

The Greatest Insight

A novel, *Say and Seal*, was written by American authors and sisters, Susan and Anna Warner. The novel was published in 1860. It tells the story of a little boy, Johnny, who is sick and dying. He is being rocked in the arms of his Sunday School teacher, John Linden. Seeking to comfort Johnny, Linden quoted the lines of a poem:

*Jesus loves me this I know
For the bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong
They are weak but he is strong.*

In 1862, William B. Bradbury set the words to music and added the famous chorus: "Yes, Jesus loves me." The song is one of the world's best known children's songs, "Jesus Loves Me."

Karl Barth was one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century. He possessed a brilliant mind and wrote thousands of words exploring the interrelation of faith, theology and culture. Towards the end of his life Barth gave a lecture at the University of Chicago Divinity School. At the end of the lecture, he was asked what he considered to be the greatest theological discovery of his life.

Everyone sat with bated breath ready for an extended and complex answer. Karl Barth paused for a moment, then smiled and said, "The greatest theological insight that I have ever had is this: Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so!" *

When we were separated from God due to our sins (Isaiah 59:1-2) and therefore destined for destruction (Matthew 7:13-14), God loved us so much that He gave His one and only Son to die on the cross for our sins.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10 ESV).

"By this we know love, that He (Jesus) laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16 ESV).

Because of His great love for us, God will save and give eternal life to those who place their faith and trust in Jesus (Acts 16:30-31), turn from

their sins in repentance (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:9-10), and are baptized (immersed) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). He will continue to cleanse from sin those who continue to walk in the light of His Word (1 John 1:7-9).

“Jesus loves me, this I know.” It is the greatest theological insight, and it is the wonderful theme of God’s plan for redemption.

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Won’t YOU accept His offer of salvation and eternal life?

-- David A. Sargent

Source: Reported in *Deep Cove Crier*, November 1993, Reporter Interactive (umr.org), May 2001, and Tony Campolo, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, as shared in www.storiesforpreaching.com with a few details added from “Jesus Loves Me” in Wikipedia.