

## The Fullness of Christ

### Christ's Knowledge of His People – Their Ignorance of Him

By [Octavius Winslow](#)

"And Joseph knew his brethren, but they did not know him." Genesis 42:8

A more precious truth, or a sublimer idea our Lord Jesus Christ never uttered when on earth than in those words of His intercessory prayer addressed to the Father- "This is life eternal, that they might know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." It was our true Joseph beseeching His Father and our Father that this revelation of God and of Christ, in the knowledge of whom consisted their eternal happiness, might be fully disclosed to His brethren. Until this revelation is made, until this knowledge is attained, the range of thought and inquiry has been limited to objects which derive their sole interest and importance from a world passing away, and destined, before long, to be involved in the final conflagration of all things. What are a man's intellectual achievements worth, even though he "understood all mysteries and all knowledge," if yet he knows not spiritually, experimentally, and savingly, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent? Such a one would deem the words of the apostle, himself no mean authority- extravagant and hyperbolic- "Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Added to which is his ardent aspiration- breathing from a mind already furnished as few were, with the precious spoils of this divine knowledge- "That I may know Him" -know Him more in the power of His risen life-giving, life-sustaining, and life-securing life. It is to this train of thought we are led by the interesting and instructive period in Joseph's history which we have now reached. There are before us two opposites- knowledge and ignorance- knowledge on the part of Joseph, ignorance on the part of Joseph's brethren. "And Joseph knew his brethren, but they did not know him."

How full of Christ, and how replete with instruction to the saints of God is this incident! Oh, may the Holy Spirit be our teacher and revealer, opening to our understandings and applying to our hearts these scriptures of truth which so manifestly and decidedly testify of Jesus! The two points for consideration are, JOSEPH AS DISGUISED TO HIS BROTHERS and THE RECOGNITION OF HIS BROTHERS BY JOSEPH, illustrating a vital, spiritual, and precious truth- CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PEOPLE.

"They knew not him." There was, doubtless, much to account for this ignorance on their part. Joseph was now exalted to the government of Egypt. Twenty-two years had passed since they last saw him, then a young lad, a beardless youth, a slave sold to the Egyptians. He was now full-grown, had arrived at maturity, was arrayed in courtly, costly apparel, speaking to them in the language and with the air of an Egyptian prince. All this tended to throw a profound veil over the person of Joseph, and to disguise from them the fact that they were, unconsciously to themselves, in the immediate presence of their long dead but now living brother.

The spiritual reader, in whose mind thoughts of Jesus are pre-eminent, will in a moment recognize the Lord here. The disciples, the Lord's brethren, knew not their Lord immediately after His resurrection. So changed was He in those three days- His countenance so altered, His whole appearance so transformed, invested as with a resurrection glory so great- when He appeared in their presence and spoke to them, they failed to recognize Him- they knew not that it was Jesus. Mary at the sepulcher, the two disciples journeying to Emmaus, the gathered Church in the upper room, were all alike unconscious that their once crucified but now risen Lord was in converse with them.

Oh, what must be His changed appearance now! How glorious! Wearing still the same body He wore on earth- perchance still associated with the imagery of the sacrificial death He endured- the print of the nails, the gash of the spear, "looking like a lamb that had been slain;" yet so transformed, so glorified, so glorious, that, but for His own manifestation and unveiling, none who knew Him in the days of His humiliation and sorrow, would know Him again.

But oh, bright and joyous prospect! We shall know Him- we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him, for He "shall change our vile body" (the body of our humiliation) "that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Dear Lord, we thank You for what we see and know of You now; and are looking for that blessed hope, Your glorious appearing, when the window will be uplifted, and the veil be withdrawn, and You will stand before us our true Joseph, raised from humiliation the deepest, to glory, honor, majesty, and power the most exalted and resplendent.

But the point of analogy which now arrests our attention is more solemn and instructive- the spiritual ignorance of the Lord Jesus Christ which marks, for the most part, the brethren of the Lord. This is exhibited, in the first place, in the natural, unregenerate state of the Lord's hidden people. What knowledge have we naturally and in our unenlightened state of Jesus? It is true, He may be our Brother in an everlasting covenant, our Savior to be revealed and made known to us in the sovereignty and effectual calling of His grace; but, while we are in that natural and unregenerate state, we are totally and profoundly ignorant of the Lord Jesus.

