

HEART-KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**NO. 1206****A SERMON****DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 6, 1874****BY C. H. SPURGEON****AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON***“I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD.”**Jeremiah 24:7*

WITH what blindness has sin smitten the heart of man, for man does not know his own Maker! It is implied in the text that in his heart he is ignorant of JEHOVAH, though in Him he lives, and moves, and has his being. What an impotence has sin brought upon the mind of man, since being ignorant of God he is also incapable of finding Him out!

This also may be most readily gathered from the text. The fact that a promise is made in the covenant that to the chosen shall be given hearts to know the Lord is a clear proof that without the divine teaching, and without the reception of a new heart from the Lord, man not only does not know, but cannot find out his God

You boast of your intellect, O vain man, but your foolish heart is darkened so that you stumble in the noonday as at midnight. You have eyes, and you say, “I see,” but your eyes are closed, your ears are dull of hearing, and your heart has waxed gross. And so dull has your soul become that only He who formed the ear can make you hear, and only He who fashioned the eye can give you sight.

How can we sufficiently admire the condescension of God, that He should stoop to instruct the heart of man? Man forgets his God, but God does not forget him. Though man knows not God, yet God knows him, and seeing that his powerlessness to grasp divine knowledge lies in his heart, He visits him in grace and renews the fountain of his strength, and the center of his nature, by giving him a new heart and a right spirit.

The infinitely glorious God might have regarded it as a matter of indifference whether such an insignificant creature as man knew Him or not. He might well have said, and it had been consistent with the majesty of His justice to say it, “Seeing that ye do not desire to know Me ye shall not perceive Me. And inasmuch as ye close your eyes to Me ye shall continue in outer darkness. Because ye will not glorify Me as God your hearts shall abide in midnight, I will leave you to your own devices.”

But the Lord of love said not so to the sons of men, upon whom His heart was set. On the contrary He has made a covenant of mercy on our behalf, and His speech is the reverse of what we might have expected, for He declares in the words of the text, “I will give them a heart to know me, that I am JEHOVAH.”

By this great promise of the text is not merely meant that God will lead the converted to know that there is a God, because that may be known without a new heart. Any man possessed of reason may know that there is a Supreme Being who created all things and preserves the universe in existence.

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork. The tokens of divine skill and power are so abundant that “The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are already seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.” The knowledge intended here is much deeper than that which comes from observation, and only affects the intellect.

To know that there is a God is a lower step, which every man takes except the fool who hath said in his heart, “There is no God.” The text promises that the favored ones shall know that God to be JEHOVAH. So the original text has it, “I will give them a heart to know me, that I am JEHOVAH.” God

leads men to see that the God revealed in Scripture, and manifested in the person of the Lord Jesus, is the God who made heaven and earth.

Man fashions for himself a god after his own liking. He makes to himself if not out of wood or stone, yet out of what he calls his own consciousness, or his cultured thought, a deity to his taste, who will not be too severe with his iniquities or deal out strict justice to the impenitent. He rejects God as He is, and elaborates other gods, such as he thinks the Divine One ought to be, and he says concerning these works of his own imagination, "These be thy gods, O Israel."

The Holy Spirit, however, when He illuminates their minds, leads us to see that JEHOVAH is God, and beside Him there is none else. He teaches His people to know that the God of heaven and earth is the God of the Bible, a God whose attributes are completely balanced, mercy attended by justice, love accompanied by holiness, grace arrayed in truth, and power linked with tenderness. He is not a God who winks at sin, much less is pleased with it, as the gods of the heathen are supposed to be, but a God who cannot look upon iniquity, and will by no means spare the guilty.

This is the great quarrel of the present day between the philosopher and the Christian. The philosopher says, "Yes, a god if you will, but he must be of such a character as I now dogmatically set before you." But the Christian replies, "Our business is not to invent a god, but to obey the one Lord who is revealed in the Scriptures of truth." The God of Holy Scripture is love, but He is also possessed of justice and severity. He is merciful and gracious, but He is also stern and terrible towards evil. Therefore unregenerate hearts say, "We cannot accept such a God as this," and they call Him cruel and I know not what besides.

