

EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS  
ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,  
And many Explanatory Notes.

BY THE REV. J. C. RYLE, B. A.,

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD,  
VICAR OF STRADBROKE, SUFFOLK;  
*Author of "Home Truths," etc.*

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# EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS

## ON THE GOSPELS.

### JOHN VII. 1—13.

1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.	8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.
2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.	9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode <i>still</i> in Galilee.
3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.	10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.
4 For <i>there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.</i>	11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?
5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.	12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.
6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.	13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.
7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.	

THE chapter we now begin is divided from the preceding one by a wide interval of time. The many miracles which our Lord wrought, while He “walked in Galilee,” are passed over by St. John in comparative silence. The events which he was specially inspired to record are those which took place in or near Jerusalem.

We should observe in this passage *the desperate hardness and unbelief of human nature*. We are told that even our Lord’s “brethren did not believe in Him.” Holy and harmless and blameless as He was in life, some of his nearest relatives, according to the flesh, did not receive Him as the Messiah. It was bad enough that His own people, “the Jews sought to kill Him.” But it was even worse that “His brethren did not believe.”

That great Scriptural doctrine, man’s need of preventing and converting grace, stands out here, as if written with a sunbeam. It becomes all who question that doctrine to look at this passage and consider. Let them observe that seeing Christ’s miracles, hearing Christ’s teaching, living in Christ’s own company, were not enough to make men believers. The mere possession of spiritual privileges never yet made any one a Christian. All is useless without the effectual and applying work of God the Holy Ghost. No wonder that our Lord said in another place, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” (John vi. 44.)

The true servants of Christ in every age will do well to remember this. They are often surprised and troubled to find that in religion they stand alone. They are apt to fancy that it must be their own fault that all around them are not converted like themselves. They are ready to blame themselves because their families remain worldly and unbelieving. But let them look at the verse before us. In our Lord Jesus Christ there was no fault either in temper, word, or deed. Yet even Christ's own "brethren did not believe in Him."

Our blessed Master has truly learned by experience how to sympathize with all his people who stand alone. This is a thought "full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort." He knows the heart of every isolated believer, and can be touched with the feeling of his trials. He has drunk this bitter cup. He has passed through this fire. Let all who are fainting and cast down, because brothers and sisters despise their religion, turn to Christ for comfort, and pour out their hearts before Him. He "has suffered Himself being tempted" in this way, and He can help as well as feel. (Heb. ii. 18.)

We should observe, for another thing, in this passage, *one principal reason why many hate Christ*. We are told that our Lord said to His unbelieving brethren "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."

These words reveal one of those secret principles which influence men in their treatment of religion. They help to explain that deadly enmity with which many during our Lord's earthly ministry regarded Him and His Gospel. It was not so much the high doctrines which He preached, as the high standard of practice which He proclaimed, which gave offence. It was not even His claim to be received the Messiah which men disliked so much, as His witness against the wickedness of their lives. In short, they could have tolerated His opinions if He would only have spared their sins.

The principle, we may be sure, is one of universal application. It is at work now just as much as it was eighteen hundred years ago. The real cause of many people's dislike to the Gospel is the holiness of living which it demands. Teach abstract doctrines only, and few will find any fault. Denounce the fashionable sins of the day, and call on men to repent and walk consistently with God, and thousands at once will be offended. The true reason why many profess to be infidels, and abuse Christianity, is the witness that Christianity bears against their own bad lives.—Like Ahab, they hate it, "because it does not prophesy good concerning them, but evil." (1 Kings xxii. 8.)

We should observe, lastly, in this passage, *the strange variety of opinions about Christ, which were current from the beginning*. We are told that "there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people." The words which old Simeon had spoken thirty years before were here accomplished in a striking manner. He had said to our Lord's mother, "This child is set for the fall and rising again of

many in Israel: and for a sign which shall be spoken against;— that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” (Luke ii. 34, 35.) In the diversities of opinion about our Lord which arose among the Jews, we see the good old man’s saying fulfilled.