The condition of the Jews is an instance of this: "He came to his own, and his

own received him not." He was their long-promised, long-looked-for Messiah, their Redeemer, their King; but when He came, wearing a human disguise, a poor man, a man of grief, they knew Him not, and, knowing Him not, they scornfully, utterly rejected Him. The apostle John alludes to the same state when He says, "The world knows us not, even as it knew Him not." This is the condition of every unconverted, unrenewed reader of this book- ignorance of Jesus Christ, and, in consequence of this ignorance, the rejection of the Son of God, which I hesitate not to say constitutes the sin of sins, the crime of crimes! Our Lord says, "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." He is the Light, and Him they reject!

Another truth is illustrated here. Observe the disguise which Joseph wore. He revealed himself, or stood before his brethren in the character, not of their brother, but as the governor of Egypt, in his legal, executive character as the prime minister of the land. And why is it, beloved, that we who are spiritually enlightened, who are taught by the Holy Spirit, and who may have had some favored discoveries of Christ to our souls, how is it that we do not know more of Christ? Is it not because we deal with Christ too much in the spirit of legality? We do not sufficiently see Christ to be our Brother, our own Brother, our living Brother- bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

Is there not too much of a Jewish faith in our professed Christian faith? Do we not too much deal with Christ as a Law-giver, rather than as a Law-fulfiller? Is there not too much in our going to Christ of a bondage spirit? Do we not often come to Jesus for bread, for the spiritual blessing for which we are longing, too little as our own Brother, our next of kin, our Goal, our Joseph, and too much as if He were the governor, the prime minister of Egypt?

Oh that the Lord may vouchsafe to us more of a gospel faith! May He give us to see that Jesus Christ is the "end of the law" for righteousness to every one that believes; and that it is our privilege to bear our needs, our sorrows, our trials to Jesus as our Brother, and not as clothed with a character and sustaining a relation that fills the mind with awe, inspires a bondage spirit, and arrests that free and full communion that ought ever to mark the approach of a sin-pardoned, accepted believer into the presence of Jesus.

Take another point of analogy- the speech of Joseph to his brethren. "He spoke roughly to them." "Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them." My reader, you can testify how often this has been your spiritual experience. What a page is here, corresponding with our Christian and spiritual exercise of soul! Is not the voice of Jesus oftentimes rough, as it were, in the ears of His brethren? Does He not often make Himself strange to us in His conduct and dealings. And when He uplifts the rod and smites -when He draws the dark cloud over life's sunny landscape- when, by His providence, He seems to muffle the loving, tender tones of His voice, and speaks roughly to us, filling us

with alarm, and dread, and apprehension- oh, does He not then wear a disguise which seems to veil from us the clear and tender relation in which He stands to us as His brethren? And yet beneath this roughness of speech and strangeness of manner, there dwells and beats in the bosom of Christ a Brother's tender, sympathizing, loving heart.

But not only does He speak roughly, and make Himself strange to them, but He sends them to prison, He puts them in ward three days. "You shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you. And he put them all together into ward three days." But what had they to fear? It was Joseph's prison, he was their jailor, their keeper, and they were in good custody. How often has the Lord Jesus Christ, in the spiritual exercises of our soul, dealt thus with us. He has brought us into a strait place, He has sent us into a solitary place; He has permitted us to recede into a legal, bondage frame of spirit; and our prayer has been that of David- "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Your name."

Oh, beloved, thank God if you are Christ's prisoner! Better, far better, be the prisoner of Jesus than of Satan; better to be sent into Christ's ward than into the devil's. What though at times your Joseph, your Jesus, your Brother, to try your faith, to test your sincerity, to deepen His work; in your heart, to make you better acquainted with the nature of the bondage spirit, puts you into a narrow place, a strait place- oh, it is but ultimately to bring you into greater largeness of soul, to prepare you to walk more in the holy liberty of adoption- it is but to sweeten, to intensify His own love, and to intensify in your heart a longing, panting, and thirsting after the free Spirit of an adopted child.