Herein they are idolaters, they set up another god and forsake the true God, and it does not alter the case if they plead that they make no graven image, for the first commandment says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The Lord teaches His people that He is JEHOVAH, who brought Israel up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. The JEHOVAH who smote Pharaoh with plagues and drowned his hosts in the Red Sea. The JEHOVAH who led His people through the wilderness, but cast out their enemies from before them with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. The JEHOVAH that redeemed His people, but chastened them for their iniquities and took vengeance upon their inventions.

The God of Sinai even is the selfsame God as the God of Calvary. "I am JEHOVAH thy God," is His solemn proclamation, and it is well for the soul when it understands and knows that JEHOVAH, He is God, yea, JEHOVAH, He is God alone. When the heart is content to believe in God as He is revealed, and no longer goes about to fashion a deity for itself according to its own fancies and notions, it is a hopeful sign.

The main stress of the promise lies, however, in this, "I will give them a heart to *know* ME." That is, not merely to know that I am, and that I am JEHOVAH, but to have a personal knowledge of Myself. I can scarcely express the idea which I wish to convey to you, but you all know the difference between knowing who a man is, what his character is, and all about him, and knowing the man himself.

There are hundreds of people of whom we know a great deal. We are favored by some prying gentleman or other with stories of how our great men dress, and what they say, what they eat and when they eat it, and all sorts of minute details of their personal habits. Still, despite all this information, we do not know these people, we should speak falsely if we said we did. To know them we must be on speaking terms with them, there must be a mutual recognition, there must be dealings of some kind between us.

Now, it is so in the far higher matter of which we now speak. It is not enough to know that our Creator is the J, of the Bible and that He is perfect in character, and glorious beyond thought. But to know God we must have perceived Him, we must have spoken to Him, we must have been made at peace with Him, we must have lifted up our heart to Him, and received communications from Him.

If you know the Lord your secret is with Him, and His secret is with you. He has manifested Himself unto you as He does not unto the world. He has made Himself known unto you by the mysterious influences of His Spirit, and because of this you know Him.

I cannot explain this knowledge, but it is delightful to remember that many of you understand what it means by experience. Is it not sweet to traverse the world discerning God on every side? Your Father ever near. Is it not a blessing to be in trouble and find Him helping us, to be in a dilemma and to hear His voice saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it”? To be depressed in spirit and to feel that His comforts rejoice our souls, to be exulting in joy and to feel that His presence calms and sobers us and keeps us from undue delight in created things.

It is inexpressibly honorable and joyful to walk with God as Enoch did, to speak with Him as Abraham did of old, as a man speaks with his friend, or to be hidden in the hollow of His hand, as Moses was in Horeb. This is to know God after the manner of the text.

My hearer, do you know God? Have you beheld the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? Have you discerned the Father in the Son? Do you see all the attributes of God shining mildly through the Mediator, toned down to our capacity, lest the effulgence of the Deity should blind our finite sense?

Do you know God by going to Jesus as your Savior? He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. “No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.” If you know Christ and are found in Him, then, beloved, you know the Lord, and are among the blessed company who are taught of the Spirit, for flesh and blood have not revealed the Lord unto you.

We will consider our text in the following manner. We will first of all describe *the seat of this knowledge*—“I will give them a *heart* to know me.” Then *the necessity of this knowledge*. Then *the excellency of this knowledge*, and lastly *the source of this knowledge*. May the Holy Ghost aid us in speaking upon each topic.

I. THE SEAT OF THIS KNOWLEDGE—“I will give them a *heart* to know me.”

Observe that it is not said, “I will give them a *head* to know me.” As I have already said, man’s great stumbling block in coming to God does not lie in his reason. There is a difficulty in his reason, but not the major one. The first and primary impediment to his knowledge of God lies in the affections. Man’s heart is set upon that which is evil, consequently he wants a God after his own fashion, who will smile upon sin, or at least tolerate it.

