existing matter. "He spake, and it was; ... He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9. All things, material or spiritual, stood up before the Lord Jehovah at His voice and were created for His own purpose. The heavens and all the host of them, the earth and all things therein, came into existence by the breath of His mouth.

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power.

Our substance was not hid from Him when we were made in secret; His eyes saw our substance, yet being imperfect, and in His book all our members were written when as yet there were none of them.

Above all lower orders of being, God designed that man, the crowning work of His creation, should express His thought and reveal His glory. But man is not to exalt himself as God.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord....  
Serve the Lord with gladness:  
Come before His presence with singing.  
Know ye that the Lord He is God:  
It is He that hath made us, and His we are;  
We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.  
Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,  
And into His courts with praise:  
Be thankful unto Him, and bless His name."

"Exalt the Lord our God,  
And worship at His holy hill;  
For the Lord our God is holy."  
Psalm 100:1-4, margin; 99:9.

God is constantly employed in upholding and using as His servants the things that He has made. He works through the laws of nature, using them as His instruments. They are not self-acting. Nature in her work testifies of the intelligent presence and active agency of a Being who moves in all things according to His will.

“Forever, O Lord,  
Thy word is settled in heaven.  
Thy faithfulness is unto all generations:  
Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.  
They continue this day according to Thine ordinances:  
For all are Thy servants.”

“Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He In heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.”

“He commanded, and they were created.  
He hath also established them for ever and ever:  
He hath made a decree which shall not pass.”  
Psalm 119:89-91; 135:6; 148:5, 6.

It is not by inherent power that year by year the earth yields its bounties and continues its march around the sun. The hand of the Infinite One is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God's power continually exercised that keeps the earth in position in its rotation. It is God who causes the sun to rise in the heavens. He opens the windows of heaven and gives rain.

“He giveth snow like wool:  
He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.”

“When He uttereth His voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens,  
And He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;  
He maketh lightnings with rain,  
And bringeth forth the wind out of His treasures.”  
Psalm 147:16; Jeremiah 10:13.

It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears, every flower blooms, every fruit develops.

The mechanism of the human body cannot be fully understood; it presents mysteries that baffle the most intelligent. It is not as the result of a mechanism, which, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. The beating heart, the throbbing pulse, every nerve and muscle in the living organism, is kept in order and activity by the power of an ever-present God.

The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men.

Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best.

“The way of man is not in himself:  
It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart...  
In all thy ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct thy paths.”

“The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him,  
Upon them that hope in His mercy;  
To deliver their soul from death,  
And to keep them alive in famine.”

“How precious is Thy loving-kindness, O God! ...  
The children of men take refuge under the shadow of Thy  
wings.”

“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,  
Whose hope is in the Lord his God.”

“The earth, O Jehovah, is full of Thy loving-kindness.”  
Thou lovest “righteousness and justice.”

Thou “art the confidence of all the ends of the earth,  
And of them that are afar off upon the sea:  
Who by His strength setteth fast the mountains,  
Being girded about with might;  
Who stilleth the roaring of the seas, ...  
And the tumult of the peoples.”

“Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to  
rejoice.”

“Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness;  
And Thy paths drop fatness.”

“The Lord upholdeth all that fall,  
And raiseth up all those that be bowed down.  
The eyes of all wait upon Thee;  
And Thou givest them their meat in due season.  
Thou openest Thine hand,  
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”

Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 3:5, 6; Psalm 33:18, 19; 36:7, A.R.V.;  
146:5; 119:64, A.R.V.; 33:5, A.R.V.; 65:5-7, A.R.V.; 65:8, 11;  
145:14-16.

### **Personality of God Revealed in Christ**

As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son. The outshining of the Father’s glory, “and the express image of His person,” Jesus, as a personal Saviour, came to the world. As a personal Saviour He ascended on high. As a personal Saviour He intercedes in the heavenly courts. Before the throne of God in our behalf ministers “One like unto the Son of man.” Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 1:13.

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ.

“I and My Father are one,” Christ declared. “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” John 10:30; Matthew 11:27.

Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. Yet not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality of God as it was revealed in Christ.

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God.

## Revealed to the Disciples

Let us study the words that Christ spoke in the upper chamber on the night before His crucifixion. He was nearing His hour of trial, and He sought to comfort His disciples, who were to be so severely tempted and tried.

“Let not your heart be troubled,” He said. “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you....”

“Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him....”

“Lord, show us the Father,” said Philip, “and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.” John 14:1-10.

