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**Barnes' Notes on the Bible**  
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**Luke**  
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*To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:*

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# LUKE

## PREFACE

Little is “certainly” known concerning the time and place of writing this Gospel, or concerning the author. The first time we have any mention of the author is in his own history, <sup><4460></sup>Acts 16:10,11. He was then the companion of Paul in his travels, and it is evident that he often attended Paul in his journeys, compare <sup><4461></sup>Acts 16:11-17; 21:1-6. In each of these places the author of “the Acts” speaks of “his” being in company with Paul. That the same person was the writer of this Gospel is also clear from <sup><400></sup>Acts 1:1.

From this circumstance the ancients regarded this Gospel as in fact the Gospel which Paul had preached. They affirm that Luke recorded what the apostle preached. Thus, Irenaeus says,

“Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him.” He also says, “Luke was not only a companion, but also a fellow-labourer of the apostles, especially of Paul.”

Origen, speaking of the Gospels, says,

“The third is that according to Luke, the gospel commended by Paul, published for the sake of the Gentile converts.”

The testimony of the fathers is uniform that it was written by Luke, the companion of Paul, and was, therefore, regarded by them as really the gospel which Paul preached.

It is not known WHERE it was written. Jerome says it was composed in Achaia. There seems to be some probability that it was written to persons that were well acquainted with Jewish manners, as the author does not stop to explain the peculiar customs of the Jews, as some of the other evangelists have done. Respecting the TIME when it was written nothing very definite is known. All that can with certainty be ascertained is that it was written before the death of Paul (65 A.D.), for it was written before

the Acts (~~400~~ Acts 1:1), and that book only brings down the life of Paul to his imprisonment at Rome, and previous to his going into Spain.

It has been made a matter of inquiry whether Luke was a Gentile or a Jew. On this subject there is no positive testimony. Jerome and others of the fathers say that he was a Syrian, and born at Antioch. The most probable opinion seems to be that he was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, though descended from Gentile parents. For this opinion two reasons may be assigned of some weight. First, he was intimately acquainted, as appears by the Gospel and the Acts, with the Jewish rites, customs, opinions, and prejudices; and he wrote in their “dialect,” that is, with much of the Hebrew phraseology, in a style similar to the other evangelists, from which it appears that he was accustomed to the Jewish religion, and was, therefore, probably a proselyte. Yet the “preface” to his Gospel, as critics have remarked, is pure classic Greek, unlike the Greek that was used by native Jews; from which it seems not improbable that he was by birth and education a Gentile. second. In ~~427~~ Acts 21:27, it is said that the Asiatic Jews excited the multitude against Paul because he had introduced “Gentiles” into the temple, thus defiling it. In ~~428~~ Acts 21:28 it is said that the Gentile to whom they had reference was “Trophimus,” an Ephesian. Yet “Luke” was also at that time with Paul. If he had been regarded as “a Gentile” it is probable that they would have made complaint respecting “him” as well as “Trophimus;” from which it is supposed that he was a Jewish proselyte.

But again, in the Epistle to the Colossians, ~~509~~ Colossians 4:9-11, we find Paul saying that Aristarchus, and Marcus, and Barnabas, and Justus saluted them, “who are,” he adds, “of the circumcision,” that is, Jews by birth. In ~~504~~ Colossians 4:14 he says that “Luke,” the beloved physician, and Demas also saluted them; from which it is inferred that they were “not of the circumcision,” but were by birth Gentiles.

Most writers suppose that Luke, the writer of this Gospel, was intended in the above place in Colossians. If so, his profession was that of “a physician;” and it has been remarked that his descriptions of diseases are more accurate and circumstantial, and have more of “technical” correctness than those of the other evangelists.

Luke does not profess to have been an eye-witness of what he recorded. See ~~400~~ Luke 1:2,3. It is clear, therefore, that he was not one of the seventy disciples, nor one of the two who went to Emmaus, as has been sometimes

supposed. Nor was he an apostle. By the fathers he is uniformly called the “companion” of the apostles, and especially of Paul.

If he was not one of the apostles, and if he was not one of those expressly commissioned by our Lord to whom the promise of the infallible teaching of the Holy Ghost was given, the question arises by what authority his Gospel and the Acts have a place in the sacred canon, or what evidence is there that he was divinely inspired?

In regard to this question the following considerations may give satisfaction:

- 1.** They were received by all the churches on the same footing as the first three Gospels. There is not a dissenting voice in regard to their authenticity and authority. The value of this argument is this — that if they had been spurious, or without authority, the fathers were the proper persons to know it.
- 2.** They were published during the lives of the apostles Peter, Paul, and John, and were received DURING their lives as books of sacred authority. If the writings of Luke were not inspired, and had no authority, those apostles could easily have destroyed their credit, and we have reason to think it would have been done.
- 3.** It is the united testimony of the fathers that this Gospel was submitted to Paul, and received his express approbation. It was regarded as the substance of his preaching, and if it received his approbation it comes to “us” on the authority of his name. Indeed, if this be the case, it rests on the same authority as the epistles of Paul himself.
- 4.** It bears the same marks of inspiration as the other books. It is simple, pure, yet sublime; there is nothing unworthy of God; and it is elevated far above the writings of any uninspired man.
- 5.** If he was NOT inspired — if, as we suppose, he was a Gentile by birth — and if, as is most clear, he was not an eyewitness of what he records, it is inconceivable that he did not contradict the other evangelists. That he did not “borrow” from them is clear. Nor is it possible to conceive that he could write a book varying in the order of its “arrangement” so much, and adding so many new facts, and repeating so many recorded also by the others, without OFTEN having contradicted what was written by them.

Let any man compare this Gospel with the spurious gospels of the following centuries, and he will be struck with the force of this remark.

**6.** If it be objected that, not being an apostle, he did not come within the “promise” of inspiration (~~John~~ John 14:26; 16:13,14) made to the apostles, it may be replied that this was also the case with Paul; yet no small part of the New Testament is composed of his writings. The evidence of the inspiration of the writings of Luke and Paul is to be judged, not only by that “promise,” but by the early reception of the churches; by the testimony of the fathers as to the judgment of “inspired men” when living, and by the internal character of the works. Luke has all these equally with the other evangelists.

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

## NOTES ON LUKE 1

**☞ Luke 1:1.** *Forasmuch as many* It has been doubted who are referred to here by the word “many.” It seems clear that it could not be the other evangelists, for the gospel by “John” was not yet written, and the word “many” denotes clearly more than “two.” Besides, it is said that they undertook to record what the “eye-witnesses” had delivered to them, so that the writers did not pretend to be eye-witnesses themselves. It is clear, therefore, that other writings are meant than the gospels which we now have, but what they were is a matter of conjecture. What are now known as spurious gospels were written long after Luke wrote his. It is probable that Luke refers to “fragments” of history, or to narratives of “detached” sayings, acts, or parables of our Lord, which had been made and circulated among the disciples and others. His doctrines were original, bold, pure, and authoritative. His miracles had been extraordinary, clear, and awful. His life and death had been peculiar; and it is not improbable — indeed it is highly probable that such broken accounts and narratives of detached facts would be preserved. That this is what Luke means appears farther from **☞ Luke 1:3**, where “he” professes to give a regular, full, and systematic account from the very beginning — “having had perfect understanding of “all things from the very first.” The records of the others — the “many” — were broken and incomplete. His were to be regular and full.

*Taken in hand* Undertaken, attempted.

*To set forth in order* To compose a narrative. It does not refer to the “order” or “arrangement,” but means simply to give a narrative. The word rendered here “in order” is different from that in the third verse, which “has” reference “to order,” or to a full and fair “arrangement” of the principal facts, etc., in the history of our Lord.

*A declarations* A narrative — an account of.

*Which are most surely believed among us* Among Christians — among all the Christians then living. Here we may remark:

1. That Christians of that day had the best of all opportunities for knowing whether those things were true. Many had seen them, and all others had had the account from those who had witnessed them.
2. That infidels now cannot “possibly” be as good judges in the matter as those who lived at the time, and who were thus competent to determine whether these things were true or false.
3. That all Christians do “most surely believe” the truth of the gospel. It is their life, their hope, their all. Nor can they doubt that their Saviour lived, bled, died, rose, and still lives; that he was their atoning sacrifice, and that he is God over all, blessed forever.

~~◀~~**Luke 1:2.** *As they delivered them* As they narrated them. As they gave an account of them.

*From the beginning* From the commencement of these things — that is, from the birth of John, or perhaps from the beginning of the ministry of Jesus.

*Eye-witnesses* Who had seen those things themselves, and who were therefore proper witnesses.

*Ministers of the word* The term “word” here means the “gospel.” Luke never uses it, as John does, to denote the second Person of the Trinity. These eye-witnesses and ministers refer, doubtless, to the seventy disciples, to the apostles, and perhaps to other preachers who had gone forth to proclaim the same things.

~~◀~~**Luke 1:3.** *It seemed good* I thought it best; or, I have also determined. It seemed “to be called for” that there should be a full, authentic, and accurate account of these matters.

*Having had perfect understanding ...* The literal translation of the original here would be, “having exactly traced everything from the first;” or, “having, by diligent and careful investigation, “followed up” everything to the “source,” to obtain an accurate account of the matter.” This much better expresses the idea. Luke did not profess to have seen these things, and this expression is designed to show how he acquired his information. It

was by “tracing up” every account until he became satisfied of its truth. Here observe,

**1.** That in religion God does not set aside our natural faculties. He calls us to look at evidence; to examine accounts; to make up our own minds. Nor will any man be convinced of the truth of religion who does “not” make investigation and set himself seriously to the task.

**2.** We see the nature of Luke’s inspiration. It was consistent with his using his natural faculties or his own powers of mind in investigating the truth. God, by His Holy Spirit, presided over his faculties, directed them, and kept him from error.

*In order* This word does not indicate that the exact order of time would be observed, for that is NOT the way in which he writes; but it means distinctly, particularly, in opposition to the confused and broken accounts to which he had referred before.

*Most excellent Theophilus* The word Theophilus means “a friend of God,” or a pious man; and it has been supposed by some that Luke did not refer to any particular “individual,” but to any man that loved God; but there is no reason for this opinion. Significant names were very common, and there is no good reason to doubt that this was some individual known to Luke. The application of the title “most excellent” proves it further. It would not be given to an unknown man. The title “most excellent” has by some been supposed to be given to express his “character,” but it is rather to be considered as denoting rank or office. It occurs only in three other places in the New Testament, and is there given to men “in office” — to Felix and Festus, <sup><423></sup>Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25. These titles express no quality of the “men,” but belong to the “office;” and we may hence learn that it is not improper for Christians, in giving honor to whom honor is due, to address men in office by their customary titles, even if their moral character be altogether unworthy of it. Who “Theophilus” was is unknown. It is probable that he was some distinguished Roman or Greek who had been converted, who was a friend of Luke, and who had requested an account of these things. It is possible that this preface might have been sent to him as a private letter with the gospel, and Theophilus chose to have them published together.

<sup><423></sup>**Luke 1:4.** *The certainty* Have full evidence or proof of.



*Been instructed* By the preachers of the gospel. The original word is the one from which is derived our word “catechism — been catechized;” but it does not denote here the “manner” in which the instruction was imparted, as it does with us, but simply the fact that he had been taught those things.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:5.** *In the days of Herod* See the notes at ◀◀◀ Matthew 2:1.

*Of the course of Abia* When the priests became so numerous that they could not at once minister at the altar, David divided them into 24 classes or courses, each one of which officiated for a week, 1 Chronicles 24. The class or course (shift) of Abia was the “eighth” in order, ◀◀◀ 1 Chronicles 24:10. Compare ◀◀◀ 2 Chronicles 8:14. The word “course” means the same as “class,” or order. The Greek-based word “Abia” is the same as the Hebrew-based word “Abijah.”

*His wife was of the daughters of Aaron* A descendant of Aaron, the first high priest of the Jews; so that “John the Baptist” was descended, on the father’s and the mother’s side, from priests. Our Saviour was not on either side. John would have been legally entitled to a place among the priests; our Saviour, being of the tribe of Judah, would not.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:6.** *Both righteous* Both “just” or holy. This means here more than external conformity to the law. It is an honorable testimonial of their “piety” toward God.

*Walking in ...* Keeping the commandments. To WALK in the way that God commands is “to obey.”

*Ordinances* Rites and customs which God had ordained or appointed. These words refer to all the duties of religion which were made known to them.

*Blameless* That is, no fault or deficiency could be found in them. They were strict, exact, punctual. Yet this, if it had been mere “external” observance, might have been no proof of piety. Paul, before his conversion, also kept the law “externally” blameless, ◀◀◀ Philippians 3:6. But in the case of Zechariah and Elizabeth it was real love to God and sincere regard for his law.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:7.** *Well stricken in years* Old or advanced in life, so as to render the prospect of having children hopeless.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:8.** *Before God* In the temple, where God dwelt by the symbols of His presence. The temple was regarded by the Jews as the “house” or dwelling of God; and in the “first” temple there was, in the most holy place, a “cloud” called the Shechinah, or a visible sign of the presence of God. It was thus “before God” that Zechariah offered incense.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:9.** *According to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was.* The Jewish writers inform us that it was customary for the priests to divide their daily task by “lot.”

*To burn incense* Incense is an aromatic or white rosin procured from trees, chiefly in Arabia. It is obtained by making incisions in the tree, and the gum flows out. It is distinguished for an especially pleasant “smell” when burned, and was therefore used in ancient worship. It was burned by the priest twice a day (◀◀◀ Exodus 30:7), and it seems to have been emblematic of prayer and praise, or of the grateful offerings of the heart wafted toward heaven. The incense used in the temple was made of stacte, onycha, and galbanum (◀◀◀ Exodus 30:34), with pure frankincense, and it was not lawful for this compound to be used elsewhere than in the house of God.

*Into the temple* See the notes at ◀◀◀ Matthew 21:12. The part of the temple where incense was burned was the “holy place.”