And, let me add, in that prison-house into which your Lord and Savior permits you to enter, how many a lesson have you learned, how many a precious truth have you been brought into the experience of, how many a sweet spring of comfort has been unsealed to your spirit, which, humanly speaking, you would otherwise never have known. Then, be not cast clown and discouraged if your Joseph, to prove you and teach you, sends you for a while into His prison. Many a man of God has had to thank Him for the prison-house, for the sickroom, for a suffering, sleepless bed. "The Lord has set apart him that is godly for himself;" and God the Lord often sets him apart from his daily calling in life, from his family, from the Church, puts him in ward that he may turn over the page of conscience, clear his evidences, examine his own heart, look more closely into the heart of Christ; and if he can but realize, "it is my Joseph who has put me here, and this is the prison-house of Him that loves me," he will bow with submission to the Savior's will, and say, "Your will, not mine be done."

There is another point very instructive. I refer to the trying of Joseph's brethren. "You are spies that have come to see the nakedness of the land." Among your greatest blessings you have to thank Christ for, are those that try the reality of your religion, test the genuineness of your faith, and prove the sincerity of your

love. The process may be humbling and painful in the extreme; to be taken for a false man, when you profess to be true; for a spy, when you deem yourself a brother; to have your religion called in question, your love doubted, your faith put to the severest test, flung like wheat into the sieve, or cast like gold into the crucible- this is a trying, humiliating process!

Nevertheless, in the catalogue of your spiritual blessings, you may place this high up in the list as one of the choicest and costliest. Thank God for that which tests the reality of your religion, which separates the wheat from the chaff, the gold from the foil, which brings your faith into exercise, proves the strength of your confidence in God, and the extent of your knowledge of Christ; which brings out your Christian principles in bold relief, emerging from the trying process with a purer faith, a deeper love, and a brighter hope. Then you will not quarrel with God, nor chide your Elder Brother for having dealt with you as a spy, and not a brother beloved of God.

But there is another striking and solemn view of the subject upon which we would lay great stress. Joseph spoke through the medium of an interpreter. Thus we read: "And they did not know that Joseph understood them; for he spoke unto them by an interpreter." And who is the interpreter of Christ and of His words but the Divine and Eternal Spirit? His is the office, as taught us by Christ himself, to make known and reveal Him. Thus Christ testifies- "but the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, that I have said into you." Again, "He shall testify of Me." "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Behold our true Interpreter! We know nothing spiritually, understandingly, of Divine truth, and of Him whom that truth reveals, and who is Himself "the truth," but as the Holy Spirit interprets it to us. The words of Christ are enigmas, the language of Christ is a foreign tongue, the revelations and mysteries of Christ unintelligible and inexplicable, and Christ himself unknown, unseen, until the Holy Spirit becomes our Teacher. The Interpreter of the Bible is He who wrote the Bible- Himself the Author of the Bible.

Men, professed theologians, who are bringing to the elucidation, interpretation, and study of revelation, the light of reason, the aids of philosophy, the results of learning, the discoveries of science, the means and appliances of human thought, utterly and avowedly abjuring the necessity and the illumination of the Holy Spirit as the sole Interpreter of the Scriptures of truth, will not only have to take up the lamentation of old- "We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon-day as in the night," -but will be found to have done contempt to the Spirit of truth, and, abandoned to their wilful and judicial darkness, will be left to believe a lie!

But, beloved, you have not so learned Christ, if so be that you have been taught

the truth as it is in Jesus. To you the Holy Spirit has made known the Savior. He has uplifted the veil from your heart, has purged the film from the eye of your understanding, and has revealed the Son of God in you. He it is who has given you to see all merit, all worthiness, all righteousness, all salvation in Jesus; and, removing the covering of this Divine Ark- the Scriptures of truth- has discovered to you JESUS in all His glory, fulness, loveliness, and love.