The disciples did not yet understand Christ’s words concerning His relation to God. Much of His teaching was still dark to them. Christ desired them to have a clearer, more distinct knowledge of God.

“These things have I spoken unto you in parables,” He said; “but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in parables, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.” John 16:25, margin.

When, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, they understood more fully the truths that Christ had spoken in parables. Much of the teaching that had been a mystery to them was made clear. But not even then did the disciples receive the complete fulfillment of Christ’s promise. They received all the knowledge of God that they could bear, but the complete fulfillment of the promise that Christ would show them plainly of the Father was yet to come. Thus it is today. Our knowledge of God is partial and imperfect. When the conflict is ended, and the Man Christ Jesus acknowledges before the Father His faithful workers, who in a world of sin have borne true witness for Him, they will understand clearly what now are mysteries to them.

Christ took with Him to the heavenly courts His glorified humanity. To those who receive Him He gives power to become the sons of God, that at last God may receive them as His, to dwell with Him throughout eternity. If during this life they are loyal to God, they will at last “see His

face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.” Revelation 22:4. And what is the happiness of heaven but to see God? What greater joy could come to the sinner saved by the grace of Christ than to look upon the face of God and know Him as Father?

The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son; ... who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time,

“Thou art My Son,  
This day have I begotten Thee?  
And again,  
I will be to Him a Father,  
And He shall be to Me a Son?”  
Hebrews 1:1-5.

The personality of the Father and the Son, also the unity that exists between Them, are presented in the seventeenth chapter of John, in the prayer of Christ for His disciples:

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” John 17:20, 21.

The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character; but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one.

### **Character of God Revealed in Christ**

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity, and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He who had been in the presence of the Father from the beginning, He who was the express image of the invisible God, was alone able to reveal the character of the Deity to mankind. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep.

He shared the lot of men; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man.

“Jehovah hath anointed Me,” He said,  
“To preach good tidings unto the poor;  
He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,”  
“And recovering of sight to the blind;”  
“To proclaim the year of Jehovah’s favor; ...  
To comfort all that mourn.”

Isaiah 61:1, A.R.V., margin; Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:2, A.R.V.

“Love your enemies,” He bids us; “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven;” “for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” Matthew 5:44, 45; Luke 6:35; Matthew 5:45; Luke 6:36.

“Through the tender mercy of our God; ...  
The Dayspring from on high hath visited us,  
To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the  
shadow of death,  
To guide our feet into the way of peace.”  
Luke 1:78, 79.

### **The Glory of the Cross**

The revelation of God’s love to man centers in the cross. Its full significance tongue cannot utter, pen cannot portray, the mind of man cannot comprehend. Looking upon the cross of Calvary, we can only say, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

Christ crucified for our sins, Christ risen from the dead, Christ ascended on high, is the science of salvation that we are to learn and to teach.

## **It Was Christ**

“Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:6-8, A.R.V.

“It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God.” “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25.

“We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Hebrews 4:15, A.R.V.

It is through the gift of Christ that we receive every blessing. Through that gift there comes to us day by day the unfailing flow of Jehovah’s goodness. Every flower, with its delicate tints and its fragrance, is given for our enjoyment through that one Gift. The sun and the moon were made by Him. There is not a star which beautifies the heavens that He did not make. Every drop of rain that falls, every ray of light shed upon our unthankful world, testifies to the love of God in Christ. Everything is supplied to us through the one unspeakable Gift, God’s only-begotten Son. He was nailed to the cross that all these bounties might flow to God’s workmanship.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1.

“Men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear,  
Neither hath the eye seen a God besides Thee,  
Who worketh for him that waiteth for Him.”  
Isaiah 64:4, A.R.V.

## **The Knowledge That Works Transformation**

The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. It is the knowledge that works transformation of character. This knowledge, received, will re-create the soul in the image of God. It will impart to the whole being a spiritual power that is divine.

“We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” 2 Corinthians 3:18.



Of His own life the Saviour said, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. "The Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29. As Jesus was in human nature, so God means His followers to be. In His strength we are to live the life of purity and nobility which the Saviour lived.

"For this cause," Paul says, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:14-19.

We "do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Colossians 1:9-11.

This is the knowledge which God is inviting us to receive, and beside which all else is vanity and nothingness.

*Signs of the Times*, April 12, 1910

## **Acquainted with God**

Our Saviour said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." And God declared by the prophet, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am Jehovah, which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

No man, without divine aid, can attain to this knowledge of God. The apostle says that "the world by wisdom knew not God." Christ "was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Jesus declared to His disciples, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

In the last prayer for His followers, before entering the shadows of Gethsemane, the Saviour lifted His eyes to heaven, and in pity for the ignorance of fallen men He said, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee." "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world."

