

# The Watchman Pulpit.

## "MADE KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN."

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"And they told what things John had done in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of bread."—*Luke 24: 35.*

A saying full of deep and pathetic mystery! Who that has read it has not wondered how it was that our blessed Lord was suddenly manifested to His brethren, when before they had not known Him? Was it some familiar gesture that gave this blessed betrayal of His identity? Was it a tone or a look that gave sudden verification to a suspicion which had been growing on them as they communed by the way? No! There is something deeper in the revelation.

I. Christ was now known sacrificially to His disciples. Have you never thought that it is possible to know all about a person,—his residence, his character, his history, and yet be utterly unacquainted with him? The heart is the man himself, and he who knows not the heart is a stranger to his most familiar friend. Now the one thing on which Christ had set His heart was, the offering up of Himself for the sins of the world. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" He said. As though His heart's blood was actually burning in His veins and crowding His heart walls, in eager haste to burst forth in redeeming tides towards a lost world. And yet, at this point, He was utterly misunderstood. When He broke the secret to Peter, he rebuked Him and said, "Far be it from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." When He hung upon the cross, I know not that a single one of His disciples knew what He was doing. And now that all was over, they thought that an irreparable calamity had befallen Him, and knew not that the redemption of the world had been accomplished. So that once more, after all His toil and travail of soul, He had to rebuke them, saying, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" I believe that the hardest trial which a faithful servant of God encounters in this world is that of being misunderstood and blamed by his own friends. Why will our Master be despised and rejected by

showing him how the Lord "came not to minister, but to be ministered to," saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Then as though the veil had been suddenly lifted, saying, "*Not my feet only, but my hands and my head.*"

As at the Levites' consecration the sacrificial blood was sprinkled on the right ear, the right hand and the right foot, so now Simon Peter, from refusing to be washed at all, will be wholly washed, head, hands and feet. Oh, if the Lord were really made known to us, my brethren, in the breaking of bread, we should be done with half-heartedness in service, and resolve to be wholly the Lord's; if we could see that He gave all that He had for us, how could we withhold giving all that we have to Him? I want to lift the veil this morning, both off your eyes who go from, and yours who stay at, the Lord's Supper. Behold Him, suffering the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. You may see Him as the Man, the Teacher, the God; but until you know Him as the sacrifice, you do not truly know Him. For two years, a German sculptor toiled upon a block of marble to produce a statue of Christ. Then he called to him a little child well instructed in the Scriptures, and lifting the covering from the statue, said, "Who is that?" And looking at it a moment, she replied, "It is a great man." "Alas! I have failed," said the artist; "she does not know who it is." Again he bent himself to the task, and after two years more of toil, he called the child once more. "Who is that?" he asked. And with the tenderest simplicity, she answered, instantly, "That is the one who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me.'" And we who preach the gospel to you are but sculptors, trying to bring Christ before you in His living lineaments. If as I preach Christ, you only say, "*The great man!*" I am not satisfied. If I set Him forth so that you exclaim, "*God manifest in the flesh,*" I am not content. If I portray Him so that in adoration you cry, "*King of Kings and Lord of Lords,*" I am not satisfied. But if as I preach, you see Him as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world—the man who stretches out His nail-pierced hands, saying, "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,*" I shall be satisfied. No! not even then. I can only be truly satisfied as I hear you answering,—

"Just as I am, without one plea,  
O Lamb of God, I come to thee."

Jesus." It was a great event, this inquiry of delegates from that wise and cultured nation, after the man of Nazareth. And with all eagerness Philip hastened to tell Andrew about these inquirers; and Andrew and Philip ran to Jesus to let Him know. Would not you think now that He would give these strangers some easy doctrine, some simple revelation of Himself, so that they might readily understand Him? On the contrary, just then He utters one of the hardest and most mysterious sayings, "Except a kernel of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." "Mysterious," I said, and yet it was the doctrine of the cross, and the cross is to be the key to human hearts. And our Lord would open at once this great central secret, life through death, salvation through suffering, the crown by way of the cross. The Master was wiser than His servant Paul. When He went down to preach to the Greeks he took them on their own ground, and delivered a philosophic and learned discourse. But we find little success attending this method. And when we next hear of Him, He is writing to the Corinthians and saying, "For I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." What the Lord determined at the outset, the servant learned by hard experience. Oh that of those who hear me to-day I might find some inquirer saying, "*We would see Jesus.*" And I would not point you first to His perfect life, to His holy self-denial, to His wise and wondrous teaching. But first of all I would point you to His cross and say, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." For Christ crucified is the key and clue to all that pertains to the Son of God.

praised by all? Why will He stand in Pilate's judgment hall, mocked and reviled and spit upon, when He could so easily have courted the popular favor, and been made the centre of universal admiration and praise? Why will He go to the cross, when He might just as well go to the throne escorted and crowned by twelve legions of angels? These questions His impatient followers asked over and over again, as they beheld Him setting His face steadfastly towards His sacrificial death. He heard all their murmurings, read all their questionings of heart, and then turned with calm and sorrowful face to the cross of humiliation and said, "The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, and crucified and rise again the third day." O thou bleeding Lamb, what if the charm of popular applause had turned thy heart aside, so that it had chosen life and honor, instead of death and ignominy? Where had been the help and hope for which lost sinners had so long waited? Now I have thought that this long-hidden secret of redemption may have been revealed to the disciples at this moment. For He seems to have turned a common meal into a sacrament. "As He sat at meat with them, He took bread and blessed it, and broke it and gave it to them"—the same language which is employed just before His death to describe the institution of the supper. There is a beautiful incident told of one of England's most saintly preachers, Fletcher of Madeley. In his old age, two brother ministers came from a distance to pay him a visit. As they entered his house fatigued from the journey, he ordered some refreshments to be brought. It chanced that, after the old English custom, bread and wine were placed upon the table. As the aged minister stepped forward to serve his guests, it seemed as though the memory of Christ's great sacrifice filled his soul with a resistless impulse. He took the bread and blessed it, and as he did so, he said, "Brethren, this is Christ's body broken for you. eat