Yes, the Spirit is Christ's interpreter. All that is obscure in His teaching, profound in His doctrine, discrepant in His revelations, unintelligible in His words, mysterious, strange, and painful in His dealings, the Eternal Spirit stands, as between Christ and the lowly disciple, prepared to unfold, explain, and reconcile all. Oh, seek more earnestly and prayerfully than ever the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the study and understanding of the Scriptures, especially those parts which more particularly testify of Christ; and ask the Spirit to make known Christ more clearly and fully to your soul. Beseech Him to unfold to you the finished work- the complete salvation of Christ; to apply the atoning blood to your conscience, and to testify, by His inward witness, to your personal interest in His love, obedience, and death.

"Blessed and Eternal Spirit! Divine Interpreter of Christ! Revealer of Jesus- lead me into all truth concerning Him. Reveal His glory, unveil His beauty, disclose His love, interpret His language, and unfold and apply His truths to my soul, until I stand in His glorified presence, and know Him even as I am known!"

Not only must the interpretation of the gospel be divine, but equally so must be the interpretation of the Divine dealings with us. God alone can elucidate and explain the mysteries of His providential dispensations. If we attempt to unveil and interpret them, guided by no other light than that which emanates from ourselves, we shall inevitably be involved in a labyrinth of perplexity and doubt. But waiting patiently on the Lord, trusting also in Him, He will bring it to pass, and interpret the dark symbols of a Providence whose wheel within wheel must ever baffle and confound the most sagacious and far-seeing mind of man.

Are the ways of God with you a great deep? Is He enshrouding your path with mystery? Does He in His transactions make Himself strange? Are your expectations blighted, your plans crossed, your purposes baffled, and, on these broken waters, do the fragments of wrecked and disappointed hopes float around you? Be still! and know that He is God! Before long He will break the silence, and all shall be explained, and this shall be your joyous cry, "He has done all things well!"

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain."

We are now conducted to the second part of the subject- Joseph's knowledge of his brethren: "And Joseph knew his brethren." Of this fact there could be no doubt: we need not, therefore, occupy any time in proving it. He had outgrown their recollection, but they had not outgrown his. We are not informed by what indices Joseph recognized them. Perhaps it was- and I think this the most probable solution of the mystery- by a direct Divine communication to his mind. He was but a stripling when last he saw them. They had advanced in life, perhaps were bald and gray-headed. Yet Joseph knew them; God doubtless gave him a direct revelation that these were his brethren, for we read- "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a man as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" It was by the illumination of the Spirit that Joseph interpreted the visions of the king, and, doubtless, by the same Spirit he knew his brethren.

We pass from Joseph and his brethren to our true Joseph and His spiritual brethren, unfolding one of the most blessed, precious, and sanctifying truths that can possibly be opened up and applied to you by the blessed Interpreter, the Spirit of Christ- CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PEOPLE. Let this one truth be engraven on your heart- Christ's full, personal, minute knowledge of you, and you have found the secret of all happiness in adversity, joy in sorrow, succor and support when heart and flesh fail you. Jesus knows His brethren.

Let me first remind you that Christ's knowledge of His brethren is an eternal knowledge. It is not a knowledge arrived at in time, attained since they had a being. The knowledge of Christ is an eternal knowledge of His Church. He knew them when they were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. He knew them when the Father gave them to Him to be His peculiar treasure. He knew them when they were intrusted to His hands to be redeemed, ransomed, and saved. He knew them when He wrote their names in His book of life. He knew them in the everlasting counsels of eternity, when He loved them with an everlasting love.

What a precious, sanctifying truth is this! Oh, do not rest in the streams, sweet as they are, but follow them up to the source where they flow. It is the everlasting love of God to His Church, the everlasting knowledge which Christ has of His brethren, which gives sweetness, reality, and substance to all the covenant blessings which flow into the soul of a child of God.

A few remark further- Christ knows His brethren in their unregeneracy, worldliness, and sin. Were not this the case, how could He ever find them? Where would He go to look for His hidden jewels? How could He direct His message of salvation to their souls if He did not know them in the great mass of fallen creatures? -if He did He not know them in the rags and ruin and famine of our nature? But the Lord Jesus Christ knows His brethren, "walking after the course of this world, the children of wrath even as others."

