

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 STRADBROOKE, SUFFOLK;

Author of "Home Truths," etc.

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LUKE XXIV. 13–35.

13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

THE history contained in these verses is not found in any other Gospel but that of St. Luke. Of all the eleven appearances of Christ after His resurrection, none perhaps is so interesting as the one described in this passage.

Let us mark, in these verses, *what encouragement there is to believers to speak to one another about Christ*. We are told of two disciples walking together to Emmaus, and talking of their Master's crucifixion; and then come the remarkable words, "While they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."

Conference on spiritual subjects is a most important means of grace. As iron sharpeneth iron, so does exchange of thoughts with brethren sharpen a believer's soul: it brings down a special blessing on all who make a practice of it. The striking words of Malachi were meant for the Church in every age:

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels.” (Mal. iii. 16, 17.)

What do we know ourselves of spiritual conversation with other Christians? Perhaps we read our Bibles, and pray in private, and use public means of grace. It is all well, very well: but if we stop short here we neglect a great privilege and have yet much to learn. We ought to “consider one another to provoke to love and good works;” we ought to “exhort” and “edify one another.” (Heb. x. 24; 1 Thess. v. 11.) Have we no time for spiritual conversation? Let us think again. The quantity of time wasted on frivolous, trifling, and unprofitable talk, is fearfully great.—Do we find nothing to say on spiritual subjects? Do we feel tongue-tied and dumb on the things of Christ? Surely if this is the case, there must be something wrong within. A heart right in the sight of God will generally find words. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (Matt. xii. 34.)

Let us learn a lesson from the two travellers to Emmaus. Let us speak of Jesus, when we are sitting in our houses and when we are walking by the way, whenever we can find a disciple to speak to. (Deut. vi. 7.) If we believe we are journeying to a heaven where Christ will be the central object of every mind, let us begin to learn the manners of heaven, while we are yet upon earth; so doing we shall often have One with us whom our eyes will not see, but One who will make our hearts “burn within us” by blessing the conversation.

Let us mark, secondly, in these verses, *how weak and imperfect was the knowledge of some of our Lord’s disciples*. We are told that the two disciples confessed frankly that their expectations had been disappointed by the crucifixion of Christ. “We trusted,” said they, “that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.” A temporal redemption of the Jews by a conqueror appears to have been the redemption which they looked for: a spiritual redemption by a sacrificial death was an idea which their minds could not thoroughly take in.

Ignorance like this, at first sight, is truly astounding. We cannot be surprised at the sharp rebuke which fell from our Lord’s lips: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe.” Yet ignorance like this is deeply instructive: it shows us how little cause we have to wonder at the spiritual darkness which obscures the minds of careless Christians. Myriads around us are just as ignorant of the meaning of Christ’s sufferings as these travellers to Emmaus. As long as the world stands the cross will seem foolishness to natural man.

Let us bless God that there may be true grace hidden under much intellectual ignorance. Clear and accurate knowledge is a most useful thing, but

it is not absolutely needful to salvation, and may even be possessed without grace. A deep sense of sin, a humble willingness to be saved in God's way, a teachable readiness to give up our own prejudices when a more excellent way is shown,—these are the principal things. These things the two disciples possessed, and therefore our Lord “went with them “and guided them into all truth.

Let us mark, thirdly, in these verses, *how full the Old Testament is of Christ*. We are told that our Lord began “at Moses and all the prophets, and expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

How shall we explain these words? In what way did our Lord show “things concerning himself,” in every part of the Old Testament field? The answer to these questions is short and simple: Christ was the substance of every Old Testament sacrifice ordained in the law of Moses; Christ was the true Deliverer and King, of whom all the judges and deliverers in Jewish history were types; Christ was the coming Prophet greater than Moses, whose glorious advent filled the pages of prophets; Christ was the true seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head, the true seed in whom all nations were to be blessed, the true Shiloh to whom the people were to be gathered, the true scape-goat, the true brazen serpent, the true Lamb to which every daily offering pointed, the true High Priest of whom every descendant of Aaron was a figure. These things, or something like them, we need not doubt, were some of the things which our Lord expounded in the way to Emmaus.

