

Unwritten Wonders

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There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written—John 21:25.

The sentiment like this comes well from the pen of John. It is the utterance of his *admiration* for his Lord. He writes as one lost in exulting amazement at the matchless glories of Him whose love he had so richly tasted, and whose Divine perfections he had so fully seen. He is closing the wondrous history of the “Word made flesh”; and in looking back upon that record, he feels that the half has not been told, nay, cannot be told. It is too long, too large, too marvelous, too glorious a story for earth. And this thought, pressing upon his soul, calls up the deepest feelings of his nature, so that, in summing up the Divine record, he cannot but give vent to these feelings in one solemn burst of triumphant admiration! “There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”

Ah! Is this intense, this absorbing, this rapturous admiration, ours? Do we not greatly lack it in these days? Is there not a most unaccountable failure here? It is not love I speak of, it is not reverence, it is *admiration*—admiration for the Person and works of Jesus! We *confess* Christ, but do we *admire* Him? We make use of Him, we draw on Him, we honor Him, we love Him—but do we *admire* Him? Where is there in us the Apostle’s admiration for His glorious Person and marvelous works?

It is from the *unwritten* wonders of the Lord that the Apostle’s admiration springs. On the *written* wonders of His life, faith rests itself; as we read, “These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31); but it is at the thought of the *unwritten* wonders of His life that admiration rises to such a height. The recorded wonders are but a specimen, a sample, no more. They are but one beam of the marvelous radiance that streamed from this “day-star,” when here below; and if one gleam be so bright, what must the full effulgence be—what must be the orb from which the effulgence comes? They are but one leaf of the wondrous tree, “the Plant of Renown”; and if one leaf be so fair and excellent, what must that tree be from which it has been plucked?

Even were that which is recorded *all* He did and spoke, He would be marvelous and lovable indeed. How much more when these are but *specimens* of His exceeding wisdom, and power, and

glory! Perfect, beyond all our ideas of perfection; good beyond all our ideas of goodness, must He have been!

We are thus taught a new method of reasoning in reference to the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ,” and His unsearchable riches—a method by which our ideas of His Divine excellency and glory may be mightily enhanced. We are to reason from the known to the unknown, from the recorded to the unrecorded. Each one of His words or deeds is to be taken as *a specimen of an infinite class*—the commencement of a line that stretches on into absolute infinity. Nothing of what He has done or spoken is to stand alone; but is to be accounted the representative of a multitude of kindred sayings and doings, one grape from the mighty cluster by which we may judge of the excellency and fruitfulness of the vine on which it hung.

And then in these there are no drawbacks, no defects to neutralize the conclusions thus drawn. In the case of man, we should have to make many allowances and large deductions from the excellency of such a character on account of necessary imperfections. But in the case of the Son of God we have no neutralizing deficiency. He is the altogether Perfect One, and in Him everything unites to enhance His surpassing glory.

These unwritten wonders of the Lord are, both in number and in greatness, beyond all calculation of ours. “The world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” What has been told us is much; what remains untold is infinitely more. The things recorded are nothing in amount when compared with the unrecorded. Yet the time over which these wonders are spread is but three years and a half! And oh, if these few years could furnish such a countless host, what will not eternity do! And what must be the boundless excellency of that Being whose few years of life could exhibit such wonders, that it should be said regarding them, “I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written!” And all this upon this earth of ours, under that sky of ours! These hills, these plains, these rocks, were witnesses of all these mighty acts and marvelous words! Oh, the honor thus conferred on this world—an honor of which heaven cannot boast—an honor which raises earth to a lofty elevation indeed, and places it foremost, in respect of wonders done in it, among the orbs of the universe—the planet which God has, above all others, delighted to honor!

But let us consider what kind of wonders these were of which the Evangelist thus speaks.

First: *They were wonders of power*. The power put forth was manifold as well as great. It was *creating* power, as was seen in His providing food for the five thousand that were gathered round Him. It was *healing* power, as when He rebuked the fever, removed the palsy, opened the eyes of the blind. It was *life-giving* power, as when He raised the widow’s son from his bier, and called Lazarus from his stony tomb. It was power over earth, as when He cursed and withered up the fig tree. It was power over the sea, as when He calmed the waves at one time, and at another

walked upon them. It was power over men; for He had but to say, "Follow Me," and men arose and followed Him. Every kind of power was displayed in and by Him—Divine, infinite, overawing power! His *recorded* miracles show this—the multitudes of unrecorded ones attest it more. How many more times did He perform all these wonders than we have heard of! Thousands more of these mighty miracles were wrought, of which the Divine record contains no notice. One single day's wonders would have filled volumes.