II. Christ must be known *spiritually* in order to be truly understood. Do you remember how Paul says?—"Henceforth I know no man after the flesh: yea, though I have known Christ after the flesh, henceforth I know Him no more." What is the difference between Christ before the resurrection, and Christ after the resurrection? Was He flesh and blood before, and only spirit afterwards? No! His was "a natural body" before He rose, and a *spiritual body* after He rose. He had *blood relations* before He rose; He has only *spiritual relations* since He rose. That is to say, if we now have constant kindredship with Christ, it is through the Holy Spirit. The Roman Catholic in making the Virgin Mary an object of worship gives an illustration of knowing Christ after the flesh. Because she was the natural mother of Jesus, it is supposed that she must have a place very near Him on the throne, whereas she is no nearer Him than any mother in this congregation who truly loves and worships the Son of God. Shall we make saints of Joseph and Mary and the brethren of Jesus, because, forsooth, they were His kindred according to the flesh? No! Hear what Christ Himself says: "Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my mother and my brother and my sister." What a blessed revelation this is! Kindredship to Christ through the Holy Spirit. All the painters give the halo round the head of Mary, to glorify her with heavenly honor. But any poor widow in this congregation who loves and adores Christ, and keeps his Father's commands, deserves to wear that halo as truly as the virgin mother does. For we have kinship to our Lord now through obedience and faith and love. This fact explains, I think, that pathetic scene with Mary Magdalen after the resurrection. Jesus met her as she stood weeping, and said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She replied, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have lain Him." And Jesus turned, and said, "Mary." And

ye all of it." And then taking the wine, he said, "This is Christ's blood shed for you." And as he did this, Fletcher of Madeley was made known to the brethren in the breaking of bread. They saw a man in whom the heart of Christ had full control, with whom the love of Christ was the supreme passion, the cross of Christ the supreme foundation, and the joy of Christ the supreme consolation. And in that moment it seemed to them as though the very gates of Paradise were swung open to them. Something like this, I have imagined, may have been the experience of those first disciples, as Jesus took bread and brake it. The long hidden meaning of that "decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem" perchance now broke upon them, and they saw in one glimpse their beloved friend, and the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

To know Christ is not simply to recognize Him, but to enter into fellowship with His deepest heart. Hear Paul's prayer, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings." Until you know what it is, my hearers, to travail in pain for lost souls and to be exceeding sorrowful even unto death over those who persist in perishing, after Christ has died to save them, you will not truly know Christ, nor can you bring others to know Him. I look into your faces this morning who have heard the gospel from my lips these many years, as Christ has been set forth enduring crucifixion in the most of you. And I seem to hear Him saying, "Have I been so long with you and hast thou not known me?" And I wonder why the veil is still upon your faces, that you should "see no beauty in Him that you should desire Him." And I think that perhaps if I had known Him better and been able to bring out the full riches of His love, you would not now be in your unbelief. What a change is wrought by simply knowing the Lord! Behold Simon Peter, at first knowing not his Lord in any deep, intimate sense, when He opened to him the doctrine of His crucifixion,—sceptical opposed, rebellious,—"*It shall never be.*" And when the Lord would teach him the lesson symbolically by stooping to wash his feet, thus

she answered, *Rabboni*, Master, and reached out her hands to grasp His, and He said, "Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to the Father." No longer am I to be known through fleshly contact, by the touch of the fingers, and the handling of the hands. "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." But is the Son of man never more to be touched? Ah yes! We have a great high priest who was passed into the heavens: Jesus the Son of God. "He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Have you a sorrowing heart? Touch Him and He will heal it. Have you a sinful soul? Touch Him and He will cleanse it. He is nearer now than in the days of the flesh, because the Holy Ghost has been given to take of His, and show it unto you. Reach out your hands of faith towards Christ upon the throne, and though angels and archangels and all the host of heaven surround Him, He will say, "Somebody hath touched me."

O my brethren, how greatly I long that Christ may be known to you this morning in the breaking of bread. He cannot be, if any veil of sense or self hangs between you and Him. You remember that it was said of the disciples that "their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." That is a saying which it is easy to interpret. A good man or a great man may dwell for years in a community without being seen. There is no eye that is focused rightly to discern Him. It takes a painter to see a painter, it takes a poet to see a poet, and it takes a Christian who is walking in the Spirit to recognize another who is walking in the Spirit. And so when the risen Christ stood there just enswathed and transfigured by the Spirit, they who had not the Spirit fully dwelling in them could not see Him, as it is written, "No man calleth Jesus Lord except by the Holy Ghost."

Now Jesus longs more than anything else that we should see Him as He is, and not be content with half views and partial apprehensions of Him. I have often been deeply impressed with our Lord's conduct towards those "certain Greeks who came up to the feast and said, We would see