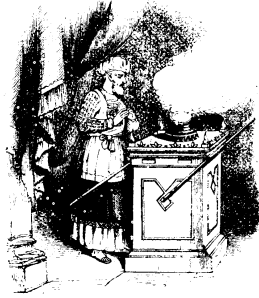
◀◀◀ **Luke 1:10.** *The whole multitude* This was the regular time of evening prayer, and multitudes came up to the temple to worship.

*Praying without* That is, in the courts around the temple, particularly in the court of the women.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:11.** *An angel* An “angel” is a messenger sent from God. See the notes at ◀◀◀ Matthew 1:20. It had now been about 400 years since the time of “Malachi,” and since there had been any divine revelation. During that time the nation was looking for the Messiah, but still with nothing more than the ancient prophecies to direct them. Now that he was about to appear, God sent his messenger to announce his coming, to encourage the hearts of his people, and to prepare them to receive him.

*On the right side ...* The altar of incense stood close by the veil which divided the holy place from the most holy. On the north stood the table of showbread; on the south the golden candlestick. As Zechariah entered, therefore, with his face to the west, the angel would stand on the north, or

near the table of showbread. That table was 18 inches square and 3 feet high. The top, as well as the sides and horns, was overlaid with pure gold, and it was finished around the upper surface with a crown or border of gold. Just below this border, four golden rings were attached to each side of the altar, one near each corner. The staves or rods for bearing the altar passed through these rings, and were made of the same wood with the altar itself, and richly overlaid with the same precious metal. Upon this altar incense was burned every morning and every evening, so that it was literally perpetual, <sup><E08></sup>Exodus 30:8. Neither burnt-sacrifice, nor meat-offering, nor drink-offering was permitted upon this altar; nor was it ever stained with blood except once annually, when the priest made atonement, <sup><E18></sup>Leviticus 16:18,19.



<sup><E12></sup>**Luke 1:12.** *He was troubled* He was alone, in the presence of God. The appearance of the angel was sudden, unexpected, and therefore fearful.

<sup><E13></sup>**Luke 1:13.** *Thy prayer is heard* That is, thy prayer for offspring. This, among the Jews, was an object of intense desire. No prospect was more gloomy to them than that of dying childless, so that their “name should perish.” Special pains, therefore, had been taken in the law to keep up the names of families by requiring a man to marry his brother’s wife, <sup><E25></sup>Deuteronomy 25:5.

<sup><E14></sup>**Luke 1:14.** *Many shall rejoice at his birth* This does not refer so much to the time of his birth as to the subsequent rejoicing. Such will be his “character,” that he will be an honor to the family, and many will rejoice that he lived: or, in other words, he will be a blessing to mankind.

<sup><E15></sup>**Luke 1:15.** *Shall be great* Shall be eminent, or distinguished as a preacher.

*In the sight of the Lord* Greek, “before the Lord.” That is, shall be “really” or “truly” great. God shall regard him as such.

*Shall drink neither wine* The kind of wine commonly used in Judea was a light wine, often not stronger than cider in this country. It was the common drink of all classes of the people. See the notes at <sup><4011></sup>John 2:11. The use of wine was forbidden only to the Nazarite, <sup><4013></sup>Numbers 6:3. It was because John sustained this character that he abstained from the use of wine.

*Strong drink* It is not easy to ascertain precisely what is meant by this word, but we are certain that it does not mean strong drink in our sense of the term. Distilled spirits were not then known. The art of distilling was discovered by an Arabian chemist in the 9th or 10th century; but distilled liquors are not used by Arabians. They banished them at once, as if sensible of their pernicious influence; nor are they used in Eastern nations at all. Europe and America have been the places where this poison has been most extensively used, and there it has beggared and ruined millions, and is yearly sweeping thousands unprepared into a wretched eternity. The “strong drink” among the Jews was probably nothing more than fermented liquors, or a drink obtained from fermented dates, figs, and the juice of the palm, or the lees of wine, mingled with sugar, and having the property of producing intoxication. Many of the Jewish writers say that by the word here translated “strong drink” was meant nothing more than old wine, which probably had the power of producing intoxication. See the notes at <sup><4311></sup>Isaiah 5:11.

*Shall be filled with the Holy Ghost ...* Shall be divinely designated or appointed to this office, and qualified for it by all needful communications of the Holy Spirit. To be “filled” with the Holy Spirit is to be illuminated, sanctified, and guided by his influence. In this place it refers:

1. To the divine intention that he should be set apart to this work, as God designed that Paul should be an apostle from his mother’s womb, <sup><4015></sup>Galatians 1:15.
2. It refers to an actual fitting for the work from the birth by the influence of the Holy Spirit, as was the case with Jeremiah (<sup><4005></sup>Jeremiah 1:5), and with the Messiah himself, <sup><4219></sup>Psalms 22:9,10.

<sup><4016></sup>**Luke 1:16.** *Children of Israel* Jews. Descendants of Israel or Jacob.

*Shall he turn* By repentance. He shall call them from their sins, and persuade them to forsake them, and to seek the Lord their God.

**<B17> Luke 1:17.** *Shall go before him* Before the Messiah. The connection here leads us to suppose that the word “him” refers to the “Lord their God” in the previous verse. If so, then it will follow that the Messiah was the Lord God of Israel — a character abundantly given him in other parts of the New Testament.

*In the spirit and power of Elias* See the notes at **<A14>** Matthew 11:14.

*To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children* In the time of John the Jews were divided into a number of different sects. See the notes at **<A7>** Matthew 3:7. They were opposed violently to each other, and pursued their opposition with great animosity. It was impossible but that this opposition should find its way into families, and divide parents and children from each other. John came that he might allay these animosities and produce better feeling. By directing them ALL to “one Master,” the Messiah, he would divert their attention from the causes of their difference and bring them to union. He would restore peace to their families, and reconcile those parents and children who had chosen different sects, and who had suffered their attachment “to sect” to interrupt the harmony of their households. The effect of true religion on a family will always be to produce harmony. It attaches all the family to “one” great Master, and by attachment to him all minor causes of difference are forgotten.

*And the disobedient to the wisdom of the just* The “disobedient” here are the unbelieving, and hence the impious, the wicked. These he would turn to the wisdom of the just, or to such wisdom as the “just” or pious manifest — that is, to true wisdom.

*To make ready a people ...* To prepare them for his coming by announcing that the Messiah was about to appear, and by calling them to repentance. God has always required people to be pure in a special manner when he was about to appear among them. Thus, the Israelites were required to purify themselves for three days when he was about to come down on Mount Sinai, **<D14>** Exodus 19:14,15. And so, when God the Son was about to appear as the Redeemer, he required that people should “prepare” themselves for his coming. So in view of the future judgment — the second coming of the Son of man — he requires that people should repent, believe, and be pure, **<A7>** 1 Peter 4:7; **<A11>** 2 Peter 3:11,12.

**Luke 1:18.** *Whereby shall I know this?* The thing was improbable, and he desired “evidence” that it would take place. The testimony of an “angel,” and in such a place, should have been proof enough; but people are slow to believe the testimony of heavenly messengers. As a consequence of not believing, he was struck mute.

**Luke 1:19.** *I am Gabriel* The word “Gabriel” is made up of two Hebrew words, and signifies “man of God.” This angel is mentioned as having been deputed to inform “Daniel” that his prayers were heard. See the notes at <sup>2016</sup>Daniel 8:16; 9:21.

*That stand in the presence of God* To stand in the presence of one is a phrase denoting “honor” or “favor.” To be admitted to the presence of a king, or to be with him, was a token of favor. So to stand before God signifies merely that he was honored or favored by God. He was permitted to come near him, and to see much of his glory. Compare <sup>1008</sup>1 Kings 10:8; 12:6; 17:1; <sup>1029</sup>Proverbs 22:29.

*And am sent ...* The angels are “ministering spirits” sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,” <sup>3007</sup>Hebrews 1:7,14. They delight to do the will of God, and one way of doing that will is by aiding his children here, by succoring the afflicted, and by defending those who are in danger. There is no more absurdity or impropriety in supposing that angels may render such aid, than there is in supposing that good people may assist one another; and there can be no doubt that it affords high pleasure to the angels of God to be “permitted” to aid those who are treading the dangerous and trying path which leads to eternity. Holiness is the same as benevolence, and holy beings seek and love opportunities to do good to their fellow creatures. In the eye of holy beings all God’s creatures are parts of one great family, and whenever they can do them good they rejoice in the opportunity, at any sacrifice.

*These glad tidings* This good news respecting the birth of a son.

**Luke 1:20.** *Because thou believest not ...* This was both a sign and a judgment — a sign that he had come from God, and that the thing would be fulfilled: and a judgment for not giving credit to what he had said. There is no sin in the sight of God more aggravated than unbelief. When GOD speaks; man should believe; nor can he that “will not” believe escape punishment. God speaks only truth, and we should believe Him. God

speaks only what is for our good, and it is right that we should suffer if we do not credit what He says.

◀102▶ **Luke 1:21.** *The people waited* That is, beyond the usual time.

*Marvelled* Wondered. The priest, it is said, was not accustomed to remain in the temple more than half an hour commonly. Having remained on this occasion a longer time, the people became apprehensive of his safety, and wondered what had happened to him.

◀102▶ **Luke 1:22.** *Had seen a vision* The word “vision” means “sight, appearance,” or “spectre,” and is commonly applied to spirits, or to beings from another world. When he came out of the temple, it is probable that they “suspected” that something of this nature had detained him there, and that, on inquiry of him, he signified by a nod that this was the case. He was unable to speak, and they had no way of “perceiving” it but by such a sign. On the word “vision,” see the notes at ▶100▶ Isaiah 1:1.

*For he beckoned unto them* That is, by beckoning unto them, or by a sign, he informed them of what he had seen.

◀102▶ **Luke 1:23.** *As soon as the days of his ministration ...* As soon as he had fulfilled the duties of the week. It might have been supposed that the extraordinary occurrence in the temple, together with his own calamity, would have induced him at once to leave this place and return home; but his duty was in the temple. His piety prompted him to remain there in the service of God. He was not unfitted for burning incense by his dumbness, and it was not proper for him to leave his post. It is the duty of ministers of religion to remain at their work until they are unfitted for it, and unable to serve God in their profession. Then they **MUST** retire. But until that time, he that for trifling causes forsakes his post is guilty of unfaithfulness to his Master.

◀102▶ **Luke 1:24.** *Hid herself* Did not go forth into public, and concealed her condition. This might have been done that she might spend her time more entirely in giving praise to God for his mercies, and that she might have the fullest proof of the accomplishment of the promise before she appeared in public or spoke of the mercies of God.

◀102▶ **Luke 1:25.** *Thus* In this merciful manner.

*To take away my reproach* Among the Jews, a family of children was counted a signal blessing, an evidence of the favor of God, <sup><1339></sup>Psalm 113:9; 128:3; <sup><2001></sup>Isaiah 4:1; 44:3,4; <sup><1339></sup>Leviticus 26:9. To be “barren,” therefore, or to be destitute of children, was considered a “reproach” or a “disgrace,” <sup><0006></sup>1 Samuel 1:6.

<sup><0026></sup>**Luke 1:26.** *In the sixth month* The sixth month after Elizabeth’s conception.

*A city of Galilee named Nazareth* See the notes at <sup><4022></sup>Matthew 2:22,23.

<sup><0027></sup>**Luke 1:27.** *To a virgin espoused ...* See the notes at <sup><4018></sup>Matthew 1:18,19. Compare the notes at <sup><2074></sup>Isaiah 7:14.

*House of David* Family of David, or descendants of David.

<sup><0028></sup>**Luke 1:28.** *Hail* This word of salutation is equivalent to “Peace be with thee,” or “Joy be with thee;” a form of speech implying that she was signally favored, and expressing joy at meeting her.

*Highly favoured* By being the mother of the long-expected Messiah — the mother of the Redeemer of mankind. Long had he been predicted; long had the eyes of the nation been turned to him, and long had his coming been an object of intense desire. To be reckoned among his “ancestors” was accounted sufficient honor for even Abraham and David. But now the happy “individual” was designated who was to be his mother; and on Mary, a poor virgin of Nazareth, was to come this honor, which would have rendered infinitely illustrious any of the daughters of Adam the honor of giving birth to the world’s Redeemer and the Son of God.

*The Lord is with thee* The word “is” is not in the original, and the passage may be rendered either “the Lord “is” with thee,” or “the Lord be” with thee,” implying the prayer of the angel that all blessings from God might descend and rest upon her.

*Blessed art thou among women* This passage is equivalent to saying “thou art the most happy of women.”

<sup><0029></sup>**Luke 1:29.** *Troubled at his saying* Disturbed or perplexed at what he said. It was so unexpected, so sudden, so extraordinary, and was so high an honor, that she was filled with anxious thoughts, and did not know what to make of it.



*Cast in her mind* Thought, or revolved in her mind.

*What manner of salutation* What this salutation could mean.

<403> **Luke 1:30.** *Fear not, Mary* Do not be alarmed at this appearance of an angel. He only comes to announce to you good tidings. Similar language was addressed by an angel to Joseph. See the notes at <402> Matthew 1:20.

*Thou hast found favour with God* Eminent favor or mercy in being selected to be the mother of the Messiah.

<403> **Luke 1:31.** *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb* See the notes at <374> Isaiah 7:14.

*And shalt call his name Jesus* A Saviour. See the notes at <402> Matthew 1:21. All this was announced, also, by an angel to Joseph, after this visitation to Mary. See the notes at <402> Matthew 1:20,21.

<403> **Luke 1:32.** *He shall be great* There is undoubted reference in this passage to <306> Isaiah 9:6,7. By his being “great” is meant he shall be distinguished or illustrious; great in power, in wisdom, in dominion on earth and in heaven.

*Shall be called* This is the same as to say he “shall be” the Son, etc. The Hebrews often used this form of speech. See <413> Matthew 21:13.

*The Highest* God, who is infinitely exalted; called THE Highest, because He is exalted over all his creatures on earth and in heaven. See <407> Mark 5:7.

*The throne* The kingdom; or shall appoint him as the lineal successor of David in the kingdom.

*His father David* David is called his father because Jesus was lineally descended from him. See <400> Matthew 1:1. The promise to David was, that there should “not fail” a man to sit on his throne, or that his throne should be perpetual (<400> 1 Kings 2:4; 8:25; 9:5; <466> 2 Chronicles 6:16), and the promise was fulfilled by exalting Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour, and the perpetual King of his people.

