Sheep.

"I am the Good Shepherd, and hear my voice; and he that is accused will not follow me. But a stranger will they not hear, because they know not the voice of strangers. "I am the Good Shepherd and I know My sheep, and they know voice of Jacob."
believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, and I said unto you, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

Now what is this knowledge by which His true sheep are known?

There are many kinds of knowledge, of which only one can be the true.

There is a knowledge which even fallen angels have of Him. St. James tells us that "the devil believes and trembles." St. Luke tells that the spirit of an unclean devil cried out in Christ's presence with a loud voice saying, "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of God? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God!" And that devil came out of many, crying out and saying, "Thou art the Son of God." And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak; for they knew that He was Christ."

And others again crept out, saying, "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

This is a knowledge of the spiritual intelligence, which may be possessed by regenerate wickedness, and with direct resistance of the will against the will of Christ. Again, there is a knowledge which all the regenerate possess. The preaching of the Church, the teaching of Holy Scriptures, the public communication of facts and feelings, the tradition of popular Christianity, and all the knowledge which from childhood we unconsciously unite, give us a general knowledge of the Evangelical facts, and of the history of our Lord. But besides and before all this, there is a knowledge which is in the grace of regeneration itself. There is in every living soul born again of the Holy Ghost a gift of enlightening. The great truths and laws of God’s Kingdom are as a germ implanted in the conscience; latent, indeterminate, and undeveloped, but there in bud-like and in power. For this cause, baptism is called our illumination. It is impossible to say what it may bestow upon the spiritual capacities of the soul; what faculties and prerogatives, what graces and mental qualities.

I Pet. x. 32.
May be infused into us by our regeneration. There seems to be in those that are baptized, whether holy or unholy, an inward sense which hardly so much answers to truth as anticipates it. They know it almost before they hear it. They, as it were, forbode it before it is declared. As the whole power of Nature seems by nature to quicken in children, needing only to be wisely elicited by questions and leading thoughts; so in those who are born again, the first notions and principles of truth seem mysteriously impressed by the grace of baptism.

The knowledge of Christ, of His name and person, that He is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, born of the Virgin, crucified, buried, risen, ascended into heaven, and coming again to judge both the quick and the dead, all these things seem as a sort of second consciousness, which men may sin against, but cannot get rid of. It clings to them whatsoever they do, whereas otherwise
Go, however they deny it. The worldly, trifling, light-minded; the impure, false, and sensual; the blasphemers, scoffers, infidels—all are held in a bondage of consciences, which, like the unseen but all-seeing eye, follows them everywhere. It pierces them with fear, and, when they see, turns their hearts within them into stone. It is this that makes evil men so irritable, sullen, restless, and desperate. When they are most raging and rebellious against the truth, it is because it is then most intensely torturing them. We often think that men are beyond the power of truth, because they turn with so much wrath against it, defying and bitterly reviling it. But all this vehement emotion shows how deep the barbs have pierced, and what a struggle and convulsion of soul they are warring to tear out the truth which galls them. Their anger gives the lie to their professed unbelief. It is one of the offices of truth to reveal this wickedness of the human spirit, and their very opposition is a
testimony to the Divine character of truth itself. There is as the testimony of the Nether Spirits: 'Art Thou come to torment us before the time? We knew Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.'

This is the test of Satan that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light, because their works were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, lest his works may be reproved.

It is right doing the work of just judgment upon sinners. What some take as an evidence against their regeneration is, in fact, the proof of it. Why is the wickedness of an angel worse than that of a man? Because he holds a higher nature in unrighteousness.

It is this same passive capacity kept from great persuasions, and instructed by the teaching and worship of the Church which makes up the knowledge of most baptized people; that, I mean as like Christian lives in the main;

that is to say, the great bulk of those who are known
least and orderly within the fold of the visible Church.
It is a kind of intuitive knowledge, an illumination
which shines mildly but truly, clearly but faintly,
and in hearts that cast many shadows upon
themselves. The Christian knowledge of such persons
is little more than a history of showing events or a
theory of pure morality, or a scheme of elevated doctrine.
It is, as for their guide, their law of life, their
institute, but their knowledge of Christ is something retrospection
rather than present, of a fact rather than of a fiction,
having a relation to His life on earth rather than
His presence now. The way in which recent
Christians speak of Him is more as of a system
than as of a Lord; and His name stands rather
as a symbol of a doctrine than as a title of one
that is living and mighty; whose searching
insight is sharper than any two-edged sword
piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,
and of the joints and marrow, and is a
discerner
of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Such indeed is the view many quote and speak of as a term equivalent with Christianity. It is a Divine Person, not an abstract name; One to whom we are all clad bare. Neither is there any invisible creature that is not manifest in His sight; for all things are naked and open unto the eyes thereof; and our thoughts are as open to Him as anything else is. 