Second: *They were wonders of majesty*. In Him there was at all times a strange and solemnizing *majesty* of demeanor. He looked, He spoke, He acted as in very deed the Son of the Highest, "the great King." There was royalty, superhuman royalty, in all His movements. But at times this majesty broke through its disguise, and sent out an influence such as overawed all around. It was so in the synagogue at Nazareth, on the Transfiguration Mount, on the way up to Jerusalem, and in Gethsemane, when, at the mere words that came from His lips, His enemies went backwards and fell to the ground. These glimpses of a heavenly majesty, such as man's eye could not endure to look upon, were doubtless much oftener given than in the instances above noticed. For His guise of lowly poverty did not hinder His oftentimes showing how truly He was possessed of all the fullness of Divine greatness and majesty. The instances on record, solemnize and overawe us; and should not the thought that these were stray beams, finding their way through deep clouds, from a glorious sun beyond, solemnize and overawe us yet more?

Third: *They were wonders of holiness*. He did indeed daily mingle with the sons of men; He did not turn away from sinners, nay, He sought them out, He spoke with them on the highway, He sat down at their table. Yet He stood aloof from sin, unfolding the law in its purity and breadth, exhibiting the Divine character in its perfection, showing Himself always as the Holy One and the Just. Each act and word and look were revelations of His holiness; and each day could number up thousands of these. Those recorded are not a few; but how immense the number of the unrecorded! We look at the written ones, and marvel at His holiness; let us think of the unwritten ones, and marvel yet more.

Fourth: *They were wonders of suffering*. Though it is only occasionally that we are told how He sorrowed, yet His life was made up of sorrow, His being steeped in it; He was "acquainted with grief," He was a "Man of sorrows." Sometimes we read that He sighed deeply, sometimes that He was troubled in spirit, sometimes that He wept. In Gethsemane, His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; on the cross, He breathed out the bitterness of His unutterable grief in such a cry as this, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Yet these are but *specimens*, no more; they are a few instances, out of multitudes that might have been given, of His profound, prolonged, unmitigated, unimaginable sorrow. These few sighs and tears are specimens of the way in which His years were spent in groaning, His couch watered with tears,

and His heart was wounded within Him. What is written tells us much; but the unwritten, the unknown, the unspoken, oh!, what a weight of infinite sorrow is contained in them!

Fifth: *They were wonders of prayer.* We read once and again, that He prayed. In the late evening, in the early dawn, all the night long, we are told that He went to be alone with God. Yet these are but glimpses of a life of unbroken prayer. Could His times of prayer be numbered, how many would they be! Could the scenes of prayer be known, how many of the hills of Judea, or the plains of Galilee, would be pointed out as consecrated by His strong crying and tears! How many Gethsemanes, how many Bethanys, how many Olivets, should we find! The recorded times and scenes affect and amaze us; how much more the unrecorded, whose only witnesses were the silent rocks or spreading olives!

Sixth: *They were wonders of zeal.* His purging of the temple is but one instance of the many which are recorded. It shows us that zeal for the Father was consuming Him; and the other instances show us how completely it was His meat and drink to do His Father's will. With how many more instances of zeal was His life filled up!—zeal without ceasing, and without wearying! Those recorded make up but a small part of that wondrous life; what then must the unrecorded have been! What volume could contain the annals of a life so zealous and devoted, so untiring in its pursuit of the one great object of living!

Seventh: *They were wonders of pity.* He had compassion on the multitude; He sympathized with the widow; He wept at the tomb of Lazarus. These are specimens of His compassion; and they are precious beyond measure, as showing how truly He pitied, how tenderly He yearned over that sad world into which He had come. Each of these instances is, of itself, enough to assure us of His compassion to the sons of men, in all their circumstances, both of corporeal and spiritual suffering; a compassion that never wearied, that never failed, that never passed into resentment or coldness, on account of provocations received; a compassion, that, as He neared the cross, seemed to gather new intensity, and gave full out vent to itself in the tears of lamentation over lost Jerusalem. Yet how few are the *recorded* instances of pity, in a life which was *filled up* with them! The unrecorded, how many they must have been! Deeds of pity done every hour! Words of pity spoken every hour! Looks of pity beaming on His countenance continually! How endless, how innumerable, His wonders of compassion! And how profound, how unfathomable, must have been that fountain of compassion out of which these blessed streams were every moment flowing!