<403> **Luke 1:33.** *Over the house of Jacob* The house of Jacob means the same thing as the “family” of Jacob, or the descendants of Jacob — that is,

the children of Israel. This was the name by which the ancient people of God were known, and it is the same as saying that he would reign over his own church and people forever. This he does by giving them laws, by defending them, and by guiding them; and this he will do forever in the kingdom of his glory.

*Of his kingdom there shall be no end* He shall reign among his people on earth until the end of time, and be their king forever in heaven. HIS is the only kingdom that shall never have an end; HE the only King that shall never lay aside his diadem and robes, and that shall never die. “He “the only King that can defend us from all our enemies, sustain us in death, and reward us in eternity. O how important, then, to have an interest in his kingdom! and how unimportant, compared with “his” favor, is the favor of all earthly monarchs!

◀1015▶ **Luke 1:35.** *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee* See ▶1010▶ Matthew 1:20.

*The power of the Highest ...* This evidently means that the body of Jesus would be created by the direct power of God. It was not by ordinary generation; but, as the Messiah came to redeem sinners — to make atonement for “others,” and not for himself it was necessary that his human nature should be pure, and free from the corruption of the fall. God therefore prepared him a body by direct creation that should be pure and holy. See ▶5005▶ Hebrews 10:5.

*That holy thing ...* That holy progeny or child.

*Shall be called the Son of God* This is spoken in reference to the human nature of Christ, and this passage proves, beyond controversy, that “one” reason why Jesus was called the Son of God was because he was begotten in a supernatural manner. He is also called the “Son of God” on account of his resurrection, ▶5004▶ Romans 1:4; ▶4433▶ Acts 13:33, compared with ▶4417▶ Psalm 2:7.

◀1015▶ **Luke 1:36,37.** *Thy cousin Elizabeth ...* The case of Elizabeth is mentioned to inspire Mary with confidence, and to assure her that what was now promised would be fulfilled. It was almost as improbable that Elizabeth should have a child at her time of life, as it was that Mary should under the circumstances promised.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:38.** *And Mary said, Behold the handmaid ...* This was an expression of resignation to the will of God, and of faith in the promise. To be the “handmaid of the Lord” is to be submissive and obedient, and is the same as saying, “I fully credit all that is said, and am perfectly ready to obey all the commands of the Lord.”

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:39.** *And Mary arose* The word “arose” here is equivalent to “setting out,” or starting on a journey.

*The hill country* The region in the vicinity of Jerusalem, commonly called the hill country of Judea.

*City of Juda* What city is meant is not known. Some have supposed it to be Jerusalem, others Hebron; but all is conjecture. It was probably a Levitical city, and the residence of Zechariah when he was not employed in the temple.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:40.** *Saluted Elizabeth* Expressed great joy and gratification at seeing her, and used the customary tokens of affectionate salutation.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:41.** *Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost* The meaning of this seems to be that she was filled with joy; with a disposition to praise God; with a prophetic spirit, or a knowledge of the character of the child that should be born of her. All these were produced by the Holy Spirit.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:42.** *Blessed art thou among women* She here repeated nearly the words of the angel to Mary, esteeming it to be the highest honor among mothers to be the mother of the Messiah. See the notes at ◀◀◀ Luke 1:28.

◀◀◀ **Luke 1:43.** *And whence is this to me?* An expression of humility. Why is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me, as if to honor me?

*Mother of my Lord* The word “Lord” sometimes denotes “divinity,” and sometimes superior, master, teacher, or governor. It was given by the Jews to their expected Messiah; but whether they understood it as denoting divinity cannot now be ascertained. It is clear only that Elizabeth used it as denoting great dignity and honor,

**Luke 1:45.** *Blessed is she that believed* That is, “Mary” who believed what the angel spoke to her. She was blessed not only in the act of believing, but because the thing promised would certainly be fulfilled.

From these expressions of Elizabeth we may learn:

1. That the spirit of prophecy had not entirely ceased among the Jews.
2. That the Holy Spirit is the source of light, comfort, and joy.
3. That everything about the birth of Jesus was remarkable, and that he must have been more than a mere man.
4. That the prospect of the coming of the Messiah was one of great joy and rejoicing to ancient saints; and,
5. That it was a high honor to be “the mother” of him that should redeem mankind.

It is from “that honor” that the Roman Catholics have determined that it is right to worship the Virgin Mary and to offer prayers to her — an act of worship as idolatrous as any that could be offered to a creature. Because:

1. It is not anywhere commanded in the Bible.
2. It is expressly forbidden to worship any being but God, <sup><0244></sup>Exodus 34:14; 20:4,5; <sup><0613></sup>Deuteronomy 6:13,14; <sup><2610></sup>Isaiah 45:20.
3. It is idolatry to worship or pray to a creature.
4. It is absurd to suppose that the Virgin Mary can be in all places at the same time to hear the prayers of thousands at once, or to aid them. There is no idolatry more gross, and of course more wicked, than to worship the creature more than the Creator, <sup><0125></sup>Romans 1:25.

**Luke 1:46.** *My soul doth magnify the Lord* To “magnify” means to “make great,” and then to “extol,” to “praise,” to “celebrate.” It does not mean here strictly to “make great,” but to increase “in our estimation” — that is, to praise or extol. See <sup><0343></sup>Psalms 34:3; <sup><0026></sup>2 Samuel 7:26.

**Luke 1:47.** *In God my Saviour* God is called “Saviour,” as he saves people from sin and death. He was “Mary’s” Saviour, as he had redeemed her soul and given her a title to eternal life; and she rejoiced for that, and

especially for his mercy in honoring her by her being made the mother of the Messiah.

**Luke 1:48.** *He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaid*

Literally, he has looked upon the low or humble condition of his handmaid. That is, notwithstanding her humble rank and poverty, he has shown her favor. And this example abundantly teaches what is elsewhere fully taught in the Bible, that God is not a respecter of persons; that he is not influenced, in conferring favors, by wealth, honor, or office, **Romans 2:11; 10:11,12.** He seeks the humble and the contrite; he imparts his rich blessings to those who feel that they need them, and who will bless him for them, **Psalm 138:6; Isaiah 57:15.**

*From henceforth* Hereafter, or in consequence of this.

*All generations* All people. All posterity.

*Call me blessed* Pronounce me highly favored or happy in being the mother of the Messiah. It is therefore right to consider her as highly favored or happy; but this certainly does not warrant us to worship her or to pray to her. Abraham was blessed in being the father of the faithful; Paul in being the apostle to the Gentiles; Peter in first preaching the gospel to them; but who would think of worshipping or praying to Abraham, Paul, or Peter?

**Luke 1:49.** *He that is mighty* God.

*Hath done to me great things* Hath conferred on me great favors and distinguished mercies.

*And holy is his name* This is an expression of Mary's feelings, desiring to bestow on God all honor and praise. As the highest honor, she declared that his "name" was "holy" — that is, that God was free from sin, injustice, and impurity. The "name" of God is often put for God Himself. The proper name of God is JEHOVAH, a word expressive of His "essential being," derived from the word "to be," **Exodus 3:14; 6:3; Psalm 83:18.** That name is holy; is to be regarded as holy; and to make a common or profane use of it is solemnly forbidden, **Exodus 20:7.**

**Luke 1:50.** *His mercy* Favor shown to the miserable and the guilty.

*Is on them* Is shown or manifested to them.

*That fear him* That “reverence” or honor Him. One kind of fear is that which a servant has of a cruel master, or which a man has of a precipice, the plague, or death. This is not the “fear” which we ought to have toward God. It is the fear which a dutiful child has of a kind and virtuous father a fear of injuring his feelings; of dishonoring him by our life; of doing anything which he would disapprove. It is on those who have SUCH fear of God that his mercy descends. This is the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, <sup><4910></sup>Psalm 111:10; <sup><4938></sup>Job 28:28.

*From generation to generation* From one age to another — that is, it is unceasing; it continues and abounds. But it means also more than this. It means that God’s mercy will descend on the children and children’s children of those that fear him and keep his commandments, <sup><1216></sup>Exodus 20:6. In this respect it is an unspeakable privilege to be descended from pious parents; to have been the subject of their prayers, and to have received their blessing. It is also a matter of vast guilt NOT to copy their example and to walk in their steps. If God is “disposed” to show mercy to thousands of generations, how heavy will be the condemnation if the children of pious parents do not avail themselves of it and early seek his favor!

<sup><4015></sup>**Luke 1:51.** *Hath showed strength with his arm* The “arm” is the symbol of strength. The expression in this and the subsequent verses has no particular reference to his mercy to MARY. From a contemplation of His goodness to HER, she enlarges her views to a contemplation of His goodness and power IN GENERAL, and to a celebration of the praises of God for ALL that he has done to all people. This is the nature of true piety. It does not terminate in thinking of God’s mercy toward OURSELVES. It thinks of OTHERS, and praises God that OTHERS also are made partakers of His mercy, and that His goodness is manifested to all His works.

*He scattereth the proud* He hath often done it in time of battle and war. When the proud Assyrian, Egyptian, or Babylonian had come against the people of God, He had often scattered them and driven away their armies.

*In the imagination of their hearts* Those who were lifted up or exalted in their own view. Those who “thought themselves” to be superior to other men.

<sup><4015></sup>**Luke 1:52.** *Hath put down the mighty* The “mighty” here denotes princes, kings, or conquerors. See <sup><23412></sup>Isaiah 14:12-14.

*Their seats* Their “thrones,” or the places where they sat in pomp and power.

*Exalted them* Raised them up, or placed them in the seats of those who had been removed.

*Low degree* Low or humble birth and condition in life. This probably has reference to the case of her ancestor David. Mary was celebrating the mercies of God to HERSELF, to her FAMILY, and of course to her ancestors. It was natural to allude to that great event in their history when Saul was overcome in battle, and when David was taken from the sheepfold and placed on the throne. The origin of illustrious families is often obscure. People are often raised by industry, talent, and the favor of God, from very humble stations — from the farm or mechanic’s shop — to places of great trust in the church and state. They who are thus elevated, if imbued with right feelings, will not despise their former employments nor their former companions, nor will they esteem their parents or friends the less BECAUSE they still remain in the same rank in life. No conduct is more odious and unchristian than to be ashamed of our birth or the humble circumstances of our friends.

~~4015~~ **Luke 1:53.** *He hath filled the hungry with good things* This is a celebration of the general mercy of God. He hath daily fed the poor, the needy, and those who came to Him with humble hearts.

*The rich he hath sent ...* While the poor come to him for a supply of their daily wants, the rich come not that their necessities should be supplied, but come with lofty hearts, and insatiable desires that their riches may be increased. When this is the case, God not unfrequently not only “withholds” what they ask, but he takes their riches away by fire, or flood, or disappointments, and sends them away empty, ~~4016~~ Proverbs 23:5. It is better to be poor and go to God for our daily bread, than to be rich and forget our dependence on Him, and to seek only a great increase of our property.

~~4015~~ **Luke 1:54.** *Hath holpen* Hath helped or assisted. The word rendered “holpen” denotes properly, “to take hold of one, to help him up when he is in danger of falling,” and here means that God had succored his people when they were feeble, and were in danger of falling or being overthrown.

*His servant Israel* His people the Israelites, or those who truly revered him and kept His commandments. See <sup><2410></sup>Isaiah 41:8,9; <sup><2810></sup>Hosea 11:1.

*In remembrance of his mercy* Or that His mercy may be remembered.

<sup><015></sup>**Luke 1:55.** *As he spake to our fathers ...* That is, He has dealt mercifully with the children of Israel, according as He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The promise PARTICULARLY here referred to is that respecting the MESSIAH which was now about to be fulfilled; but there is no doubt that there was also included the promises respecting all the other mercies which had been conferred on the children of Israel. See <sup><0217></sup>Genesis 22:17,18.

*Forever* These words are to be referred to the preceding verse — “in remembrance of His mercy” forever, “as he spake,” etc. They denote that the “mercy of God” manifested to His people should be had in everlasting remembrance.

There is a striking similarity between this song of praise by Mary and that spoken by “Hannah,” <sup><0102></sup>1 Samuel 2:2-10. There are few pieces of “poetry” — for this is poetry, and almost the only poetry in the New Testament — more beautiful than this. It is the language of a humble, thankful, pious, female heart praising God:

1. For his mercy to her, <sup><0146></sup>Luke 1:46-49;
2. For his mercy to all people — his “general” goodness, <sup><0150></sup>Luke 1:50-53; and,
3. His special goodness to his people, <sup><0154></sup>Luke 1:54,55.

<sup><0159></sup>**Luke 1:59.** *On the eighth day* This was the day on which it was required to circumcise children, <sup><0210></sup>Genesis 21:4.

*And they called him Zacharias* The name of the child was commonly given at the time of the circumcision, <sup><0210></sup>Genesis 21:3,4. The name “commonly” given to the eldest son was that of the father.

<sup><0160></sup>**Luke 1:60.** *Shall be called John* This was the name which the angel had said should be given to him, of which Zechariah had probably informed Elizabeth by writing.



**Luke 1:61.** *There is none of thy kindred ...* The Jewish tribes and families were kept distinct. To do this, and to avoid confusion in their genealogical tables, they probably gave only those names which were found among their ancestors. Another reason for this, common to all people, is the respect which is felt for honored parents and ancestors.

**Luke 1:63.** *He asked* That is, by signs.

*A writing table* The table denoted by this word was usually made of wood and covered with wax. The ancients used to write on such tables, as they had not the use of paper. The instrument used for writing was an iron pen or STYLE, by which they MARKED on the wax which covered the table. Sometimes the writing-table was made entirely of lead.

**Luke 1:64.** *His mouth was opened ...* That is, he was enabled to speak. For nine months he had been mute, and it is probable that they supposed that he had been afflicted with a paralytic affection, and that he would not recover. Hence, their amazement when he spoke. For one act of disbelief all this calamity had come upon him, and it had not come without effect. With true gratitude he offered praise to God for the birth of a son, and for his restoration to the blessings of speech.