Thus, there, rests the knowledge of which the Good Shepherd spoke when He said, "I know mine own, and are known of mine." It must be something of a deeper kind, something more loving and personal. It is plainly, therefore, such a knowledge as He has of us. It is such mutual consciousness of which we speak when we say that we know any person as our friend. We do not mean that we know him by name, for many strangers we know by name; many whom we have never seen, or further care to know; neither do we mean only that one
Know all about him, that is to say, who he is, and whence, of what lineage, or from what land, or what has been his history, his acts and words, and the like; for in this way we may be said to know many who are not known to us, and with those we have nothing to do. When we say we know any one as our friend we mean that we know not only who he is, but what, or as we say, his character, that he is true affectionate, gentle, forgiving, liberal, patient, self-denying, and still more, that he has been, and is, all this to ourselves, that we have made trial of him, and have cause to know his character as a reality, of which we have, as it were, tasted, by often meeting with him, seeing him at all times, under all circumstances and in all changes, familiarly conversing with him, doing service to him, ourselves receiving from him in turn tokens of love and goodness.

It is in this way we knew our friends; what
They are, what they seem, with and in all cases, far from equal, what every look, tone, and word signifies. It is a knowledge not in the understanding, so much as in the heart, in the perceptions of feeling, affection, and sympathy, by which we are drawn towards them, and grow to them, love them, chose them out from all others, as our advisers, guides, companions, live with them, and live for them; trust in them, with a feeling that we are safe in their hands, and at rest in their hearts; that they love us and would do anything for our good; and though we be often away from them, and alone, and at times seldom see them, yet we are as if always with them — always happy in the thought of them, know that they are always the same to us, and knowing besides, both where and how we shall find them if we desire or need. This is the knowledge of friendship deep.
of love. It is something living and personal, springing out of the whole of our inward nature, and filling all our powers and affections.

And such is the knowledge the true sheep have of the Good Shepherd. "I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me." As He knows us through and through — all that we have been and are, all that we desire and need, hope and fear, do and leave undone, all our thoughts, affections, purposes, all our secret acts, all our hidden life, which is hid with Christ in God — so do His true sheep know Jesus — His love, care, tenderness, mercy, meekness, compassion, patience, gentleness, all His forecasting and prudent watchfulness, His indulgent and faithful condescension. They have learned it by the grace of regeneration, by the illumination of their spiritual birth, by the light of His holy Gospels, by acts of contemplation, by direct approach to Jesus in prayer, by inaudible Communion in the holy Eucharist, by His particular
And detailed guidance, by His providential discipline from childhood, all along the path of life. It is the knowledge of heart with heart, soul with soul, spirit with spirit; a sense of presence and companionship. So that when most alone, we are perceptibly least alone; when most solitary, we are least forgotten. It is a consciousness of guidance, help, and protection, so that all we do or say, and all that befalls us is shared with Him. It fills us with a certainty that in every part of our lot, in all its details, there is some purpose, some indication of His design and will. Some discipline or strict medicine for us; some hid treasure, if we will purchase it; some secret of peace, if we will only make it our own.

Now, if this be the knowledge which His sheep have of Him, it is plain that a great part of baptized men do not so reckon Christ. The multitude of the visible Church live in this world...
forgotten faith of God and Shepherd; remembering them only in direct acts of religion, which are short and few in the midst of a busy earthly life of buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, trading and toiling late and early.

With the very best among us, how sadly true is this. Who is not backward in this one science which only it is needful for us to learn? It is hard to be feared that some persons of learned devotion, live on very strange to Him, and for off, running Him rather in the understanding and imagination, rather picturing Him upon their fancy in the garb and parable of the Good Shepherd, than realising with every true and strict spirit, all consciousness the truth and blessedness of His pastoral love and care.

