

# EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,

*And Many Explanatory Notes.*

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LUKE XXII. 63–71.

<p>63 And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote <i>him</i>.</p> <p>64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?</p> <p>65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.</p> <p>66 And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into the council, saying,</p> <p>67 Art thou the Christ? tell us.</p>	<p>And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:</p> <p>68 And if I also ask <i>you</i>, ye will not answer me, nor let <i>me</i> go.</p> <p>69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.</p> <p>70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.</p> <p>71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.</p>
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WE should notice, firstly, in these verses the *shameful treatment that our Lord Jesus Christ underwent at the hands of His enemies*. We read that the men who held Him, “mocked” Him, “smote” Him, “blindfolded” Him, and “struck him on the face.” It was not enough to have taken prisoner a person of most blameless and charitable life: they must needs add insult to injury.

Conduct like this shows the desperate corruption of human nature. The excesses of savage malice to which unconverted men will sometimes go, and the fierce delight with which they will sometimes trample on the most holy and the most pure, almost justify the strong saying of an old divine, that “man left to himself is half-beast and half-devil.” He hates God and all who bear anything of God’s image about them. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” (Rom. viii. 7.) We have probably a very faint idea of what the world would become if it were not for the constant restraint that God mercifully puts upon evil; it is not too much to say that if unconverted men had their own way entirely, the earth would soon be little better than a hell.

Our Lord’s calm submission to insults like those here described, shows the depth of His love towards sinners. Had He so willed, He could have stopped the insolence of his enemies in a moment: He who could cast out devils with a word, could have summoned legions of angels to His side, and scattered these wretched tools of Satan to the winds. But our Lord’s heart was set on the great work He had come on earth to do. He had undertaken to purchase our redemption by His own humiliation, and He did not flinch from paying the uttermost farthing of the price; He had undertaken to drink the bitter cup of vicarious suffering to save sinners, and “for the joy set before Him He despised the shame,” and drank the cup to the very dregs. (Heb. xii. 2.)

Patience like that which our blessed Lord exhibited on this occasion should teach His professing people a mighty lesson. We should forbear all murmuring and complaining, and irritation of spirit, when we are ill-treated by the world. What are the occasional insults to which we have to submit compared to the insults which were heaped on our Master? Yet “when he

was reviled he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not." He left us an example that we should walk in his steps. Let us go and do likewise. (1 Peter ii. 21-23.)

We should notice, secondly, in these verses, *the striking prophecy which our Lord delivers about His own coming glory*. He says to His insulting enemies, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." Did they find fault with His lowly appearance, and want a glorious Messiah? They would see Him in glory one day.—Did they think He was weak, powerless, and contemptible, because at present there was no outward majesty about Him? They would behold Him one day in the most honourable position in heaven, fulfilling the well-known prophecy of Daniel, with all judgment committed to His hands. (Dan. vii. 9, 10.)

Let us take heed that the future glory of Christ forms a part of our creed, as much as Christ's cross and passion. Let it be a first principle in our religion, that the same Jesus who was mocked, despised, and crucified, is He who has now "all power in heaven and earth," and will one day come again in His Father's glory with all His angels. We see but half the truth if we see nothing but the cross and the first advent: it is essential to our own comfort to see also the second advent, and the crown. That same Jesus who stood before the bar of the high priest and of Pilate, will one day sit upon a throne of glory and summon all His enemies to appear before Him. Happy is that Christian who keeps steadily before his mind that word "hereafter!" Now in this present time believers must be content to take part in their Master's sufferings and with Him to be weak: "hereafter" they shall share in His glory, and with Him be strong.—Now like their Lord they must not be surprised if they are mocked, despised, and disbelieved: "hereafter" they shall sit with Him on the right hand of God.

We should notice, lastly, in these verses, *what a full and bold confession our Lord makes of His own Messiahship and divinity*. We read that in reply to this question of His enemies, "Art thou the Son of God?"—"He said unto them, Ye say that I am." The meaning of this short sentence may not be clear at first sight to an English reader. It signifies in other words, "Ye speak the truth: I am, as ye say, the Son of God."

Our Lord's confession deprived His enemies of all excuse for unbelief. The Jews can never plead that our Lord left their forefathers in ignorance of His mission, and kept them in doubt and suspense. Here we see our Lord telling them plainly who He was, and telling them in words which would convey even more to a Jewish mind than they do to ours; and yet the confession had not the least good effect upon the Jews! Their hearts were hardened by prejudice; their minds were darkened by judicial blindness; the veil was over the eyes of their inward man: they heard our Lord's confession unmoved, and only plunged deeper into the most awful sin.

