

JESUS KNOWN BY PERSONAL REVELATION.

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BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”-Matthew 16:13-17.

THIS is one of the earliest places in the New Testament in which we find any mention of the church. Jesus says, in verse eighteen, “I will build my church.” It is very significant that our Lord should connect with the church the right idea of himself. In our text we have the test question which must be put to every one who is to be admitted into the assembly of the Lord-“Whom say ye that I am?” The first question to be put to one who would join the church is, “What thinkest thou of Jesus?” You cannot be right in the rest unless you think rightly of him. If you do not begin aright with Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God, you will not go on aright, and your joining of any visible church will be a mistake which will be injurious both to yourself and the church. Beloved, let it be with you first Christ, then the church. There is a certain style of preaching in which the church is the leading idea: meaning, to a great extent, by “the church,” the priest, as the dispenser of ordinances and the voice of God. But as for us, our chief word is not “church,” but “Christ,” and not even the church of Christ, but

Christ as very God of very God-the Son of the Highest. First Christ, the root, then the church, the outgrowth; first Christ, the builder, then the church, which is his building. The most important question is not, "To which part of the church do you belong?" but, "Do you belong to Christ, who is the Son of the living God?" This must be decided by that other question, "Whom say ye that I am?" If you know Christ, if you rest in Christ, if Christ be to you "the way, the truth, and the life"; above all, if Christ be "formed in you the hope of glory," your connection with the true church, the church of God's election and redemption, is clear and certain.

In putting the question about himself, our Lord made a distinction between two classes of persons, who are named as "men," and as his disciples. He enquired, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" These "men" formed their judgment of Christ according to flesh and blood: they went upon the ground of carnal reasoning; or else they followed current opinion. They went upon natural, and not upon spiritual, grounds; they discerned nothing of spiritual things: their judgment was that of flesh and blood. What conclusion did they arrive at while guided by flesh and blood? The conclusions were diverse: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Error is multiform; truth is one. A thousand lies will live together, and tolerate each other, especially at this time, when errorists are all crying out, "Cast in thy lot with us; let us all have one purse." A thousand false gods will stand together in the Pantheon; but if the ark of the true God enters Dagon's temple, Dagon must come down on his face and be dashed to pieces. Jehovah is God alone, and will not brook a rival. Truth is of necessity intolerant of error. Do not misunderstand me-I believe in the fullest religious liberty, and that conscience owes allegiance to none but God: but I speak of principles: holiness cannot endure sin, righteousness cannot bear injustice, and truth cannot consort with error. "What concord hath Christ with Belial?"

The results to-day of the judgments of men about Christ are very many; but they agree in this, that they contradict the one and only truth. To-day, some say, "He is a good man," others say, "Nay; but he deceiveth the people." Some say that he is divine, though not actually God; others that he has become God, though he was not always so; and a third company think him a divine man. Some agree that his teachings were admirable for the occasions on which he delivered them, but that they are somewhat stale in this advanced age; while others ridicule his teachings as altogether

impracticable. The doctrines of flesh and blood concerning Jesus are very various.

They were also contradictory; for, if Jesus was John the Baptist, he could not be Jeremias. Certain spirits contradicted all the opinions which are registered in our text, for they called the master of the house Beelzebub. The apostles quoted to their Lord the best things that had been said of him; but they hardly liked to foul their mouths with the baser titles. Flesh and blood make many guesses, but they settle upon no one: the enemies of the Lord are at war with each other. In this case, as in others, the false witnesses agree not together.

The judgments of men here recorded are respectful to our Lord Jesus. It is usual nowadays to speak very respectfully of him-if there can be any respectfulness in words which deny his Godhead. To-day they rend the seamless vesture of the Crucified. They retain his example, and profess to value it; but his sacrifice they fling aside as a rag of superstition. They dare to deny his miracles while they applaud his precepts: they will have nothing to do with the doctrine of the cross; but with the self-denial of the cross they affect to be enamoured. Our Lord will not thus be divided. Those who take not a whole Christ take not Christ at all.