Let us, then, consider in what way we may attain this knowledge, which is not of the understanding, but of the heart; not of the mere intellect, but in the consciousness of the soul.
I. First, it must be by following Him. "My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me." By living such a life as He lived, abiding in Jesus is the power of knowing Jesus. Nay, rather it is knowledge itself; there is no other. It cannot be by the knowledge of the eye, or ear, nor by the knowledge of imagination or thoughts, but by the knowledge of the will, and of the spiritual reason instructed by the experience of faith. It is by likeness that we know, and by sympathy that we learn. And we know that we have known Jesus, if we keep His Commandments. So that we know, if we keep His Commandments; that is, if we keep the Commandments of God perfect, that we are in Jesus. So that we are abideth in Jesus; ought himself also to walk Jesus as He walked." If one say that we have fellowship with Jesus, and walk in His steps, He is, and
do not the truth. "I have fellowship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost."

And he that walketh in darkness, and knoweth not where he goeth, abideth in unrighteousness. And he that saith he abideth in the light, and hateth his brother, abideth in darkness until the day dawneth, and the day star ariseth in the heart of him that loveth him. And he that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no cause of reproach in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and knoweth not what he saith in the darkness, because darkness is his friend. And no man knoweth how to come to him, or who it is that sitteth in darkness, and who it is that walketh in the darkness. But that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; For the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew to you the eternal life. This then is the testimony of God, and this thing which we declare unto you, that we have seen, and that we have heard, and that we have handled, and are sure in it. I write not unto you, because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that ye might believe on the name of the Son of God. And these things write we unto you, that our joy may be fulfilled. And this is the testimony of God, that we believe and know that his Son Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life. For we have all received of him grace upon grace.
planned to learn, we put off to the last, that which needs most grace to know, we take for our alphabet. How long shall we go on professing to judge of His doctrine, before we have begun to learn the imitation of His life? Surely the plainest and first lesson is to follow His steps. This is the first work of our probation, the first condition of His guidance. If we would only take the Sermon on the Mount, and read it, not as the world has paraphrased it, but as He wrote it; if we would only fulfill it, not as men dispense with it, but as He laid it upon earth; we should begin to think somewhat of those deeper perceptions of His love, tenderness, and compassion, which are the peace of His elect. Such obedience has a searching and powerful virtue to quicken and make alive the faculties of our conscience. And it would change our whole view of the Christian life, from a solitary observance of an abstract rule of duty,
into an abiding relation towards a personal and living Master. It would make men to feel that not only the general and confused mass of life shall, in the end of time, be brought into judgment, but that every deed and thought, every motive of the heart and indication of the will are full of pregnant meaning.

If obedience or of disobedience, of loyalty or betrayal, to the person of our Lord, that our every-day life is better in the track of His footsteps or gone astray from the one only path that leads to life.

This is the first step to a true knowledge of Christ.

