

# EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,

*And Many Explanatory Notes.*

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LUXE X. 21–24.

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| 21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. | Son, and <i>he</i> to whom the Son will reveal <i>him</i> .   |
| 22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the   | 23 And he turned him unto <i>his</i> disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:  |
|   | 24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen <i>them</i> ; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard <i>them</i> . |

THERE are five remarkable points in these verses which deserve the attention of all who wish to be well-instructed Christians. Let us take each of the five in order.

We should observe, in the first place, *the one instance on record of our Lord Jesus Christ rejoicing*. We read, that in that hour “Jesus rejoiced in spirit.” Three times we are told in the Gospels that our Lord Jesus Christ wept. Once only we are told that He rejoiced.

And what was the cause of our Lord’s joy? It was the conversion of souls. It was the reception of the Gospel by the weak and lowly among the Jews, when the “wise and prudent” on every side were rejecting it. Our blessed Lord no doubt saw much in this world to grieve Him. He saw the obstinate blindness and unbelief of the vast majority of those among whom He ministered. But when He saw a few poor men and women receiving the glad tidings of salvation, even His heart was refreshed. He saw it and was glad.

Let all Christians mark our Lord’s conduct in this matter, and follow His example. They find little in the world to cheer them. They see around them a vast multitude walking in the broad way that leadeth to destruction, careless, hardened, and unbelieving. They see a few here and there, and only a few, who believe to the saving of their souls. But let this sight make them thankful. Let them bless God that any at all are converted, and that any at all believe. We do not realize the sinfulness of man sufficiently. We do not reflect that the conversion of any soul is a miracle,—a miracle as great as the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Let us learn from our blessed Lord to be more thankful. There is always some blue sky as well as black clouds, if we will only look for it. Though only a few are saved, we should find reason for rejoicing. It is only through free grace and undeserved mercy that any are saved at all.

We should observe, secondly, *the sovereignty of God in saving sinners*. We read that our Lord says to His Father, “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.” The meaning of these words is clear and plain. There are some from whom salvation is “hidden.” There are others to whom salvation is “revealed.”

The truth here laid down is deep and mysterious. “It is high as heaven: what can we do? It is deep as hell: what do we know?” Why some around us are converted and others remain dead in sins, we cannot possibly explain. Why England is a Christian country and China buried in idolatry, is a problem we cannot solve. We only know that it is so. We can only acknowledge that the words of our Lord Jesus Christ supply the only answer that mortal man ought to give: “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

Let us, however, never forget that God’s sovereignty does not destroy man’s responsibility. That same God who does all things according to the counsel of His own will, always addresses us as accountable creatures,—as beings whose blood will be on their own heads if they are lost. We cannot understand all His dealings. We see in part and know in part. Let us rest in the conviction that the judgment day will clear up all, and that the Judge of all will not fail to do right. In the mean time, let us remember that God’s offers of salvation are free, wide, broad, and unlimited, and that “in our doings that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.” (*17th Article of Church of England.*) If truth is hidden from some and revealed to others, we may be sure that there is a cause.

We should observe, thirdly, *the character of those from whom truth is hidden, and of those to whom truth is revealed.* We read that our Lord says, “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes.”

We must not gather from these words a wrong lesson. We must not infer that any persons on earth are naturally more deserving of God’s grace and salvation than others. All are alike sinners, and merit nothing but wrath and condemnation. We must simply regard the words as stating a fact. The wisdom of this world often makes people proud, and increases their natural enmity to Christ’s Gospel. The man who has no pride of knowledge, or fancied morality, to fall back on, has often fewest difficulties to get over in coming to the knowledge of the truth. The publicans and sinners are often the first to enter the kingdom of God, while the Scribes and Pharisees stand outside.

Let us learn from these words to beware of self-righteousness. Nothing so blinds the eyes of our souls to the beauty of the Gospel as the vain, delusive idea, that we are not so ignorant and wicked as some, and that we have got a character which will bear inspection. Happy is that man who has learned to feel that he is “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Rev. iii. 17.) To see that we are bad, is the first step towards being really good. To feel that we are ignorant is the first beginning of all saving knowledge.

