

Sermon for Easter Monday;

Luke 24:13-35

I. THREE THOUGHTS TAUGHT BY THIS GOSPEL

Luke 24:13-35

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, 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? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were

opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

1. This Gospel brings out and enforces especially three thoughts on the article of faith concerning Christ's resurrection. First, that this narrative transpired and was written along with others as a sure witness and proof of our faith in this article of our Creed. First, in that we see these two disciples leave the company of the others, full of unbelief in the resurrection. They commune together about the things that transpired as if they despair of Christ, and he is now dead and forever buried in their hearts, who does nothing more and is unable to do anything. This appears from their own confession where they say: "We hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea, and besides this, it is now the third day since he is dead." And though they had heard from the women that these had seen a vision of angels who told them that Christ had risen and was alive, yet they urged that he had not been seen or found by anyone. In the second place - and this is the most important fact - we here see Christ not only showing himself alive to the unbelieving disciples, so that they might become assured of his resurrection and return at once to announce it to the others, and to hear the same truth from them, the testimony on both sides agreeing and being thereby established; but also that Christ, before they knew him, proved fully and clearly from the Scriptures that it behooved Christ both to die and to rise again from the dead. For this reason he upbraided them for their unbelief because they ought to have known the Scriptures concerning Christ, since he himself had taught them that his sufferings were foretold in the Scriptures.

2. The second thought this Gospel presents is an example of the power and fruit of the resurrection as manifested in these two disciples while they are talking of him and listening to his preaching. This also is nothing less than a portion of the proof of his resurrection. For Christ here proves by word and deed that he is not dead, as they believed before, but works in them and exercises his power through the Word, even before they know him, and makes believers of them who have another mind, reason, heart, and will. This they also recognize and confess, saying: "Was not our heart burning within us while he spake to us, etc?" After this manner he still works in the whole Christian church; though unseen, he yet carries on his work and shows his dominion in that, as the living Lord, he enlightens them through his Word, comforts and strengthens them, defends them with his power and keeps them against the wrath of the devil and the world.

3. As a third truth, we are here shown in what manner Christ reveals his resurrection, and how it may be known and apprehended, namely, above all first through the Word and faith, rather than through bodily vision or sensation. Therefore he is unknown to them at first when he comes to them and walks with them, though he is with them in very truth, the selfsame Christ whom they had so often seen and heard and known full well. Yet now they do not know him at all, because they know that he had died and had been buried the third day before; and hence can think of him only as a dead man. So strange and unknowable had he become to them that they would not have known him, had he stayed with them ever so long, until he announced to them his resurrection and preached about it. The text says: "Their eyes were holden, that they should not know him." It was not he who had been changed, nor was it his will to remain unknown to them, but their hearts and thoughts had become estranged and far removed from his. In the same way neither Magdalene nor the other disciples recognized him until they had heard the Word of his resurrection.

4. His purpose is to show and teach us that the power of his resurrection and dominion will be exercised here on earth, and manifest itself in this life only through the Word, and through faith which holds fast to Christ, though it does not see him, and thus conquers sin and death in him, lays hold of righteousness and life, etc. This is a brief summary of the story contained in this Gospel, in so far as it pertains to the article of faith on the resurrection in general; of which we lately heard more.

5. But the special purpose of this Gospel is to show us how weak in faith the disciples were, and how Christ in his kingdom manifests himself to such persons of weak faith, and how he deals with them. For we see from the whole story of Christ's resurrection, as recorded in the Gospels, how the Apostles, and all the other disciples after them, were so weak in their faith in this doctrine, even to the time of his ascension, that he had to upbraid them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen, Mk 16, 14. They manifested this weakness, though he had often told them from the Scriptures that he must be crucified and rise again on the third day, etc.

6. From this we learn, in the first place, that even in those who have become true Christians, weakness and frailties remain, especially in the deeper matters of doctrine and faith, they being unable to understand them or to grasp them as firmly and strongly as they ought. For faith is not so light or easy a matter as ignorant and inexperienced people fancy, and as our coarse blockheads, the popish dunces, pretend, who believe that faith is no more than to have heard the history and to know it. Having heard or read just once what the Gospel tells of Christ, these people fancy that they have fully understood and believed it, and henceforth need no longer to learn and believe it.