**Luke 1:65.** *And fear came ...* The word “fear” often denotes ‘religious reverence.’ The remarkable circumstances attending the birth of John, and the fact that Zechariah was suddenly restored to speech, convinced them that God was there, and filled their minds with awe and veneration.

**Luke 1:66.** *What manner of child ...* Such were the remarkable circumstances of his birth that they apprehended that he would be distinguished as a prophet, or that great events would result from his life.

*The hand of the Lord was with him* The word “hand” is used to denote “aid, protection, favor.” We stretch out the hand to aid those whom we wish to help. The expression here means that God “aided” him, “protected” him, or showed him favor. Some think that these words are a part of the speech of the neighbors — “What manner of child shall this be? God is so evidently with him!”

**Luke 1:67.** *Filled with the Holy Ghost* See <sup><015></sup>Luke 1:15.

*And prophesied* The word “prophesy” means:

1. To foretell future events.
2. To celebrate the praises of God (see <sup><9105></sup>1 Samuel 10:5,6; <sup><1182></sup>1 Kings 18:29); then to,
3. Teach or preach the gospel, etc. See the notes at <sup><5126></sup>Romans 12:6.

This song of Zechariah partakes of all. It is principally employed in the praises of God, but it also predicts the future character and preaching of John.

<sup><206></sup>**Luke 1:68.** *Blessed* See the notes at <sup><418></sup>Matthew 5:3.

*Hath visited* The word here rendered “visited” means properly “to look upon;” then to look upon in order “to know the state of anyone;” then to visit for the purpose of “aiding those who need aid,” or alleviating misery. Compare <sup><253></sup>Matthew 25:43. In this sense it is used here. God “looked upon” the world — he saw it miserable — he came to relieve it, and brought salvation.

*And redeemed* That is, was “about to redeem,” or had given the pledge that he “would redeem.” This was spoken under the belief that the Messiah, “the Redeemer,” was about to appear, and would certainly accomplish his work. The literal translation of this passage is, “He hath made a “ransom” for his people. A “ransom” was the “price” paid to deliver a captive taken in war. A is a prisoner taken in war by B. B has a right to detain him as a prisoner by the laws of war, but C offers B a “price” if he will release A and suffer him to go at liberty. The price which he pays, and which must be “satisfactory” to B — that is, be a “reason” to B why he should release him is called a “price” or “ransom.” Men are sinners. They are bound over to just punishment by the law. The law is holy, and God, as a just governor, must see that the law is honored and the wicked punished; but if anything can be done which will have the same “good effect” as the punishment of the sinner, or which will be an “equivalent” for it — that is, be of equal value to the universe — God may consistently release him. If he can show the same hatred of sin, and deter others from sinning, and secure the purity of the sinner, the sinner may be released. Whatever will accomplish “this” is called a “ransom,” because it is, in the eye of God, a sufficient “reason” why the sinner should not be punished; it is an equivalent for his sufferings, and God is satisfied. The

“blood of Jesus” — that is, his DEATH in the place of sinners constitutes such a ransom. It is in their stead. It is for them. It is equivalent to their punishment. It is not itself a “punishment,” for that always supposes “personal crime,” but it is what God is pleased to ACCEPT in the place of the eternal sufferings of the sinner. The king of the “Locrians” made a law that an adulterer should be punished with the loss of his eyes. His “son” was the first offender, and the father decreed that his son should lose ONE eye, and HE HIMSELF one also. This was the “ransom.” He showed his “love,” his regard for the honor of his law, and the determination that the guilty should not escape. So God gave his Son a “ransom” to show his love, his regard to justice, and his willingness to save people; and his Son, in his death, was a ransom. He is often so called in the New Testament, <sup><118></sup>Matthew 20:28; <sup><115></sup>Mark 10:45; <sup><124></sup>Titus 2:14; <sup><112></sup>Hebrews 9:12. For a fuller view of the nature of a ransom, see the notes at <sup><124></sup>Romans 3:24,25.

<sup><119></sup>**Luke 1:69.** *And hath raised up a horn* A horn is a symbol of strength. The figure is taken from the fact that in horned animals the strength lies in the “horn.” Particularly, the great power of the rhinoceros or unicorn is manifested by the use of a single horn of great “strength,” placed on the head near the end of the nose. When the sacred writers, therefore, speak of great strength they often use the word “horn,” <sup><114></sup>Psalms 148:14; <sup><117></sup>Deuteronomy 33:17; <sup><100></sup>Daniel 7:7,8; 7:21. The word salvation, connected here with the word “horn,” means that this “strength,” or this mighty Redeemer, was able to save. It is possible that this whole figure may be taken from the Jewish “altar.” On each of the four corners of the altar there was an eminence or small projection called a “horn.” To this persons might flee for safety when in danger, and be safe, <sup><115></sup>1 Kings 1:50; 2:28. Compare the notes at <sup><111></sup>Luke 1:11. So the Redeemer “may be” called the “horn of salvation,” because those who flee to him are safe.

*In the house* In the family, or among the descendants of David.

<sup><110></sup>**Luke 1:70.** *His holy prophets ...* All the prophets are said to have referred to the Messiah, from the beginning of the world. The most striking of these were Jacob (<sup><110></sup>Genesis 49:10); Moses (<sup><115></sup>Deuteronomy 18:15); Isaiah (<sup><116></sup>Isaiah 9:6,7; 53).

*Since the world began* This is not to be taken literally, for there were no prophets “immediately after” the creation. It is merely a GENERAL expression, designed to denote that ALL the prophets had predicted the

coming of the Messiah. Compare the notes at <sup><0207></sup>Luke 24:27; <sup><6990></sup>Revelation 19:10.

<sup><0071></sup>**Luke 1:71.** *Saved from our enemies* The enemies of “man” are his sins, his carnal propensities, his lusts, and the great adversary Satan and his angels, who continually seek to destroy him. From “these” the Messiah came to save us. Compare <sup><0085></sup>Genesis 3:15; <sup><0021></sup>Matthew 1:21.

*The hand* The power; or to save us from them.

<sup><0072></sup>**Luke 1:72.** *To perform the mercy* To show the mercy promised. The expression in the “original” is, “To make mercy with our fathers” — that is, to show kindness to our fathers; and the propriety of it is founded on the fact that mercy to “children” is regarded as kindness to the “parent.” Blessing the “children” was blessing the “nation;” was fulfilling the promises made to the fathers, and “showing” that he regarded them in mercy.

*His holy covenant* The word “covenant” means compact or agreement. This is in use among people. It implies equality in the parties; freedom from constraint; freedom from previous obligation to do the thing now covenanted; and freedom from obligation to enter into a compact, unless a man chooses so to do. Such a transaction evidently can never take place between man and God, for they are not equal. Man is not at liberty to “decline” what God proposes, and he is under obligation to do “all” that God commands. When the word “covenant,” therefore, is used in the Bible, it means sometimes a “command;” Sometimes a “promise;” sometimes a “regular law” — as “the covenant of the day and night;” and sometimes the way in which God dispenses mercy — that is, by the old and new covenants. In the place before us it means “the promise” made to Abraham, as the following verses clearly show.

<sup><0073></sup>**Luke 1:73.** *The oath* This oath is recorded in <sup><01216></sup>Genesis 22:16,17. It was an oath in which God swore by himself (because he could swear by no greater, <sup><3063></sup>Hebrews 6:13,14) that he would surely bless Abraham and his posterity. That promise was now to be entirely fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah.

<sup><0074></sup>**Luke 1:74.** *Might serve him* Might obey, honor, and worship him. This was regarded as a “favor.” This was what was promised, and for this Zechariah praised God.

*Without fear* Fear of death, of spiritual enemies, or of external foes. In the sure hope of God's "eternal" favor beyond the grave.

◀175▶ **Luke 1:75.** *In holiness ...* In piety and strict justice.

*Before him* In the presence of God. Performed as in his presence, and with the full consciousness that he sees the heart. The "holiness" was not to be merely EXTERNAL, but spiritual, internal, pure, such as "God" would see and approve.

*All the days of our life* To death. True religion increases and expands until death.

◀176▶ **Luke 1:76.** *And thou, child ...* Zechariah predicts in this and the following verses the dignity, the employment, and the success of John. He declares what would be the subject of his preaching, and what his success.

*Prophet of the Highest* Prophet of God; a prophet "appointed by God" to declare his will, and to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

*The face of the Lord* The Lord Jesus, the Messiah, that was about to appear. To go before "the face of one" is the same as to go IMMEDIATELY before one, or to be IMMEDIATELY followed by another.

*To prepare his ways* This is taken from <sup>◀240B▶</sup> Isaiah 40:3. See the notes at <sup>◀18B▶</sup> Matthew 3:3, and at <sup>◀240B▶</sup> Isaiah 40:3.

◀177▶ **Luke 1:77.** *To give knowledge of salvation* Knowledge of the "way" of salvation: that it was provided, and that the author of salvation was about to appear.

*By the remission of their sins* The word remission means pardon or forgiveness. It implies that God will treat the sinner AS IF he had not committed the sin. The idea here is, that the "salvation" about to be offered was that which was connected with the pardon of sin. There can be no other. God cannot treat people as his friends unless they come to him by repentance and obtain forgiveness. When that is obtained, which he is always disposed to grant, they can be treated with kindness and mercy.

◀178▶ **Luke 1:78.** *Whereby the dayspring ...* The word "dayspring" means the morning light, the aurora, the rising of the sun. It is called the dayspring "from on high" because the light of the gospel shines forth from heaven. God is its Author, and through His mercy it shines upon people. There is

here, doubtless, a reference to <sup><2401></sup>Isaiah 60:1,2; indeed, almost the very words of that place are quoted. Compare also <sup><6216></sup>Revelation 22:16.

<sup><017></sup>**Luke 1:79.** *To give light ...* See the notes at <sup><4046></sup>Matthew 4:16.

*To guide our feet ...* The figure in these verses is taken from travelers, who, being overtaken by night, know not what to do, and who wait patiently for the morning light, that they may know which way to go. So man wandered. So he became benighted. So he sat in the shadow of death. So he knew not which way to go until the Sun of righteousness arose, and THEN the light shone brightly on his way, and the road was open to the promised land of rest — to heaven.

This song of Zechariah is exceedingly beautiful. It expresses with elegance the great points of the plan of redemption, and the mercy of God in providing that plan. That mercy is “great.” It is worthy of praise — of our highest, loftiest songs of thanksgiving; for we were in the shadow of death — sinful, wretched, wandering — and the light arose, the gospel came, and people may rejoice in hope of eternal life.

<sup><080></sup>**Luke 1:80.** *Waxed strong in spirit* That is, in courage, understanding, and purposes of good, fitting him for his future work. The word “wax” means to “increase, to grow,” from an old Saxon word.

*In the deserts* In Hebron, and in the hill country where his father resided. He dwelt in obscurity, and was not known publicly by the people.

*Until the day of his showing* Until he entered on his public ministry, as recorded in Matthew 3 — that is, probably, until he was about 30 years of age. See Luke 3.

## NOTES ON LUKE 2

◀111▶ **Luke 2:1.** *In those days* About the time of the birth of John and of Christ.

*A decree* A law commanding a thing to be done.

*Caesar Augustus* This was the Roman emperor. His first name was Octavianus. He was the nephew of Julius Caesar, and obtained the empire after his death. He took the name “Augustus — i.e., august,” or honorable — as a compliment to his own greatness; and from him the month “August,” which was before called “Sextilis,” received its name.

*That all the world* There has been much difficulty respecting this passage, from the fact that no such taxing of “all the world” is mentioned by ancient writers. It should have been rendered “the whole land” — that is, the whole land of Palestine. The “whole land” is mentioned to show that it was not “Judea” only, but that it included also “Galilee,” the place where Joseph and Mary dwelt. That the passage refers only to the land of Palestine, and not to the whole world, or to all the Roman empire, is clear from the following considerations:

1. The fact that no such taxing is mentioned as pertaining to any other country.
2. The account of Luke demands only that it should be understood of Palestine, or the country where the Saviour was born.
3. The words “world” and “whole world” are not unfrequently used in this limited sense as confined to a single country.

See ▶111▶ Matthew 4:8, where Satan is said to have shown to Christ all the kingdoms of “the world,” that is, of the land of Judea. See also ▶111▶ Joshua 2:3; ▶111▶ Luke 4:25 (Greek); ▶111▶ Luke 21:26; ▶111▶ Acts 11:28.

*Should be taxed* Our word “tax” means to levy and raise money for the use of the government. This is not the meaning of the original word here. It means rather to “enroll,” or take a “list” of the citizens, with their employments, the amount of their property, etc., equivalent to what was meant by census. Judea was at that time tributary to Rome. It paid taxes to the Roman emperor; and, though Herod was “king,” yet he held his

appointment under the Roman emperor, and was subject in most matters to him. Farther, as this “enrolment” was merely to ascertain the numbers and property of the Jews, it is probable that they were very willing to be enrolled in this manner; and hence we hear that they went willingly, without tumult — contrary to the common way when they were “to be taxed.”

~~¶~~ **Luke 2:2.** *And this taxing was first made ...* This verse has given as much perplexity, perhaps, as any one in the New Testament. The difficulty consists in the fact that “Cyrenius,” or “Quirinius,” was not governor of Syria until 12 or 15 years after the birth of Jesus. Jesus was born during the reign of Herod. At that time “Varus” was president of Syria. Herod was succeeded by “Archelaus,” who reigned eight or nine years; and AFTER he was removed, Judea was annexed to the province of Syria, and Cyrenius was sent as the governor (Josephus, “Ant.,” b. xvii. 5). The difficulty has been to reconcile this account with that in Luke. Various attempts have been made to do this. The one that seems most satisfactory is that proposed by Dr. Lardner. According to his view, the passage here means, “This was the “first” census of Cyrenius, governor of Syria.” It is called the “first” to distinguish it from one “afterward” taken by Cyrenius, ~~¶~~ Acts 5:37. It is said to be the census taken by “Cyrenius; governor of Syria; “not that he was “then” governor, but that it was taken by him who was afterward familiarly known as governor. “Cyrenius, qovernor of Syria,” was the name by which the man was known when Luke wrote his gospel, and it was not improper to say that the taxing was made by Cyrenius, the governor of Syria,” though he might not have been actually governor for many years afterward. Thus, Herodian says that to Marcus “the emperor” were born several daughters and two sons,” though several of those children were born to him “before” he was emperor. Thus, it is not improper to say that General Washington saved Braddock’s army, or was engaged in the old French war, though he was not actually made “general” until many years afterward. According to this Augustus sent Cyrenius, an active, enterprising man, to take the census. At that time he was a Roman senator. Afterward, he was made governor of the same country, and received the title which Luke gives him.