Whether the conclusions of flesh and blood are respectful to Jesus or not, they are every one of them wrong. In the favorable summary here given, not one conjecture of men is correct. Jesus was not John the Baptist, nor Elias, nor Jeremias, nor one of the prophets. Assuredly he was not Beelzebub. Men did not know what Jesus was. They neither knew him, nor his Father. The character of Jesus is much too hard a nut for philosophic teeth to crack. Men wonder at him, and, as the case may be, they admire or abhor him; but who among them can declare his generation, or read the enigma of his person? He is spiritual, and they are carnal; he is holy, and they are "sold under sin." The brightness of his glory blinds them. The pure in heart shall see God; but those who are in love with evil cannot see the fullness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Jesus. They guess, and reason, and blunder. Jesus is to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.

The conclusions of flesh and blood are unblessed. No blessing attached to any of the various notions which men hold concerning the Son of man; but that judgment which came by revelation from the Father made Simon Peter blessed, and our Lord beheld and declared the blessing. Gazing at Jesus as if he were John the Baptist, or Elias, brought no blessing with it; and if

Jesus be not known by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, he is not known as a well-spring of blessedness to the soul. If you know no more of Christ than the world knows, than the learned know, than the philosophical know, you have not found the blessing. If you know no more of Christ than you have found out for yourselves, even by reading the Word of God, unaided by the Father, you are not blessed. If you know no more of Jesus than flesh and blood has revealed to you, it has brought you no more blessing than the conjectures of their age brought to the Pharisees and Sadducees, who remained an adulterous and unbelieving generation.

There was a handful of people in the world in the Savior's day who were known as his disciples. To them he put the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" They were disciples, that is, learners; they were not so much "thoughtful men," as the cant phrase now is, as learners. They received what he imparted to them; his "Verily, verily," being to them better than reasoning. As disciples, they were also servants—they learned obedience. They knew Jesus by following in his steps. Put these two things together, learners and servants, and you will see how different they were from the men of the world. "Men" were not learners, for they already knew; they were not obedient, for they followed their own devices, and boasted that they were never in bondage unto any man. The chosen of God received by grace that humble spirit which confesses its ignorance, and is willing to learn; that yielding spirit which lays aside its own will, and is eager to obey its Lord. Judge ye, dear hearers, to which you belong, whether ye are "men," boasting of your intellect, guided by "flesh and blood," or whether ye are "his disciples," who judge after the Spirit, and are taught of the Father. Consider whether the Father has revealed the Son unto you. If you belong to this latter class you are among the blessed. The benediction of the Savior falls like morning dew upon your hearts at this time: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

You have now fully before you the subject of our morning's meditation. May the Spirit of God guide us into it!

I. Our first observation is this—THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS DIFFERS FROM THAT OF THE WORLD.

It is more serious, more thoughtful, more personal. Men of the world said, "We do not know who Jesus may be. He is a very remarkable person: he disturbs the quiet of the age, and he is certainly out of his element among

us. We do not know who he may be, and we do not particularly care.” Herod came to the hasty conclusion that John the Baptist was risen from the dead. Others said, “It is very likely Elijah, who was to appear before the coming of the Messiah.” A third party, hearing of his sorrows, thought that he might be Jeremiah redivivus. He might be some other prophet, but it did not matter which. The disciples had arrived at their conclusion solemnly, thoughtfully, carefully, each one for himself; and when the Savior said to them, “Whom say ye that I am?” they would any one of them have spoken, only they had fallen into the habit of making Peter the foreman and mouthpiece of the twelve, and so he spake first, and said very properly and positively, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” To my mind these words have a tone of deep solemnity. Evidently the man means what he says, values the truth he speaks, and attaches deep importance to it. The replies of the world were flippant and frothy; but the answer of the apostles was devout and deliberate, for they judged the subject to be one of the highest importance. Now, beloved, what do you think of Jesus? Is his name a weighty matter with you? Do you see that your view of him is the test of your state? Have you weighed it well? Is he God? Is he the sent and anointed of the Lord? Has he washed you in his blood? Have you taken him to be your all in all? Personally, for yourself, have you done this, and done it with care and deliberation? Will you repeat your choice this morning? Well, then, in this you are what a disciple should be.