7. That this is naught but an idle, vain fancy, is proved by their own confession that this knowledge of the Bible story rests in their hearts as a cold, lifeless thing, a mere empty husk, lacking all life-giving power, of no use or help to them, neither giving strength nor

making them better; whereas this great, exalted miracle of Christ's resurrection was performed and is to be preached, learned, and known, to the end that it may be fruitful in us, quicken and kindle our hearts, and work in us new thoughts, new knowledge, new forces, life, joy, comfort and strength. If this does not take place, the story has been heard in vain, and is dead within you, being of no more value to you than to Turks and heathen who have never heard it, or have not believed it to be true. You dare not boast of faith, though froth on your tongue, or a sound in your ears, or a dream in your memory give witness that you have heard the story, of which your heart has neither experienced nor tasted aught. The papists show plainly, in all their doctrine and life, that they do not from their hearts believe and hold fast to this article of faith, because they seek the power and effect which ought to come from the resurrection of Christ in themselves and outside of Christ, teaching that it must be sought and obtained through their own works and merits, while they condemn, blaspheme, and persecute the saving doctrine that tells us to turn from these foolish lies to Christ and to the power of his resurrection.

8. Christians, however, and true believers know by sad experience in others as well as in themselves how weak they are, and they deplore the fact that they are unable to grasp this doctrine, or to hold it fast in their hearts with as strong a faith as they ought. Their entire life is spent in combating this weakness, as even Paul says in Phil 3, 12, that he had not grasped it, nor was already made perfect, but that he was pressing on, if so be that he might lay hold of it, and obtain a knowledge of the power of Christ's resurrection, etc.

9. For though this doctrine is most delightful and comforting in itself, full of joy and blessedness, and ought to find its way gently and easily into the heart, yet it is hindered by two great obstacles which make it difficult to believe. In the first place, this work of God is much too exalted and too great in itself for us ever to understand thoroughly in this life, even if our faith were perfectly strong and without weakness; for not until we are in the life beyond will we ever truly see and feel its full force and power. In the second place, our own flesh and blood, and the hearts of all men, are by nature much too weak and too fearful to believe God's Word; and must be filled with fear and terror when they contrast the greatness of this work with themselves and their own unworthiness.

10. God cannot overlook the first cause and obstacle nor have patience with it; for this work must and shall remain as great as it is, and it dare not be belittled; yea, it must be the power to which all creatures, men, angels, the devil, and hell, must yield and be subjected, because it is necessary for our salvation. For if this were not so, we would continue in sin, death and the eternal wrath of God. The other obstacle, namely, that we are too weak to grasp this great work and power by our faith, God may overlook and have patience with; as we here see Christ doing with his disciples, who had certainly heard he had risen, and yet were full of such great and heavy doubts that they almost despaired of Christ entirely saying, *"We hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel."*

11. Behold, how earnestly he looks after these two of weak faith, and cares for them, doing everything to lift them out of their weakness, and to strengthen their faith. Because he sees and knows that in great sorrow and sadness they had departed from the other Apostles and do not know what to think or hope, he is determined not to leave them in such doubt and temptation. In order to help them out of it, he becomes their companion on the way, leaving behind all the other Apostles, though they too were assembled in great sorrow and very weak faith. But because these two are in great danger of total unbelief, he at once comes to them, as if he had nothing else to do now that he was risen; he speaks to them in the friendliest way, and reasons with them from the Scriptures, gives them occasion to retain him and to ask him to abide with them, to eat and to drink in their company, until their faith is quickened once more, and they are relieved of all doubts. Their faith grows so strong that they recognize him as the same Christ who had been with them before in life, and whom they had seen crucified three days ago, but had been unable to recognize on the way by reason of doubt and the weakness of their faith.

12. It is, therefore, his purpose to teach us by this narrative, given for our instruction and consolation, how his work is to be done in the Christian church after his resurrection, namely, that he will not reject nor cast out those who are weak in their faith, yea, not even those who are held in error or ignorance, or who are otherwise weak, fearful, and despairing. They are rather the very persons in whom he will exercise and manifest the power of his resurrection, not only by inviting them to come to him, but also by coming to them, and treating them in the gentlest and kindest way, talking with them, teaching and instructing them, yea, even eating with them, until at length they grow strong and secure in their faith; while their hearts, so sad and sorrowful for a time, are again filled with joy. Thus we also should know and have this comforting assurance that he is our Lord who is able to bear with our infirmities and to overlook them; that he will not reject and condemn those unable to believe and live at once as they should, if only they do not in their hearts despise and deny Christ and his Word, but delight in him and love him, and truly desire to become strong and perfect in faith and life.