In the face of such a passage as this, the endless differences and divisions about religion, which we see on all sides, in the present day, ought never to surprise us. The open hatred of some toward Christ,—the carping, fault-finding, prejudiced spirit of others,—the bold confession of the few faithful ones,—the timid, man-fearing temper of the many faithless ones,—the unceasing war of words and strife of tongues with which the Churches of Christ are so sadly familiar,—are only modern symptoms of an old disease. Such is the corruption of human nature, that Christ is the cause of division among men, wherever He is preached. So long as the world stands, some, when they hear of Him, will love, and some will hate,—some will believe, and some will believe not. That deep, prophetic saying of His will be continually verified: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword.” (Matt. x. 34.)

What think we of Christ ourselves? This is the one question with which we have to do. Let us never be ashamed to be of that little number who believe on Him, hear His voice, follow Him, and confess Him before men. While others waste their time in vain jangling and unprofitable controversy, let us take up the cross and give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. The children of this world may hate us, as it hated our Master, because our religion is a standing witness against them. But the last day will show that we chose wisely, lost nothing, and gained a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

#### NOTES. JOHN VII. 1-13.

1.—[*After these things Jesus walked in Galilee.*] These words cover a space of about six months. The events of the last chapter took place about the time of the Passover, in spring. The events of the chapter we now begin took place in autumn, at the feast of tabernacles. What our Lord did in Galilee during these six months St. John passes over in silence. His Gospel, with the exception of the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 6th chapters, is almost entirely taken up with our Lord’s doings in or near Jerusalem. He was, at this period of His ministry, entirely absent from Jerusalem, it would seem, for about eighteen months.

The expression “walked” must be taken figuratively. It simply means, that our Lord “lived, dwelt, sojourned, was going to and fro, and passing his time.” The Greek word is in the imperfect tense, and denotes a continuous action or habit.

[*He would not walk in Jewry.*] This would be more literally rendered, “He did not will, or desire, or choose to walk.” The use of the word “Jewry” by our translators is to be regretted, and seems uncalled for. The Greek word so rendered is the same that is rendered “Judæa” in the third verse.

[*Because the Jews sought to kill him.*] By “the Jews” we must understand the leaders and rulers of the Jewish nation. There is no proof that the lower orders felt the same enmity that the upper classes did against our Lord. “The common people heard Him gladly.” (Mark xii. 37.) The depth

and bitterness of this hatred against Christ may be seen in their wish to kill Him. It seems to have been a settled plan with the Jews from the time when the miracle was wrought at the pool of Bethesda. (John v. 16, 1a.) They could neither answer Him, nor silence Him, nor prevent the common people listening to Him. They resolved therefore to kill Him.

Our Lord's example recorded in this verse shows clearly that Christians are not meant to court martyrdom, or wilfully expose themselves to certain death, under the idea that it is their duty. Many primitive martyrs seem not to have understood this.

2.—[*Jews' feast of tabernacles.*] This expression, like many others in St. John's Gospel, shows that he wrote for the Gentiles, who knew little of Jewish customs and feasts. Hence "the Jews' feast."

The feast of tabernacles was one of the three great feasts in the Jewish year, when, by God's command, all pious Jews went up to Jerusalem. (Deut. xvi. 16.) It was held in autumn, after the completion of the harvest, in the seventh month. The time of the Jewish "Passover" answered to our Easter, "Pentecost" to our Whitsuntide, and "Tabernacles" to our Michaelmas. The seventh month was remarkable for the number of ordinances which the law of Moses required the Jews to observe. On the first day was the feast of trumpets, on the tenth day was the day of atonement, and on the fifteenth began the feast of tabernacles.

There are several things peculiar to the feast of tabernacles, which ought to be remembered in reading this chapter, because some of them throw light on it. (1) It was an occasion of special mirth and rejoicing with the Jews. They were ordered to dwell in booths, or tabernacles made of branches, for seven days, in remembrance of their dwelling in temporary booths when they came out of Egypt, and to "rejoice before the Lord." (Lev. xxiii. 39-43.) (2) It was a feast at which more sacrifices were offered up than at any of the Jewish feasts. (Num. xxix. 12-34.) (3) It was a feast at which, once every seven years, the law was publicly read to the whole people. (4) It was a feast at which water was drawn from the pool of Siloam every day with great solemnity, and poured upon the altar, while the people sung the 12th chapter of Isaiah. (5) It was a feast which followed close on the great day of atonement, when the peculiarly typical ordinances of the scapegoat, and the High Priest going once in the year into the holy of holies, were fresh in the minds of the people. These things should be carefully noted, and remembered, as we read through the chapter.