Let it be a settled principle in our minds, in reading the Bible, that Christ is the central sun of the whole books: so long as we keep Him in view, we shall never greatly err, in our search for spiritual knowledge; once losing sight of Christ, we shall find the whole Bible dark and full of difficulty. The key of Bible knowledge is Jesus Christ.

Let us mark, finally, in these verses, *how much Christ loves to be entreated by His people*. We are told, that when the disciples drew nigh to Emmaus, our Lord “made as though he would have gone further.” He desired to see if they were weary of His conversation. But it was not so. “They constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them.”

Cases like this are not uncommon in Scripture. Our Lord sees it good for us to prove our love, by withholding mercies till we ask for them. He does not always force His gifts upon us, unsought and unsolicited; He loves to draw out our desires, and to compel us to exercise our spiritual affections, by waiting for our prayers: He dealt so with Jacob at Peniel. “Let me go,” He said, “for the day breaketh;” and then came the noble declaration from Jacob's lips: “I will not let thee go except thou bless me.” (Gen. xxiii. 26.) The story of the Canaanitish mother, the story of the healing of two blind

men at Jericho, the story of the nobleman at Capernaum, the parables of the unjust judge and friend at midnight, are all meant to teach the same lesson. All show that our Lord loves to be entreated, and likes importunity.

Let us act on this principle in all our prayers, if we know anything of praying. Let us ask much, and ask often, and lose nothing for want of asking; let us not be like the Jewish King who smote three times on the ground, and then stayed his hand. (2 Kings xiii. 18.) Let us rather remember the words of David's Psalm: "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." (Psal. lxxxii. 10.) It is the man who puts a holy constraint on Christ in prayer, who enjoys much of Christ's manifested presence.

NOTES. LUKE XXIV. 13-35.

- 13.—[*Two of them.*] We are not told who these two disciples were, except that one of them was named Cleopas. Several conjectures have been made about the other one: Epiphanius supposes he was Nathanael; Origen calls him Simeon; Ambrose calls him Amaon; Theophylact suggests that it was Luke himself. All this is guesswork: we know nothing certain about it, excepting this,—that it could not have been one of the apostles. We are distinctly told that when these two disciples returned to Jerusalem "they found the eleven gathered together."—This point ought to be carefully noticed.

Lightfoot says, "It seems to me beyond question, that one of the disciples going to Emmaus was Peter, who hearing from the women that the Lord had risen, and sent him a message, and spoken of going to Galilee, took Cleopas and made off towards Galilee."—This opinion seems very improbable.

[*Went that same day.*] Henry says on this expression: "I suspect that they were going homeward to Galilee, with an intention not to inquire more about this Jesus: that they were meditating a retreat, and went away from their company without asking or taking leave."—This is, no doubt, an ingenious conjecture; but I see nothing to warrant it.

- 16.—[*Should not know him.*] Let it be noted here that St. Mark mentions that He "appeared in another form." (Mark xvi. 12.) This circumstance would account for their not recognizing Him. At the same time it is clear that in some miraculous way the eyes of the disciples were holden or restrained from seeing aright. (See 2 Kings vi. 17-20.)

- 17.—[*He said.*] Bengel remarks here, that "it is the part of wisdom to pass with ease into profitable conversation."

[*What manner...communications...ye have.*] The literal rendering of the Greek words here would be, "What sayings or words are these which ye cast against one another, or bandy about?"

The parallel between Joseph and our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be noticed at this part of our Lord's history. The conduct of Joseph in not discovering himself to his brethren, and in trying them by delay, was a type of our Lord's dealings with His two disciples before manifesting Himself to them. The whole history of Joseph is probably much more typical than we suppose.

- 18.—[*Art thou only a stranger, &c.*] The Greek words so rendered are somewhat peculiar. Alford translates them, "Dost thou lodge alone at Jerusalem?"—Major renders them, "Art thou that one individual who sojournest at Jerusalem, and hast not known," &c.: meaning, "There surely cannot be another, whether stranger or resident, who has not heard of these events."

The whole verse is an important evidence of the publicity and notoriety of our Lord Jesus Christ's crucifixion.

- 19.—[*What things?*] Our Lord, both here and at a latter part of His history, draws out from the disciples their opinions, feelings, and wishes. By asking a question He elicits a declaration of the exact state of their minds about Himself.

