After His sufferings, the first time Jesus presented Himself to His disciples and showed them that He was alive and had a body was on the evening of His resurrection. It was the fourth time He had made Himself visible since He rose from the dead. The first person He had appeared to in the morning was Mary of Magdala. She had earned this honor by her unparalleled devotion. She had the same spirit that Mary of Bethany had and stood out among the other women who came to Joseph's tomb to embalm the dead body of the Savior. When she found the grave empty, she was overcome with emotion and cried because they had taken her Lord away, and she did not know where they had laid Him. Those tears were a sure sign of deep, true love and were observed by the Risen One. The sorrows of this faithful soul touched His tender heart and brought Him to her side to comfort her. Distressed, she turned from the sepulchre and saw Him standing there but did not recognize Him. “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, ‘Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’” (Jn. 20:15-16). Startled by the familiar voice, she looked more closely and immediately returned the kind greeting with an expressive word that indicated she recognized Him, ‘Rabboni.’ Thus, “to holy tears,
in lonely hours,  
Christ risen appears.”

Peter was given the privilege of being the second person to see Jesus. However, we do not have any details about this private meeting between Jesus and His erring disciple. It is simply mentioned by Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (I Cor. 15:5) and by Luke in his Gospel (Lk. 24:34). But we do not have any doubts about the purpose of the meeting. The Risen Master remembered Peter’s sin. Jesus knew how troubled he was about it. He desired, without delay, to let Peter know he was forgiven. So, out of His sensitivity for Peter’s feelings, He planned to meet him for the first time after his fall - alone.

During the course of that day, Jesus appeared a third time to the two men who were walking to Emmaus. Luke highlighted this third appearance more than anyone else, probably because it was one of the most interesting anecdotes about the resurrection which he found in the collected writings from which he compiled his Gospel. And, truthfully, we cannot imagine a story
more beautiful and interesting than this one. We get a clear picture of what Jesus’ disciples were thinking when we consider the two friends who were walking together. They were talking about the things that had just happened, including the sufferings of Jesus three days before and the rumors that had just come to them about His resurrection. As they talked, they shifted between despair and hope and could not be consoled when they reflected on the crucifixion of Him whom, until then, they thought was the Redeemer of Israel. At other times, they wondered if it was possible that He could have risen again! How compassionate is Jesus’ behavior throughout the time He spends with them! Because of His love for them, He goes along with them incognito. He joins the company of the two sorrowing men and asks them in a carefree way about the subject they are discussing so sadly and seriously. When the men respond with a question that expressed surprise that even a stranger in Jerusalem would not know about the things that had transpired, He dryly and indifferently asks, “What things?” Once He had drawn the story out of them, He proceeded to show them that an intelligent reader of the Old Testament ought not to be surprised by the things that were happening to someone they believed to be Christ. He used the occasion to explain to them “the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Lk. 24:27), without ever saying that He was speaking about Himself. When the travelers arrive at the village where the two men were going, the unknown One pretends that He is going on further. It would not have been appropriate for a stranger to invite himself to stay with them. But when they urge Him to stay, He accepts the invitation. Finally, the two men discover whom it is they have been entertaining without being aware of it. It fills them with joy.

Jesus’ appearance to the two men on this road was a kind of prelude to the one He made on the evening of the same day in Jerusalem to the Eleven, or rather, the Ten (Thomas was not present; see Jn. 20:24). As soon as they discovered whom it was that they had for a guest, Cleopas and his companion set out from Emmaus to the Holy City, eager to tell their friends there the exciting news. And note this, while they are in the very act of telling about the things that happened on the way and how Jesus became known to them in the breaking of bread, Jesus Himself appeared in the midst of them, uttering the kind greeting, “Peace be with you” (Jn. 20:21). He has come to do for the future Apostles what He has already done for the two friends, namely, to show that He is alive after His sufferings and open their minds that they might understand the Scriptures. He wanted them to see that, based on what had been written about Christ in years past (the O.T.), it was necessary for Him to suffer, die, and to rise from the dead the third day.

While the general purpose of the two appearances is the same, we notice a difference in the order of the procedure that Jesus followed. In one case, He opened the eyes of the understanding first, and then the eyes of the body. In the other, He reversed the order. In His words with the two brothers, He first demonstrated that the crucifixion and the rumored resurrection were in perfect agreement with the Old Testament Scriptures. When He had finished, He made Himself visible to their physical eyes as the Jesus who had risen from the dead. In other words, He first
taught them the true scriptural theory of the Messiah’s earthly experience and then satisfied them with the facts. In the meeting at night with the Ten, on the other hand, he dealt with the facts first and then took up the theory afterwards. He convinced His disciples that He really was risen by showing them His hands and His feet and by eating food. Then He proceeded to demonstrate that the facts were only what they should have expected because they were the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