*Syria* The region of country north of Palestine, and lying between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates. “Syria,” called in the Hebrew “Aram,” from a son of Shem (~~¶~~ Genesis 10:22), in its largest acceptation extended from the Mediterranean and the river Cydnus to the Euphrates, and from



Mount Taurus on the north to Arabia and the border of Egypt on the south. It was divided into “Syria Palestina,” including Canaan and Phoenicia; “Coele-Syria,” the tract of country lying between two ridges of Mount Lebanon and Upper Syria. The last was known as “Syria” in the restricted sense, or as the term was commonly used.

The leading features in the physical aspect of Syria consist of the great mountainous chains of Lebanon, or Libanus and Anti-Libanus, extending from north to south, and the great desert lying on the southeast and east. The valleys are of great fertility, and yield abundance of grain, vines, mulberries, tobacco, olives, excellent fruits, as oranges, figs, pistachios, etc. The climate in the inhabited parts is exceedingly fine. Syria is inhabited by various descriptions of people, but Turks and Greeks form the basis of the population in the cities. The only tribes that can be considered as unique to Syria are the tenants of the heights of Lebanon. The most remarkable of these are the Druses and Maronites. The general language is Arabic; the soldiers and officers of government speak Turkish. Of the old Syriac language no traces now exist.

◀◀▶▶ **Luke 2:4.** *The city of David* Bethlehem, called the city of David because it was the place of his birth. See the notes at ▶▶◀◀ Matthew 2:1.

*Because he was of the house* Of the family.

*And lineage* The “lineage” denotes that he was descended from David as his father or ancestor. In taking a Jewish census, families were kept distinct; hence, all went to the “place” where their family had resided. Joseph was of the “family” of David, and hence he went up to the city of David. It is not improbable that he might also have had a small paternal estate in Bethlehem that rendered his presence there more desirable.

◀◀▶▶ **Luke 2:7.** *Her first-born son* Whether Mary had any other children or not has been a matter of controversy. The obvious meaning of the Bible is that she had; and if this be the case, the word “firstborn” is here to be taken in its common signification.

*Swaddling clothes* When a child among the Hebrews was born, it was washed in water, rubbed in salt, and then wrapped in swaddling clothes; that is, not garments regularly made, as with us, but bands or blankets that confined the limbs closely, ▶▶◀◀ Ezekiel 16:4. There was nothing special in the manner in which the infant Jesus was treated.

*Laid him in a manger* The word rendered “inn” in this verse means simply a place of halting, a lodging-place; in modern terms, a khan or caravanserai (Robinson’s “Biblical Research in Palestine,” iii. 431). The word rendered “manger” means simply a crib or place where cattle were fed. “Inns,” in our sense of the term, were anciently unknown in the East, and now they are not common. Hospitality was generally practiced, so that a traveler had little difficulty in obtaining shelter and food when necessary. As traveling became more frequent, however, khans or caravanserais were erected for public use — large structures where the traveler might freely repair and find lodging for himself and his beast, he himself providing food and forage. Many such khans were placed at regular intervals in Persia. To such a place it was, though already crowded, that Joseph and Mary resorted at Bethlehem. Instead of finding a place in the “inn,” or the part of the caravanserai where the travelers themselves found a place of repose, they were obliged to be contented in one of the stalls or recesses appropriated to the beasts on which they rode.

The following description of an Eastern inn or caravanserai, by Dr. Kitto, will well illustrate this passage: “It presents an external appearance which suggests to a European traveler the idea of a fortress, being an extensive square pile of strong and lofty walls, mostly of brick upon a basement of stone, with a grand archway entrance. This leads ... to a large open area, with a well in the middle, and surrounded on three or four sides with a kind of piazza raised upon a platform 3 or 4 feet high, in the wall behind which are small doors leading to the cells or oblong chambers which form the lodgings. The cell, with the space on the platform in front of it, forms the domain of each individual traveler, where he is completely secluded, as the apparent piazza is not open, but is composed of the front arches of each compartment. There is, however, in the center of one or more of the sides a large arched hall quite open in front ... The cells are completely unfurnished, and have generally no light but from the door, and the traveler is generally seen in the recess in front of his apartment except during the heat of the day ... Many of these caravanserais have no stables, the cattle of the travelers being accommodated in the open area; but in the more complete establishments ... there are ... spacious stables, formed of covered avenues extending between the back wall of the lodging apartments and the outer wall of the whole building, the entrance being at one or more of the corners of the inner quadrangle. The stable is on the same level with the court, and thus below the level of the tenements which stand on the raised

platform. Nevertheless, this platform is allowed to project behind into the stable, so as to form a bench ... It also often happens that not only this bench exists in the stable, forming a more or less narrow platform along its extent, but also recesses corresponding to these “in front” of the cells toward the open area, and formed, in fact, by the side-walls of these cells being allowed to project behind to the boundary of the platform. These, though small and shallow, form convenient retreats for servants and muleteers in bad weather ... Such a recess we conceive that Joseph and Mary occupied, with their ass or mule — if they had one, as they perhaps had tethered — in front ... It might be rendered quite private by a cloth being stretched across the lower part.”

It may be remarked that the fact that Joseph and Mary were in that place, and under a necessity of taking up their lodgings there, was in itself no proof of poverty; it was a simple matter of necessity there was “no room” at the inn. Yet it is worthy of our consideration that Jesus was born “poor.” He did not inherit a princely estate. He was not cradled, as many are, in a palace. He had no rich friends. He had virtuous, pious parents, of more value to a child than many riches. And in this we are shown that it is no dishonor to be poor. Happy is that child who, whether his parents be rich or poor, has a pious father and mother. It is no matter if he has not as much wealth, as fine clothes, or as splendid a house as another. It is enough for him to be as “Jesus” was, and God will bless him.

*No room at the inn* Many people assembled to be enrolled, and the tavern was filled before Joseph and Mary arrived.

~~<ans>~~ **Luke 2:8.** *The same country* Round about Bethlehem.

*Shepherds* Men who tended flocks of sheep.

*Abiding in the field* Remaining out of doors, under the open sky, with their flocks. This was commonly done. The climate was mild, and, to keep their flocks from straying, they spent the night with them. It is also a fact that the Jews sent out their flocks into the mountainous and desert regions during the summer months, and took them up in the latter part of October or the first of November, when the cold weather commenced. While away in these deserts and mountainous regions, it was proper that there should be someone to attend them to keep them from straying, and from the ravages of wolves and other wild beasts. It is probable from this that our Saviour was born before the 25th of December, or before what we call

“Christmas.” At that time it is cold, and especially in the high and mountainous regions about Bethlehem. But the exact time of his birth is unknown; there is no way to ascertain it. By different learned men it has been fixed at each month in the year. Nor is it of consequence to “know” the time; if it were, God would have preserved the record of it. Matters of moment are clearly revealed; those which “he” regards as of no importance are concealed.

*Keeping watch ...* More literally, “tending their flocks “by turns” through the night watches.”

◀119▶ **Luke 2:9.** *The glory of the Lord* This is the same as a “great” glory — that is, a splendid appearance or “light.” The word “glory” is often the same as light, ▶154▶ 1 Corinthians 15:41; ▶108▶ Luke 9:31; ▶421▶ Acts 22:11. The words “Lord” and “God” are often used to denote “greatness” or “intensity.” Thus, “trees of God” mean great trees; “hills of God,” high or lofty hills, etc. So “the glory of the Lord” here means an exceedingly great or bright luminous appearance perhaps not unlike what Paul saw on the way to Damascus.

◀112▶ **Luke 2:12.** *This shall be a sign ...* The evidence by which you shall know the child is that you will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

◀114▶ **Luke 2:14.** *Glory to God* Praise be to God, or honor be to God. That is, the praise of redeeming man is due to God. The plan of redemption will bring glory to God, and is designed to express his glory. This it does by evincing his love to people, his mercy, his condescension, and his regard to the honor of his law and the stability of his own government. It is the highest expression of his love and mercy. Nowhere, so far as we can see, could his glory be more strikingly exhibited than in giving his only-begotten Son to die for people.

*In the highest* This is capable of several meanings:

1. In the highest “strains,” or in the highest possible manner.
2. “Among” the highest that is, among the angels of God; indicating that “they” felt a deep interest in this work, and were called on to praise God for the redemption of man.

3. In the highest heavens — indicating that the praise of redemption should not be confined to the “earth,” but should spread throughout the universe.
4. The words “God in the highest” may be equivalent to “the Most High God,” and be the same as saying, “Let the most high God be praised for his love and mercy to people.”

Which of these meanings is the true one it is difficult to determine; but in this they all agree, that high praise is to be given to God for his love in redeeming people. O that not only “angels,” but “men,” would join universally in this song of praise!

*On earth peace* That is, the gospel will bring peace. The Saviour was predicted as the Prince of peace, <sup><306></sup>Isaiah 9:6. The world is at war with God; sinners are at enmity against their Maker and against each other. There is no peace to the wicked. But Jesus came to make peace; and this he did,

1. By reconciling the world to God by His atonement.
2. By bringing the sinner to a state of peace with his Maker; inducing him to lay down the weapons of rebellion and to submit his soul to God, thus giving him the peace which passeth all understanding.
3. By diffusing in the heart universal good-will to people — “disposing,” people to lay aside their differences, to love one another, to seek each other’s welfare, and to banish envy, malice, pride, lust, passion, and covetousness — in all ages the most fruitful causes of difference among people. And,
4. By diffusing the principles of universal peace among nations. If the gospel of Jesus should universally prevail, there would be an end of war. In the days of the millennium there will be universal peace; all the causes of war will have ceased; people will love each other and do justly; all nations will be brought under the influence of the gospel. O how should each one toil and pray that the great object of the gospel should be universally accomplished, and the world be filled with peace!

*Good will toward men* The gift of the Saviour is an expression of good-will or love to people, and therefore God is to be praised. The work of redemption is uniformly represented as the fruit of the love of God, <sup><316></sup>John 3:16; <sup><317></sup>Ephesians 5:2; <sup><318></sup>1 John 4:10; <sup><319></sup>Revelation 1:5. No

words can express the greatness of that love. It can only be measured by the “misery, helplessness,” and “danger” of man; by the extent of his sufferings here and in the world of woe if he had not been saved; by the condescension, sufferings, and death of Jesus; and by the eternal honor and happiness to which he will raise his people. All these are beyond our full comprehension. Yet how little does man feel it! and how many turn away from the highest love of God, and treat the expression of that love with contempt! Surely, if God so loved us “first,” we ought also to love him, I  
 <B019>John 4:19.

<B016>**Luke 2:16.** *Unto Bethlehem* The city of David, where the angel had told them they would find the Saviour. These shepherds appear to have been pious people. They were waiting for the coming of the Messiah. On the first intimation that he had actually appeared they went with haste to find him. So all people should without delay seek the Saviour. When told of him by the servants of God, they should, like these shepherds, forsake all, and give no rest to their eyes until they have found him. We may “always” find him. We need not travel to Bethlehem. We have only to cast our eyes to heaven; to look to him and to believe on him, and we shall find him ever near to us, and forever our Saviour and friend.

<B017>**Luke 2:17.** *When they had see it* When they had satisfied themselves of the truth of the coming of the Messiah, and had ascertained that they could not have been mistaken in the appearance of the angels. There was evidence enough to satisfy “them” that what the angels said was true, or they would not have gone to Bethlehem. Having seen the child themselves, they had now evidence that would satisfy others; and accordingly they became the first preachers of the “gospel,” and went and proclaimed to others that the Messiah had come. One of the first duties of those who are newly converted to God, and a duty in which they delight, is to proclaim to others what they have seen and felt. It should be done in a proper way and at the proper time; but nothing can or should prevent a Christian recently converted from telling his feelings and views to others — to his friends, to his parents, to his brothers, and to his old companions. And it may be remarked that often more good may be done then than during any other period of their life. Entreaties then make an impression; nor can a sinner well resist the appeals made to him by one who was just now with him in the way to ruin, but who now treads the way to heaven.

**<112> Luke 2:19.** *Mary kept all these things* All that happened, and all that was said respecting her child. She “remembered” what the angel had said to “her;” what had happened to Elizabeth and to the shepherds — all the extraordinary circumstances which had attended the birth of her son. Here is a delicate and beautiful expression of the feelings of a mother. A “mother” forgets none of those things which occur respecting her children. Everything they do or suffer — everything that is said of them, is treasured up in her mind; and often she thinks of those things, and anxiously seeks what they may indicate respecting the future character and welfare of her child.

*Pondered* Weighed. This is the original meaning of the word “weighed.” She kept them; she revolved them; she “weighed” them in her mind, giving to each circumstance its just importance, and anxiously seeking what it might indicate respecting her child.

*In her heart* In her mind. She “thought” of these things often and anxiously.

**<112> Luke 2:20.** *The shepherds returned* To their flocks.

*Glorifying ...* Giving honor to God, and celebrating his praises.

**<112> Luke 2:21.** *Eight days ...* This was the regular time for performing the rite of circumcision, **<0172>**Genesis 17:12.

*Called Jesus* See the notes at **<0121>**Matthew 1:21.

**<112> Luke 2:22.** *Days of her purification* Among the Hebrews a mother was required to remain at home for about forty days after the birth of a male child and about eighty for a female, and during that time she was reckoned as impure — that is, she was not permitted to go to the temple or to engage in religious services with the congregation, **<0113>**Leviticus 12:3,4.

*To Jerusalem* The place where the temple was, and where the ordinances of religion were celebrated.