Josephus calls the feast of tabernacles "the holiest and greatest feast of the Jews." It was a Rabbinical saying, "The man who has not seen these festivities does not know what a jubilee is."

Whether this very year, when our Lord went to the feast of tabernacles, was the precise seventh year in which the public reading of the law took place, we cannot now know for certainty. Whether the custom of dwelling in booths was literally kept up when our Lord was on earth may also be matter of question. It certainly had not been observed for many years in the days of Nehemiah. (Neh. viii. 17.) But that this feast was kept up with extraordinary festivity and rejoicing in the latter days of the Jewish dispensation is testified by all Jewish writers.

It was in the middle of this public rejoicing, and the concourse of Jews from every part of the world, that the things recorded in this chapter took place. It stands to reason that all that our Lord said and did this week must have been more than usually public, and would necessarily attract great attention.

Wordsworth, Burgon, and others, consider the feast of tabernacles to have been a very significant type of our Lord's incarnation. I confess that I am unable to see it. If the feast was typical at all, which is not certain, I venture the conjecture, that it was meant to be a type of our Lord's second advent. My reasons are these:—

(a) It was the last in order of the Jewish feasts every year, and formed the completion of the annual routine of Mosaic ordinances. It wound up all.

(b) It was kept at the end of harvest, when the year's work was done, and the fruits were all gathered in.

(c) It was an occasion of special rejoicing and festivity more than any of the feasts. The dwelling in booths seems to have been a circumstance of the feast less essential than the rejoicing.

(d) It followed immediately after the feast of trumpets, and the day of atonement. On that day the High Priest went into the holy of holies and then came out to bless the people. (See Isa. xxvii. 13; 1 Thes. iv. 16.)

(e) It followed immediately after the jubilee every fiftieth year. That jubilee, and proclamation of liberty to all, was in the seventh month.

(f) It is that special feast which, after the Jews are restored and Jerusalem rebuilt, the nation are yet to keep in the future kingdom of Christ. (Zech. xiv. 16.)

I venture this conjecture with much diffidence; but I think it deserves consideration. In the six points I have mentioned, I see much more of the second advent than of the first. To my eyes the feast of passover was a type of Christ crucified;—the feast of pentecost, of Christ sending forth the Holy Ghost in this dispensation;—the feast of tabernacles, of Christ coming again to gather His people in one joyous company, to reap the harvest of the earth, to wind up this dispensation, to come forth and bless His people, and to proclaim a jubilee to all the earth.

- 3.—[*His brethren.*] Who these “brethren” were is a matter of dispute. Some think, as Alford, Stier, and others, that they were literally our Lord’s own brethren, and the children of Mary by Joseph, born after our Lord’s birth. (See Psalm lxix. 8.)—Some think, as Theophylact and others, that they were the children of Joseph by a former marriage, and brought up by Mary under the same roof with our Lord.—Others think, as Augustine, Zwingle, Masculus, and Bengel, that the word “brethren” does not necessarily mean more than cousins or kinsmen. (See 1 Chron. xxiii. 22.) This is the most probable opinion. I take these “brethren” to have been relatives and kinsmen of Joseph and Mary, living at Nazareth, or Capernaum, or elsewhere in Galilee,—who naturally observed all our Lord’s doings with interest and curiosity, but at present did not believe on Him. To suppose, as some do, that these brethren were some of our Lord’s Apostles, is to my mind a most improbable theory, and flatly contrary to the 5th verse of this chapter.

If Mary really had sons after the birth of our Lord, it certainly seems strange that our Lord should commend her to the care of John, on the cross, and not to her own sons, His half-brethren. That at the latter part of His ministry He had some “brethren” who were not Apostles, but believed, is clear from Acts i. 14. But whether they were the “brethren” of the text before us, we have no means of ascertaining.