13. Looking at these disciples, weak and unreasonable as they are, one sees that their hearts nevertheless were in a state that they felt kindly toward Christ, delighted both to speak of him and to hear him spoken of, and had no greater desire than that what they had heard concerning his resurrection might be true. But the thing was much too great for them to believe, so that they were as yet quite unable to accept it as true - just as it is also too high and too great for us. This our dear Lord knows and sees full well, and so he is better able to have patience with us, is satisfied and pleased if only we listen to him as his pupils and are willing to be taught and directed by him.

14. Furthermore, he thereby wishes to teach us how to conduct ourselves in his kingdom, particularly towards those who are weak and infirm in faith. We also ought not hastily to reject and condemn those whom we see erring or stumbling; but also have patience with them, even as Christ had with us and still must have every day. For though in his own

person by virtue of his resurrection he is in divine might and power Lord of heaven and earth, yet he rules his Church in a way to exercise and manifest the power of his resurrection in his poor, weak band by serving them with this power and might for their consolation and growth.

15. In harmony with this example, though we be strong we ought not to take pleasure in ourselves nor boast, but rather let our gifts and powers serve the weak, striving to uphold and reform them by instruction, consolation, encouragement, friendly admonition and reproof, etc., just as one must act kindly and considerately toward weak, frail children and invalids, nursing, lifting and carrying them until they are grown and can stand on their own feet.

16. This is one of the chief points of knowledge to be gained from the Gospel, in regard to the kingdom of Christ, how it is arranged and governed, namely that it is a government under which Christians, who have begun to believe and are holy, are nevertheless beset with frailty, ignorance, and other sinful infirmities. He bears and overlooks these shortcomings, but with the expectation that improvement shall ensue. Hence we must not dream of a church on earth in which there is neither frailty nor error in faith, as the papists boast that their church and church councils cannot err, etc. For here we are told that not only these two disciples, but all the other apostles erred in the leading and most necessary article of faith, abiding in their unbelief until Christ himself drew them out by means of many and various sermons and revelations. During the three days after Christ's crucifixion, faith in his resurrection had completely died in all hearts; indeed, that light was kept burning nowhere except with Mary, his mother, who preserved within her heart all that she had heard from him and others, and was comforted and sustained thereby in her great grief over the sufferings and death of her son.

17. For faith in Christ must always continue and be preserved somewhere in the Church; there must always be some who have the truth and confess it, though their number be small, and the most fall into error, as they did here. If there are not more, there must be a Mary to keep the faith. He permits it to happen that many great saints err and stumble, in order that we may not trust in men, though they be many, great, and holy. We must be led to rely upon the Word that is sure and cannot deceive, as here these two men, and all the others afterward, were directed to the Scriptures.

18. Aside from this, let us not overlook the example contained in this Gospel which urges and admonishes us to speak and hear of Christ gladly, and to study the Scriptures and God's Word, though it may not always be understood and affect us as it ought. The Gospel also shows us the power, blessing and effect of the Word, if approached with a sincere heart.

19. For, in the first place, although these two disciples were still filled with unbelief, yet he will not and cannot be separated from them, because they went their way communing sorrowfully with one another about Christ, and questioning together almost without

result. He at once drew near and went with them and soon touched their hearts and minds. He began a beautiful, masterly sermon, such as they had never heard before, concerning the very article of faith which caused them trouble and doubt. Then, in the second place, they immediately feel its power; their hearts are no longer heavy, slow, and cold to believe as before, but are moved and kindled, and enlightened and receive a new understanding, so that now they begin to know the Scriptures aright, and what they had never understood before, becomes clear and manifest to their souls. Finally the mask and cover are taken away from their hearts and eyes, so that they no longer look upon him as a guest and a stranger, but truly know him and feel that he is no longer far from them, but at their side, and works certainty in their faith. Henceforth they no longer need bodily, visible revelations, but go forth at once to preach to others, and to strengthen and aid them against doubt and unbelief.

20. Therefore we should follow their example, and gladly hear the Word of God, without growing weary. For this is not only a needful practice for the strong and for the weak, for the wise and for the unwise, by which a knowledge of everything we need unto salvation is given - such study can never exhaust it - but it is also the punishment through which God wishes to work within our hearts, to give faith and the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says in Rom 10, 17: "Belief cometh by hearing the Word of God." If man studies earnestly, even though the heart be cold and unwilling at first, if he only continues in the work, it will not be in vain, and the effect will be produced that the unwise and erring will be brought in and made better, the weak will be strengthened, and at last the heart will be kindled and enlightened, so that Christ is better understood and known from the Scriptures.