*To present him to the Lord* Every first-born male child among the Jews was regarded as “holy” to the Lord, **<0132>**Exodus 13:2. By their being “holy unto the Lord” was meant that unto them belonged the office of “priests.” It was theirs to be set apart to the service of God — to offer sacrifice, and to perform the duties of religion. It is probable that at first the duties of

religion devolved on the “father,” and that, when he became infirm or died, that duty devolved on the eldest son; and it is still manifestly proper that where the father is infirm or has deceased, the duty of conducting family worship should be performed by the eldest son. Afterward, God chose “the tribe of Levi in the place” of the eldest sons, to serve him in the sanctuary, <sup><BIB></sup>Numbers 8:13-18. Yet still it was proper to present the child to God, and it was required that it should be done with an offering.

<sup><BIB></sup>**Luke 2:23.** *As it is written ...* <sup><BIB></sup>Exodus 13:2.

<sup><BIB></sup>**Luke 2:24.** *And to offer a sacrifice ...* Those who were able on such an occasion were required to offer a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering. If not able to bring a “lamb,” then they were permitted to bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, <sup><BIB></sup>Leviticus 12:6,8.

*Turtle-doves* Doves distinguished for having a plaintive and tender voice. By Mary’s making this offering she showed her poverty; and our Saviour, by coming in a state of poverty, has shown that it is not dishonorable to be poor. No station is dishonorable where “God” places us. He knows what is best for us, and he often makes a state of poverty an occasion of the highest blessings. If “with” poverty he grants us, as is often the case, peace, contentment, and religion, it is worth far more than all the jewels of Golconda or the gold of Mexico. If it be asked why, since the Saviour was pure from any moral defilement in his conception and birth, it was necessary to offer such a sacrifice: why was it necessary that he should be circumcised, since he had no sin, it may be answered:

1. That it was proper to fulfil all righteousness, and to show obedience to the law, <sup><BIB></sup>Matthew 3:15.
2. It was necessary for the future usefulness of Christ. Unless he had been circumcised, he could not have been admitted to any synagogue or to the temple. He would have had no access to the people, and COULD not have been regarded as the Messiah.

Both he and Mary, therefore, yielded obedience to the laws of the land, and thus set us an example that we should walk in their steps. Compare the notes at <sup><BIB></sup>Matthew 3:15.



**◀125▶ Luke 2:25.** *Whose name was Simeon* Some have supposed that this Simeon was a son of the famous “Hillel,” a distinguished teacher in Jerusalem, and president of the Sanhedrin; but nothing is certainly known of him but what is here related. He was an aged man, of distinguished piety and reputation, and was anxiously expecting the coming of the Messiah. Such an “old age” is especially honorable. No spectacle is more sublime than an old man of piety and high character looking for the appearing of the Lord, and patiently waiting for the time to come when he may be blessed with the sight of his Redeemer.

*Just* Righteous before God and man; approved by God as a righteous man, and discharging faithfully his duty to man.

*Devout* This word means “a religious man,” or a “pious” man. The original expresses the idea of “good reputation, well received,” or of high standing among the people.

*Waiting for the consolation of Israel* That is, waiting for the “Messiah,” who is called “the consolation of Israel” because he would give comfort to them by his appearing. This term was often applied to the Messiah before he actually appeared. It was common to swear, also, by “the consolation of Israel” — that is, by the Messiah about to come. See Lightfoot on this place.

*The Holy Ghost ...* He was a holy man, and was “divinely inspired” respecting the Messiah about to appear.

**◀126▶ Luke 2:26.** *And it was revealed unto him* In what way this was done we are not informed. Sometimes a revelation was made by a dream, at others by a voice, and at others by silent suggestion. All we know of this is that it was by the Holy Spirit.

*Not see death* Should not die. To “see” death and to “taste” of death, was a common way among the Hebrews of expressing death itself. Compare **◀188▶** Psalm 89:48.

*The Lord’s Christ* Rather “the Lord’s Anointed.” The word “Christ” means “anointed,” and it would have been better to use that word here. To an aged man who had been long waiting for the Messiah, how grateful must have been this revelation — this solemn assurance that the Messiah was near! But this revelation is now given to every man, that he need not taste of death until, by the eye of faith, he may see the Christ of God. He is

offered freely. He has come. He waits to manifest himself to the world, and he is not willing that any should die forever. To us also it will be as great a privilege in our dying hours to have seen Christ by faith as it was to Simeon. It will be the only thing that can support us then — the only thing that will enable us to depart in peace.

**<027> Luke 2:27.** *By the Spirit* By the direction of the Spirit.

*Into the temple* Into that part of the temple where the public worship was chiefly performed — into the court of the women. See the notes at **<012> Matthew 21:12.**

*The custom of the law* That is, to make an offering for purification, and to present him to God.

**<028> Luke 2:28.** *Blessed God* Thanked or praised God.

**<029> Luke 2:29.** *Now lettest* Now thou “dost” let or permit. This word is in the indicative mood, and signifies that God was permitting him to die in peace, by having relieved his anxieties, allayed his fears, fulfilled the promises, and having by the appearing of the Messiah, removed every reason why he should live any longer, and every wish to live.

*Depart* Die.

*According to thy word* Thy promise made by revelation. God never disappoints. To many it might have appeared improbable, when such a promise was made to an old man, that it should be fulfilled. But God fulfils all his word, keeps all his promises, and NEVER disappoints those who trust in him.

**<030> Luke 2:30.** *Thy salvation* Him who is to procure salvation for his people; or, the Saviour.

**<031> Luke 2:31.** *Before the face of all people* Whom thou hast provided for all people, or whom thou dost design to “reveal” to all people.

**<032> Luke 2:32.** *A light to lighten the Gentiles* This is in accordance with the prophecies in the Old Testament, Isaiah 49; 9:6,7; **<083> Psalm 98:3;** **<033> Malachi 4:2.** The Gentiles are represented as sitting in darkness that is, in ignorance and sin. Christ is a “light” to them, as by him they will be made acquainted with the character of the true God, his law, and the plan

of redemption. As the darkness rolls away when the sun arises, so ignorance and error flee away when Jesus gives light to the mind. Nations shall come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising, <sup><281B></sup>Isaiah 60:3.

*And the glory ...* The first offer of salvation was made to the Jews, <sup><40E></sup>John 4:22; <sup><24F></sup>Luke 24:47. Jesus was born among the Jews; to them had been given the prophecies respecting him, and his first ministry was among them. Hence, he was their glory, their honor, their light. But it is a subject of special gratitude to us that the Saviour was given also for the Gentiles; for:

**1.** We are Gentiles, and if he had not come we should have been shut out from the blessings of redemption.

**2.** It is he only that now

*“Can make our dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are,  
While on his breast we lean our head,  
And breathe our life out sweetly there.”*

Thus our departure may be like that of Simeon. Thus we may die in peace. Thus it will be a blessing to die. But,

**3.** In order to do this, our life must be like that of Simeon. We must wait for the consolation of Israel. We must look for his coming. We must be holy, harmless, undefiled, “loving” the Saviour. Then death to us, like death to Simeon, will have no terror; we shall depart in peace, and in heaven see the salvation of God, <sup><60E1></sup>2 Peter 3:11,12. But,

**4.** Children, as well as the hoary-headed Simeon, may look for the coming of Christ. They too must die; and “their” death will be happy only as they depend on the Lord Jesus, and are prepared to meet him.

<sup><41B></sup>**Luke 2:34.** *Simeon blessed them* Joseph and Mary. On them he sought the blessing of God.

*Is set* Is appointed or constituted for that, or such will be the effect of his coming.

*The fall* The word “fall” here denotes “misery, suffering, disappointment,” or “ruin.” There is a plain reference to the passage where it is said that he

should be “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence,” <sup><2384></sup>Isaiah 8:14,15. Many expected a temporal prince, and in this they were disappointed. They loved darkness rather than light, and rejected him, and fell unto destruction. Many that were proud were brought low by his preaching. They fell from the vain and giddy height of their own self-righteousness, and were humbled before God, and then, through him, rose again to a better righteousness and to better hopes. The nation also rejected him and put him to death, and, as a judgment, “fell” into the hands of the Romans. Thousands were led into captivity, and thousands perished. The nation rushed into ruin, the temple was destroyed, and the people were scattered into all the nations. See <sup><4102></sup>Romans 9:32,33; <sup><4118></sup>1 Peter 2:8; <sup><4123></sup>1 Corinthians 1:23,24.

*And rising again* The word “again” is not expressed in the Greek. It seems to be supposed, in our translation, that the “same persons would fall and rise again; but this is not the meaning of the passage. It denotes that many would be ruined by his coming, and that many “others” would be made happy or be saved. Many of the poor and humble, that were willing to receive him, would obtain pardon of sin and peace — would “rise” from their sins and sorrows here, and finally ascend to eternal life.

*And for a sign ...* The word “sign” here denotes a conspicuous or distinguished object, and the Lord Jesus was such an object of contempt and rejection by all the people. He was despised, and his religion has been the common “mark” or “sign” for all the wicked, the profligate, and the profane, to curse, and ridicule, and oppose. Compare <sup><2388></sup>Isaiah 8:18, and <sup><4822></sup>Acts 28:22. Never was a prophecy more exactly fulfilled than this. Thousands have rejected the gospel and fallen into ruin; thousands are still falling of those who are ashamed of Jesus; thousands blaspheme him, deny him, speak all manner of evil against him, and would crucify him again if he were in their hands; but thousands also “by” him are renewed, justified, and raised up to life and peace.

<sup><4125></sup>**Luke 2:35.** *Yea, a sword ...* The sufferings and death of thy Son shall deeply afflict thy soul. And if Mary had not been thus forewarned and sustained by strong faith, she could not have borne the trials which came upon her Son; but God prepared her for it, and the holy mother of the dying Saviour was sustained.

*That the thoughts ...* This is connected with the preceding verse: “He shall be a sign, a conspicuous object to be spoken against, that the thoughts of

many hearts may be made manifest — that is, that they “might show” how much they hated holiness. Nothing so “brings out” the feelings of sinners as to tell them of Jesus Christ. Many treat him with silent contempt; many are ready to gnash their teeth; many curse him; all show how much by nature the heart is opposed to religion, and thus are really, in spite of themselves, fulfilling the scriptures and the prophecies. So true it that

“none can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost,”

✠1 Corinthians 12:3.

✠Luke 2:36. *Of the tribe of Aser* The tribe of Aser, or Asher, dwelt in the northern part of the land of Canaan. Why Anna was called a prophetess is not known. It might be because she had been the wife of a prophet, or because she was employed in celebrating the praises of God (compare ✠1 Chronicles 25:1,2,4; ✠1 Samuel 10:5), or because she herself had foretold future events, being inspired.

✠Luke 2:37. *And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years* That is, she was about 84 years of age. It does not mean that she had been a widow for that long time.

*Fastings and prayers* Constant religious service. pending her time in prayer, and in all the ordinances of religion.

*Night and day* Continually — that is, at the usual times of public worship and in private. When it is said that she departed not from the temple, it is meant that she was “constant” and “regular” in all the public services at the temple, or was never absent from those services. God blesses those who wait at his temple gates.

✠Luke 2:39. *They returned into Galilee* Not immediately, but after a time. Luke has omitted the flight into Egypt recorded by Matthew; but he has not denied it, nor are his words to be pressed as if he meant to affirm that they went IMMEDIATELY to Nazareth. A parallel case we have in the life of Paul. When he was converted it is said that he came to Jerusalem, as if he had gone there immediately after his conversion (✠Acts 9:26); yet we learn in another place that this was after an interval of three years, ✠Galatians 1:17,18. In the case before us there is no improbability in supposing that they returned to Bethlehem, then went to Egypt, and then to Galilee.

**◀1210▶ Luke 2:40. *Strong in spirit*** In mind, intellect, understanding. Jesus had a human soul, and THAT soul was subject to all the proper laws of a human spirit. It therefore increased in knowledge, strength, and character. Nor is it any more inconsistent with his being God to say that his soul expanded, than to say that his body grew.

*Filled with wisdom* Eminent for wisdom when a child — that is, exhibiting an extraordinary understanding, and “wise” to flee from everything sinful and evil.

*And the grace of God ...* The word “grace” in the New Testament commonly means unmerited favor shown “to sinners.” Here it means no more than favor. God showed him favor, or was pleased with him and blessed him.

It is remarkable that this is all that is recorded of the infancy of Jesus; and this, with the short account that follows of his going to Jerusalem, is all that we know of him for thirty years of his life. The design of the evangelists was to give an account of his “public ministry,” and not his private life. Hence, they say little of him in regard to his first years. What they DO say, however, corresponds entirely with what we might expect. He was wise, pure, pleasing God, and deeply skilled in the knowledge of the divine law. He set a lovely example for all children; was subject to his parents, and increased in favor with God and man.

**◀1211▶ Luke 2:42. *Twelve years old*** All males among the Hebrews were required to appear three times a year before God, to attend on the ordinances of religion in the temple, and it is probable that this was the age at which they first went up to Jerusalem, <sup>◀1234▶</sup>Exodus 23:14-17; <sup>◀1616▶</sup>Deuteronomy 16:16.

*To Jerusalem* Where the feasts of the Jews were all held. This was a journey from Nazareth of about 70 miles.

*After the custom of the feast* According to the usual manner of the feast.

**◀1212▶ Luke 2:43. *Had fulfilled the days*** The days of the Passover. These were eight days in all — one day for killing the paschal lamb, and seven days for the observance of the feast of unleavened bread, <sup>◀1215▶</sup>Exodus 12:15; <sup>◀1235▶</sup>Leviticus 23:5,6.

**Luke 2:44.** *Supposing him to have been in the company* It may seem very remarkable that parents should not have been more attentive to their only son, and that they should not have been assured of his presence with them when they left Jerusalem; but the difficulty may be explained by the following considerations:

1. In going to these great feasts, families and neighbors would join together, and form a large collection.
2. It is not improbable that Jesus was “with” them when they were about to start from Jerusalem and were making preparations. Seeing him then, they might have been certain as to his presence.
3. A part of the company might have left before the others, and Joseph and Mary may have supposed that he was with them, until they overtook them at night and ascertained their mistake.