[*Depart—go into Judæa, that thy disciples, etc.*] This recommendation, as well as the next verse, looks like the advice of men who as yet were not convinced of our Lord’s Messiahship. The expression “that Thy disciples may see,” seems also to indicate that the speakers were not yet of the number of our Lord’s disciples. The language is that of bystanders looking on, waiting to see how the question is to be settled, before they make up their own minds. It is as though they said,—“Make haste, rally a party round Thee, show some public proof that Thou art the Christ, and gather adherents.” The “works” here mentioned must evidently mean miracles. This speech seems to imply that our Lord had a party of disciples in Judæa and at Jerusalem. Many, it should be remembered, “believed on Him” at the first passover he attended. (John ii. 23.)

- 4.—[*For there is no man, etc.*] This sentence is a kind of proverbial saying. Every one knows that if a man seeks to be known openly, it is no use to do his work secretly.

[*If thou do these things, show thyself to the world.*] There seems to be a latent sneer about this sentence. “If Thou really art doing miracles to prove Thyself the Messiah, do not continue to hide Thyself here in Galilee. Go up to Jerusalem, and do miracles there.” That the speakers said this from an honest zeal for God’s glory, and a sincere desire to have our Lord known by others as well as themselves, is a view that I cannot think probable.

Some think that the words "If Thou doest," mean "since Thou doest," and see a parallel in Coloss. iii. 1,—where "if" does not imply any doubt whether the Colossians were "risen with Christ." Lampe thinks it means, "if Thou really and truly, not illusively, doest miracles."

The false standard of an unconverted man is very manifest in this and the preceding verse. Such an one has no idea of waiting for man's praise and favour, and being content without it if it does not come. He thinks that a religion should have the praise of the world, and labour to get it. The man of God remembers that true religion does not "cry, nor strive," nor court publicity.

5.—[*For neither...brethren believe.*] These words appear to me to admit of only one meaning. They mean, that these brethren of our Lord had at present no faith at all. They did not yet believe that Jesus was the Christ. They had no grace. They were not converted. The idea of some that the words mean, "His brethren did not fully and entirely believe in Him," seems to me utterly without foundation. It cannot, moreover, be reconciled with the language that soon follows,—“The world cannot hate you,” etc. Such language cannot be applied to disciples. The whole teaching of the Bible shows clearly that it was quite possible to be a relative of Christ according to the flesh and yet not be converted. He that does God's will is as dear to Christ as "brother, or sister, or mother." (Mark iii. 35.)

How frequently even the natural brethren of God's most eminent saints have been graceless and ungodly, every Bible reader must often have observed. The cases of the brothers of Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and David will occur to our minds.

We should learn from a verse like this the desperate hardness of man's heart, the absolute necessity of grace to make any one a disciple, and the extreme danger of familiarity with high spiritual privileges. We should remember too, that a man may be a truly good and holy man, and yet not have converted relatives. No one can give grace to his own family. "A prophet is not without honour but in his own country." (Mark vi. 4.) Even our Lord was not believed by all around Him. He can truly sympathize with all His people who are in a similar position.

6.—[*My time is not yet come.*] These words must mean, that our Lord did everything during His earthly ministry according to a preordained plan, and that he could take no step except in harmony with that plan. He doubtless spoke with a Divine depth of meaning that none but Himself could comprehend, and that must have been unintelligible at the time to His "brethren." To them His words would probably convey nothing more than the idea that for some reason or other He did not think the present a favourable opportunity for going to Jerusalem.

[*Your time is always ready.*] This sentence must mean, that to unconverted people, like our Lord's brethren, it could make no matter what time they went up. All times were alike. They would excite no enmity, and run no risk.

A Christian not possessing foreknowledge can only pray for guidance and direction as to the steps of his life, and the ways and times of his actions; and, having prayed, then make the best use of his judgment, trusting that a faithful God will not let him make mistakes.