We should observe, in the fourth place, *the majesty and dignity of our Lord Jesus Christ*. We read that He said, “All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father; and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.”

These are the words of one who was very God of very God, and no mere man. We read of no patriarch, or prophet, or apostle, or saint, of any age, who ever used words like these. They reveal to our wondering eyes a little of the mighty mystery of our Lord’s nature and person. They show Him to us, as the Head over all things, and King of kings: “All things are delivered to me of my Father.”—They show Him as one distinct from the Father, and yet entirely one with Him, and knowing Him in an unspeakable manner. “No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father: and who the Father is but the Son.”—They show Him, not least, as the Mighty Revealer of the Father to the sons of men, as the God who pardons iniquity, and loves sinners for His Son’s sake: “No man knoweth who the Father is but he to whom the Son will reveal him.”

Let us repose our souls confidently on our Lord Jesus Christ. He is one who is “mighty to save.” Many and weighty as our sins are, Christ can bear them all. Difficult as is the work of our salvation, Christ is able to accomplish it. If Christ was not God as well as man we might indeed despair. But with such a Saviour as this we may begin boldly, and press on hopefully, and await death and judgment without fear. Our help is laid on one that is mighty. (Psalm lxxxix. 19.) Christ over all, God blessed for ever, will not fail any one that trusts in Him.

Let us observe, finally, *the peculiar privileges of those who hear the Gospel of Christ*. We read that our Lord said to His disciples, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”

The full significance of these words will probably never be understood by Christians until the last day. We have probably a most faint idea of the enormous advantages enjoyed by believers who have lived since Christ came into the world, compared to those of believers who died before Christ was born. The difference between the knowledge of an Old Testament saint and a saint in the apostle’s days is far greater than we conceive. It is the difference of twilight and noon day, of winter and summer, of the mind of a child and the mind of a full grown man. No doubt the Old Testament saints looked to a coming Saviour by faith, and believed in a resurrection and a life to come. But the coming and death of Christ unlocked a hundred Scriptures which before were closed, and cleared up scores of doubtful points which before had never been solved. In short, “the way into the holiest was not made manifest, while the first tabernacle was standing.” (Heb. ix. 8.) The

humblest Christian believer understands things which David and Isaiah could never explain.

Let us leave the passage with a deep sense of our own debt to God and of our great responsibility for the full light of the Gospel. Let us see that we make a good use of our many privileges. Having a full Gospel, let us beware that we do not neglect it. It is a weighty saying, "To whomsoever much is given, of them will much be required." (Luke xii. 48.)

NOTES. LUKE X. 21-24.

21.—[*I thank thee, O Father, &c.*] The meaning of this remarkable expression appears to be, "I thank thee, that, having hid these things from the wise and prudent, thou hast revealed them unto babes."—The same kind of expression is found in Rom. vi. 17. "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine." The thanks are not given because they were the servants of sin, but because they had obeyed the Gospel. Campbell remarks, that the same kind of expression may be found in Isaiah xii. 1, which literally rendered would be, "Lord, I will praise thee, because thou wast angry with me; thine anger is turned away."

[*Wise and prudent.*] These were the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Priests, and Elders of the Jews, who were "wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight," and refused to receive the Gospel of Christ.

[*Babes.*] These were the fishermen, and publicans, and other poor and unlearned Jews, who became our Lord's disciples, and followed Him, when the majority of the nation would not believe.

Let it be noted, that this remarkable expression, and that in the verse following, appear to have been used by our Lord more than once. The words in Matt. xi. 25 seem to have been spoken on an entirely different occasion.

22.—[*All things are delivered unto me, &c.*] Let the words of Whitby on this verse be noted. "All things, that is all power both in heaven and earth, (Matt. xxviii. 18.) all judgment, (John i. 27.) and power over all flesh to give eternal life. (John xvii. 2.) Now this includes power to raise the dead, and to pass judgment on them according to their works, and secret thoughts, and so a power and wisdom which is plainly divine, and consequently the divine nature from which these attributes are inseparable. This is an argument for the divinity of Christ!"

[*Kings.*] By these "kings" we must suppose such men are meant as David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah."