No. 182.  
On showing that we have been with Jesus.

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Acts IV, 13... "And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

It was at an important crisis, that this circumstance occurred to the minds of the elders, who threw themselves in the way of the religion of Jesus to oppose its progress. Two of the most distinguished champions of the new religion had drawn upon themselves the indignation of those in power, by the strong excitement with which a miracle had produced. They were doubtless considered as little better than disturbers of the peace, as such were treated with violence and contempt. But when they were brought forth, and called upon to defend themselves, they shrunk not back, though placed in the midst of powerful enemies. Peter, with his characteristic valor, stood boldly forth to meet the charge, told them without wavering or fear, that the miracle had been performed in the name of the Rabbi, that Jesus, when
they had but a short time before condemned to die the death of a malefactor. The fearlessness and energy of these determined men excited the astonishment of those, who were sitting in judgment on them, so that they marvelled. Yet was it then that they took knowledge then, that they had been with Jesus; or rather, as it breaketh to be expressed, they remembered that they had beheld Jesus.

It is my purpose to take these words and apply them in a figurative sense for our own instruction. The disciples, in a peculiar sense with Jesus; they were with him personally. They followed his steps, they heard his instructions, they saw the mighty works that he did. They shared in his dangers, his toils, his persecutions; like him, they had not where to lay their heads; yea, they too participated in the opposition, contempt of the rulers of this populace. Of course they were with Jesus in a manner, in which no other can or could be with him. Yet there is a sense, in which we can be said to be with Jesus; the same sense, in which we may be with the great and good, who have lived in all ages. When we look back on the lives of the distinguished men, who have blessed their age, &cast
broadly mighty influence on the condition & happiness of mankind—we almost envy these wise good men it was to live with them & about them to gaze on their countenances, to witness the display of their characters, to listen to their conversation, in short to move within the circle, where their energy & influence lived, breathed & was felt. There is something elevating in the presence of knowledge of such men: we feel, as if we had been wise & better ourselves, had we dwelt under the light of such wise & good men. Yet there is a way in which we can be with them, if not so immediately, yet almost as effectually, as were their contemporaries. We can be with them by the remembrance of what they were; by the light of their example, by the effects of their efforts still existing among us, by their influence, by their fame... Their bodies are long since laid in the dust; but their spirits may be said still to live among us, in their institutions, in their writings, in their opinions, in their memories... The hand itself has vanished to dust; but that hand set in motion springs, that are now moving in the great machinery of society, that give impulses, that are still felt, & will be felt for ages through the community... Many of our improvements, our festivals, our enjoy
ments come from their exertions, do they left an inha-
tance of blessings, to which we are born, which have been con-
tinually diffusing happiness around us, not to forget
their source... And, my sir, in the same way, that we may
be said to be with the great and good of all ages, we may
be with Jesus... in a vastly higher and more important
sense, than we can be said to be with any other person.
ages... It was not our lot to be once, to live in the same
age, in which he appeared, to walk by his side, to catch the
heavenly words, which fell from his lips. Yet the spirit
of that celestial messenger is abroad through all ages;
it has come down to us; it dwells in the midst of us;
in the institutions of the, in the refined and sublime prin-
ciples of religion, in those new families even to the mis-
cellaneous of children, in those sanctuaries, promises, and hopes, in
which a flood of light in our short path through earth. By
these, by other means, we may be brought near:--we approach
fresses of religion, as those who have named his name.
it becomes do by these is by other means to be with him.
Men should take knowledge of us, as they did of the
apostles, that we have been with Jesus, that we have
not forgotten him who hath redeemed us, that we
have not suffered time or familiarity to wear away.
ne hearts the gratitude of obedience we owe to him, the
of all benefactors was the greatest about the world has
ever known.

