EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS

ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,
*And Many Explanatory Notes*.

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LUKE XIX. 28–40.

28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against *you;* in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring *him hither.*

31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose *him?* thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their gar­ments upon the colt, and they sat Jesus thereon.

36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multi­tude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

38 Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

LET us mark, for one thing, in these verses, *the perfect knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* We see Him sending two of His disciples to a village, and telling them what they would find at the entrance of it: “a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat.” We see Him describing what they would see and hear, with as much confidence as if the whole transaction had been previously arranged. In short, He speaks like one to whom all things were naked and open,—like one whose eyes were in every place,—like one who knew things unseen as well as things seen.

An attentive reader will observe the same thing in other parts of the Gospel. We are told in one place that “He knew the thoughts” of His enemies; we are told in another, that “He knew what was in man;” we are told in another, that “He knew from the begin­ning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him.” (Matt. xii. 25; John ii. 25; John vi. 64.) Knowledge like this is the peculiar attribute of God. Passages like these are meant to remind us, that “the man Christ Jesus” is not only man, He is also “God blessed for ever.” (Rom. ix. 5.)

The thought of Christ’s perfect knowledge should alarm sinners and awaken them to repentance. The great Head of the Church knows them and all their doings; the Judge of all sees them continually, and marks down all their ways. There is “no darkness where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves.” (Job xxxiv. 22.) If they go into the secret chamber, the eyes of Christ are there; if they privately scheme villainy and plot wickedness, Christ knows it and observes it; if they speak secretly against the righteous, Christ hears. They may deceive men all their life long, but they cannot deceive Christ. A day comes when God “will judge the *secrets* of men by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel.” (Rom. ii. 16.)

The thought of Christ’s perfect knowledge should com­fort all true-hearted Christians, and quicken them to increased diligence in good works. The Master’s eye is always upon them. He knows where they dwell, and what are their daily trials, and who are their companions: there is not a word in their mouths, or a thought in their hearts, but Jesus knows it altogether. Let them take courage when they are slandered, misunderstood, and misrepresented by the world: it matters nothing, so long as they can say, “Thou, Lord, who knowest all things, knowest that I love thee.” (John xxi. 17.) Let them walk on steadily in the narrow way, and not turn aside to the right hand or the left. When sinners entice them, and weak brethren say “spare thyself,” let them reply, “My Master is looking at me: I desire to live and move as in the sight of Christ.”

Let us mark, for another thing, in this passage, *the publicity of our Lord’s last entry into Jerusalem,.* We are told of His riding in on an ass, like a king visiting his capital, or a conqueror returning in triumph to his native land. We read of a “multitude of disciples” surrounding Him, as He rode into the city, “rejoicing and praising God with a loud voice.” The whole history is strikingly unlike the general tenor of our Lord’s life. On other occasions, we see Him withdrawing from public obser­vation, retiring into the wilderness, charging those whom He healed to tell no man what was done. On the present occasion all is changed: reserve is completely thrown aside; He seems to court public notice; He appears desirous that all should see Him, and should mark, note, and observe what He did.

The reasons of our Lord’s conduct at this crisis of His ministry, at first sight, may appear hard to discover. On calm reflection they are clear and plain. He knew that the time had come when He was to die for sinners on the cross. His work as the great Prophet, so far as His earthly ministry was concerned, was almost finished and completed. His work as the Sacrifice for sin and Sub­stitute for sinners, remained to be accomplished. Before giving Himself up as a sacrifice, He desired to draw the attention of the whole Jewish nation to Himself. The Lamb of God was about to be slain; the great sin-offering was about to be killed: it was meet that the eyes of all Israel should be fixed upon Him. This great thing was not to be done in a corner.

For ever let us bless God that the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was so widely known and so public an event. Had He been suddenly stoned in some popular tumult, or privately beheaded like John the Baptist in prison, there never would have been wanting Jewish and Gentile unbelievers, who would have denied that the Son of God died at all. The wisdom of God so ordered events that such a denial was rendered impossible. Whatever men may think of the doctrine of Christ’s atoning death, they never can deny *the fact* that Christ died. Publicly He rode into Jerusalem a few days before His death; publicly He was seen and heard in the city until the day that He was betrayed; publicly He was brought before the High Priests and Pilate, and condemned; publicly He was led forth to Calvary, and nailed to the cross. The corner­stone and crowning event in our Lord’s ministry was His death for sinners. Of all the events of His ministry that death was the one most public, and the one witnessed by the greatest number of Jews. And that death was the “life of the world.” (John vi. 51.)