The Lord complains in the psalm, “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself,” it is the tendency of man to think that God is like himself. The impure in heart cannot conceive of a pure God, and if he could conceive Him he would detest rather than worship Him. “The pure in heart shall see God,” is one of the opening benedictions of the Savior’s ministry, but the impure in heart cannot see God, and cannot therefore know Him. The heart is the seat of the blindness, there lies the darkness which beclouds the whole mind. Hence to the heart the light must come and to the heart that light is promised.

I understand by the fact that the knowledge of God here promised lies in the heart, first, that God renews the heart so that it *admires* the character of God. The understanding perceives that God is just, powerful, faithful, wise, true, gracious, longsuffering, and the like. Then the heart being purified admires all these glorious attributes, and adores Him because of them.

You can in a measure test your knowledge of the Lord by the inquiry—Do you approve the character of God? Perceiving the God of the Scriptures to be the true God, do you admire Him as He reveals Himself? I must repeat what I have already said. There are many who have imagined God to be what they would like Him to be, and then of course they admire the image which they have set up. But to see God as the Scripture reveals Him, especially in His holiness, is a gift of His grace.

Have you noted how David sings in the hundred and third psalm, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His *holy* name”? It would have sounded more in accordance with the context to have said His gracious name, for he goes on to speak of the Lord’s deeds of grace—“who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.”

But that which the psalmist most admired was the Lord's holiness in all this—the way in which He could deal mercifully with the guilty, and yet retain His spotless holiness. Holiness is the great terror of the ungodly, and therefore it is a token of our knowing God in our hearts when we can bless His holy name.

How do the angels praise Him? Do they sing, “Mighty, mighty, mighty, Lord God of hosts”? or “Bounteous, bounteous, bounteous Creator of the universe”? No, but “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.” They adore the whole of God and God as a whole. Holiness means completeness of character, the absence of everything like excess, the presence of everything that is perfection.

O my soul, can you in some measure see the infinite perfectness of the Lord in all points, and seeing do you admire? Do you see Him as a consuming fire, burning up evil, and do you approve Him as such? Do you see His sovereignty, His hatred of sin, His immutability, His jealousy, and yet admire Him? Do you indeed delight in even the sterner traits of the divine character, knowing that under all aspects the Lord is good? Then in you is fulfilled the promise, “I will give them a heart to know me.”

The heart-knowledge promised in the covenant of grace means, however, much more than approval, grace enables the renewed heart to take another step and *appropriate* the Lord, saying, “O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee.” All the saved ones cry, “This God is our God for ever and ever; He shall be our guide even unto death.” The man who only knows the Lord with his head regards Him as anybody's God, or another man's God. But the man who knows the Lord with his *heart* exclaims with Thomas, “My Lord and my God.”

By an act of appropriating faith the gracious man cries out, “The Lord is my portion saith my soul,” and then in return he dedicates himself to the service of his God. And there is fulfilled in him that other promise of covenant, “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” Admiration of God leads on to appropriation, and this to something higher still.

All true knowledge of God is attended by *affection* for Him. In spiritual language to know God is to love Him. “He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.” “I love the LORD,” saith David, “because he hath heard my voice and my supplication.” He had been no stranger to the Lord, but had conversed with Him in prayer and received tokens of favor, and therefore, his love overflowed.

He cries out in another psalm, “I will love thee, O LORD, my strength,” and then he goes on to heap up and pack together a host of words of love and praise, “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.” Where the Lord is fully known He is intensely loved.

The spouse first described her beloved as the apple tree among the trees of the wood, and then she cried out, “I am sick of love.” At another time, after drawing a full-length portrait of her Lord, she could not refrain from exclaiming, “His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely.” Such is our love of God when we know Him, that we feel bound to glory in Him before others.

“My soul shall make her boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.” It is the great passion of the renewed soul to glorify God, whom he knows and loves. Knowledge without love would be a powerless thing, but God has joined this knowledge and love together in a sacred wedlock, and they can never be put asunder. As we love God we know Him, and as we know Him we love Him.