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life.

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Saviour answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." Only as we contemplate the great plan of redemption can we have a just appreciation of the character of God. The work of creation was a manifestation

of His love; but the gift of God to save the guilty race, alone reveals the infinite depths of divine tenderness and compassion. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

While the law of God is maintained, and its justice vindicated, the sinner can be pardoned. The dearest gift that Heaven itself had to bestow has been poured out, that God "might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." By that gift, men are uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin, to become children of God. Paul says, "Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." What love, what matchless love, that, sinners and aliens as we are, we may be brought back to God, and adopted into His family! We may address Him by the endearing name, "Our Father," which is a sign of our affection for Him, a pledge of His tender regard and relationship to us. And the Son of God, beholding the heirs of grace, "is not ashamed to call them brethren." They have even a more sacred relationship to God than have the angels who have never fallen.

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean, when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue can not utter it; pen can not portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and breadth, the depth and height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it.

Yet as we study the Bible, and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more. And it will be ours to realize the blessing which Paul desired for the Ephesian church, when he prayed "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe."

*Signs of the Times*, July 26, 1905

## **The Knowledge of God**

The knowledge of God is as a great ocean, without bottom or shore. No line can fathom it, no eye measure it. Every needy soul may be supplied from this boundless sea. In every emergency, in every time of need, men and women may receive God's grace and power, and yet there will be no lessening of the supply. God's great resources can not be too heavily drawn upon. The gifts provided for all true, earnest seekers after truth are without measure.

In all ages God has given human beings divine revelations, that thus He may fulfil His purpose of unfolding gradually the doctrines of grace. His manner of imparting truth is illustrated by the words, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday.

A cold, lifeless theory is not a knowledge of God. Those who have a knowledge of God must have His love, must understand its sacrifice, its condescension. The hungry mind and heart must receive His grace, to impart to others its fulness, its sufficiency. It is not a head acceptance of truth, but heart reception, that moulds and fashions aright the emotions and impulses of the soul, making it tender and compassionate, humble and contrite. Christ received into the soul makes man one with God in His beloved Son. Then the love of the Redeemer is acknowledged as beyond all estimate. And more than this: the life and character are changed by the presence of the indwelling Saviour.

Only when the heart is moulded and fashioned by the love of God can human beings reveal Christ. Then and then only can they impart the knowledge of God as it shines in the face of His Son. The Holy Spirit is with them, quickening their minds, showing that Bible truth has life-giving power, power to convict hearts and transform lives. The lifting up of Christ's countenance upon the human agent, the glorious light shining from His face, makes all things clear.

The knowledge of God is the knowledge of all truth, and is the beginning of all understanding. It is our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. To those who receive and practise them, the truths of the Word of God are as the leaves of the tree of life. But before man can receive these truths, he must realize his need.

## Out of Bondage

Self—the old disobedient nature—must be crucified, and Christ must take up His abode in the heart. Thus the human agent is born again, with a new nature. The newborn child of God begins to have some conception of what God is. To all intents and purposes, truth is truth to him. He has caught a glimpse of God's glory. A sense of his accountability to God quenches the unholy ambition that keeps upon the soul a galling yoke of guilt. The light in which he enters is softened and subdued, tempered to suit his condition. By daily beholding Jesus and striving to practise His virtues, his spiritual perceptions grow clearer and stronger.

God says, "A new heart will I give you." Every learner may be renewed in knowledge and true holiness. The ransom of an enslaved race was Christ's purpose in coming to this earth. Christ alone can make us free. And those whom He makes free are free indeed. His power breaks the yoke of bondage that binds man to the great deceiver. But how many there are who are unwilling to allow Christ to break their shackles. How many there are who choose to cling to the thralldom of sin.

The Gospel of Christ is truly believed only when it is practised. Faith is justified by works. Self must be hid; Christ must appear as the Chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely. When an unreserved surrender of the powers of the whole being is made to the Saviour, self no longer strives for the mastery. What man needs today is the crucifixion of self and the revelation in his life of Christ, the hope of glory. Then will be fulfilled the words, "Ye are the light of the world."

As yet we have scarcely been a light in the world, because we cling to our sinful practises. We have been too well satisfied with the twilight glow of heavenly enlightenment. We have not yet gained the experience that would make us feel at home in heaven. As yet we are but stepping over the threshold of the sanctuary containing the truth that every one who enters heaven must receive and practise.