Let us leave the whole passage with the cheering reflection, that the joy of Christ’s disciples at His entry into Jerusalem, when He came to be crucified, will prove as nothing compared to the joy of His people when He comes again to reign.—That first joy was soon broken off and exchanged for sorrow and bitter tears. The second joy shall be a joy for evermore.—That first joy was often interrupted by the bitter sneers of enemies, who were plotting mischief. The second joy shall be liable to no such rude interruptions. Not a word shall be said against the King when He comes to Jerusalem the second time. “Before him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord.” (Phil. ii. 11.)

NOTES. LUKE XIX. 28–40.

30.—[*Ye* *shall find a colt tied, &c.*]Let it be noted, that the public entry into Jerusalem which we read of here, is one of the few events in our Lord’s history which all four Gospel writers relate. There is evidently an importance about it as a step in our Lord’s earthly ministry, which we should not overlook.

The allegorical meanings which many commentators attach to the whole transaction, appear to me, to say the least, very questionable. I am unable to see that “the colt” is a type of the Gentile Church, and our Lord’s riding on it a type of Gentiles becoming obedient to the Gospel. Those who wish to see instances of allegorical views of the subject will find them in the commentaries of Pellican and Brentius, and in Luther’s “Exposition of the Gospel for the First Sunday in Advent.”

It may be well to remark that there was nothing ignominious or unworthy of a great person in riding on an ass. In Eastern countries asses have in every age been used by persons of high rank. (See Judges v. 10.)

31*.—*[*The Lord hath need of him.*]It is not quite clear whether these words were meant to have a miraculous constraining influence on the mind of the master of the colt, or whether he would simply regard it as a case of borrowing for some eminent person’s use. The former of the two opinions seems the more probable. It is clear that throughout the whole transaction of this last entry into Jerusalem, a constraining miraculous in­fluence was exercised over the minds of many persons, showing plainly what our Lord might have easily done if He had been minded to take to Himself a temporal dominion.

32*.—*[*Found as he had said.*]It is interesting to note here how many various minute circumstances were mentioned by our Lord when He sent His disciples for the colt, and how accurate His description proved.

37*.—*[*Multitude of the disciples.*]We must necessarily suppose that many of the disciples here mentioned were not really disciples in heart. They followed our Lord probably in much ignorance, and under very mistaken expectations.

38*.—*[*Peace in heaven.*]We can only conjecture what the multi­tude meant by this expression. It is possible that they intended to declare their belief that Messiah’s reign of universal “peace” and His advent in “glory,” was on the point of beginning. In the mouths of many it was probably a scriptural phrase used at any period of great religious rejoicing, without any distinct application to Messiah’s times.

39.—[Rebuke *thy disciples.*]This expression seems to show clearly that the Pharisees considered the multitude to be treating Jesus as the Messiah, and considered Jesus to be claiming the Messiah-ship by His not checking the language His attendants used. His riding on the colt would doubtless bring to their recollection the famous prophecy of Zechariah, which all Jews applied to the Messiah, and would add to their displeasure.

40*.—*[*The stones would cry out.*]This expression must evidently be regarded as a proverbial and figurative one. If men did not rejoice at Christ’s advent, even inanimate nature would cry shame.

In leaving this passage it is fair to remark that the view I have set forth in the exposition, of our Lord’s design in making His public entry into Jerusalem, is not that which is commonly given by commentators. It seems generally thought that our Lord’s principal object was to manifest His kingly power, and His dominion, when He thought fit to exercise it, over the wills of men.

I cannot help thinking that this theory falls short of the true meaning of the event. I have a firm conviction that our Lord did what He did in anticipation of His approaching death on the cross. Before dying for our sins, He called public attention to Himself, and filled Jerusalem with the report of His arrival. The consequence was, that when He was crucified a few days after, the attention of the whole multitude assembled at Jeru­salem for the passover, was directed to Him. He was offered up as a sacrifice with the greatest possible publicity, and with the eyes of the whole nation upon Him. One of the greatest helps to this publicity, beyond doubt, was His remarkable entry into Jerusalem. Myriads of Jews from foreign parts came up to the holy city at the feast of the passover. There was probably not one among them who did not hear that a wonderful teacher had arrived, who claimed to be the Messiah, and rode into the city in the manner predicted by Zechariah. His death on the cross a few days after, would doubtless raise many thoughts in their minds, and in many cases would never be forgotten.