Admiration, appropriation, affection are crowned with *adhesion*. To know a thing by heart is, in our common talk, to know it thoroughly. When a child knows his lesson by heart, we hope that he will not forget it. That which is learned in the head may be unlearned, for our understanding is very fickle and our memory frail, but that which is written upon the heart cannot be erased.

Holy Scripture asks, “Can a maid forget her ornaments or a bride her attire?” These she dotes upon, and therefore, she will not forget them. Can a woman forget her sucking child? No, she cannot, because her knowledge of her child is heart knowledge. Memories of the heart abide when all others depart.

A mother's love, a wife's fondness, a sweet child's affection, will come before us even in the last hours of life. When the mind will lose its learning and the hand forget its cunning, the dear names of our

beloved ones will linger on our lips, and their sweet faces will be before us even when our eyes are dim with the shadow of approaching death.

If we can sing, "O God, my heart is fixed, O my heart is fixed," then the knowledge which it possesses will never be taken away from it. To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, is not a fleeting attainment, but shall abide with us and increase until we know even as we are known. This is not the knowledge which shall vanish away, but that which shall be perfected when the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

Now, beloved friend, have you such a knowledge of God? Do you admire, appropriate, love, and cleave to the Lord your God? Can you hope that you have been taught of the Lord according to that promise, "They shall know me from the least even unto the greatest." Do not say, "I am so little in Israel that I cannot be expected to know." Does not the covenant promise imply that the least must know the Lord as well as the greatest?

This blessed knowledge is essential to every Christian, do you possess it? If not, do you desire it? If so, plead for it, and say, "I beseech You show me Your glory. Let me know You as the Lord God, merciful and gracious, passing by transgression, iniquity, and sin." He will hear you if you plead for Jesus' sake.

II. This brings us at once to the second point, namely, THE NECESSITY OF THIS KNOWLEDGE.

If we think a minute we shall see how necessary it is. To know God is a needful preparation *for every other true knowledge* because the Lord is the center of the universe, the basis, the pillar, the essential force, the all in all, the fullness of all things.

Not to know God is as if a student should attempt to construct a system of astronomy and be altogether ignorant of the sun, or a mariner should be a stranger to the sea, or a husbandman should not know the existence of seeds. The place which God occupies must be settled in our minds or we shall have no arrangement in our knowledge, and our science will be nothing but a conglomeration of truth and error.

You may learn the doctrines of the Bible, but you do not know them truly till you know the God of the doctrines. You may understand the precepts in the letter of them, and the promises in their outward wording, but neither precept nor promise do you truly know until you know the God from whose lips they fell. The knowledge of God is at once the beginning and the end of wisdom. The ancient sage said, "Man, know thyself."

He spoke well, but even for this man must first know his God. I venture to say that no man rightly knows himself till he knows his God because it is by the light and purity of God that we see our own darkness and sinfulness.

There must be a perfect model before us before we can discern our own departures from perfection. You must have a standard by which to weigh yourself or you cannot tell whether you are wanting or no. God is the standard, and until a man knows the standard he does not know how far he himself has fallen short of it.

The proper study of mankind is God, and that attended to, the next appropriate subject of study is man. We must know God, or our other knowledge may be dangerous to others, and certainly will be hurtful to ourselves. It will puff us up, or load us with responsibilities which we shall not be able to meet. For the highest and most practical purposes, without the knowledge of God, we abide in utter ignorance.

The knowledge of God is necessary *to any real peace of mind*. Suppose a man is in the world and feel that he is right in every way except with regard to God, and as to Him he knows nothing. Hear him say, "I go about the world and see many faces which I can recognize, and I perceive many friends upon whom I can trust, but there is a God somewhere, and I know nothing at all about Him. Whether He be my friend or my foe I know not."

If that individual is thoughtful and intelligent he must suffer unrest in his spirit, because he will say to himself, "Suppose this God should turn out to be a just God, and I should be a breaker of His laws?"

What a peril hangs over me. How is it possible for me to be at peace till this dreadful ignorance is removed!"

