

**THEY KNOW CHRIST  
WHO KEEP HIS  
COMMANDMENTS**

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They know Christ who keep his commandments by Ralph Cudworth

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## Leaven Leaves.

*"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."*

GALATIANS v. 9.

# They know Christ

WHO KEEP HIS

# Commandments.

By RALPH CUDWORTH, D.D.



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*141. d. 508.*

And hereby we do know, that we know  
him, if we keep his commandments.  
—He that saith I know him, and  
keepeth not his commandments, is a  
liar, and the truth is not in him.”—  
I JOHN ii. 3, 4.



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WE have much inquiry concerning knowledge in these latter times. The sons of Adam are now as busy as ever Adam himself was about the tree of knowledge of good and evil; shaking its boughs, and scrambling for the fruit: whilst, I fear, many are too unmindful of the tree of life. And, though there be now no cherubim, with their flaming swords, to fright men off, yet the way that leads to it seems to be solitary and untrodden, as if there were but few that had any mind to taste of its fruit. There are many that speak of new glimpses and discoveries of truth, of dawnings of Gospel light. And no question but God has reserved much



of this for the very evening and sunset of the world; for, in the latter days, "knowledge shall be increased." But yet I wish we could, in the meantime, see that day dawn which the apostle speaks of, and that "day-star arise in men's hearts." I wish, whilst we talk of light and dispute about truth, that we could walk more as "children of the light." But, if St John's rule in the text be good, that no man truly knows Christ but he who keeps his commandments, it is much to be suspected that many of us who pretend to light, have a thick and gloomy darkness within overspreading our souls.

There are now many large volumes and discourses written concerning Christ; thousands of controversies discussed, infinite problems determined, concerning his divinity, humanity, union of both together, and what not. So that our bookish Christians, who have all their religion in writings and papers, think they are completely furnished with all kinds of knowledge concerning Christ. And, when they see all their leaves lying about them, they think they have a goodly stock of knowledge and truth, and cannot possibly miss the way to heaven; as if reli-

gion were nothing but a little bookcraft, a mere paper-skill.

But, if St John's rule here be good, we must not judge of our knowing Christ by our skill in books and papers, but by our keeping his commandments. And that, I fear, will discover many of us, notwithstanding all this light which we boast of round about us, to have nothing but Egyptian darkness within our hearts.

The vulgar sort think that they know Christ enough out of their creeds, and catechisms, and confessions of faith: and if they have but a little acquainted themselves with these, and, like parrots, have conned the words of them, they doubt not but that they are sufficiently instructed in all the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Many of the more learned, if they can but wrangle and dispute about Christ, imagine themselves to be grown great proficient in the school of Christ.

The greater part of the world, whether learned or unlearned, think that there is no need of purging and purifying their hearts for the right knowledge of Christ and his Gospel. But, though their lives be never so wicked, their hearts never so foul within,

yet they may know Christ sufficiently out of their treatises and discourses, out of their mere systems and bodies of divinity. Which I deny not to be useful in a subordinate way; although our Saviour prescribes to his disciples another method for coming to the right knowledge of divine truths: "He that will do my Father's will, shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." The true Christian, indeed, is not he that is only book-taught, but he that is God-taught; he that has "an unction from the Holy One," "that teacheth him all things;" he that has the Spirit of Christ within him, that searcheth out the deep things of God: "For, as no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man, which is in him; even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God."

Ink and paper can never make us Christians, can never beget a new nature, a living principle in us; can never form Christ, or any true notions of spiritual things, in our hearts. The Gospel, that new law which Christ delivered to the world, is not merely a dead letter without us, but a quickening spirit within us. Cold theorems and maxims, dry and jejune disputes, lean syllogis-