**THE EXPOSITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE BY ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

**LUKE-093**. **THE RISEN LORD'S SELF REVELATION TO WAVERING SOULS by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"13. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. 14. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. 16. But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. 17. And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? 18. 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? 19. 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: 20. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. 21. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. 22. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; 23. 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. 24. 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. 26. Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? 27. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. 28. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and He made as though He would have gone further. 29. 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. 30. And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight. 32 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?"*

*Luke 24:13-32*

These two disciples had left their companions after Peter's return from the sepulchre and before Mary Magdalene hurried in with her tidings that she had seen Jesus. Their coming away at such a crisis, like Thomas's absence that day, shows that the scattering of the sheep was beginning to follow the smiting of the shepherd. The magnet withdrawn, the attracted particles fall apart. What arrested that process? Why did not the spokes fall asunder when the centre was removed? John's disciples crumbled away after his death. When Theudas fell, all his followers were dispersedand came to nought. The Church was knit more closely together after the death that, according to all analogy, should have scattered it. Only the fact of the Resurrection explains the anomaly. No reasonable men would have held together unless they had known that their Messianic hopes had not been buried in Christ's grave. We see the beginnings of the Resurrection of these hopes in this sweet story.

**I. We have first the two sad travellers and the third who joins them.**

Probably the former had left the group of disciples on purpose to relieve the tension of anxiety and sorrow by walking, and to get a quiet time to bring their thoughts into some order. They were like men who had lived through an earthquake; they were stunned, and physical exertion, the morning quiet of the country, and the absence of other people, would help to calm their nerves, and enable them to realise their position. Their tone of mind will come out more distinctly presently. Here it is enough to note that the things which had come to passfilled their minds and conversation. That being so, they were not left to grope in the dark. Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. Honest occupation of mind with the truth concerning Him, and a real desire to know it, are not left unhelped. We draw Him to our sides when we wish and try to grasp the real facts concerning Him, whether they coincide with our prepossessions or not.

It is profoundly interesting and instructive to note the characteristics of the favoured ones who first saw the risen Lord. They were Mary, whose heart was an altar of flaming and fragrant love; Peter, the penitent denier; and these two, absorbed in meditation on the facts of the death and burial. What attracts Jesus? Love, penitence, study of His truth. He comes to these with the appropriate gifts for them, as truly--yea, more closely--as of old. Perhaps the very doubting that troubled them brought Him to their help. He saw that they especially needed Him, for their faith was sorely wounded. Necessity is as potent a spell to bring Jesus as desert. He comes to reward fixed and fervent love, and He comes, too, to revive it when tremulous and cold.

Their eyes were holden, says Luke; and similarly their eyes were opened(ver. 31). He makes the reason for His not being recognised a subjective one, and his narrative affords no support to the theory of a change in our Lord's resurrection body. How often does Jesus still come to us, and we discern Him not! Our paths would be less lonely, and our thoughts less sad, if we realised more fully and constantly our individual share in the promise, I am with you always.

**II. We have next the conversation (vs. 17-28).**

The unknown new-comer strikes into the dialogue with a question which, on some lips, would have been intrusive curiosity, and would have provoked rude retorts. But there was something in His voice and manner which unlocked hearts. Does He not still come close to burdened souls, and with a smile of love on His face and a promise of help in His tones, ask us to tell Him all that is in our hearts? Communicationstold to Him cease to sadden. Those that we cannot tell to Him we should not speak to ourselves.

Cleopas naively wonders that there should be found a single man in Jerusalem ignorant of the things which had come to pass. He forgot that the stranger might know these, and not know that they were talking about them. Like the rest of us, he fancied that what was great to him was as great to everybody. What could be the subject of their talk but the one theme? The stranger assumes ignorance, in order to win to a full outpouring. Jesus wishes us to put all fears and doubts and shattered hopes into plain words to Him. Speech to Christ cleanses our bosoms of much perilous stuff. Before He speaks in answer we are lightened.

Very true to nature is the eager answer of the two. The silence once broken, out flows a torrent of speech, in which love and grief, disciplespride in their Master, and shattered hopes, incredulous bewilderment and questioning wonder, are blended.