In the next place, the disciples’ knowledge is more definite, more clear, more assured. If you had asked the outsiders about Jesus, they would have said, “Well, perhaps he is John the Baptist, or perhaps he is Jeremias”; but their notions were all in the clouds: they could not make him out. They saw that Jesus was a mysterious person, a holy person, a compassionate person, a wonder-working person; but who he might be they could not make out. But to the disciples Jesus was known, and his personality was distinct. They knew enough to say for certain, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” I will not enlarge upon this, but come to close grips with you. Do you believe in Jesus by an inward discernment of him? Is he to you, clearly and distinctly, the Son of man and the Son of God? Is he to you, definitely, your Savior, whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation for your sins? Is he your surety, substitute, and sacrifice? Beware of a misty religion! Beware of that which is without form, for it is sure to be void! Beware of that which is undefined and undefinable, because there is nothing solid in it! Beware of the religion which cries with the poet

laureate, “Behold, we know not anything”! This may suit brutes, but will never satisfy men. Let the things visible go. They should go, for they are only a day-dream; but I pray you, as Rutherford says, “tighten your grips” upon eternal things. Realize the Christ, and hold him fast. Make sure work with him. Know what you do know concerning Jesus. Have no secondhand information, no hypothesis, no inference; but say, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”-not the Son of a mere abstraction, but of Jehovah, who lives, thinks, and acts. A disciple’s knowledge, then, differs from the common, windy knowledge of men, in that it is definite, clear, assured.

Thirdly, this knowledge of the disciples was unanimous. Outside the circle Jesus was a dozen things; inside the circle he was only one - “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Beloved, men sometimes talk to us of the divisions in the Christian church, and it is a pity there should be even the semblance of a division there; but I am bold to say that there is no real division in the true church of Jesus Christ. Those who are really taught of the Father believe one doctrine concerning Jesus. If I were to lead upon this platform a representative of any one Christian denomination who was spiritually in Christ, his opinion of the Lord Jesus would be the same as mine. A thousand of us would each one say, “He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Put believers on their knees, where they talk to Christ, rather than of Christ, and they all say the same thing. Peter was answering his Lord when he made the confession now before us. When we speak to one another we are warped by party forces, but when we speak to our Master we all speak the same language.

*“The saints in prayer appear as one,
In word, and deed, and mind;
While with the Father and the Son
Sweet fellowship they find.”*

All the spiritual in the world are one. We believe in Jesus Christ as man, as God, as Messiah, as Redeemer, as he by whose merit and precious blood we are saved. We alike glorify Jesus, on whom all our hopes are fixed. Glory be to his name for ever and ever, brethren, we, without exception, join in the general verdict of the church of God- “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”!

Furthermore, the true disciples’ knowledge of Christ differs from that of men in that it is permanent. The verdict of men concerning Jesus is changeable as the wind. In one age Jesus was hounded down as the

Nazarene, the blasphemer. By-and-by men would set up his statue in the Pantheon among the gods. In one age, his teachings were held to be deeply philosophical, and the gnostics began to mystify them at a great rate: at another period they were denounced as visionary, or ridiculed as absurd. Christ is sometimes up in the market, and sometimes down in the market; but, mark you, he is not in the market at all. He can neither be bought nor sold. They say well of him one day, they speak ill of him another day: what matters it what they say? He needs no honor from them, and he fears not their dishonor. Unless they will believe in him as Lord and Savior, it is of no importance what they think of him. Till they submit to him as their Prophet, Priest, and King, their thoughts of him are vain. As dogs do bay the moon, and yet the moon shines on, so do men howl at Jesus, or cringe at his feet; but he shines on in steadfast light. True believers have always the same idea of Christ. They grow in the extent of their knowledge, they grow in the depth of their convictions; but when they begin with him he is the Son of the living God to them, and when they know him best he is still both Christ and God. In every country and in every age, during every phase of the world's fickle thought, the disciples of Jesus hold fast by his Messiahship and Godhead, and on this rock they build their hopes.