By varying the order of revelation in this way, Jesus was only making His procedure relevant to the different circumstances of the people with whom He had to deal. The two friends who were going to Emmaus did not notice any resemblance between the stranger who joined them and their beloved Lord about whom they had been thinking and speaking. “Their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him” (Lk. 24:16). We believe the main reason for this was simply heavy hearts. Sorrow caused them not to see. They were so engrossed in their own sad thoughts that they could not see anything outside themselves. They did not make the effort to really notice the person who had joined them. It would not have made any difference, even if the stranger had been their own father. It is obvious how men in this state of mind must be dealt with. They can only get outward vision by, first of all, getting their inward eye opened. Their diseased minds must be healed so that they may be able to look at what is right in front of them and see it for what it is. This is the principle Jesus followed with the two men. He met them where they were and led them from despair to hope. Then their outward senses recovered their ability to perceive and told them who the stranger was. In essence, He said, “You have heard a rumor that the One who was crucified three days ago is risen. You believed this rumor was a story that could not be trusted. But the question is, “Why not?” You believe Jesus is the Christ. If He was the Christ, His rising again was to be expected as much as His sufferings, for both of them are foretold in the Scriptures which you believe are the Word of God.” When these thoughts took hold of their minds, the hearts of these two men begin to burn with the kindling power of a new truth. The dawn of hope breaks on their spirits. They wake up as if they have been having a dream. They look outward, and behold, the Man who has been discoursing with them is Jesus Himself!

**Jesus’ Appearance to the Ten**

The situation was different for the Ten. When Jesus appeared to them, they were amazed at the resemblance to their deceased Master. They had been listening to the story of Cleopas and his companion and were in more of a frame of mind to observe. But they could not believe that what they saw was really Jesus. They were terrified and thought they had seen a spirit - the ghost of the Crucified. The first thing Jesus had to do in this situation, therefore, was obviously to quiet their fears and convince the frightened disciples that the Being who had suddenly appeared was not a ghost, but a Man - the same Man He seemed to be, even Jesus Himself. Until He had done that, no discourse could be given from the Old Testament on the subject of Messiah’s earthly history. So, accordingly, Jesus immediately addressed their fears and then proceeded to explain the true Messianic theory.
We have pointed out the difference between the two and the ten disciples and their belief in the resurrection. Something analogous to this may be found in the ways that different Christians are now brought to faith. The evidences for Christianity are commonly divided into two main categories - the external and the internal. One is taken from outward historical facts, while the other is taken from the adaptation of the gospel to man’s nature and needs. Both kinds of evidence are necessary for a complete faith, just as both kinds of vision (outward and inward) were necessary to make the disciples thorough believers in the truth of the resurrection. But some people begin with one and some with the other. Some are convinced, first, that the gospel story is true and then, perhaps later on, get a sense of its importance and preciousness. Others are like Cleopas and his companion. They are so engrossed in their own thoughts that they are unable to appreciate or see the facts. First, they have to have the eyes of their understanding enlightened to see the beauty and the worthiness of the truth as it is in Jesus. At one time they may have had a kind of traditional faith in the facts and believed that those facts were well attested. These are the kind of people who, even if they lost their faith, might still have regrets about losing it. They may be skeptics and yet be sad because they are. In fact, they may feel that they were better off when, like others, they believed. But even though they may attempt it, they cannot restore their faith by studying only the external evidences. They may read books that deal with such evidences, but they are not moved by them. Their eyes stare straight ahead and cannot see Christ coming to them in that outward way. So, He reveals Himself to them in another way. He has a hidden discourse with their spirits and conveys to their minds a powerful sense of the moral grandeur of the Christian faith. He makes them feel that, whether it is true or not, it is at least worthy to be true. Then their hearts begin to burn. They hope that what is so beautiful may turn out to be objectively true. Then they become interested in the external evidences. They inquire, they read, they look. And what do they see? Jesus revived - a true historical person for them. He is risen from the grave of doubt to live forever as the sun of their souls, and even more precious because of the temporary loss they experienced without Him. He comes

“Apparelled in more precious habit,
More moving, delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of their soul”

than He ever did before they doubted.