He knows them in their rebellion, in their fall, in their sinfulness, and in their self-righteousness. He knows where they are, what they are, and who they are. Oh! what a solemn truth is this! How it throws memory back on the past, and explains many a mystery in our unregenerate history hitherto inexplicable. You can think of periods when your life seemed to hang by a hair- of circumstances which brought you to the very confines of eternity. Ah, why were you preserved? What was it that guarded you, rescued you, brought you back?

It was Jesus's knowledge of you in your darkness, unregeneracy, and rebellion! It was Jesus having His eye on you, His hand over you, the yearning of His heart towards you! It was He that kept your feet from falling, your soul from destruction, your life from the grave. It was He that followed you along all your dark, winding way, never losing sight of you for a moment, nor withdrawing His hand until the appointed, the blissful moment arrived, when He called you by His grace. "Preserved in Christ Jesus, and called."

"That was a time of wondrous love,  
when Christ, my Lord, was passing by;  
He felt His tender pity move,  
And brought His great salvation nigh."

"Guilty and self-condemned I stood,  
Nor thought His mercy was so near,  
when He my stubborn heart subdued,  
And planted all His graces there."

"When on the verge of endless pain,  
He gently whispered, 'I am thine;'  
I lost my fears, and dropped my chain,  
And felt a transport all divine."

We go further, and remind you of Christ's knowledge of His brethren in deep spiritual necessity, famine, and need. Oh, this is a blessed view of Christ's recognition of us- His acquaintance with our true spiritual condition. Jesus knows that we have not a righteousness with which we can present ourselves before God- that we have nothing good in our flesh, that we have been brought to the end of our own strength, merit, and righteousness. "He remembers us in our low estate, for His mercy endures forever." "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me."

And what an especial knowledge Jesus has of us when, by the Holy Spirit, and under the deep conviction and consciousness of this necessity, poverty, and famine, we are led to arise and go to Him, traveling in our emptiness to His fulness, and in our necessity to His supply, and in our famine to Him the Bread of Life. Ah, do not think that the Lord Jesus Christ is not cognizant of your soul's necessity, whatever it may be. If the Eternal Spirit is breaking up the fallow



ground of your heart, and showing you its plague and emptiness- if He is creating in you a spiritual hungering and thirsting after righteousness, showing you more and more that your soul can live only by the bread that comes down from heaven, it is a sweet, blessed thought that Jesus knows those deep gracious exercises of soul.

Oh, you have not a desire after Christ, faint though it is, your heart goes not out after Christ, longs for Christ, and rests in Christ, but Christ knows it, and rejoices in it with exceeding great joy. And is it not a delightful thought that Christ is cognizant of the work of His own Spirit in the soul? You may not at times be able to discern that work yourself; so concealed is it by infirmity, unbelief, and the mists that exhale from inbred sin and corruption; nevertheless, here is a truth worth untold gold- Jesus knows His own work, recognizes His own image, and calls us His brethren. The saints may not know it, your dearest friend may not know it, you may not know it yourself, enough that Jesus knows it; He sees the flickering spark which nothing can extinguish, traces the lineaments of His own image which nothing shall efface, and interprets as none other can, the language of our groans, tears, and desires.

It is also a blessed thought that, Jesus knows His brethren individually. Christ does not, as we too frequently ourselves do, lose sight of our individuality. We too imperfectly deal with Jesus personally. We too little bring our individual sorrows, needs, and circumstances to Christ. And yet what a comforting truth is this, and not comforting only, but deeply sanctifying- Christ knows me personally, has my name on His heart, has my position in His mind, has my circumstances in His eye, is acquainted with my individual state in society, with my trials, temptations, sorrows, and wants. Such is His individual and discriminating knowledge, He knows me as if I were the only brother He owns and acknowledges on earth. Sweet truth is this! If you retire to your chamber to brood in solitude and silence over your lonely griefs, perhaps, with the sad thought, "no one knows me, no one sympathizes with me, no one is acquainted with my case, I am like a sparrow alone on the house-top, I pray, and sigh, and groan in lonely places, and no man cares for my soul," oh, beloved, there is One who knows you, knows your name, your position, your griefs, your temptations, your loneliness, who says, "I know their sorrows," it is Jesus, your Joseph, your brother.