The bold confession of our Master upon this occasion, is intended to be an example to all His believing people. Like Him, we must not shrink from speaking out when occasion requires our testimony. The fear of man, and the presence of a multitude, must not make us hold our peace. (Job xxxi. 34.) We need not blow a trumpet before us, and go out of our way, to proclaim our own religion; opportunities are sure to occur in the daily path of duty, when, like St. Paul on board ship, we may show “whose we are and whom we serve.” (Acts xxvii. 27.) At such opportunities, if we have the mind of Christ, let us not be afraid to show our colours. A confessing Master loves bold, uncompromising, and confessing disciples: them that honour Him by an outspoken, courageous testimony, He will honour, because they are walking in His steps. “Whosoever,” He says, “shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. x. 32.)

NOTES. LUKE XXII. 63–71.

63.—[*Mocked him, &c.*] We must understand that this took place after our Lord’s first examination before the priests, of which St. Luke gives no account. That there were two separate examinations, will be seen in the next note.

66.—[*As soon as it was day.*] Some little explanation is necessary at this point in St. Luke’s history of our Lord’s passion. It is clear, from the account of the evangelists Matthew and Mark, that as soon as our Lord was taken prisoner He was brought *at once* before Caiaphas, the high priest, and examined; it is also clear from the same evangelists, that Peter’s thrice-repeated denial of his master took place *after* this examination: how then are we to explain the fact that St. Luke speaks of St. Peter’s denial, as having taken place *before* any examination of our Lord at the High Priest’s bar?

The most satisfactory reply to this inquiry is the explanation given by Gerhard, Scott, Burgon, and Stier. They maintain that after the Council had condemned Jesus the first time, they separated, and met again early in the morning, and that the words used by St. Luke, “as soon as it was day,” refer to this second meeting of the Council.—“Nor is it improbable,” says Scott, “that the high priest should again put the same questions to our Lord as he had done the night before, both to see whether He would stand to what He had said, and also that such members of the Council as had been absent might hear His answers.”

Two arguments may be mentioned in support of the above explanation.—One is the great improbability that our Lord’s enemies, having taken Him prisoner, would wait until it was morning before they examined Him: on the contrary it is plain, from Matthew and Mark, that Jesus was taken before Caiaphas as soon as He was apprehended.—The other argument is the great improbability that the men who held Jesus would have mocked and insulted Him as they did, if He had not been already examined, and condemned.

We must understand then, that our Lord was twice examined before the chief priests and elders, and that the examination mentioned by St. Luke is the second of the two, and answers to the morning “consultation,” mentioned by St. Mark. (Mark xv. 1.)—I am aware that Poole, Doddridge, and Alford, maintain that there was only one examination before the priests. But their reasoning does not satisfy me.

Horne remarks, in his Introduction to Scripture, “According to the Talmud, capital causes were prohibited from being heard in the night, as also was the institution of an examination, pronouncing a sentence, and carrying it into execution on one and the same day. It was en-

joined that at least the execution of a sentence should be deferred to the following day. How flagrantly these injunctions were disregarded in the case of Jesus Christ, it is scarcely necessary to mention.”

67.—[*Ye will not believe.*] Assuming the correctness of the view put forth in the last note, there is much point in these words. When our Lord had told them who He was at the first examination, they would not believe. To this unbelief He here seems to refer.

68.—[*If I ask you.*] This expression has occasioned some surprise, and called forth many remarks. It seems strange, at first sight, that a prisoner should talk of putting questions to his judges.

Major paraphrases the expression: “If I advance any arguments to prove that I am the Messiah.” He adds, “to interrogate was a usual mode of argumentation among the Hebrews.” (See Luke xx. 7; xvii. 44.)

Pellican paraphrases the passage: “If I inquire of you what kind of Messiah is promised in Scripture, and ask you whether the signs of Messiah appear sufficiently in me, you will not give me an honest answer.”

Gill renders it, “If I require an answer to the arguments proving me to be the Messiah, or desire to know what objection can be made to them, you will not answer me, or dismiss me though I should appear to be the Messiah. You are resolved, right or wrong, to detain me in bonds and take away my life.”

Heinsius mentions an opinion of some, that the Greek word rendered “ask” might also be rendered “petition or supplicate.” This however, would be a most undignified sense to put on the words, and is utterly improbable.

69.—[*Hereafter... Son of man... right hand... God.*] There is a plain reference in these words to the famous prophecy of Daniel. (Dan. vii. 9-14.) Our Lord evidently implies that He was the person to whom that prophecy pointed, and that, although condemned by the Jews, He would shortly be exalted to the highest position of dignity in heaven. The Jews saw this at once, and proceeded to put the question of the next verse. This, be it noted, is the last occasion on which our Lord ever called Himself the “Son of man.”

70.—[*Art thou... Son of God.*] It is very worthy of note here, that our Lord in the preceding verse had called Himself the “Son of man.” His enemies in this question, ask Him if He is the “Son of God.” They did so, because His solemn saying about sitting at God’s right hand, showed them that He claimed to be the Messiah and very God.

[*Ye say that I am.*] It is almost needless to remark, that this expression means, “Ye say rightly that I am.” Major gives instances of a similar form of speech both in Greek and Latin writers.