The Impact of Jesus’ Exposition of Scripture
From these remarks on the order of the two revelations that were made by Jesus to His disciples (first, the revelation of Himself to their physical eyes, and second, the revelation of the Scriptural doctrine of the Messiah to the eyes of their minds), we move on to consider this question: “What impact did Christ’s expositions of Scripture have on His hearers?” Did the disciples gain enough light from these expositions so that they would not need any further illumination? Had
Jesus Himself done the work of the Spirit of Truth, whose advent He had promised before He suffered, and led them into all truth? Certainly not. The opening of their understanding which took place at this time did not, by any means, amount to a full spiritual enlightenment in Christian doctrine. The disciples did not yet comprehend the moral grounds for Christ’s suffering and resurrection. They did not know why He had to go through these experiences. At this time, the words ought and should did not mean any more than this: They might and should have anticipated the things that happened, if they had properly understood the Old Testament prophecies. They were in the same frame of mind as the Jewish Christians probably were to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews was addressed. These Christians were not grounded very well in the truth of the gospel. They could not see the glory of the gospel dispensation, nor how it harmonized with what had existed before and under which they had been educated. Specifically, the divine dignity of the Author of the Christian faith seemed to them to be incompatible with His earthly humiliation. Therefore, the writer of the epistle attempted to prove that the divinity, the temporary humiliation, and the subsequent glorification of the Christ were all taught in the Old Testament Scriptures. He quotes them liberally for that purpose in the early chapters of his epistle. In fact, his written expositions did for his readers what Jesus did through His oral expositions for His hearers. And what should we say was the immediate impact of the writer’s argument on the minds of those who attentively read it? This is what we imagine: that the new believer, after he put the book down, would be compelled to admit, “Well, he is right. These things about the Messiah are all written in the Scriptures. Therefore, not one of them, not even the humiliation and suffering, over which I stumble, can be a reason for rejecting Jesus as the Christ.” A very important result, yet a very elementary one. What a vast difference between the admission that the real life of Jesus corresponded to the ideal life of the Messiah as portrayed in the Old Testament and the admiring, enthusiastic, and thoroughly intelligent appreciation of gospel truth that the writer put forth on every page of his epistle!

The difference between the disciples’ frame of mind after Jesus explained to them the things in the law, the prophets, and the psalms about Himself, and their enlightenment as Apostles after the Holy Spirit came was also significant. Before Pentecost, they only knew the basics of the doctrine of Christ. But when they matured, they were thoroughly initiated into the mystery of the gospel. Before the coming of the Spirit, a single ray of light came into their dark minds. But later on, the daylight of truth flooded their souls. We can express the difference in words that John uses in his narrative about the things that took place in connection with Jesus’ first appearance to His disciples. John relates that at a certain moment when they were together, Jesus breathed on the disciples and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 20:22). They did not, then and there, receive the Spirit in the promised fulness. The breath was only a sign and a “down payment” (earnest) of what was to come. It was only a symbolic renewal of the promise and a first installment of its fulfillment. It was just a little cloud the size of a man’s hand that predicted the coming downpour (see I Kings 18:44) or the first gentle puff of wind that precedes the power-
ful storm. Right now, they have the little breath of the Spirit’s influence, but not until Pentecost will they feel the rushing wind. There is a great difference between now and then, between the disciples’ spiritual enlightenment on the first Christian Sabbath evening and that of the Apostles in the days ahead.

For the disciples, it was still just a day of small things. The small things, however, were not to be despised (and they weren’t). We are not told how the Ten valued the light they had received. But we can safely assume that their feelings were similar to the two brothers who made the journey to Emmaus. As these men talked together about Jesus’ discourse after He left their presence, they said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?” (Lk. 24:32). The light they received may have been small, but it was new light, and it had all the heart-kindling, thought-stirring power of new truth. That conversation on the road created a crisis in their spiritual history. It was the dawn of the gospel day. It was the little spark that kindled a great fire. It put into their minds a thought which was to form the core or center of a new system of belief. It took away the veil that had been put over their faces when they read the Old Testament and was, therefore, the first step in a process which was to result in their “beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord,” and in their “being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (II Cor. 3:18). How happy is the person who has even received as much as these two disciples at this point in their lives!

Some dejected person may say, “I wish that same happiness could be mine!” In order to comfort such an unhappy brother, let us take note of the circumstances in which this new light arose for the disciples. Their hearts were set on fire when they had become very dry and withered - hopeless, sick, and weary because of their sorrow and disappointment. This is the way it always is: The kindling must be dry in order for the spark to set it on fire. When the people of Israel complained, “Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off,” the word went forth from God, “O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel” (Ez. 37:11-12). It was the same way with Jesus’ disciples. When every bit of the sap of hope had been drained out of them, and their faith had been reduced to this, “But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel” (Lk. 24:21), then their hearts were set on fire by the kindling power of a new truth. It has been the same in many instances since then. The fire of hope was kindled in the heart, never to be extinguished, just at the moment when the men were becoming more and more discouraged. Historically, faith has been revived even when someone thought of himself as an unbeliever. The light of truth has risen in minds that had stopped looking for the dawn. The comfort of salvation has returned to people who had started thinking that God’s mercy was gone forever. “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Lk. 18:8).
There is nothing strange about this. The truth is, the heart needs to be dried through trials before it can be made to burn. Until sorrow comes, human hearts do not catch the divine fire. There is too much of this world's sap in them. That was what caused the disciples to be so slow to believe all that the prophets had spoken. Their worldly ambition prevented them from learning the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and their pride blinded them to the glory of the cross. Therefore, Jesus rightly rebuked them for their unbelief and their mindless stupidity. If their hearts had been pure, they might have known beforehand what was going to happen. But what really happened was that they did not comprehend anything until their Lord's death had crushed their hope, blasted their ambition, and bitter sorrow had prepared them for receiving spiritual instruction.