The belief of disciples differs from the notions of "men," in that it is more glorifying to Jesus. Men make him John the Baptist; but that earnest man was not worthy to unloose the latches of his shoes. They make him Elias, the prophet of fire, as if he would call fire from heaven upon men to destroy them. Whatever they judge Jesus to be, they do not agree to sing with the virgin, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." As for me, my tongue can never speak a thousandth part of the praises my heart adjudges to him, and, alas, my heart does not worship him a thousandth part as much as he deserves. When I have striven with all my might to extol him in my discourse, I feel ready to bite my tongue for being so slow and slack. I go home, saying to myself, "A pretty herald of thy King art thou! Thou didst conceal his excellence instead of commending it to the eyes of men." Brethren, "words are but air, and tongues but clay," and our Master's glories are too great to be set forth by such poor means. Oh, that we knew how to extol him! Away, ye men of the world, with your comparison of him to this or that mortal; ye are blind as bats! As well might ye compare the sun to glow-worms. Come, angels and archangels, and help us with your burning

words! Nay, even you must fail. Jesus is infinite, incomparable. The brightness of the Father's glory is not to be set forth by our words.

Once more, the knowledge which disciples have of Christ differs from that of the world, in that it is more influential. The world is not influenced by believing on Jesus as John the Baptist; but we are greatly influenced by believing that he is the Son of God. This takes possession of our heart, our head, our eye, our hand, our foot, our body, our soul, and our spirit. This Son of God is Lord over us. He sits supreme upon the throne of our hearts, and our lives show that he rules and governs our thoughts. Is it not so? This is no inert opinion, but a living, active principle. I leave these things with you that you may search yourselves, and see whether you belong to the mass outside, guessing and blundering; or whether you are of the inner circle, who are taught of the Father, and therefore know the Son.

II. Secondly, and this is a very important point: THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST POSSESSED BY TRUE DISCIPLES IS RECEIVED IN A SPECIAL WAY. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee."

Beloved, if we know the Savior aright, we have not learned it alone by the instruction of other men. Peter had heard others speak, but he did not know Jesus as the Christ till the Father revealed him. Paul tells us concerning the gospel, that he neither received it of man, neither was he taught it, but he received it by the revelation of Jesus Christ. I grant you that God uses men to instruct us; but all the prophets and apostles could not teach us Christ if the Father did not reveal his Son in us personally. Holy men are the pens, but God himself must write with them, or they will write nothing on our hearts. God must reveal Jesus to us, or we shall never see him, however faithful the minister may be.

Nor had Peter found out the nature and glory of the Lord Jesus by his own reasonings. These were the flesh and blood by which Jesus is never made out. No doubt, as he read the Old Testament, he said- "This prophecy and that are fulfilled in Jesus"; but, even that would not have sufficed to make Jesus known to him as Christ and God. The Father, who sent Jesus to us, must also make Jesus known to each one of us, or we shall remain in ignorance of him. Man cannot by searching find out God, nay, not even God in Christ Jesus. Peter came to the conclusion that Jesus was the Son of the living God, because the Father in heaven made him to see and know that it must be so.

We do not even discover Christ merely by reading the letter of the Word of God. God teaches us saving truth through Holy Scripture, and by our devout meditation thereon; but these operate not of themselves effectually, but only as he is at the back of them. You might go on hearing, reading, and thinking, and yet never discern the Lord's Christ. The true disciple's knowledge of Christ cometh not through flesh and blood, but by revelation of the Spirit, who is sent of the Father.

Can you follow me experimentally in this? Has the Father revealed Christ to you by a birth in you? You can never know the Father till you become a son; you can never know the Son till you are yourself a son. A spiritual faculty must be created in us, by which we are enabled to perceive the Son of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and nothing more, and flesh cannot discern spiritual things. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and spirit alone can enter into the spiritual world, and understand spiritual things. "Ye must be born again." You must be begotten again of the Father; otherwise Jesus Christ will be as little known to you as the light of the sun is known to dead men.