[*A prophet, &c.*] The exceeding dimness of the disciples' apprehension of our Lord's divinity and atonement, is strikingly brought out in this description.

[*Before God and the people.*] This must mean "By the testimony both of God and the Jewish nation."—We read elsewhere that "God bare him witness by signs and wonders." (Acts ii. 22.) The people also "bare record." (John xii. 17.)

- 21.—[*He which, should have redeemed Israel.*] The exact kind of redemption expected by the disciples we are left to conjecture. But it is clear that like most Jews, they looked much more for a temporal Redeemer than a spiritual one. They looked for a redemption like that of their forefathers out of Egypt; hence their excessive perplexity and amazement when He who they thought would prove the Redeemer was crucified.

[*Today is the third day.*] There certainly seems a reference in the mind of Cleopas to something which was to happen on the "third day," according to promise. He speaks like one who had an indistinct recollection of our Lord's sayings about rising again upon the third day, but had never understood their meaning.

Lightfoot remarks on this verse, what notice the Rabbins take of the third day, and conjectures that the Jewish idea about the third day may be traced in the saying of Cleopas, as well as a reference to our Lord's predictions. He points out the frequency with which the third day is referred to in the Old Testament. (Gen. xxii. 4; Hosea vi. 2; Gen. xlii. 18; Jos. ii. 16; Exod. xix. 16; Jonah i. 17; Ezra viii. 15; Esther v. 1.)

- 24.—[*Certain of them, &c.*] St. Luke has only told us of Peter having gone to the grave. From St. John we learn that John accompanied him.
- 25.—[*Fools.*] The Greek word so rendered is not the same word which is so translated in the sermon on the mount. (Matt. v. 22.) Here it only means "wanting in thought, understanding, and consideration," and does not imply any contempt.

[*Slow of heart to believe al ...prophets...spoken.*] This expression should be carefully noted. The disciples believed many things which the prophets had spoken; but they did not believe *all*. They believed the predictions of Messiah's glory, but not of Messiah's sufferings. Christians in modern times too often err in like manner, though in a totally different direction. They believe *all* that the prophets say about Christ's sufferings, but *not all* that they say about Christ coming the second time in glory.

- 26.—[*Ought not.*] This means, "was it not fitting, meet, and needful;" "did it not behove," in order to the fulfilment of prophecies and types, that Christ should suffer? It is the same Greek word translated "behooved," at the 46th verse.

[*Suffered...enter...glory.*] Here our Lord briefly states the whole truth concerning the expected Messiah. He was one who was to suffer first and afterwards to reign,—to be cut off first and afterwards have a kingdom,—to be led as a lamb to the slaughter first, and afterwards to divide the spoil as a conqueror.

- 27.—[*Beginning at Moses, &c.*] Many a commentator has remarked on this verse, that it would have been a blessing to the Church if it had possessed the exposition which our Lord here gave. For wise reasons it has been withheld from us. Several have attempted to supply conjecturally the general substance of this exposition, and specially Gerhard, Bullinger, and Stella. But it is probable that we have, at best, very inadequate ideas of the fulness of our Lord's exposition. Judging from the use He made of Scripture during His ministry, He saw

probably many “things concerning Himself” which modern commentators utterly fail to discover.

Alford remarks, “Observe the testimony which this verse gives to the divine authority, and Christian interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures. The denial of reference to Christ’s death and glory in the Old Testament, is a denial of Christ’s own teaching.”

- 28.—[*He made as though...gone further.*] Many very unprofitable remarks have been made on this expression. Some have gone so far as to assert that it justifies dissimulation and a certain degree of untruthfulness on some occasions. Such assertions are too monstrous and absurd to deserve serious refutation.

Alford remarks, “It is not implied that our Lord said anything to indicate that He would go further, but simply that He was passing on.” He quotes also a passage from Jeremy Taylor’s Sermon on Christian Simplicity, explanatory of this expression: “Our blessed Saviour pretended that He would pass forth from Emmaus; but if He intended not to do it, He did no injury to the two disciples, for whose good He intended to make this offer. Neither did He prevaricate the strictness of simplicity and sincerity, because they were persons with whom He had made no contracts, to whom He had passed no obligations. In the nature of the thing it is proper and natural by an offer to give an occasion to another to do good actions; and in case it succeeds not, then to do what was intended not. And so the offer was conditional.”