7.—[*The world cannot hate you.*] These words surely settle the question as to the present state of our Lord's brethren. They were yet unconverted. Our Lord says, in another place,—“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.” (John xv. 19.)

[*Me it hateth because I testify...works...evil .*] The true reason of this enmity of many of the Jews against Christ is here distinctly indicated. It was not merely His claims to be received as the Messiah. It was not merely the high and spiritual doctrine He preached. It was rather His constant testimony against the sinful lives and wicked practices of the many in His day. That adultery, covetousness, and hypocrisy were rife and common among the leading Pharisees, is evident from many expressions in the Gospels. It was our Lord's witness against these darling sins that enraged His enemies.

The wickedness of human nature is painfully shown in this sentence. Christ was “hated.” It is an utter delusion to suppose that there is any innate response to perfect moral purity, or any innate admiration of “the true, the pure, the just, the kind, the good, and the beautiful,” in the heart of man. God gave man, 1800 years ago, a perfect pattern of purity, truth, and love, in the person of our Lord while He was upon earth. And yet we are told He was “hated.”

True Christians must never be surprised if they are “hated” like their Lord. “The disciple is not above his Master.”—“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.” (Matt. x. 24; 1 John iii. 13.) In fact the more like Christ they are, the more likely to be “hated.” Moreover, they must not be cast down and make themselves miserable, under the idea that it is their inconsistencies the world hates, and that if they were more consistent and lovely in life the world would like them better. This is a complete mistake, and a common delusion of the devil. What the world hates about Christians is neither their doctrines, nor their faults, but their holy lives. Their lives are a constant testimony against the world, which makes the men of the world feel uncomfortable, and therefore the world hates them.

Let us note, that unpopularity among men is no proof that a Christian is wrong, either in faith or practice. The common notion of many, that it is a good sign of a person’s character to be well-spoken of by everybody, is a great error. When we see how our Lord was regarded by the wicked and worldly of His day, we may well conclude that it is a very poor compliment to be told that we are liked by everybody. There can surely be very little “witness” about our lives if even the wicked like us. “Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.” (Luke vi. 26.) That sentence is too much forgotten.

Erasmus used to say, that Luther might have had an easy life, if he had not touched the Pope’s crown, and the monks’ bellies.

Bengel observes, “Those who please all men, at all times, ought deservedly to look on themselves with suspicion.”

- 8.—[*Go ye up...this feast.*] These words can hardly be called a command. They rather mean, “If you wish to go at once, go, and do not tarry for Me.”

[*I go not up yet...my time is not yet full come.*] Here the reason already given and commented on is repeated. Our Lord did not say He would not go to the feast, but not yet. There was “a time” for all His actions, and every step of His ministry, and that time had not yet fully arrived; or, as the Greek literally means, was not “fulfilled.” True Christians should remember that, like their Master on this occasion, they and worldly men cannot well work and act and move together. They will often find it so. Their principles are different. Their reasons and motives of action are different. They will often find that “two cannot walk together except they are agreed.”

It seems strange that any reasonable person should see difficulty in this passage, as if it threw a colour of doubt on our Lord’s veracity. Yet Augustine has a Homily on the subject in defence of our Lord. Surely the simplest and most natural view is, that our Lord meant, “I am not going up yet;” and “am not going, at any rate, in the public caravan with yourselves.” This is Chrysostom’s view and Theophylact’s. At an early period Porphyry tried to fasten on our Lord the charge of inconstancy of purpose, out of this passage. An enemy of Christianity must be sadly at a loss for objections, if he can find no better than one founded on this place.

- 9.—[*When...said these words...abode...Galilee.*] This means, that He staid at the place where this conversation took place, while His brethren started on their journey to Jerusalem. What the place in Galilee was we are not told.

- 10.—[*But when...brethren...gone up, then went he.*] We are not told what interval there was between our Lord’s setting off for Jerusalem, and His brethren’s departure. The words before us would seem to indicate that He set off very soon after them. One reason perhaps for our Lord not going with them was His desire to avoid being made a public show by His relatives. They had very likely

a carnal desire to call attention to Him and to rally a party of adherents round Him, for their own worldly ends. To avoid affording any opportunity for this, our Lord would not go in their company. He had not forgotten, no doubt, that in Galilee there was a party who once would fain have “taken Him by force to make Him a king.” (John vi. 15.) He wished to keep clear of that party.