Moreover, the Father must also purify us. As we have already heard, "the pure in heart shall see God." It is only when the Father by the Holy Spirit purifies the mental eye, by cleansing the heart and life, that we are able to understand and perceive the true nature, work, and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ. Regeneration must be followed up by sanctification if we would obtain edification in the things of Christ. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord": he may have the Lord set before him, but he cannot see him without holiness; he may hear about Jesus, he may read about Jesus, but he cannot see him as Christ and God unless his nature is sanctified. There must be a character given corresponding in a measure to that of Christ before we can perceive Christ. Do not misunderstand me; you can believe Christ to be divine, you can believe him to be sent of God; you can believe all this as a matter of orthodoxy, and be lost to-day, and lost for ever: but to know Jesus as the Christ, to know him so that you are acquainted with him even as you are acquainted with a friend, must be given you of the Spirit of God or you will never attain it. Flesh and blood cannot reveal this to you.

Let me refresh the memories of God's people. Have there not been times with you when the Son of God has been revealed in you with power? Certain of these occasions have happened when you were in trouble: you

found no rest till you thought of Jesus, your Lord and God, and then your peace was like a river. The storm raged till you saw Jesus walking on the waves, and bidding them be still; and then you said, "Truly this is the Son of God." Remember when you were burdened with sin-you can never forget that! You were crushed to the earth under your load of guilt, and Jesus was revealed as the Sin-bearer, and as you kissed his pierced feet, and he spoke pardon to you, you knew that he was God. Had he not said of old, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else"? At times my heart has been so full of joy that I could hardly have endured more. Jesus has been heaven within my heart. In standing alone, contending for the faith, I have enjoyed a sweet content in the sole fellowship of my Lord. In his presence, anxieties and fears have fled away, and questions have been solved once for all in a peaceful sense of infinite love. Son of the Highest, thou art revealed to me in thine own light, and I am glad! This revelation of Christ must be given to each one of you, or else you will miss the blessedness to which Simon Peter had attained. I am obliged to be brief where I should like to enlarge; but time will not tarry, even when we are spending it best. May you enjoy a personal revelation in your souls by which the divine revelation, in this Book shall be made your own for ever.

III. Thirdly, THIS KNOWLEDGE HAS ITS OWN PECULIAR MARKS! It comes not by flesh and blood, but by the teaching of the Father, and it has characteristics all its own.

First, it has this mark-it comes with an infallible certainty to the heart. If you read of Jesus in books, or hear of him from ministers, it is well; but if the Father reveals him to you, it is infinitely better; for then no shadow of suspicion rests upon the testimony. The witness of God cannot be questioned. Men must not wonder that we grow indignant when the glorious truths concerning our Lord are questioned; for to our hearts they are not in the region of things to be disputed. There is constructive blasphemy in discussing those facts concerning the Son of God which the Father has revealed to us. When such questions do cross our minds, they are exceedingly painful to us, and we chase them out as thieves which defile the temple of the Lord; but when the Father is revealing Jesus as the Christ, the intruders do not come near; they could not. There is no doubting when the Father is witnessing to the heart. Doubts cannot come: as fire amongst stubble burns up the dry straw, so does the Father's witness consume questioning. "Oh," saith one, "but the Father has never

spoken to me in that way.” I am sorry for you. Ask him to do so. I am glad that you confess your want of such an experience; but it is a very serious want. The Lord must deal with you: his Spirit must come into contact with your spirit: there must be an inward illumination by the Holy Ghost, or else you will never be truly blessed. It was not only what Peter knew, but the way in which he came to know it, which made Peter blessed. Truth thus revealed comes with a force far transcending the arguments of pure reason. Notwithstanding the precision of mathematical demonstrations, I venture to assert that what the Holy Ghost writes on the soul is even more sure to him who receives it. The demonstration of the Spirit is the most certain of demonstrations. To the illuminated mind the witness of the Father is absolute certainty. Oh for more of it!