Eighth: *They were wonders of condescension and meekness.* To Nicodemus, to the woman of Sychar, to Zaccheus, what condescending gentleness He showed! To the little children that were brought to Him, how He stooped! To those who taunted Him with being a Samaritan, and with having a devil, how meekly did He show Himself! He reviled not again when reviled; His

soft answer turned away wrath; when He suffered He threatened not; He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; He hid not His face from shame and spitting. The recorded instances of this condescension and meekness are easily numbered, but who can number the unrecorded? We may try to imagine them, and in doing so we get some insight into the extent to which these feelings filled His soul. Each hour He was stooping, in His condescension, over the lost ones of earth, stretching out His hands all the day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people. His dealing with Nicodemus is but one specimen, out of a thousand such, in which He received the timorous inquirer without one upbraiding word; showing how willing He is to teach, and to love, and to bless, even those who are as yet half-ashamed to be taught, and loved, and blessed by Him. His treatment of the Samaritan profligate is but one instance out of hundreds or thousands, in which His condescension to the vilest appeared, even when they only repelled and resisted Him; thus proclaiming to every sinful man and woman here, however seared in conscience by long guilt, that with Jesus there is no neglectful coldness such as would lead Him to pass you by, as if uninterested in your desperate case, no repelling pride that would bid you stand afar off, as if your presence were hateful. No. Be you Nicodemus, or Zaccheus, or the Samaritan, He bids you welcome as you are. If you are ignorant, He will teach you; if you are dark, He will enlighten you; if you are filthy, He will cleanse you; if you are lifeless and insensible, He will impart quickening; He will stoop over you in His condescension, He will deal with you in His meekness, He will heal all your diseases, He will satiate your soul with His abundant goodness. You are not too far gone for Him. You are not too guilty for Him. What He did for the ungodliest, when He was on earth, gives you the surest of all evidence of what He is willing to do for you!

Ninth: *They were wonders of grace.* At Naza-reth they wondered at His grace, even when they cast Him out of their city. In Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils, we see a trophy of His grace. In the adulteress to whom He said, "Neither do I condemn thee," we see another. In the woman that washed His feet with her tears, and of whom He said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven," we see another. In Peter, after his denial, when the Lord looked on him, we see another. In doubting Thomas we see another. In the thief upon the cross we see another. These are a few of His wonders of grace. And how precious they are, how assuring, how satisfying! Even these by themselves would have been enough to make any sinner feel that, in coming to such a Savior, he was coming to one who would make him truly welcome; who would receive him most gladly, whatever might be the amount of his transgression, and the length of time over which it had been spread. Each one of these cases is such a display of free love as makes us feel it to be impossible that we can be too guilty, too unworthy, too far gone in sin, for such a Savior as this. In each of them we see such abounding sin, yet such much more abounding

grace—grace so varied, so rich, so ample, so sincere and true, that no sinner need hesitate for a moment to throw himself unreservedly upon it. Yet, after all, these are but glimpses, no more—a few leaves of that tree which is for the healing of the nations, a few gems out of an unfathomable mine, a few drops out of an infinite ocean, a few beams from a glorious and inexhaustible sun. If these few specimens give us such an idea of His unutterable grace, oh, what must that grace be of which the half hath not been told, of whose wonders not so much as the thousandth part has been recorded; all its breadth and length, its depth and height, remaining as yet unknown—only to be dimly imagined, as we might guess at the glory of the firmament from a single star, or at the beauty and perfection of Paradise from the fragrance of a single flower.

And then, apart from His *deeds*, there are His *words*; and in these latter we find, if it were possible, yet more unwritten wonders than in the former. For how very small a portion do His recorded sayings bear to His unrecorded! All the former are comprised in a small volume which one might almost read in a single hour. Four brief biographies are all we have, both of His words and deeds. Of these His words occupy, at the most, but little more than the half. And this is all of the recorded sayings of Him who spake as never man spake—all that we have of the “gracious words” which proceeded out of His mouth! What would the full record have been! What wonders would it have contained! Grace was poured into His lips, and out of these lips were words of grace every moment pouring forth! How fervently we exclaim, Oh, that they had all been written down! Not that they are lost. What we know not now we shall know hereafter. We shall spend eternity in listening to the recital of those words, for a season left unwritten, but which shall all one day be fully and forever known.