21. And even though there were no other benefit to be derived from this study, we ought to be urged to it by the fact that it pleases God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and renders him a service. We know that he will surely not be far from us when we do so, as he himself has promised, Mt 18, 20: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." If he is with us, the angels certainly are near also and take pleasure in our work, while the devil is driven away and has to retreat as he left Christ when he conquered him with the Word of God. Mt 4, 11.

22. There is a legend, telling us that an old patriarch living in the desert received peculiar visions and revelations from God. When he happened to be among young people, listening to their conversation, he saw that whenever they spoke of the Scriptures and things divine, beautiful young men consorted with them and joyfully smiled upon them; but on the other hand, whenever their conversation became wanton and silly, the same young men turned away displeased and sad, and dirty black hogs came and wollowed at their feet etc.

II. THE SERMON THE RISEN CHRIST PREACHED TO HIS DISCIPLES.

23. Let this be enough concerning the chief points of the story of this Gospel. There remains one other important part, the sermon Christ preached to the disciples from the Scriptures, in which he briefly showed them that it behooved Christ to suffer and thus to enter into his glory etc. Of this, sermon the Evangelist speaks as follows: *"And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."*

24. Without doubt this was a very beautiful and a model sermon. Now it is true we all would gladly know just the passages the Lord quoted referring to himself, by which he thereby enlightened, strengthened and convinced these disciples, since Moses contains so little, or nothing, as it would seem, of a plain statement on that of which Christ here speaks, that it behooved him to suffer, and to rise on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name etc. For the Jews, who have had Moses so long and read him diligently enough even until the present day, have never yet discovered this rare truth in Moses.

25. But the Evangelist answers this and analyzes this argument by stating their heart burned within them while he opened to them the Scriptures, and in the Gospel following says Christ opened their mind to understand the Scriptures. Here is the point: Moses certainly writes concerning Christ and Christ is found in the books of Moses; but it is necessary not only to read, but also to understand what is said. Hence Paul says in 2 Cor 3,14-15 that the veil of Moses remains before the face of the Jews when they read the Old Testament, which only Christ alone can take away. And to his apostles Christ says, in Mt 13, 11: *"Unto you is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; the others, however, though they see and hear, yet they do not understand."*

26. Therefore the Bible is a book that must not only be read and preached, but it also requires the true interpreter, that is, the revelation of the Holy Spirit; as we learn from our own experience now-a-days that it is of no avail to prove most clearly from Scripture the articles of the true doctrine to our opponents and to point out their errors. Not a single article of faith has ever been preached that was not more than once attacked and denied by heretics, though they read the same Scriptures that we have.

27. But this revelation also requires pupils of the right kind, who are willing to learn and to be instructed, like these pious and simple-minded disciples, not wise and puffed up minds and self-made masters who reach beyond the very heavens with their knowledge. For this is a doctrine that makes our wisdom foolishness and blinds our own reason, before it can be believed and understood; for it is not born of man's wisdom, like other sciences and arts on earth, which have sprung from reason and can be grasped by means of reason. Hence it is impossible to attain to it by reason, and if you undertake to measure

and reckon how far it agrees with reason, you will not succeed. All heresies from the beginning have had their origin here, and both Jews and Gentiles, and the Turks at present, grow foolishly violent in regard to our doctrine because it does not agree with reason and human wisdom. Only the pious, simple-minded people can grasp and understand it, who are true to this rule, and say: "God hath said it, therefore will I believe it;" as Christ himself declares in Mt 11, 25 and thanks the Father with a joyful heart that he hides these things from the wise and understanding and reveals them unto babes.

28. There is no way out of it, wise people and proud reason cannot be taught these wonderful things, concerning Christ, that true man is God's Son from eternity, and yet he died and rose again, that in his human nature he has become Lord of heaven and earth, that he rules all creatures with divine power though no one sees him, and that we are saved by his merits alone, if we believe in him etc. Therefore God must needs establish the order that no one shall understand unless he is willing to be a fool, become a child, and believe in the simplicity of the heart.

29. Behold, what kind of people did he employ to be his first messengers, to proclaim and to witness his grandest work, the resurrection? Poor, ignorant women came to the sepulchre after useless expense and trouble in purchasing costly ointment and without considering that the tomb was covered with a heavy stone, yea, even sealed and guarded by soldiers. Yet these foolish persons are the first to whom Christ reveals his resurrection, and calls to be its preachers and witnesses. So also does he give these disciples a knowledge of the Scriptures which all the learned scribes did not possess, so that now they view Moses with different eyes and are forced to say: Behold, how often have I read and heard this before, but never understood it.