I have quoted this passage from a desire to meet the possible objections of scrupulous consciences. To my own mind it seems surprising that anyone can stumble at the expression before us, or can find ground for supposing that our Lord meant to deceive. Our Lord used the readiest and most natural means to draw out the feelings of His disciples, by walking on as if He intended to go further. But it seems to me as unreasonable to see in this an intention to deceive, as it would be to see dishonesty in His first question, “What manner of communications are these that ye have?” He knew all things, and had no real occasion to ask; but He asked in order to draw out the minds of His disciples.

- 29.—[*They constrained him.*] Let it be noted that we have several instances of expressions like this in Scripture used upon similar occasions. Abraham said, “Pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.” (Gen. xxiii. 26.) Gideon said, “Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee.” (Judges vi. 18.) Manoah and his wife said, “I pray thee, let us detain thee.” (Judges xiii. 15.) All show that God loves to be entreated of His people, and that those who would have much must ask much, and even use a holy violence.

- 30.—[*He took bread...blessed...brake...gave, &c.*] The action mentioned here has occasioned much difference of opinion.

1. Some think that no particular sense is to be attached to the expression, and that it means that Jesus was recognized at the time when He break bread.

2. Some think that there was something peculiar in our Lord’s manner and demeanour at breaking of bread, which was well known to the disciples. Lyranus and Stella even go so far as to say that He broke bread in a miraculous manner, like one cutting with a knife. According to Schottgen, Jewish teachers used to be known and recognized by their disciples by their peculiar gestures.

3. Some think that the whole passage refers to the Lord’s supper. This opinion is stoutly defended by Maldonatus and Cornelius à Lapede, the Romish commentators, and maintained even by Wordsworth among modern English Protestants.—The two Romish writers go so far as to maintain that the passage shows the propriety of the bread only and not the cup being given to the laity in the Lord’s supper. It is only fair to say that not all Romish writers maintain this opinion respecting the Lord’s supper being meant: Jansenius and Stel-

la deny it entirely; Barradius and Bellarmine allow that it is just as probable that the Lord's supper is not meant, as that it is meant!

I have little doubt that the expression refers to some well-known and peculiar gesture of our Lord in the act of breaking bread, with which all His disciples were familiar. I think it even possible that there is a reference to our Lord's demeanour at the miracle of feeding the multitude with a few loaves and fishes.

Alford suggests that the marks of the nails in our Lord's hands may have been first noticed as He was breaking bread.

That it could not be the Lord's supper appears clear to my own mind for the following reasons.—Firstly, it was impossible that the two disciples could recognize anything in our Lord's manner of breaking the bread to remind them of the Lord's supper, because they were not present at the institution of it. None but the apostles were present at the institution, and the two disciples were evidently not apostles.—Secondly, it is mere gratuitous assumption to say that the Lord's supper is meant, when we find no words of consecration used, and no mention of wine. Even the Roman Catholics must allow that without consecration and the presence of wine, there is no sacrament. They will hardly dare to say that the two disciples at Emmaus were *laymen*.—Thirdly, the words of our Lord at the time of the first institution of the Lord's supper, that He would no more "drink the fruit of the vine" with His disciples, make it highly improbable that the sacrament can be here referred to.

The quotations of the Fathers given by the Romish writers in defence of this opinion about the Lord's supper are most meagre and unsatisfactory. At best they only prove, as Jansenius remarks, that some of the Fathers thought the transaction at Emmaus figurative of the Lord's supper.

The plain truth is that both here and elsewhere the carnal mind of man catches at the least pretext for making everything in religion material and sensual, and strains every possible expression into a material sense. All texts about eating, and drinking, and a cup, and bread, must needs signify the Lord's supper! All texts about washing, and water, and purifying, and the like, must needs mean baptism! Against such interpretations of Scripture we must always be on our guard.

Lightfoot remarks, "It is strange that any should interpret this breaking of bread of the holy eucharist, when Christ Himself had determined to disappear in the very distribution of the bread, and so interrupt the supper. And where indeed doth it appear that any of them tasted a bit? The supper was ended before it began." "The Rabbins say, if three eat together, they are bound to say grace."