*General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 6, 1899*

## **The True Relation of God and Nature**

Since the fall of man nature can not reveal a perfect knowledge of God; for sin has brought a blight upon it, and has intervened between nature and nature's God. Had man never disobeyed his Creator, had he remained in his state of perfect rectitude, nature would never have been marred by sin, and it would thus have revealed to man the perfection of the character of God. But when man disobeyed God, when he ate of the tree of knowledge, he united with the apostate leader, and separated himself from the knowledge of God.

When Adam and Eve listened to the voice of the tempter, they sinned against God. The light, the garments of heavenly innocence, departed from these deceived souls, and they drew about themselves the dark robes of ignorance of God. The clear and perfect light of innocence which had hitherto surrounded them had lightened everything which they approached; but deprived of that heavenly light, the posterity of Adam could no longer perfectly trace the character of God in his created works.

After the fall, the things of nature could not fully teach the lesson of the great and marvelous love of God. Therefore the Father sent his well-beloved Son into the world, and declared him to be a perfect revelation of himself to man. In order that the world might not remain in darkness, in eternal, spiritual night, the God of nature met in Jesus Christ. He was "that true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

The most difficult and humiliating lesson that man has to learn, if he is kept by the power of God, is his own inefficiency, and the sure failure of his own efforts to read nature correctly. Sin has obscured his vision, so that, of himself, man can not interpret nature without placing it above God. He is in the same position as were the Athenians who erected their altars for the worship of nature, upon which they might well inscribe, "To the unknown God." Nature is not God, and never was God. The voice of nature testifies of God, declaring his glory; but nature itself is not God. As God's created work, it but bears a testimony of his power.

The ancient philosophers prided themselves upon their superior knowledge, but God has said of them: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed

beasts, and creeping things.... Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.”

Christ came to the world as a personal Saviour. He represented a personal God. He ascended on high as a personal Saviour, and he will come again as he ascended to heaven,—a personal Saviour. We need carefully to consider this; for in their human wisdom, the wise men of the world, knowing not God, foolishly deify nature and the laws of nature. Those who have not a knowledge of God by their acceptance of the revelation God has made of himself in Christ, will obtain only an imperfect knowledge of God in nature. Those who think they can obtain a perfect knowledge of God, aside from the Representative whom the Word declares is the “express image of his person,” will need to become fools in their own estimation before they can be wise. This knowledge, so far from giving elevated conceptions of God, so far from elevating the mind, the soul, the heart, and bringing the whole being into conformity to the will of God, will make men idolaters.

Though it is impossible to gain a perfect knowledge of God from imperfect nature; yet the things of nature, marred though they be, inculcate truths regarding the skilful Master Artist. One omnipotent in power, great in goodness, in mercy, and love, has created the earth; and even in its blighted state, much that is beautiful remains. Nature's voice speaks, saying that there is a God, the Creator of nature. Nature in its imperfections can not fully represent God; it can not reveal the character of God in his moral perfection.

It was for the purpose of giving to man a perfect representation of the character of God that Jesus came to our earth. He said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.... Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork, but Philip could not accept nature as his God. “Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” We are to behold the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. In the person of his only begotten Son, the God of heaven has condescended to stoop to our human nature. The Father in heaven has a voice and a person which Christ expressed. Those who have a true knowledge of God will not become so infatuated with the laws of matter and the operations of nature as to overlook or to refuse to acknowledge the continual working of God in nature. Deity is the author of nature. The natural world has in itself no inherent power but that which God supplies. How strange, then; that so many make a

deity of nature! God furnishes the matter and the properties with which to carry out his plans. Nature is but his agency.

The hand of God is continually guiding the globe in its continuous march around the sun. The same hand which holds the mountains, and balances them in positions, guides and keeps in order the respective planets. All the wonderful glories in the heavens are but doing their appointed work. Vegetation flourishes because of the agencies employed by the great and mighty God. He sends the dew and the rain and the sunshine, that verdure may spring forth, and spread its green carpet over the earth, that the shrubs and the fruit-trees may bud and blossom and bring forth fruit. It is not to be supposed that a law is set in operation for the seed to work of itself,—that the leaf appears because it must do so of itself. It is through the immediate agency of God that every tiny seed breaks through the earth, and springs into life. Every green leaf grows, every flower blooms, through the working power of God.

The physical organism of God is under the supervision of God; but it is not like a clock that is set in operation, and must go of itself. The heart beats, pulse succeeds pulse, breath succeeds breath; but the being is under the supervision of God. Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. In God we live and move and have our being. Each heart beat, each breath, is the inspiration of that God who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life,—the inspiration of the ever-present God, the great I AM.