*Kinsfolk* Relatives.

*Acquaintances* Neighbors who had gone up with them in the same company to Jerusalem.

**Luke 2:46.** *After three days* This means, probably, “on the third day” after they had left Jerusalem — that is, the first day they went toward Galilee, on the second they returned to Jerusalem, and on the third they found him. Compare **Matthew 27:63**; **Mark 8:31**.

*In the temple* In the “court” of the temple, for Jesus, not being a Levitical priest, could not enter into the temple itself. See **Matthew 21:12**.

*In the midst of the doctors* The “teachers,” the “rabbis,” who were the instructors of the people in matters of religion.

*Asking them questions* Proposing questions to them respecting the law and the prophets. There is no reason to suppose that this was for the purpose of perplexing or confounding them. The questions were doubtless proposed in a respectful manner, and the answers listened to with proper deference to their age and rank. Jesus was a child, and religion does not teach a child to be rude or uncivil, even though he may really know much more than more aged persons. Religion teaches all, and especially the young, to treat others with respect, to show them the honor that is due, to venerate age, and to speak kindly to all, **1 Peter 2:17; 3:8; 9**; **Exodus 20:12**; **Matthew 23:3**; **Romans 13:7**.

◀◀◀ **Luke 2:48.** *Why hast thou thus dealt with us?* Why hast thou given us all this trouble and anxiety, in going so far and returning with so much solicitude?

*Thy father* Joseph was not the “real” father of Jesus, but he was “legally” so; and as the secret of his birth was not commonly known, he was called his father. Mary, in accordance with that usage, also called him so.

*Sorrowing* Anxious, lest in the multitude he might not be found, or lest some accident might have happened to him.

◀◀◀ **Luke 2:49.** *How is it ...* “Why” have ye sought me with so much anxiety? “Mary” should have known that the Son of God was safe; that his heavenly Father would take care of him, and that he could do nothing amiss.

*Wist ye not* “Know ye not.” You had reason to know. You knew my design in coming into the world, and that design was “superior” to the duty of obeying earthly parents, and they should be willing always to give me up to the proper business for which I live.

*My Father’s business* Some think that this should be translated “in my Father’s house” — that is, in the temple. Jesus reminded them here that he came down from heaven; that he had a higher Father than an earthly parent; and that, even in early life, it was proper that he should be engaged in the work for which he came. He did not enter, indeed, upon his public work for eighteen years after this; yet still the work of God was “his” work, and always, even in childhood, it was proper for him to be engaged in the great business for which he came down from heaven.

◀◀◀ **Luke 2:50.** *They understood not ...* It is remarkable that they did not understand Jesus in this, but it shows how slow persons are to believe. Even his parents, after all that had taken place, did not seem to comprehend that “he” was to be the Saviour of people, or if they did, they understood it in a very imperfect manner.

◀◀◀ **Luke 2:51.** *Went down with them* Down from Jerusalem, which was in a high, mountainous region.

*Was subject unto them* Performed the duty of a faithful and obedient child, and not improbably was engaged in the trade of Joseph — that of a carpenter. Every Jew was required to learn some trade, and there is every



reason to think that our Saviour followed that of his reputed father. And from this we learn:

**1.** That obedience to parents is a duty. Jesus has set an example in this that all children should follow. Though he was the Son of God, and on proper occasions was engaged in the great work of redemption, yet he was also the “son of Mary,” and he loved and obeyed his mother, and was “subject” to her.

**2.** It is no dishonor to be a mechanic, or to be brought up in an obscure employment. Jesus has conferred honor on virtuous industry, and no man should be ashamed of industrious parents, though poor, or of a condition of life that is far from ease and affluence. Industry is honorable, and virtuous poverty should not be regarded as a matter of reproach. The only thing to be ashamed of, in regard to this matter, is when people are idle, or when children are too proud to hear or speak of the occupation of their parents, or to follow the same occupation.

~~¶~~ **Luke 2:52.** *In favour with God* That is, in proportion to his advance in wisdom. This does not imply that he ever lacked the favor of God, but that God regarded him with favor in proportion as he showed an understanding and spirit like his own. Happy are those children who imitate the example of Jesus — who are obedient to parents who increase in wisdom — who are sober, temperate, and industrious, and who thus increase in favor with God and people.

## NOTES ON LUKE 3

**Luke 3:1.** *Now in the fifteenth year* This was the “thirteeneth” year of his being sole emperor. He was “two” years joint emperor with Augustus, and Luke reckons from the time when he was admitted to share the empire with Augustus Caesar. See Lardner’s “Credibility,” vol. i.

*Tiberius Caesar* Tiberius succeeded Augustus in the empire, and began his “sole” reign Aug. 19th, 14 A.D. He was a most infamous character — a scourge to the Roman people. He reigned 23 years, and was succeeded by “Caius Caligula,” whom he appointed his successor on account of his notorious wickedness, and that he might be, as he expressed it, a “serpent” to the Romans.

*Pontius Pilate* Herod the Great left his kingdom to three sons. See the notes at <sup>4102</sup>Matthew 2:22. To “Archelaus” he left “Judea.” Archelaus reigned “nine” years, when, on account of his crimes, he was banished into Vienne, and Judea was made a Roman province, and placed entirely under Roman governors or “procurators,” and became completely tributary to Rome. “Pontius Pilate” was the “fifth” governor that had been sent, and of course had been in Judea but a short time. (See the chronological table.)

*Herod being tetrarch of Galilee* This was “Herod Antipas” son of Herod the Great, to whom Galilee had been left as his part of his father’s kingdom. The word “tetrarch” properly denotes one who presides over a “fourth part” of a country or province; but it also came to be a general title, denoting one who reigned over any part — a third, a half, etc. In this case Herod had a “third” of the dominions of his father, but he was called tetrarch. It, was this Herod who imprisoned John the Baptist, and to whom our Saviour, when arraigned, was sent by Pilate.

*And his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea* “Iturea” was so called from “Jetur,” one of the sons of Ishmael, <sup>012515</sup>Genesis 25:15; <sup>13031</sup>1 Chronicles 1:31. It was situated on the east side of the Jordan, and was taken from the descendants of Jetur by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, <sup>1359</sup>1 Chronicles 5:19.

*Region of Trachonitis* This region was also on the east of the Jordan, and extended northward to the district of Damascus and eastward to the deserts of Arabia. It was bounded on the west by Gaulonitis and south by

the city of Bostra. Philip had obtained this region from the Romans on condition that he would extirpate the robbers.

*Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene* Abilene was so called from “Abila,” its chief city. It was situated in Syria, northwest of Damascus and southeast of Mount Lebanon, and was adjacent to Galilee.

◀**OR**▶ **Luke 3:2.** *Annas and Caiaphas being highpriests* There was, properly speaking, but one high priest of the Jews; yet the name of high priest continued to be given to those who had been in that office, and especially when they still possessed some civil office after they had left the high priesthood. In this case it appears that “Caiapas” was high priest, and Annas “had been,” but had been dismissed from the office. It is highly probable that he still held an office under the Romans, and was perhaps president of the Sanhedrin. He is mentioned before Caiaphas because he was the father-in-law to Caiaphas, and probably was the eldest, and had been longest in office. Instances similar to this may be found in Josephus.

There is one remark to be made here about the manner in which the gospels are written. They have every mark of openness and honesty. An impostor does not mention names, and times, and places particularly. If he did, it would be easy to ascertain that he was an impostor. But the sacred writers describe objects and people as if they were perfectly familiar with them. They never appear to be “guarding” themselves. They speak of things most minutely. If, therefore, they had been impostors, it would have been easy to detect them. If, for example, John did NOT begin to preach in the 15th year of Tiberius — if Philip was “not” tetrach of Iturea — if Pontius Pilate was NOT governor of Judea, how easy would it have been to detect them in falsehood! Yet it was never done. Nay, we have evidence of that age, in Josephus, that these descriptions are strictly true; and, consequently, the gospels must have been written by people who were personally acquainted with what they wrote, who were not impostors, and who were “honest” people. If they were “honest,” then the Christian religion is true.

◀**OR**▶ **Luke 3:3-9.** *On the baptism of John* see the notes at Matthew 3.

◀**OR**▶ **Luke 3:10.** *What shall we do, then?* John had told them to bring forth fruits appropriate to repentance, or to lead a life which showed that their repentance was genuine. They very properly, therefore, asked how it should be done, or what “would be” such a life.

◀<sup>4181</sup>**Luke 3:11.** *He that hath two coats ...* Or, in other words, aid the poor according to your ability; be benevolent, and you will thus show that your repentance is genuine. It is remarkable that one of the “first” demands of religion is to do good, and it is in this way that it may be shown that the repentance is not feigned. For

1. The “nature” of religion is to do good.
2. This requires self-denial, and none will deny themselves who are not attached to God. And
3. This is to imitate Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.

*Coats* See the notes at ▶<sup>4154</sup>Matthew 5:40.

*Meat* Provision of any kind.

◀<sup>4182</sup>**Luke 3:12.** *The publicans* See the notes at ▶<sup>4157</sup>Matthew 5:47. There is reason to think that the “publicans” or “tax-gatherers” were especially oppressive and hard in their dealings with the people; and that, as they had every opportunity of exacting more than they ought, so they often did it, and thus enriched themselves. The evidence of repentance in them would be to break off their sins in this respect, and to deal justly.

◀<sup>4183</sup>**Luke 3:13.** *Exact* Demand, or take, no more.

*Than that which is appointed* That is, by the government. John does not condemn the office, or say that the employment should be forsaken. Though it was hated by the people — though often abused and therefore unpopular — yet “the office itself” was not dishonorable. If there is a government, it must be supported; and of course there must be people whose duty it is to collect taxes, as the means of the proper support of the government; and as such a support of the government is necessary, so the people should pay cheerfully the just apportionment of their rulers, and regard favorably those who are authorized to collect it. See ▶<sup>533E</sup>Romans 13:1-6.

◀<sup>4184</sup>**Luke 3:14.** *The soldiers likewise* It seems that “they,” also came to his baptism. Whether these were Jews or Romans cannot be ascertained. It is not improbable that, as Judea was a Roman province, they were Jews or

Jewish proselytes in the service of Herod Antipas or Philip, and so were really in the Roman service.

*Do violence ...* Do not take the property of any by unlawful force, or do not use unjust force against the person or property of any individual. It is probable that many of them were oppressive, or prone to violence, rapine, or theft, and burdensome even in times of peace to the inhabitants.

*Neither accuse any falsely* It is probable that when they wished the property of others and could not obtain it by violence, or when there was no pretext for violence, they often attempted the same thing in another way, and falsely accused the persons of crime. The word rendered “falsely accused” is the one from which our word “sycophant” is derived. The proper meaning of the word “sycophant” was this: There was a law in Athens which prohibited the importation of “figs.” The “sycophant” (literally “the man who made figs to appear,” or who showed them) was one who made complaint to the magistrate of persons who had imported figs contrary to law, or who was an “informer;” and then the word came to be used in a general sense to denote “any” complainer — a calumniator — an accuser — an informer. As such persons were usually cringing and fawning, and looked for a reward, the word came to be used also to denote a fawner or flatterer. It is always used in a bad sense. It is correctly rendered here, “do not accuse any falsely.”

*Be content ...* Do not murmur or complain, or take unlawful means to increase your wages.

*Wages* This word means not only the “money” which was paid them, but also their “rations” or daily allowance of food. By this they were to show that their repentance was genuine; that it had a practical influence; that it produced a real reformation of life; and it is clear that “no other” repentance would be genuine. Every profession of repentance which is not attended with a change of life is mere hypocrisy. It may farther be remarked that John did not condemn their profession, or say that it was unlawful to be a soldier, or that they must abandon the business in order to be true penitents. It was possible to be a good man and yet a soldier. What was required was that in their profession they should show that they were really upright, and did not commit the crimes which were often practiced in that calling. It is lawful to defend oneself, one’s family, or one’s country, and hence, it is lawful to be a soldier. Man everywhere, in all professions, should be a Christian, and then he will do honor to his profession, and his

profession, if it is not a direct violation of the law of God, will be honorable.

**<RB5> Luke 3:15.** *In expectation* Expecting the Messiah. Margin, “suspense.” That is, they were not certain whether John was not himself the Messiah. They confidently “expected” his appearing, and their minds were in “suspense,” or they were in a state of doubt whether he had not already come, and whether John was not the Messiah.

*Mused in their hearts of John* Thought of his character, his preaching, and his success, and anxiously inquired whether he did not do the things which were expected of the Messiah.

**<RB6> Luke 3:16-18.** See the notes at **<RB1> Matthew 3:11,12.**

**<RB9> Luke 3:19,20.** See the notes at **<RB4> Matthew 14:1-13.** “Added this above all.” To all his former crimes he added this; not implying that this was the “worst” of his acts, but that this was “one” of his deeds, of like character as the others. The event here mentioned did not take place until some time after this, but it is mentioned here to show what was the end of John’s preaching, or to “fill out” the account concerning him.

**<RB1> Luke 3:21,22.** See the notes at **<RB3> Matthew 3:13-17.** “Jesus being baptized;” or, Jesus “having been” baptized. This took place after the baptism, and not “during” its administration, **<RB6> Matthew 3:16.**

*Praying* This circumstance is omitted by the other evangelists; and it shows,

1. That Jesus was in the habit of prayer.
2. That it is proper to offer up special prayer at the administration of the ordinances of religion.
3. That it is possible to pray in the midst of a great multitude, yet in secret. The prayer consisted, doubtless, in lifting up the heart silently to God. So “we” may do it anywhere — about our daily toil — in the midst of multitudes, and thus may pray “always.”

**<RB2> Luke 3:22.** *In a bodily shape* This was a real visible appearance, and was doubtless seen by the people. The dove is an emblem of purity and harmlessness, and the form of the dove was assumed on this occasion to

signify, probably, that the spirit with which Jesus would be endowed would be one of purity and innocence. The “Holy Spirit,” when he assumes a visible form, assumes that which will be emblematic of the thing to be represented. Thus he assumed the form of “tongues,” to signify the miraculous powers of language with which the apostles would be endowed; the appearance of fire, to denote their power, etc., <sup><411B></sup>Acts 2:3.