I will point out some of the ways, in which we ought then,
that are have been with Jesus.
1. It will appear, that we have been with Jesus, if we
estimate the value of, as we ought. It is the institu-
tion of Jesus: if therefore we have that regard for our
Savior implied in being with him, we cannot but
set the highest value on it. We apply this standard
ourselves to other things. If we love, value men, mean
that we ought to do it by having, valuing, their in-
stitutions. Do we not say, for instance, that we show
the highest regard to the 'Fathers of our country,' as he
is greatly called, when we cherish in our hearts his prin-
ciples, estimate in the same value that liberty, or he
tried, fought, counseled to achieve? The followers
of a great man, who has distinguished himself in some
science, is handed to posterity an account of this daring
discoveries, best show their respect, reverence for the
genius of their master, by adhering to his systems.
proving, defending his theories. The principle in fact
is a general one, is applied in numberless instances — it is a matter of my own conscience to say, with much greater emphasis the principle applies to the division between the followers of Jesus, their Master. You believe that he appeared with divine authority to proclaim the living truths of the living God, that for this cause he was born and came into the world, that he might make known the truth. Whatever he did he did by the authority of God, of whatever he taught be taught by the authority of God, that he died, rose again to accomplish the will of his Father, God. Then may we truly say, if we would draw that we have indeed known him, we shall value most highly the system of religion, as the under God, which we have proclaimed and established. You will say, perhaps, that we do value it, that we are aware of the richness of the treasures, which it offers to us, that the very act of making an open profession of belief in the Savior is itself sufficient evidence that we value it as the best gift of God to man. I acknowledge that such a profession, if it be not hypocritical, is an acceptable homage to the Son. If I would truly tell God that every heart and soul in this homage. Still it may be done, without much fear.
ing of the value of it. ... But there is a reason of very general, and almost universal extent, why may afford ground for the constant apprehension, that we do not estimate the worth of our religion as we ought. I refer to the effect of it being so old, so constant, a blessing. It seems to be a law of the human mind, that familiarity with any truth blunts and deadens the sense of its greatness and value. Whatever is common, be it ever so important, is apt to be neglected precisely because it is common. We see this strikingly exemplified in other things, besides religion. The evidences of providence in the world around us are imbedded, because we see them every day. So common an object as the sun, pouring abroad his light in meridian splendor, daily extinguished, to our sight, is daily lighted afresh; if seen for the first time by some being suddenly introduced to our earth, would doubtless excite the strongest feelings of wonder, the most rapturous emotions of sublimity. But to us, what is more common than our light? Therefore what is less heeded? So it is with all. We have never been without this religion; therefore we hardly tell what our feelings, if after being recovered from our darkness & debasing errors, we were once for the first
time to be brought with this heavenly system in all its purity and excellence... We are so accustomed to hear its art proclaimed, perhaps, Sabbath after Sabbath, from the pulpit or we read of it frequently, that it becomes one of those acknowledged truths, which are laid away in the mind, never questioned, but never felt. Let it be our endeavor, then, to have not a cold general, but a par
ticular, warm and operative sense of the value of this eternal medicine of a diseased world... Regarding it, as the institution of that Law, when we profess to love never be it ever our care, to manifest to the world that we have been with them in spirit, by bearing about in our hearts the thought of the vital importance of this institution, of those institutions, which have brought blessings to our families, homes, and have given honor to all the meek and mild, amiable virtues, in just the same proportion as they prepare men for heaven, make them better friends, but his neighbors, a better member of society. Y.C. is honored by honoring his institutions and ordinances... He is loved by loving his religion... He is most grateful for the light, and hopes, of discoveries of the God... He in short, thinks nothing of the value of religion, he has been most with Jesus. It is most...
grateful for the Son.

2. It will be manifest to the world, that we have been with him in spirit, if we imitate his example. He may be said to give us by his example an opportunity of being with him, though he has ascended to his Father's side. - but if we do not imitate his example, it is in vain that this offer is made to us. To imitate the character of those whom we love or regard is but a common testimony of affection or reverence. Yet in this imitative propensity, when fallible men are taken for models, there is certainly no little danger. In the best of men there is such a mixture of good and evil, so much that we approve so much that we disapprove, - virtues that are just ready to degenerate into vices, vices that are hovering around the verge of virtues. - it must be for loved so much to be申wwed, - that when we endeavor to shape our own characters by theirs, we are exposed to all the peril of taking the promiscuous collection of good and bad together, without selection. Consequently without benefit, if not with positive injury. - In the fracture of the brightest character, there are dark shades; in the fairest name are some spots; in the best compound of qualities, many things are merely pardoned on account
of their union with something better. Now in such cases, when we copy, we are apt to copy the whole, of course to imitate bad as well as good traits. But from this danger, in endeavoring to imitate the example of her, we are wholly free; for it presents not a single defect for us to copy, not a single blemish for us to transfer to our own lives. He, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, who did no sin, who in whose mouth no guile was found, has not left us a faulty model, on some parts of all, while we gaze with wonder, light, we turn from others with a sigh of tears. There is nothing for us to lament in his character, if the more perfectly closely we can copy it, the more nearly approach the standard of divine excellence. If then, we would have men to the knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus, we must follow his steps. We must walk, as he also walked, not being conformed to the errors of the world, but being transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may have what is that good, acceptable, perfect will of God. If I had reverence of love for any earthly friend, I knew not then I could better express it, than by silently imitating all that was excellent.
in his character; so if I have the Savior, should then that I am with him in heart and soul, I cannot better hear it, than by imitating his fathers character, without ostentation or clamorous professions. I find, without most devout piety, ascribing all that he was all that he did to God; "my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me"; the truth, who dwelleth in one, he doth the works; "shall I not, then, like him look up to God, the author of all my blessings, powers, enjoyments? I find that he prayed in moments when his heart was refined communion with God; shall I not, then, pour out my soul to God, in the offices of devotion? I go with him to the garden of Gethsemane, in the midst of that agonizing struggle with sorrow from mine drops of blood. See him lift his eyes to heaven, and hear him exclaim "Father, not my will, but thine be done"; do when the cloud of sorrow comes over me, if my portion is pain and grief, shall I not resign myself without a murmur to the will of God? When his angry disciples would faint before him invoke fire from heaven to punish the Samaritan, I find he would not stoop to the meanness of revenge.
around them, it was his business to save; not to destroy; shall I take fire at every insult, injury, real or imaginary, of mine for revenge, or pursue my enemy with the implacable spirit of a friend? — Alas! for one, if So; I have not been with Jesus... Do the ignorant, opiniou, I find, he was ever the ready instructer, the kind friend. shall I despise or hate there whom I may choose to think not so wise as myself? — What though the soul of thine was woven for his head? What though he was arrayed in the robe of scarlet? Pain mockery of indulgence; I was still majestic preserver... And what voice is that which I hear from the lips of him, whose bleeding on the cross? It is a voice exciting pardon for his murderers, urging the only circumstance that can be imagined to extenuate their guilt: — father, forgive them, for they knew not what they did. And shall I not exercise a forgiving spirit towards those, whom I only see to have strangled or injured me? Shall they save the spirit of Jesu, or take up an unforgiving spirit? If I do, if I will not forgive me their trespasses, how can I expect that my Lord Jesus will forgive any trespasses. — These are but a few of the instances, in which we may dwell
imitate the example of Jesus: - I entreat upon your knees, as the best, to keep this consideration to heart, that if you would have men take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus, you must imitate his example, especially in these mild, amiable, kind virtues, or give even to this life something of the charms of heaven.