30. God would seem to say by this act: Very well, I see plainly that it is of no avail though everything be spoken and written in the very clearest manner; for in truth, all articles of faith are set forth clearly and tersely enough in the Scriptures. Take only the article on God and the creation, which certainly is told and given in the very plainest way; yet see the rabble of heretics it has made, Manichaeans, Valentinians, Marcionites, etc. Again, what did it avail that Christ himself, among his own people, confirmed his doctrine clearly and publicly by great miracles? Nothing more than that they began to twist both his words and his deeds, and called them the words and deeds of the devil and Beelzebub. Hence God must continue and say: Since they will not have and receive this Word as I give it to them, it shall remain hidden and unknown to them. I shall indeed have it written and preached in clear language; but reveal it to some few, simple-minded people who seek my Word. To the others it shall be mere darkness which may be felt, as among the Egyptians (though it shines and is preached most clearly), yea, it shall be naught but an offense and poison, against which they must stumble and fall in their blasphemies and contradictions, until they break to pieces.

31. Thus the Jews have had and have read Moses unto this day; yet all of them know nothing of what he speaks concerning Christ, yea, not even in minor articles of faith, just as their forefathers knew nothing of it, save some few who believed, as the prophets and the apostles after them, who elaborated their whole books from a single Bible passage. This enabled them to preach what everyone was compelled to acknowledge as true.

32. How did Christ stop the mouth of the Sadducees (who did not believe the resurrection of the dead and accepted no other Scripture but Moses), and convince them of the resurrection of the dead? He took the commonest saying in their religion, which all Jews knew and quoted every day, when God says, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob etc." With these words he revealed Moses and drew the following conclusion: If you believe God to be God of those that are dead, how can he be God of those who have altogether ceased to be? Therefore, if he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as he himself declares, these men must be alive, though they have died as far as this life is concerned, and lie in their graves; for he cannot be God of that which does not exist. Hence Abraham, who now lies under the earth, and all the saints, must be alive before God, though they are dead before you; for this is, and will be, his name forever that he is the God of Abraham and of all who believe as he had promised him and all believers, saying: "I shall be thy God" etc.

33. Now who would have thought that these short, simple words are so full of meaning and furnish such an excellent, rich sermon, yea, that a big book might be written upon them? Though they know the books of Moses well enough, they yet declared that not a word concerning the resurrection of the dead was to be found in them. This was also the reason why they accepted Moses alone and rejected the prophets who nevertheless based all their preaching of the important articles of the faith in Christ upon Moses.

34. But let us look more closely at Christ's sermon and consider one of the passages from Moses which he quoted. Genesis 3, 15 is the first word which promises grace, and was given to Adam and Eve, when he spoke to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel." These words are read by Jews, Turks and heathens, and by human reason, but they all find them to be only hard pebbles, yea, dead and useless words, from which they cannot take anything even by their best efforts. But as soon as revelation comes to our aid, we understand them to mean: Through sin the serpent, that is the devil, has brought upon Adam and Eve sin and the eternal wrath of God. But in order to help them out of this dreadful fall and misery, into which they were led by Satan, God in his unfathomable mercy has found within himself this remedy that by the woman's seed, that is, by the natural offspring of a woman, that very head of the serpent, that is, sin, death, and everlasting wrath, shall be crushed and robbed of his power, so that he may no longer be lord of death, nor be able to keep man either in sin, or in God's wrath and condemnation.

35. From this an entire New Testament springs forth, all the discourses of St. Paul and the apostles, who do not tell a great deal of the life and miracles of Christ, but, where it is possible, use such a passage as a flower, so to say, with which to cover a great meadow, doing so by the aid of revelation and the Holy Ghost who knows how to grind and press the words thoroughly, so that they give forth the juice and power they possess. For these words show, in the first place, that this seed must be a natural child, born of a woman, but without sin; for the Scriptures testify that whatever is born into this world of man and woman, is born in sin and is under the wrath of God, as David says, Ps. 51, 5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity" etc. For this flesh and blood is completely permeated and corrupted with evil lusts and disobedience against God, and as this substance is corrupted in father and mother, it must remain so in the child; hence no man can be born from man and woman without a sinful nature. God, therefore, hath ordained to take a woman alone for the conception and birth of Christ, the promised seed without a man, she becomes the little child's mother, by the Holy Ghost, who causes this conception and birth in her, in order that he may be a natural man, having our flesh and blood, but without sin and power of Satan, whose head he was to bruise.