In the next place, this knowledge has this peculiar mark; that it is attended with sacred operations. When the Father reveals Christ to a man, he at the same time reveals the man to himself. This discovery of the sin and ruin of self leads on to humiliation, contrition, repentance, and renewal. The man is moved to desire holiness, to long to be like Jesus; and this is a blessed fruit of knowing Jesus. All manner of holy and blessed work goes on in the heart at the time when Jesus becomes known: faith, hope, love, patience, zeal, and joy in the Holy Ghost come with a discovery of the glories of Jesus. He is that living and incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever, and from him there groweth up in the soul all those holy fruits which are well pleasing unto God. If thou hast Christ, thou hast the new birth, thou hast the heavenly life, thou hast holy aspirations, and thou art on the way to the attainment of perfection.

There also comes with this revelation a remarkable restfulness. The mind before flitted about like a bat at eventide; but now it rests like the dove when she was clasped in Noah’s hands, and taken into the ark. Get a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in thy soul from the Father’s self, and “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep thy heart and mind.” I cannot describe that peace; indeed, I can describe nothing; but must leave you to feel it for yourselves. We read in the gospels that, after our Lord had spoken to the winds and waves, “there was a great calm.” It was not only “a calm,” but a great calm.” Did you ever feel that profound serenity, that unbroken rest? Even desire, at such a time, seems to sleep. You could not wish for more. You remember nothing grievous, and you foresee nothing alarming. You have all things in Christ Jesus your Lord; and you feel like singing all the time. This is one of the marks of the

revelation of Christ in the soul: it brings an inward repose which is the pledge and earnest of the heavenly rest.

There is this one more mark about it, that this conviction of the Godhead and glory of Christ abides for ever. The man who has obtained his religion from other people may have it taken away by other people; but he who has received it from the Father, holds it by a tenure which cannot be broken. That which we have learned from the Father will never be unlearned. Nothing can erase what the Holy Spirit has engraved. Beloved, I beseech you beware of a home-made religion, cobbled on your own lapstone. Equally, beware of a religion which is a sort of patchwork, made up by the kind contributions of Christian friends; and none of it your own. Beware of that oil which you borrow: you must go to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. No man among you can drink from my pitcher, you must go to the wellhead, each one for himself. Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." There is no safe religion in the world but that which comes through a personal application to Jesus, and a reception of him for yourself. In this matter, God himself must reveal Jesus to you; for he himself says, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." The Spirit must take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us, or we shall never receive them. Every one that hath been taught of the Father comes to Jesus, and comes to Jesus to remain: all short of that is temporary and delusive. Get the better part by sitting at the feet of Jesus, and it will never be taken from you; but religion which does not come by a personal revelation is a mere mirage—there is no reality about it, and it will disappear like a dream of the night.

IV. Lastly, THIS KNOWLEDGE SECURES PECULIAR PRIVILEGES TO ITS POSSESSOR. What saith the Lord Jesus? "Blessed art thou, Simon, Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." How was he blessed?

Simon Peter was blessed, first, because he had eternal life. How do we know? Our Savior said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." "This is life eternal": if you know Jesus as sent of God, you have eternal life. The knowledge of him is life eternal. You read about Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, and the like; but you certainly do not know them. You cannot know them. You know about them in proportion to your scholarship, but you do not know them as living persons, or as sent of God to you. They

are dead and gone long ago, and to you they never had an existence or a mission. At this hour you know something about the President of the United States; but you do not know him. With regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, you not only know a great deal about him, but I trust you know HIM. Do you know Jesus himself? Have you ever spoken to him? Has he ever spoken to you? Have you ever leaned your head on his bosom? Do you know his heart? Does he know your heart by your having told your heart to him? Is he a friend, an acquaintance, a brother to you? This is life eternal. This kind of knowledge is revealed to us by the Father. Flesh and blood cannot make us friends of Christ. The apostles knew Christ after the flesh, yet this was not the cause of their blessedness, but the Father gave them a revelation which brought eternal life with it.