"The foundation of God stands fast, having this seal, the Lord knows those who are his." Well may we with surprise inquire with Nathaniel, "How do You know you me?" Are you acquainted with such a poor, sinful worm as I? Do you, Lord, care for me; think of me; love me? Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is like Yourself, Divine. Let me remark, too, that our highest source of comfort lies, not in our knowledge of Christ, but in Christ's knowledge of us.

There stood Joseph's brethren; they were as safe, as tenderly, kindly cared for, had awakened as profound an interest in the heart of Joseph, as at the moment

when his disguise fell, and he stood before them revealed and manifested as their brother. Let this comfort you, my reader; if there are times when Christ conceals Himself from you, when God is a hidden God; if there are periods when, as with Mary at the sepulcher, a veil so conceals Him, that you do not know Him to be your risen Lord; if, like the disciples, you are tossed upon the dark waters, and Christ comes walking on the sea, and you mistake Him for a ghost, and cry out for fear; nevertheless, here is your comfort, your safety, and your hope- Jesus knows you, is acquainted with you, has His unslumbering eye upon you, and you can be in no circumstance of sorrow, of peril, of darkness, and of need, in which Christ shall not know and recognize you as His brother, and most dearly beloved.

You, then, who are walking in darkness, who are tossed upon the stormy waves of adversity, who do not see Christ in the mist, oh, take this comfort to your heart- "I may not see Jesus in this storm, He may wear a disguise, speak roughly to me by His providence, make Himself strange to me by His conduct, nevertheless, my faith grasps this precious truth- "I know my sheep," and it is enough. "Enough, Lord, that you know me."

This is a peculiarly consolatory truth in view of a trial to which the saints of God are often much and painfully exposed- the ignorance of them, their principles, actions, and motives on the part of their fellow-believers. In consequence of this we are often exposed to much misjudgment and unkind censure. Our Lord drank of this very cup. His brethren did not know Him, and even His disciples misunderstood Him. Let this comfort you in the misjudgments and misinterpretations, the reproofs, and rebukes of men, especially those of your fellow disciples. "Lord, it is enough that You have said, I know my sheep, and that You know me. You know the principles that govern me, the motives that influence me, the end that I seek in this act, and I can calmly, safely leave the inspection of my heart to Your eye, and the issue of this step to Your judgement and decision." Thus you will rise superior to the human opinion of an honest, upright, conscientious cause, and will be enabled to say with the magnanimous apostle, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yes, I judge not my own self." Blessed Lord, YOU know me, and it suffices!

We venture upon yet another truth. These brethren of Joseph were standing as petitioners in his presence without the least conviction of their relationship. There was reverence to his authority, faith in his ability, and repose in his willingness; but not one feeling of confidence or of comfort inspired by the assurance that he was their brother. This fact illustrates a remarkable feature of the believer's experience. We often go to Jesus, live upon His sufficiency, and exercise faith in His kindly feelings towards us, without the comfort and joy of a full assurance that He is ours.

Nevertheless, He is ours, and we have still a measure of faith that binds us to

Him, and that faith, though it be like the unseen anchor dropped into the ocean, keeps the soul firm and stable, and nothing shall separate it from Christ. Then, though you may not have the full assurance of faith, of hope, and of love, yet cast not away your confidence, which has great recompense of reward;" but in your darkness, depression, and loneliness, keep a firm grasp on this truth," I am empty, Jesus is full; in my poverty and ignorance I throw myself on Him by faith; and although I have but a dim perception of Him as my Brother, still, though He put me in ward, yes, though He slay me, yet will I love and trust in Him."