The Old Testament Scripture says, "Acquaint now thyself with God and be at peace." There is no peace to the heart while God is unknown. He is the God of peace, and there can be no peace till the soul knows Him. Does it not strike you as being most certainly so? To leave this point unknown would be to leave in jeopardy the most vital part of happiness, the hinge upon which our eternal destiny must turn. Are you doing this? or is the Lord known to you?

That this knowledge of God is necessary is clear, for how could it be possible for a man to have spiritual life and yet not know God? The very first being which a man discerns when he is quickened into spiritual life is the Father of Spirits. His first cry is, "Father, I have sinned," and all his life he cries, "Abba Father." Prayer is his breath, but he cannot truly pray to an unknown God. Faith is his life, but how shall he believe in Him whom he does not know?

I cannot imagine such a being as a spiritual man who knows not God, it is a self-evident impossibility—to be of the sons of God and not yet know the Father, to be pressed upon the Father's bosom, to receive the Father's forgiveness, and yet to be an utter stranger to that forgiving God is impossible—it is utterly inconceivable! The knowledge of God is an absolute and necessary concomitant of the spiritual life, without which we cannot see or enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Certainly it is necessary for the spiritual life when fully developed above. In heaven, and not know the King who reigns there! The golden harp in your hand, and not know for whom to sweep its melodious strings! White robed in glory, and not know the Redeemer in whose blood our robes were washed! Absurd supposition! It cannot be endured for a moment.

Sinner, you must know the Lord. If you do not know Him you are not a partaker of His grace, but you abide in darkness. Into His heaven you can never enter till He has given you a heart to know Him, do not forget this warning, or trifle with it.

III. Our third theme is THE EXCELLENCY OF THIS KNOWLEDGE.

And here I shall spend a little longer time, and I hope I shall not tire you. I shall not weary those who care more for sense than sound. One of the first effects of knowing God in the soul is that it *turns out our idols*. Paul tells the Galatians in the fourth chapter and eighth verse of his epistle, that it was when they knew not God that they did service unto them which by nature are no gods, but when they knew God, or rather were known of Him, they turned from their idols at once.

A knowledge of God! O my brethren, it creates an abhorrence of idols, especially of those which have enslaved our own hearts. It seems to us most monstrous that the ancient Greeks and Romans could have worshipped the deities which their poets fabled for them, and yet at this very time, as I have said, men imagine for themselves a god such as they would choose and then they worship this god of their own fabrication.

Only let the Lord reveal Himself to the soul, let the heart know the true God and away these idols go. With loathing are they cast to the moles and to the bats. Get a view of the JEHOVAH of Revelation, shining through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you say, "What have I to do anymore with idols?"

With holy scorn you pour contempt upon the gods of man's invention, and glory in the living God, the God of Israel. Your hearts burn with the jealousy of Elijah, and flames with indignation against the rivals of the Lord of hosts, you would take the prophets of Baal and let not one escape, because they have dared to set up "the image of jealousy" in the temple of the Most High, and have seduced the minds of men to pay their worship to the gods that are no God.

Beloved, God so enamors the soul of the converted man, so engrosses every spiritual faculty, that he cannot endure an idol, however dear in former times. And if perchance in some backsliding moment an earthly love intrudes, it is because the man has withdrawn his eye from the splendor of the Deity. When once he gets his eye back again to the God of love, then does Dagon fall before the ark of the Lord, and

not so much as the stump is thereof left. Blessed Lord, let us know Thee, for then we shall know our idols no more.

The second good effect of the knowledge of God is that it *creates faith* in the soul. To prove this I might give a great many texts, but one will suffice, from Psalm 9:10, “they that know thy name will put their trust in thee.” We cannot trust an unknown God, but when God reveals Himself to us by His Spirit, then to trust Him is no longer difficult. It is, indeed, inevitable.