Idolatry of nature is a farce; it is the invention of men who know not God, and who are trying to keep out of sight a knowledge of the true God. The words of Holy Writ say nothing of the independent laws of nature. They teach us that God is the superintendent as well as the Creator of all things. The divine Being is engaged in upholding the things which he has created. God has laws which he has instituted; but they are only his servants, through which he effects results. It is God who calls everything into order, and keeps all things in motion.

We may look up, through nature, to nature's God. The beautiful things of nature have been given us for our pleasure. Then let us not turn our blessings into a curse by being led away from God in the worship of the creature rather than the Creator. Let nature's beautiful ministers of love answer the purpose of God, drawing our hearts to him to adore his goodness, his compassion, his inexpressible love, and to be filled with the beauties of his character.

E. G. White.



## **Love God Practically**

“Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” How sad it is that Jesus has to stretch out his hands pleading with his people to come unto him, and they refuse to hear, refuse to believe, refuse to receive the comfort of the fulness that God designed should be theirs. Jesus wept over the impenitent city of Jerusalem, and cried with brokenness of heart, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!”

What a work might have been done for us as individuals, if our proud and stubborn wills had been wholly submerged in the will of God, and our souls lifted up from earthliness to a higher, purer atmosphere! O that those who claim to be children of God, would invest every talent that God has intrusted to them for his glory! All should educate themselves to exercise faith in the promises of God, in order that faith may grow into perfect trust. Have you human love for the few with whom you are associated? You must have a deeper love than this. You must have the love of Jesus, which is an abiding, increasing love, that can be cultivated by bestowing it upon those for whom Christ died.

When the little children were brought to Jesus, he took the lambs of the flock in his arms, and blessed them. What are those who believe in Jesus doing for the children and youth? Are you one with the great Worker in every effort? Do you put forth your every power to gather the children into little groups, trying to draw them to Jesus, trying to tell them of him, and trying to bring them to the throne of grace in earnest prayer for their salvation? Children are the heritage of the Lord. Gather them into the fold, and place them before Jesus, where the bright beams of his righteousness shall shine upon them.

Christ came to the world to represent the true and living God, who is revealed in the fourth commandment as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is distinguished in the fourth precept from the idols of the nations; in his hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all men. He is “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” The Lord exercises loving, pitying tenderness to those who believe in him, to those who keep his commandments.

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” He wants us to discern his love in bestowing upon us his only

begotten Son, Heaven's best gift. Jesus revealed to the world, in his character, that "God is love." The beloved apostle exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

The Jews as a nation had lost their knowledge of the character of God when Jesus came to this earth. While they claimed to be the most exalted of all people, they did not perceive or practise the commandments of God. They did not reflect love, which is the character of God. No one can be truly righteous unless his soul reflects the image of God, and manifests love for all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people; for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Simply to have your name enrolled in the church books, and to perform the outward ceremonies of religion, will not make you a child of God; for form alone is of no value. It is the pure in heart who shall see God in his true character, as a God of love. He who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart, will reflect the purity and love which exist in Jehovah, and which Christ represented in our world. He who has the love of God in his heart has no enmity against the law of God, but renders willing obedience to all his commandments, and this constitutes Christianity. He who has supreme love to God will reveal love to his fellow-men, who belong to God both by creation and by redemption. Love is the fulfilling of the law; and it is the duty of every child of God to render obedience to his commandments.

Every one is accountable to God according to the ability and talent which he has received. Those who are on probation to see whether or not they are to be subjects of the kingdom of God, must be tried and proved now. Those who love God in spirit and in truth, will be pronounced fit subjects of the heavenly kingdom. The law of God, which is perfect holiness, is the only true standard of character. Love is expressed in obedience, and perfect love casteth out all fear. Those who love God, have the seal of God in their foreheads, and work the works of God. Would that all who profess Christianity knew what it means to love God practically. Then they would ever bear with them a sense of the sacredness of the name and character of Jesus Christ, and would be one with Christ, as he is one with the Father. They would then better appreciate their responsibilities, and would adorn the doctrine of Christ, our Saviour. They would have some realization of the infinite holiness of God, knowing that he is high and lifted up, and the train of his glory fills the temple. They would have a powerful influence upon the life and character of those around

them, which would work as leaven amid the mass of humanity, transforming others through the power of Jesus Christ. Connected with the source of power, they would never lose their vital influence, but would ever increase in efficiency, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Mrs. E. G. White

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