B. - It will be manifest, that we have been with Jesus, if we obey his precepts. - This is another standard, to have many safely trust: for it is one with Christ himself has established. I refer you to his own words: - he said to his disciples: - ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." - This is the grand point of the Christian life - doing what I command.

D. What then are the precepts of God? They are such as the following: - "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. - You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: - you shall love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these." - "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." - "Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the children of God." - "Whosoever therefore"
shall humble himself, as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandment, abiding in his love. "Ye have heard, it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour,' but the enemy: but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them even as the children of your Father, who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good; sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust." These, then, are a specimen of our Lord's instructions, precepts. They are such as all the ages of wisdom and research before had never furnished—simple, heart-searching, on time, how only. Now, I put it to your consciences, shall we, as with such a teacher, whom we acknowledge to have been divinely qualified, who has handed down to us the word of grace of truth, dictated by the spirit of God, whether we are not bound to give heed to his precepts, inasmuch as to the things that belong to our everlasting peace, of this man may take knowledge of us, that we have been sent.
Jesus.

The topic which has been suggested by my text, John has now been briefly urged upon you, is one of vital importance. I know it is a very common one, what you have heard very often. But I entreat you not to neglect it because it is so common. It is my duty to reiterated from this place time after time the same truths, in various forms, the story of the times duty is not a long one; it is simple, plain, and soon told. We must therefore repeat to you the same warnings, the same admonitions, the exhibitions. But I pray you, let not the repetition be vain. Especially do I hope, that it will not be in vain with those, who have professed to believe in the law, to take his yea for the rule of faith and practice. They ought to remember, that it depends much on them whether the number of professing times shall be increased or not. I knew it is not right for any person to suffer it to depend on the conduct of another person, whether they will obey the command or not. If there was no professing instances in the world, who lived as he ought to do, according to the virtue of the yea, still it would be the duty of every believer in Jesus, to eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance
of him, she lived & died to serve us. — But since men will have the folly to excuse themselves from obeying the injunction of the law, because other wise do obey it are none the better for it, — let it be our earnest care that we remove from the path of our fellow men the stone of stumbling & the rock of offence. — For in this case it may truly be said, “no to him by whom the offense cometh.” The consideration of the injury we do by to the cause of goodness & true truth, might furnish an additional motive to walk in all the ordinances & commandments of the Lord. Blamers, besides the inherent powerful motives which arise from the nature of the case. We should be under an indispensable obligation to lead good & pious lives in all godliness & honesty, even if there were nobody to observe our conduct. — But when we reflect, besides this, that the manner in which we live may a great influence on the feelings & principles of others with regard to religious ordinances, the sense of the importance of our obligation should be greatly deepened & strengthened. — Suffer me then to beseech you earnestly to live in such a manner, that men may take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus.
suffer me to ask others most seriously, whether they think, that they can completely show that they have been with Jesus, who refuse to obey his last, his dying command?

March, 1826.

At home, March 29, 1826, forenoon.
At Mr. Gannett, (Friday lecture) June 12, 1826.
At home, Friday lecture, March 32, 1826.