We would not repress your ardor after full assurance of your interest in Christ; yet, for the sake of the feeble in grace, we would remark that it is not essential to your salvation, nor is it your warrant to go to Jesus. You may still be Christ's, and in simple faith be living upon His fulness, yet lack the clearer, fuller, and more assured manifestation of Himself to your soul- the sealing of the Spirit. But, since this degree of knowledge is attainable, and its attainment will contribute materially to your spiritual enjoyment and personal holiness, we would earnestly plead with you to seek it.

Assurance may not be essential to your salvation, but it is essential to your happy, holy walk; and to the confidence expressed in these words of the great apostle the feeblest child of God may arrive- "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." And what is assurance? It is nothing more nor less than faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the fulness of assurance is in the same ratio with the fulness of our faith in the Son of God. In the smallest degree of faith there is the germ of assurance, and assurance develops and deepens, strengthens and brightens, as faith becomes rooted and grounded in Christ.

The poor man in the Gospel who could only say with tears, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief," had as really the germ of assurance in his heart as Paul, who could say, so unequivocally, "I know whom I have believed." Poor soul! have you but touched the hem- but seen the cross distant and dim- but ventured, tremblingly, hesitatingly upon Jesus? Can you say, "Lord, I believe in the midst of my much unbelief; I believe that you are able to save me, though I have such misgivings as to your willingness?"

Dear heart, cheer up! you shall never be lost! Jesus has spoken it, and it is enough. He says, "He who comes unto me,"- no qualifications, no limitations, as to the amount of guilt, or the multitude of sins, or the degree of faith- simply, "he who comes;" -take Christ at His word; come to Him as you are, and He will in no wise discourage or reject you.

Meditate much upon Christ. You will find this habit an effectual antidote to those vain, carnal, earthly thoughts, which, alas, obtrude themselves so frequently and so powerfully upon the believing mind. Let the mind be preoccupied and solely with Jesus, and the world and the creature and sin will find no play. Oh, it is a

sweet theme of meditation, Jesus! You are in mental converse with One who has access to the innermost recess of your soul, the most sacred cloister of your heart; who is in communion with the most delicate shade of thought, with the finest tone of feeling, and who knows you, can understand you, and feel for you as no other being in the universe can.

Do not deem this mental meditation unattainable, this spiritual concentration of the soul on Christ in meditation so high that you cannot attain unto it. What others have experienced you may experience. Cultivate this devout meditation upon Christ. Meditate upon His person, study His work, muse upon His love. Endeavor to blend Him with your thoughts, to entwine Him with your affections, to associate Him with your daily life of service and of suffering. Such an effort to think of Christ will soon bring down to your soul the dear Object of your thoughts, for He regards them who only think upon His name; and while you are musing upon His person, the fire of His love will burn within your heart, and your tongue will give utterance to such precious sentiments and feelings as are contained in this experience of an eminent divine, recorded above a century ago, "The thoughts of Christ are become exceedingly frequent with me; I meditate on His glorious Person, as the eternal and the incarnate Son of God: and I behold the infinite God as coming to me, and meeting with me in this blessed meditation. I fly to Him on multitudes of occasions every day, and am impatient if many minutes have passed without some recourse to Him. Every now and then I rebuke myself for having been so long without any thoughts of my Savior; how can I bear to keep at such a distance from Him? I then look up to Him, and say- Oh, my Savior, draw near unto me! Oh, come to dwell in my soul, and help me to cherish some thoughts wherein I shall enjoy You; and upon this I set myself to think of what He has done, is doing, and what He will do, for me: I find the subject inexhaustible; and after I have been thus employed in the day, I fall asleep at night in the midst of some meditation on the glory of my Savior; so I fall asleep in Jesus, and when I awake in the night, I do on my bed I seek Him whom my soul loves. On awaking, the desires of my soul still carry me to Him who was last in my thoughts when I fell asleep." (John Cotton)

Let the thought of Christ's knowledge of us be an ever-present, ever-abiding remembrance. When darkness or sorrow veils Him from our view, still let us cling to the truth that He knows us; and when sin would tempt, and the world seduce, and the creature ensnare, and some false attraction would disturb the central fixedness of our heart on Christ, oh, let the solemn truth that Jesus knows us then instantly break the spell, dissolve the enchantment, and win back the soul to its allegiance and love.

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