That long speech (vs. 19-24) gives a lively conception of the two disciplesstate of mind. Probably it fairly represented the thought of all. We note in it the limited conception of Jesus as but a prophet, the witness to His miracles and teaching (the former being set first, as having more impressed their minds), the assertion of His universal appreciation by the people, the charging of the guilt of Christ's death on our rulers, the sad contrast between the officials'condemnation of Him and their own fond Messianic hopes, and the despairing acknowledgment that these were shattered.

The reference to the third dayseems to imply that the two had been discussing the meaning of our Lord's frequent prophecy about it. The connection in which they introduce it looks as if they were beginning to understand the prophecy, and to cherish a germ of hope in His Resurrection, or, at all events, were tossed about with uncertainty as to whether they dared to cherish it. They are chary of allowing that the women's story was true; naively they attach more importance to its confirmation by men. But Him they saw not, and, so long as He did not appear, they could not believe even angels saying that He was alive.

The whole speech shows how complete was the collapse of the disciples'Messianic hopes, how slowly their minds opened to admit the possibility of Resurrection, and how exacting they were in the matter of evidence for it, even to the point of hesitating to accept angelic announcements. Such a state of mind is not the soil in which hallucinations spring up. Nothing but the actual appearance of the risen Lord could have changed these sad, cautious unbelievers to lifelong confessors. What else could have set light to these rolling smoke-clouds of doubt, and made them flame heaven-high and world-wide?

The ingenuous disclosure of their bewilderment appealed to their Companion's heart, as it ever does. Jesus is not repelled by doubts and perplexities, if they are freely spoken to Him. To put our confused thoughts into plain words tends to clear them, and to bring Him as our Teacher. His reproach has no anger in it, and inflicts no pain, but puts us on the right track for arriving at the truth. If these two had listened to the prophets, they would have understood their Master, and known that a divine mustwrought itself out in His Death and Resurrection. How often, like them, do we torture ourselves with problems of belief and conduct of which the solution lies close beside us, if we would use it?

Jesus claimed all the prophetsas His witnesses. He teaches us to find the highest purpose of the Old Testament in its preparation for Himself, and to look for foreshadowings of His Death and Resurrection there. What gigantic delusion of self-importance that was, if it was not the self-attestation of the Incarnate Word, to whom all the written word pointed! He will still, to docile souls, be the Interpreter of Scripture. They who see Him in it all are nearer its true appreciation than those who see in the Old Testament everything but Him.

**III. We have finally the disclosure and disappearance of the Lord.**

The little group must have travelled slowly, with many a pause on the road, while Jesus opened the Scriptures; for they left the city in the morning, and evening was near before they had finished their threescore furlongs(between seven and eight miles). His presence makes the day's march seem short.

He made as though He would have gone further, not therein assuming the appearance of a design which He did not really entertain, but beginning a movement which He would have carried out if the disciplesurgency had not detained Him. Jesus forces His company on no man. He would have gone furtherif they had not said Abide with us. He will leave us if we do not keep Him. But He delights to be held by beseeching hands, and our wishes constrainHim. Happy are they who, having felt the sweetness of walking with Him on the weary road, seek Him to bless their leisure and to add a more blissful depth of repose to their rest!

The humble table where Christ is invited to sit, becomes a sacred place of revelation. He hallows common life, and turns the meals over which He presides into holy things. His disciplestables should be such that they dare ask their Lord to sit at them. But how often He would be driven away by luxury, gross appetite, trivial or malicious talk! We shall all be the better for asking ourselves whether we should like to invite Jesus to our tables. He is there, spectator and judge, whether invited or not.

Where Jesus is welcomed as guest He becomes host. Perhaps something in gesture or tone, as He blessed and brake the bread, recalled the loved Master to the disciplesminds, and, with a flash, the glad It is He!illuminated their souls. That was enough. His bodily presence was no longer necessary when the conviction of His risen life was firmly fixed in them. Therefore He disappeared. The old unbroken companionship was not to be resumed. Occasional appearances, separated by intervals of absence, prepared the disciples gradually for doing without His visible presence.

If we are sure that He has risen and lives for ever, we have a better presence than that. He is gone from our sight that He may be seen by our faith. That now we see Him notis advance on the position of His first disciples, not retrogression. Let us strive to possess the blessing of those who have not seen, and yet have believed.