36. In the second place, if he was to be lord over sin and death, to subdue the devil and pluck us out of his hand, he had to have divine, almighty power. For though a man were altogether pure and without blemish of body or soul, as Adam was first created, yet were it not in his power and strength to take away this eternal misery and corruption, and to obtain and give in their stead unchangeable blessings and eternal life. Thus it follows that his power must be greater than that of all creatures, even all angels. Such power is found nowhere except in God himself, the Lord of all creation.

37. From this follows further that if he is born of a woman he is also mortal and must die in the body as others. And since he became man for our sake, and was sent by God to deliver us from sin and death, he had to take our place, to become a sacrifice for us, to bear and atone for that wrath and curse under which we had fallen and lay. But it was not possible for him to remain in death; since he was an eternal being he could not be held by it, as St. Peter says in Acts 2, 31, and in like passages; but even his body ere it had seen corruption and decay. must needs pass through death unscathed and by his resurrection and eternal life begin to rule in everlasting power and eternal glory, in order to bring his own out of sin and death, and the power of Satan unto everlasting righteousness and life.

38. Note that this is but a simple passage, which Christ surely did not overlook but interpreted from his own wealth of knowledge, as being the first and chief passage, from which later on all the others flow. Here we see that these are words, or miracles, rather, which reason can never grasp or fathom. They can only be understood when the Holy Ghost accompanies them, and preaches and reveals them unto those who believe with singleness of heart and abide in them. Then they begin to taste the sweet savor, and receive spiritual nourishment, so that they must say: This will do it, this will enlighten the heart and set it aflame.

39. Thus the prophets viewed the saying of Moses and drew therefrom their glorious prophecies concerning Christ, as Isaiah (7, 14) bases his prophecy of Christ's birth upon this passage with the plain statement, "Behold, a virgin shall receive and bear a son" etc., also the whole 53 chapter concerning his suffering and resurrection, how that he would offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins etc. All these words Christ doubtless quoted in his sermon.

40. The apostles likewise, being ignorant fishermen, learned to know the Scriptures, not in the schools of the great scribes, but through the revelation by which Christ led them into the Scriptures. Thus they were enabled to understand and to write on the basis of a single passage a book or a sermon the world cannot understand. And if I had the same Spirit Isaiah or Paul had, I could take this passage and develop from it a New Testament, if that were not already written.

41. How did St. Peter know, or where is written in Moses that which he says in 1 Pet 1:10-11: "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto?" Who told him that the Spirit of Christ existed and prophesied of Christ, before there were prophets and, above all, before Christ and the Holy Ghost were present? Are these the words of a fisherman, or of a learned, wise scribe? Nay, it is the revelation of the Holy Spirit who had also revealed it to the prophets before. Again, where is written in Moses what the Epistle to the Hebrews says in 1, 3-4, that Christ sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, to be Lord over all, having become much better and higher than the angels? etc. He certainly took it from the Old Testament, but he found it not by his own reason, but by revelation, hence he argues: thus: If Christ is a Son of God and Lord of the angels, he must certainly be more and of a better nature than the angels. Now every angel is more powerful than all the world and combined human nature; yet if this true child of a virgin is to be Lord, not alone of the evil spirits, but also of the good and holy angels, he must be of one power and essence with God. This nobody will say or believe, except by revelation. Therefore I would agree to take Moses, the Psalms, Isaiah, together with the Spirit whom these men had, and make a New Testament every whit as good as that which the apostles wrote; but because we have not the same wealth and power of the Spirit, we must be taught by them and drink from the fountain which they gave us.

42. Let this be enough concerning a single portion or a single passage of the sermon Christ spoke to these disciples, and wherewith he well and fully earned, yea, paid for the entertainment they furnished him at the inn. But to set forth all the other words of Moses and the prophets which they spoke of Christ, and which he explained, would be by far too great a task for one sermon; for it would in itself amount to a book as large as the Bible. But without doubt they were the same passages the apostles quoted afterwards as they heard them from his own mouth on this occasion, and learned to understand them better

on the following day of Pentecost. A goodly number of these passages were quoted by them in their sermons, in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles; and they are recommended for close study to every Christian, as he reads and ponders the Holy Scriptures. Then the Holy Ghost will be present with his power to give the right understanding, as we have heard, since he is the true interpreter, if only we treat them seriously and in the simplicity of the heart. The fruit thereof will be that we shall find Christ therein and learn to know him aright. This will quicken and kindle the heart, and fill it with comfort and joy

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