[*Not openly, but...in secret.*] This probably only means that our Lord did not go in the caravan, or large company of His kinsmen, who according to custom went up together from Galilee, but in a more private manner.—How large the caravans or gatherings of fellow-travellers going up to the three great feasts must have been, we may easily see from the account of our Lord being not missed by Mary and Joseph at first, when He went up to Jerusalem with them at the age of twelve. “Supposing Him to have been *in their company*, they went a day’s journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.” (Luke ii. 44.)—Our Lord never sought publicity but once, and that was when He entered Jerusalem, at the last passover, just before His crucifixion. Then He wanted to draw attention to the great sacrifice He was about to offer up on the cross. The contrast between His conduct on that occasion and the present one is very remarkable.

When it says that “He went in secret,” it does not necessarily mean that He went alone. There is no reason to suppose that His own chosen Apostles had gone without Him. It only means that He did not go up publicly in the company of all “His kinsfolk and acquaintance” from Galilee.

11—[*Then the Jews sought Him.*] If, as usually is the case in St. John, the “Jews” here mean the rulers and Pharisees, there can be little doubt that they sought Jesus in order to kill Him, as the first verse tells us they wished to do. They naturally concluded that, like all devout Jews, He would come up to Jerusalem to the feast.

[*Where is He?*] Here, as in many other places, the Greek word rendered “he” implies dislike and contempt. It is as if they said, “that fellow,” (See Matt. xxvii. 63.) “that deceiver.”

12.—[*There was much murmuring.*] As a general rule the Greek word rendered “murmuring” means an undercurrent of discontent or dislike, not openly expressed. (Thus, Acts vi. 1.) But here, and at ver. 32, it does not seem to mean more than muttering, and private conversation, implying only that people were not satisfied about our Lord, and privately talked much to one another about Him.

[*The people.*] This word in the Greek is in the plural, and evidently means the multitude, or crowd of persons who were gathered at Jerusalem on account of the feast, in contradistinction to the rulers who are called “the Jews.”

[*Some...good man: others...deceiveth...people.*] These expressions show the feeling of the common people towards our Lord, and are doubtless indicative of the classes from which the two opinions came. The class of simple-minded, true-hearted Israelites, who had sufficient independence to think for themselves, would say of our Lord, “He is a good man.” So also would the Galileans, probably, who had seen and heard most of our Lord’s ministry. On the other hand, the class of carnal Jews who thought nothing of true religion, and were led like a mob at the beck of the priests and Pharisees, would probably take their cue from the Rulers, and say, “He deceiveth the people,” simply because they were told so. Such, probably, was the feeling of the lower orders at Jerusalem.

Let it be noted that Christ is, and always has been, the cause of division of opinion, whenever He has come or has been preached. To some He is a saviour of “life,” and to others of “death.” (2 Cor. ii. 16.) He draws out the true character of mankind. They either like Him or dislike Him. Strife and conflict of opinion are the certain consequences of the Gospel really coming among men with power. The fault is not in the Gospel but in human nature. Stillness and quiet are signs not of life but of death. The sun calls forth miasma and malaria from the swamps it shines upon; but the fault is not in the sun, but in the land. The very same rays call forth fertility and abundance from the cornfield.

13.—[*Howbeit no man...openly...fear...Jews.*] This expression of course applies specially to those who favoured our Lord. Those who hated Him would not fear to say so openly. This verse shows the length to which the enmity of the Jewish rulers against our Lord had already gone. It was a notorious fact among the lower orders that the heads of the nation hated Jesus, and that it was a dangerous thing to talk favourably of Him, or to manifest any interest in Him. The fear of man is a powerful principle among most people. Rulers have little idea how many things are secretly talked of sometimes among subjects, and kept back from them. Two hundred years ago, the Stuarts could persecute all open and out-spoken favourers of the English Puritans; but they could not prevent the lower orders secretly talking of them, and imbibing prejudices in their favour.