2. And, further than this: there are peculiar faculties of the heart which must be awakened, if we would know Him as He knows us. There can be no true obedience without the discipline of habitual devotion. By this is signified something far deeper than the habit of prayer which we commonly maintain. As obedience to Christ impresses us with a sense of His personality, so devotion awakens a perception of His presence. And here—
Easy it is to pray for years with little or no sense of His presence — with a dead, cold, lifeless form of the necessary presence of God that must be here, because He is God, for God is everywhere — we all unhappily know. Half our difficulties in prayer, half the incoherence of the act, the incoherence of the posture, the wandering of our hearts, the distraction of our thoughts, may be traced to this one great lack, the lack of a deep consciousness of His personal presence. And therefore it is our prayers gain for us so little light, so scant an insight into His mind and perfection, so clouded a knowledge of His love and will towards us. If we truly knew Him, we should delight to speak with Him, to lie near and dwell in His presence. We should go from our prayers with the low heart the Lord bring to them. And should we lay up all day long our thoughts, cares, forebodings, to lighten our hearts at night by pouring them...
out before thee. It should then somewhat understand the words, "Lesting all your care upon him, for
his care of you." And thus would open to us the
words of Holy Scripture, which to most are so
undeveloped, and perplexing. Perhaps there is no book
that is so much read, and so little really under
stood, because so little dwelt upon. And why, but
because Meditation implies the intensity and affection
of a devout mind? Prayer and Meditation are
so nearly one that we may pass and return from
the one to the other, almost without perceptible tran
sition. Not that they are indeed one and the
same; but Meditation is the food of Prayer, and
Prayer is the life of Meditation, and they are therefore
indissoluble. It is for want of these deeper and
more steadfast thoughts that we go on through life
reading Holy Scripture without piercing beneath
the letter. And this cursory and superficial
habit of mind keeps up our insensibility of the
presence of Christ.
Moreover, it is the sacred unexperienced and unawakened temper of heart that leads men to live in a habitual neglect of the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood. They have no sense of hunger and thirst, no consciousness of any inward craving, no need felt of taste. no perception of the constraining love of His who, in the night of His betrayal, left that command to prove the faith and love of His Church for ever. Now a Christian in this toying unawakened state, cannot know His worth the Knowledge of His true Sheep. There is nothing which deadens and stifles the spiritual affections. Cold devotions will make a man's heart hard. Let him profess what he will, let him in the intellect know what he may, into the true Knowledge which comes by love and likeness to Christ, he cannot enter. A life of devotion that is of frequent and perfect worship of our Divine Lord is awakener and tendler the whole
inward heart that there is nothing more real
and blessed to a Christian man to escape
from all the world into the presence of the Holy
and true Shepherd. And this is tested above
all in the mystery of the Holy Communion. The
eyes of many are, by their own covert of insight,
long held, so as not to know Jesus, until the
Nature Himself known in the breaking of bread.
Even though all along their intellect have been
opened to understand the Scriptures, there is a
knowledge still higher, still more personal
and intimate, which they cannot have till:
He manifests Himself in that blessed Sacrament.
There is a marked and visible distinction between
those who knew Jesus by the intellect, and those
who knew Jesus by the heart; those who have
sought to know Jesus by mere reading, and those who
have sought to know Jesus by Communion. The Holy
Communion is the very life,bread of God true harden.
It is the very Gospel, not written with pen and ink,
But by a pierced hand, and in the blood of the Good Shepherd. There even the inculcative Christian, the teachest of His flock, learns what doctors in the temple neither teach nor know. A life of devout and frequent communion is the true and infallible way to a personal knowledge and experience of His love. What things He may make known to us in that holy mystery, each will understand. They are not to be spoken or known by hearsay, but He has promised an ineffable fellowship to them that devoutly open their hearts to receive His word. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

3. And lastly, this true knowledge of Him is not a transitory state of feeling. Out of obedience and devotion arises an habitual faith, which makes Him, though invisible, yet perceptibly a part of all our life. Without this we shall but see great risks.

Rev III. 20.
of attending ourselves. This strong and sustained consciousness of His presence makes all things within
the soul more real than those we see. The Visible
Head of the Church rising and glorified; the
mystical body united in ours by the Holy Ghost;
the Good Shepherd leading His own fold on the
Everlasting hills; the familiar image of His
loving Countenance; - all these, all day long, in
the midst of work and in their hour of rest, at
home and abroad, among men or in solitude, are
spread before the sight of hearts that need Him
by love.
Let us then seek, in this way, to know Him.
He will guide us in a sure path, though it be
a rough one, though shadows hang upon it,
yet He will be with us. If we be His true flesh,
we shall lack nothing. He will bring us home
at last. Through much trial it may be, and
weariness, in much fear and failing of heart,
in much sadness and loneliness, in griefs that
The world never knows, and under burdens that
the nearest never suspect. Yet He will suffice
for all. By His eye or by His voice He will
guide us, if we be dextrous and gentle; by His
staff and by His rod, if we wander or are
wasteful; among hosts, and by all means, He
will bring us to His rest. Not one shall perish,
except we be steadfastly bent upon our own portion.
Blessed are they that love to know Him. They alone
are truly happy; they alone have that which
will fill all hearts, stay all desires, and
make even the broken spirit to be glad. He
is enough: there, a strength to the poor, a
strength to the needy in His distress, a refuge
from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when
the blast of the terrible wind is as a fire spread
for a wall. She is an healing place from the
sound, and a haven from the tempest, as even
brought
of water in a dry place, and the shade of a
mountain in a burning land. Who is parched

1) Isaiah xxx. 4; xxxiv. 2.
And weary of the glare and thought of this dazzling and dangerous world? "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden and burdened, and I will refresh you." Say: Even so, Lord, make me to know Thee. It is the unreasonable, the self-love of my heart, that will not know Thee. Take away all these which hide Thee from me. The veil is not upon Thee, but upon my heart. "Lord that I may receive Thy Sight." For "What have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." What have I in heaven but Thee; and beside Thee what do I desire upon earth?"