Whenever a man does not believe God, it is because he does not know Him. If you doubt His willingness to pardon sin, you do not know the abundance of His mercy. If you doubt His skill to bring you through your present difficulties, you do not know the infinite resources of His wisdom. If you dream that He cannot deliver you in this your time of need, you have closed your eye to the unlimited energy of His power. If you think He has forsaken you, you have failed to know His immutability. Know Him, and you must trust Him.

Thirdly, this knowledge of God not only creates faith, but creates *good works also*. Turn to 1 John 2:3, and you read, “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments,” regarding it as absolutely certain that wherever there is a knowledge of God there must follow thereupon the keeping of His commandments, and it is certainly so. Know the Lord, and with holy reverence you will obey Him.

See what a great deal the apostle ascribes to the knowledge of God in Colossians 1:9, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, 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.” What was to be the benefit of this? Let us read on, “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 longsuffering with joyfulness.”

See what a string of excellent graces spring out of our being filled with the knowledge of God, it is a tree which bears twelve manner of fruits. The soul that knows the Lord is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth its fruit in its season. Daniel says (11:32), that “The people who do know their God shall be strong and do great exploits,” so that courage, valor, and prowess are learned in this sacred school. A heart to know the Lord begets and nurtures every virtue and every grace, and is the basis of the noblest character, the very food which feeds grace till it matures into glory.

Brethren, to know God has over us a *transforming power*. Remember how the apostle writes (in 2 Cor. 3:18), “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, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” The knowledge of God is the most effectual influence under heaven, for the Spirit works thereby, and by its means we are renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us. Everything that we learn and know affects our character in some measure, even as the flesh of an animal tastes of its food. A constant sight of any object, good or bad, tells upon us.

We heard a German missionary say, last Monday night, that when he was in Coomassie, the sight of dead bodies and of mangled corpses from week to week so hardened him to it that the horror was almost gone. Every thought which crosses the mind affects it for the better or the worse. Every glance is molding us, every wish fashions the character. A sight of God is the most wonderfully sanctifying influence that can be conceived of. Know God, and you will grow to be like Him. Dear hearer, have you beheld this marvelous vision?

The knowledge of God has a further effect. It *causes us to praise Him*. Here is a proof text—“In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel.” Wherever the Lord is known He must be magnified. It is not possible for us to have low thoughts of Him, or to give forth mean utterances concerning Him, or to act in a miserly way towards His cause, when we practically know him.

There are some men whom we know whose presence renders paltry actions impossible, you feel that you could not act towards them in any but a generous manner. To know them elevates you. You must do the good and the great and the generous thing when they are concerned.

So, when once we know God it is much more so, for to know Him constrains us to praise Him, not only with our lips, but with our lives. It makes us feel that nothing is good enough for Him, and we would even die for His name's sake. We wish for a glorious high throne on which He may be exalted above the highest heavens, King of kings and Lord of lords.

The knowledge of God brings *comfort*, and that is a very desirable thing in a world of trouble. What saith the psalmist? "God is known in her palaces for a refuge." Do you know Him? Then He is your refuge. Blessed be God, in days of storm we put into this harbor, and in days of battle we fly to this castle, and dwell in this high tower. If you know God you will not be ruffled, or if for a little while you are disturbed, your heart will soon come back to its rest. You will cast your care on Him, wait patiently for Him, and rejoice in Him at all times, and surely it shall be well with you.

To know God also brings a man great honor. I cannot attempt at this time to explain the noble text which I am about to quote. I throw it out as a pleasing theme for meditation. It is the fourteenth verse of the ninety-first psalm. "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." Think of it—"set on high," and set on high by the Lord Himself, and all as the result of knowing the name of the Lord.

There is no getting on high and keeping there, no dwelling above the world and sin, no sitting in the heavenlies, no triumphing over death and hell except by knowing God. When we do know Him our meditation of Him shall be sweet. Then shall our head be lifted up above our enemies round about us, our heart shall mount above the cares and sorrows of the world, and our soul shall dwell on high, where our place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks.

One thing more, and that is, the man who knows the Lord will have *usefulness* given him. And to prove that I will quote a passage in 2 Corinthians 2:14—"Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest *the savor of his knowledge* by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish."