Oh, think what the *full* record of His words would have been, when the brief outline is so precious! A thousand such sermons as that on the Mount, each one as fully charged with blessings! A thousand such expositions as that at Nazareth, when men wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth! A thousand such invitations as that by the sea of Galilee, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.” A thousand such promises as, “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” A thousand such gracious assurances as, “Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out”; or, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith, Give Me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.” A thousand such tender expostulations as, “Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.” A thousand such proclamations as that in the last and great day of the feast, “If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink.” A thousand such conversations as that at Jacob’s well, with sinners as vile as that woman of Sychar, summing themselves up in such language as this, “Whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give

him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." A thousand such declarations as, "I am the light of the world"—"I am the bread of life"—"I am the resurrection and the life"—"I am the door"—"I am the way, and the truth, and the life." A thousand such exhortations as, "Enter in at the strait gate"—"Yet a little while the light is with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." A thousand such Gospel messages as that in the temple, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." A thousand such words of forgiveness as, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven"—"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." A thousand such utterances of compassion as that over the guilty city, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, etc." A thousand such consolations as, "Let not your hearts be troubled,"—"Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." A thousand such prayers as that, "Sanctify them through Thy truth." "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." A thousand such encouragements to children as, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me." A thousand such parables as the prodigal son, or the lost sheep, or the good Samaritan! Conceive all His gracious words multiplied a thousandfold; and oh, what a universe of wonders, opens on our view! We conceive but little of them here, but eternity shall fully disclose them all, and spread them out before us! Then it will be seen that the Evangelist was using no mere figure of speech, was chargeable with no exaggeration, when he said, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books which should be written." And then shall we add our joyful "Amen" to his, when, one by one, the unknown and untold wonders of the grace of Christ rise upon our view, to fill our souls and occupy a whole eternity!

O brethren, what a region of blessed thought is thus opened up to us! What a mine of glad and glorious contemplation have we thus discovered! And what an exhibition of the character of Christ is thus given! What a boundlessness of every perfection, finite and infinite, does this ascribe to Him! What a bright radiance of more than mortal excellence does this throw around Him! Ah, yes; He of whom such things can be said, *must be* fairer than the children of men. It is no idle romance, no fond sentimentality, no wild exaggeration, to speak of Him as the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely.

There is, in truth, no conceivable limit to His words or ways of grace, and power, and wisdom, and holiness, and majesty. And if so, oh, what an arm is this for a soul to lean on, were he the neediest and the feeblest of the sons of men! Oh, what a home is this for a sinner to take refuge in, were he the guiltiest that ever polluted this soil with his steps! What a bosom is this for the inquiring spirit, or the troubled saint, in which to deposit every fear and doubt, so that unbelief might seem a thing as impossible, as it is strange and hateful.

Yes, there is not, neither can there be, any limit to His words and ways of love. Were all that could be said of Him contained within these four Gospels, there would be a limit, though even that would form a wondrous circle. But these are but the first four pages, or rather lines, of the infinite volume which contains the record of His transcendent glories. When that volume is unfolded; when we shall have eyes to read it, or ears to hear it read, in gladder days than these, and without interruption or fear of weariness; when we turn over page after page of the recorded treasures, and read all the wonders in the light of eternity, and in the company of angels and ransomed men, shall we not experience the truth of that saying, "Blessed is he that readeth"; shall we not be filled with amazement, and delight, and admiring rapture, past all utterance; shall we not feel how well He deserved all our trust and love, how worthy He was of loudest praise, and honor, and blessing; shall we not be ashamed to think that there actually was one period, nay, one day of our lives, when we did not love and trust and honor and praise him; shall we not be amazed to think, that one hard, one suspicious, one unbelieving thought, could ever have arisen within us; shall we not be humbled at the remembrance of having so often treated with coldness, and disesteem, and neglect, this Being of beings, this Brother of brothers—so often brought dishonor upon this name of names!