Again, Peter was blessed because this knowledge was an evidence that he was a peculiarly favored man. What a question is that, "Lord how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The world does not know Christ, it cannot know him. It is to his chosen that he reveals himself: the rest believe not, and therefore see him not. To his chosen he cometh and speaketh with them as friend with friend. He takes them apart and looks into their hearts, and hearkens to their sorrows; and in return opens his heart, and says to each one of them, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." What a favor to be so instructed of the Father as to know the Son! If thou knowest Christ, the Father foreknew thee. "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." If thou knowest Christ, thy name is written in the Lamb's book of life, thou art in the family register of heaven, and thou shalt, by-and-by, be with him where he is. Well did the Savior say, "Blessed art thou."

He that knows Christ is in a favored position wherever he is. In every condition he is blessed. You are very ill-you are blessed in being ill. You are prospering in the world-if you know Christ, your prosperity is blessed. Do you lament that you are going down in the world? Mourn not, for your adversity is blessed. You are very simple-minded, and have not much education. Never mind, you are blessed if you know Christ; his knowledge is the most excellent of the sciences. Are you well-instructed? Rejoice not in all knowledge, but glory in this one thing, that thou knowest Jesus, and art blessed. Does the world curse thee? Fret not. Does the devil snuff at thee? Tremble not, but resist him. Jesus says thou art blessed, and I wot that he whom Christ blesses is blessed, and none shall reverse the word.

I close, desiring that every man among you may know this blessedness to the full. If you do know it, it will qualify you for honorable service. Peter was the man who knew and confessed the Lord's Christ as the Son of the living God, and he was not only blessed himself, but he was chosen to be one of the first stones of the church whose foundation-courses were then being laid. Peter was described by his Lord as a piece of rock, and on that rock would the Lord build his church. Peter was to have the keys, because in his faith in the Savior God he already possessed the key of all gospel truth. Having received the word by a revelation from the Father, he became a fit person to be built into the church at its first founding. He who clings to Christ for himself is the man to help others. Unless thou dost first of all know Christ by the distinct revealing of God, what canst thou do? So thou wouldst run, wouldst thou? Wait till thou art sent! And thou art not sent thyself if thou dost not know Jesus Christ whom God hath sent. So thou wouldst deliver a message, wouldst thou? Wait till thou knowest it! And thou dost not know it unless thou hast a personal knowledge of Christ as God's Messiah, and as the Son of God. I may be speaking to some young brother who thinks about preaching, or to some sister who looks forward to teaching in the Sunday-school: do not set up to teach what you do not know. If you have never been taught of the Father, wait till you have been. Pray that you may now be taught of the Lord. He that would teach a trade, but has never practiced it, will make a fool of himself; and he that would go and tell of a Christ he has never known is foolish even to think of it.

Go home, and pray the Father to reveal his Son Jesus Christ to thee. Then, when thou goest out to speak, thou wilt speak with confidence. Men, perhaps, will say, "He is very dogmatic." But a brave confession is much needed nowadays. You must be sure of something, or you will teach nothing worth learning. A man must have a fulcrum, or fixed point, or his lever is useless: if everything is uncertain to you, one thing alone is certain, namely, that you had better let the matter alone till you have found out something certain. If you have no foundation for yourself, you cannot build up others. Therefore, do, first and foremost, cry to God, "Lord, reveal thy Son in me!" It is a prayer I would have you all put up: "O Lord God, the giver of Christ, shine into my heart, that I may see thine unspeakable gift! By thy Holy Spirit enable me to know who and what Jesus is, that I may accept him as thou hast proposed him to me. Thou didst give him out of thy bosom, give him into mine. Enable me to speak of him, as of one whose glory I have beheld, whose power I have felt."

Do not suppose, my hearers, that you will find out the Lord Christ by your own wit and wisdom. Young man, do not say, "I will be a student, I will by my own ability discover this Son of man." Remember that Jesus can only be seen by his own light. Only Godhead can teach us Godhead. Christ is a book in which no man can read except Christ himself shall spell the words to him. Jesus is his own Interpreter. He is the door, but he is also the key. He is to be seen, but he supplies the light in which he is to be seen. Jesus came forth from God, and the power to know Jesus also comes forth from God, so that all comes from God; and unto God let us return it, adoring Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.