- 31.—[*Their eyes...opened...knew him.*] The manner of this sudden revelation of Christ we cannot explain. The whole transaction is so miraculous that we can only take the words as we find them, and must not waste time in attempting to define what is beyond our comprehension.

[*Vanished out of their sight.*] This and other expressions concerning our Lord's risen body, show plainly that it was a body in some wonderful way different from the common body of man. It was a real material body, and true flesh and blood; but it was a body capable of moving, appearing, and disappearing after a manner that we cannot explain. We may fairly suppose that it was a pattern of what our own bodies will be after they are raised again: they will be true bodies, material and real, but bodies endued with capacities of which we now know nothing.

- 32.—[*Did not our heart burn?*] These words would be more literally rendered, "was not our heart burning within us?" It is a strong expression to indicate the warmth and delight of

their feelings while they listened to our Lord's exposition of Scripture. (See Psalm xxxix. 4; Jerem. xx. 9.)

- 33.—[*Found the eleven gathered together.*] This expression deserves notice. Was Thomas with them or not? If he was, he must have gone out immediately after the two disciples came in: otherwise it would be difficult to reconcile the verses which immediately follow, describing our Lord's appearing, with the account given in St. John, of Christ's appearing when Thomas was not present.—If Thomas was not present on this occasion, how can we explain St. Luke speaking of "the eleven"? Doddridge must supply the answer: "As Paul calls the company of apostles *the twelve* (1 Cor. xv. 5), though Judas the twelfth person was dead; so Luke here calls them *the eleven*, though Thomas the eleventh person was absent, as appears from John xx. 24."

Let us add to this, that St. Mark distinctly tells us, also, that the Lord appeared to *the eleven*, as they sat at meat. (Mark xvi. 14.)

- 34.—[*Saying, the Lord is risen indeed.*] Major remarks here: "These words which Luke attribute to the eleven apostles are not altogether consistent with what we read in Mark (Mark xvi. 12), that when the two disciples returning acquainted the rest, they did not believe them."—Campbell thus solves the difficulty: "This does not imply that none of them believed, but that several, perhaps the greater part, did not believe. When Luke tells us that they said 'the Lord is risen indeed,' we are not to conclude that everyone said this, or even believed it, but only that some believed, and that one of them expressly affirmed it. Such latitude in using pronouns is common in every language. So, according to Matthew and Mark, both malefactors reproached Jesus on the cross. But from Luke we learn that it was only one of them who acted thus."

[*Appeared to Simon.*] This appearance to Simon Peter alone is only mentioned in this place and in the Epistle to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. xv. 2.) The circumstances of the appearance we do not know.

It may be well to mention here the eleven distinct appearances of our Lord after His resurrection. He appeared,

1. To Mary Magdalene alone. (Mark xvi.; John xx. 14.)
2. To the women returning from the sepulchre. (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.)
3. To Simon Peter alone. (Luke xxiv. 34.)
4. To the two disciples going to Emmaus. (Luke xxvi. 13, &c.)
5. To the apostles at Jerusalem, excepting Thomas, who was absent. (John xx. 19.)
6. To the apostles at Jerusalem, a second time, when Thomas was present. (John xx. 26, 29.)
7. At the sea of Tiberias, when seven disciples were fishing. (John xxi. 1.)
8. To the eleven disciples, on a mountain in Galilee. (Matt. xxviii. 16.)
9. To above five hundred brethren at once. (1 Cor. xv. 6.)
10. To James only. (1 Cor. xv. 7.)
11. To all the apostles on Mount Olivet, at His ascension. (Luke xxiv. 51.)

Three times we are told that His disciples "touched" Him after He rose. (Matt. xxviii. 9; Luke xxiv. 39; John xx. 27.) Twice we are told that He ate with them. (Luke xxiv. 42; John xxi. 12, 13.)

- 35.—[*Things...done in the way.*] This must necessarily mean the wonderful exposition of Scripture which had made their "hearts burn."

[*Known of them in breaking of bread.*] It is only necessary to remark here that to apply this expression to the Lord's supper is mere accommodation of Scripture words, and not justified by the context.