Do you not see that the apostle knew Christ, and Christ's name was in him as ointment poured forth. The man who knows God has a savor about him, and wherever he goes he will be a power among men. The savor of Christ will come streaming out of him, as incense from a censor filled with glowing coals.

Our usefulness very much depends upon our knowledge of God. We cannot teach others of things that we do not know ourselves. If we have no savor in us there cannot be a savor coming out of us. We shall only be a drag upon the church in any position if we are destitute of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. But if we are filled with a knowledge of Christ, then the sweet savor of His name will pour forth from us as perfume from the flowers.

Thus I have put together many things upon which we cannot expatiate, but they will make you see how excellent a thing it is to know the Lord in the heart.

IV. Our fourth point is, THE SOURCE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE.

Upon this I will dwell but briefly. We are clearly taught in the text that it is *a divine work*—"I will give them a heart to know me." None but the Creator can give a man a new heart, the change is too radical for any other hand. It would be hard to give a new eye, or a new arm, but a new heart is still more out of the question. All the preaching, teaching, and reforming in the world cannot do it. The Lord Himself must do it. As surely as God made you, God must new make you, or you will never know Him.

It is evidently *a work of pure grace*. "I will give them a heart," not "They shall grow into it, or purchase it," but "I will give it to them." He freely gives to whomsoever He wills, according to His own declaration, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."

It is evidently *a work which is possible*. All things are possible to God, and He says, "I will give it to them." He does not speak of it as a blessing desirable, but unattainable. On the contrary, He says, "I will give them a heart to know me." It is *a work which the Lord has promised to do*. How many precious passages there are in Holy Writ in which the Lord declares that this shall be done.

I have lately read them with much sweetness to my own heart, here are some of them. In Hosea 2:19, "I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment,

and in lovingkindness and in mercies, I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the LORD.”

Then in the eighth chapter of the prophecy of Hosea, in the second verse we read, “Israel shall cry unto me, my God, we know thee.” That wonderful passage in Jeremiah 31:33-34, is so nearly reproduced by the apostle in the eighth of the Hebrews that I need only read the New Testament version (Heb. 8:10-12). “This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

So then it is a promised blessing. A blessing all divine, and divinely guaranteed to those with whom JEHOVAH has entered into covenant.

The sum of my discourse is this. If you have received this heart to know the Lord, bless Him every minute of your existence for this choicest of all boons, without which you could not enjoy any other covenant blessing. Never cease to praise the Lord, for He has favored you above measure in giving you so priceless a blessing.

But suppose you stand in doubt as to whether you know God, how should you act? Harken to good counsel. Consider your ways, and turn unto the Lord your God, even now. Confess your ignorance, dear friend. A sense of ignorance is the very vestibule of knowledge. Go before God this very day with an acknowledgment that you know nothing. Tell Him how ignorant, and blind, and stupid you are. Confess it all before Him.

That being done, remember that it is by the knowledge of Christ that you are to be justified, “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.” Study the character of Christ, contemplate with eager attention His work and person. See God in Christ Jesus, and when you have so done, cry mightily unto the Lord, saying, “Thou hast given this promise in Thy covenant, Lord let it be a promise unto me, and do Thou fulfill it. Thou hast said, ‘I will give them a heart to know me.’ Lord, give me a heart to know Thee.”

“For this,” He says, “I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.” Go and inquire of Him concerning it. He will give you that heart. He will reveal Himself to you, and you shall yet have to bless and praise His holy name, that He has turned you from darkness to light, and from the ignorance of your natural estate unto the true knowledge of His name. God grant it may be so with you this very day.

Time flies, we are almost at the end of the year, and some of you still remain ignorant of God. Shall the year return to heaven to accuse you? Let not this blessed Sabbath go until you have thought upon your ways, and turned your steps unto His testimonies. May His Spirit sweetly incline you to seek His face, and He will be known of you. God grant His blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JEREMIAH 31:18-37

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—908, 231, 489

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.