<sup><412B></sup>**Luke 3:23.** *Jesus began to be ...* This was the age at which the priests entered on their office, <sup><404B></sup>Numbers 4:3,47; but it is not evident that Jesus had any reference to that in delaying his work to his thirtieth year. He was not subjected to the Levitical law in regard to the priesthood, and it does not appear that prophets and teachers did not commence their work before that age.

*As was supposed* As was commonly thought, or perhaps being legally reckoned as his son.

<sup><412B></sup>**Luke 3:24-38.** See, on this genealogy, the notes at <sup><400I></sup>Matthew 1:1-16.

## NOTES ON LUKE 4

◀401▶ **Luke 4:1-14.** On the temptation of Jesus, see the notes at  
◀401▶ Matthew 4:1-11.

◀402▶ **Luke 4:2.** *Being forty days tempted* That is, through forty days he was “tried” in various ways by the devil. The temptations, however, which are recorded by Matthew and Luke did not take place until the forty days were finished. See ▶402▶ Matthew 4:2,3.

*He did eat nothing* He was sustained by the power of God during this season of extraordinary fasting.

◀403▶ **Luke 4:13.** *Departed for a season* For a time. From this it appears that our Saviour was “afterward” subjected to temptations by Satan, but no “particular” temptations are recorded after this. From ▶404▶ John 14:30, it seems that the devil tried or tempted him in the agony in Gethsemane. Compare the notes at ▶405▶ Hebrews 12:4. It is more than probable, also, that Satan did much to excite the Pharisees and Sadducees to endeavor to “entangle him,” and the priests and rulers to oppose him; yet out of all his temptations God delivered him; and so he will make a way to escape for “all” that are tempted, and will not suffer them to be tempted above that which they are able to bear, ▶406▶ 1 Corinthians 10:13.

◀407▶ **Luke 4:14.** *In the power of the Spirit* By the “influence” or direction of the Spirit.

*A fame* A report. See ▶408▶ Matthew 4:24.

◀409▶ **Luke 4:15.** *Glorified of all* Praised by all; or, all were pleased with his instructions, and admired his wisdom.

◀410▶ **Luke 4:16.** *And, as his custom was, he went ...* From this it appears that the Saviour regularly attended the service of the synagogue. In that service the Scriptures of the Old Testament were read, prayers were offered, and the Word of God was explained. See the notes at ▶411▶ Matthew 4:23. There was great corruption in doctrine and practice at that time, but Christ did not on that account keep away from the place of public worship. From this we may learn:



1. That it is our duty “regularly” to attend public worship.
2. That it is better to attend a place of worship which is not entirely pure, or where just such doctrines are not delivered as we would wish, than not attend at all.

It is of vast importance that the public worship of God should be maintained; and it is “our” duty to assist in maintaining it, to show by our example that we love it, and to win others also to love it. See ~~scrips~~ Hebrews 10:25. At the same time, this remark should not be construed as enjoining it as our duty to attend where the “true” God is not worshipped, or where he is worshipped by pagan rites and pagan prayers. If, therefore, the Unitarian does not worship the true God, and if the Roman Catholic worships God in a manner forbidden and offers homage to the creatures of God, thus being guilty of idolatry, it cannot be a duty to attend on such a place of worship.

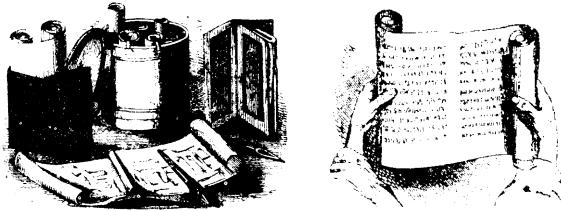
*The synagogue* See ~~4023~~ Matthew 4:23.

*Stood up for to read* The books of Moses were so divided that they could be read through in the synagogues once in a year. To these were added portions out of the prophets, so that no small part of them was read also once a year. It is not known whether our Saviour read the lesson which was the regular one for that day, though it might seem “probable” that he would not depart from the usual custom. Yet, as the eyes of all were fixed on him; as he deliberately looked out a place; and as the people were evidently surprised at what he did, it seems to be intimated that he selected a lesson which was “not” the regular one for that day. The same ceremonies in regard to conducting public worship which are here described are observed at Jerusalem by the Jews at the present time. Professor Hackett (“Illustrations of Scripture,” p. 232) says: “I attended the Jewish worship at Jerusalem, and was struck with the accordance of the ceremonies with those mentioned in the New Testament. The sacred roll was brought from the chest or closet where it was kept; it was handed by an attendant to the reader; a portion of it was rehearsed; the congregation rose and stood while it was read, whereas the speaker, as well as the others present, sat during the delivery of the address which formed a part of the service.”

~~4017~~ **Luke 4:17.** *There was delivered unto him* By the minister of the synagogue, or the keeper of the sacred books. They were kept in an “ark”

or chest, not far from the pulpit, and the minister gave them to whomsoever he chose, to read them publicly.

*The book* The volume contained the prophecy of Isaiah. It would seem, from this, that the books were kept separate, and not united into one as with us.



*When he had opened the book* Literally, when he had “unrolled” the book. Books, among the ancients, were written on parchments or vellum that is, skins of beasts, and were “rolled” together on two rollers, beginning at each end, so that while reading they rolled off from one to the other. Different forms of books were indeed used, but this was the most common. When used the reader unrolled the manuscript as far as the place which he wished to find, and kept before him just so much as he would read. When the roller was done with, it was carefully deposited in a case.

*The place where it was written* <sup><260></sup>Isaiah 61:1,2.

<sup><408></sup>**Luke 4:18.** *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me* Or, I speak by divine appointment. I am divinely inspired to speak. There can be no doubt that the passage in Isaiah had a principal reference to the Messiah. Our Saviour directly applies it to himself, and it is not easily applicable to any other prophet. Its first application might have been to the restoration of the Jews from Babylon; but the language of prophecy is often applicable to two similar events, and the secondary event is often the most important. In this case the prophet uses most striking poetic images to depict the return from Babylon, but the same images also describe the appropriate work of the Son of God.

*Hath anointed me* Anciently kings and prophets and the high priest were set apart to their work by anointing with oil, <sup><1195></sup>1 Kings 19:15,16; <sup><1237></sup>Exodus 29:7; <sup><1096></sup>1 Samuel 9:16, etc. This oil or ointment was made of various substances, and it was forbidden to imitate it, <sup><1278></sup>Exodus 30:34-38. Hence, those who were set apart to the work of God as king, prophet, or priest, were called the Lord’s anointed, <sup><1016></sup>1 Samuel 16:6; <sup><1849></sup>Psalms 84:9;

◀351▶ Isaiah 45:1. Hence, the Son of God is called the “Messiah,” a Hebrew word signifying the “Anointed,” or the “Christ,” a Greek word signifying the same thing. And by his being “anointed” is not meant that he was literally anointed, for he was never set apart in that manner, but that “God had set him apart” for this work; that “he” had constituted or appointed him to be the prophet, priest, and king of his people. See the notes at ▶400▶ Matthew 1:1.

*To preach the gospel to the poor* The English word “gospel” is derived from two words — “God” or “good,” and “spell,” an old Saxon word meaning “history, relation, narration, word, or speech,” and the word therefore means “a good communication” or “message.” This corresponds exactly with the meaning of the Greek word — “a good or joyful message — glad tidings.” By the “poor” are meant all those who are destitute of the comforts of this life, and who therefore may be more readily disposed to seek treasures in heaven; all those who are sensible of their sins, or are poor in spirit (▶408B▶ Matthew 5:3); and all the “miserable” and the afflicted, ▶287▶ Isaiah 58:7. Our Saviour gave it as one proof that he was the Messiah, or was from God, that he preached to “the poor,” ▶400B▶ Matthew 11:5. The Pharisees and Sadducees despised the poor; ancient philosophers neglected them; but the gospel seeks to bless them — to give comfort where it is felt to be needed, and where it will be received with gratitude. Riches fill the mind with pride, with self-complacency, and with a feeling that the gospel is not needed. The poor “feel” their need of some sources of comfort that the world cannot give, and accordingly our Saviour met with his greatest success the gospel among the poor; and there also, “since,” the gospel has shed its richest blessings and its purest joys. It is also one proof that the gospel is true. If it had been of “men,” it would have sought the rich and mighty; but it pours contempt on all human greatness, and seeks, like God, to do good to those whom the world overlooks or despises. See the notes at ▶400B▶ 1 Corinthians 1:26.

*To heal the brokenhearted* To console those who are deeply afflicted, or whose hearts are “broken” by external calamities or by a sense of their sinfulness.

*Deliverance to the captives* This is a figure originally applicable to those who were in captivity in Babylon. They were miserable. To grant deliverance to “them” and restore them to their country — to grant deliverance to those who are in prison and restore them to their families —

to give liberty to the slave and restore him to freedom, was to confer the highest benefit and impart the richest favor. In this manner the gospel imparts favor. It does not, indeed, “literally” open the doors of prisons, but it releases the mind captive under sin; it gives comfort to the prisoner, and it will finally open all prison doors and break off all the chains of slavery, and, by preventing “crime,” prevent also the sufferings that are the consequence of crime.

*Sight to the blind* This was often literally fulfilled, <sup><4015></sup>Matthew 11:5; <sup><4011></sup>John 9:11; <sup><4010></sup>Matthew 9:30, etc.

*To set at liberty them that are bruised* The word “bruised,” here, evidently has the same “general” signification as “brokenhearted” or the contrite. It means those who are “pressed down” by great calamity, or whose hearts are “pressed” or “bruised” by the consciousness of sin. To set them “at liberty” is the same as to free them from this pressure, or to give them consolation.

<sup><4019></sup>**Luke 4:19.** *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord* The time when God is willing to accept of people, or to receive sinners coming to him. The gospel assures us that the guilty “may” return, and that God will graciously receive them. There is, perhaps, here, an allusion to the year of jubilee — the fiftieth year, when the trumpet was blown, and through the whole land proclamation was made of the liberty of Hebrew slaves, of the remission of debts, and of the restoration of possessions to their original families, <sup><4013></sup>Leviticus 25:8-13. The phrase “the acceptable year” means the time when it would be acceptable to God to proclaim such a message, or agreeable to him — to wit, under the gospel.

<sup><4020></sup>**Luke 4:20.** *And he closed the book* That is, he rolled it up again. See the notes at <sup><4017></sup>Luke 4:17.

*And he gave it again to the minister* That is, to the one in the synagogue who had charge of the books. The word means “servant,” and the office was not much unlike that of a sexton now. It was his duty, among other things, to take charge of the books, to hand them to the reader of the law, and then return them to their place.

*And sat down* This was usual in speaking in their synagogues. See the notes at <sup><4011></sup>Matthew 5:1.

*Were fastened on him* Were intently fixed on him, waiting to see what explanation he would give of the words.

◀◀◀ **Luke 4:21.** *This scripture* This writing, or this part of the Scriptures.

*Fulfilled* It is coming to pass; the thing originally intended by it is about to be accomplished.

*In your ears* In your “hearing;” or you hear, in my preaching, the fulfillment of this prophecy. It is probable that he said much “more” than is here recorded, but Luke has preserved only the “substance” of his discourse. This was the “amount” or “sum” of his sermon, or his explanation of the passage, that it was now receiving its accomplishment.

◀◀◀ **Luke 4:22.** *All bare him witness* All were witnesses of the power and truth of what he said. Their reason and conscience approved of it, and they were constrained to admit the force and propriety of it, and on this account they wondered.

*They wondered* They were struck with the truth and force of his words; and especially when they remembered that he was a native of their own place, and that they had been long acquainted with him, and that he should “now” claim to be the Messiah, and give so much evidence that he “was” the Christ.

*The gracious words* The words of grace or favor; the kind, affectionate, and tender exposition of the words, and explanation of the design of his coming, and the nature of the plan of redemption. It was so different from the harsh and unfeeling mode of the Pharisees; so different from all their expectations respecting the Messiah, who they supposed to be a prince and a bloody conqueror, that they were filled with astonishment and awe.

◀◀◀ **Luke 4:23.** *Physician, heal thyself* This proverb was probably in common use at that time. The meaning is this: Suppose that a man should attempt to heal another when he was himself diseased in the same manner; it would be natural to ask him FIRST to cure himself, and thus to render it manifest that he was worthy of confidence. The connection of this proverb, here, is this: “You profess to be the Messiah. You have performed miracles at Capernaum. You profess to be able to deliver us from our maladies, our sins, our afflictions. Show that you have the power, that you are worthy of our confidence, by working miracles HERE, as you profess to have done at Capernaum.” It does not refer, therefore, to any purification of his own, or

imply any reflection on him for setting up to teach them. It was only a demand that he would show the proper evidence “by miracles” why they should trust in him, and he proceeds to show them why he would not give them this evidence.

*Whatsoever we have heard done* Whatsoever we have heard that thou hast done. It would seem, from this, that Christ had BEFORE this performed miracles in Capernaum, though the evangelist has not recorded them.

*In Capernaum* Capernaum was on the northwest corner of the Sea of Tiberias, and was not far from Nazareth. It is not improbable that some of those who then heard him might have been present and witnessed some of his miracles at Capernaum. See the notes at <sup><4043></sup>Matthew 4:13.

<sup><4024></sup>**Luke 4:24.** *No prophet is accepted* Has honor, or is acknowledged as a prophet. See the notes at <sup><4157></sup>Matthew 13:57.

<sup><4025></sup>**Luke 4:25.** *Of a truth* Truly, and therefore worthy of your credit. He calls attention to two cases where “acknowledged” prophets had so little honor in their own nation that they bestowed their favors on foreigners. So, says he, such is the want of faith in my own country, that I shall work no miracles here, but shall give the evidence of my divine mission to others.

*In Israel* In the land of Israel, or Judea. It was therefore the more remarkable, since there were so many in his own country whom he MIGHT have helped, that the prophet should have gone to a pagan city and aided a poor widow there.

*The days of Elias* The days of Elijah. See the account of this in <sup><4178></sup>1 Kings 17:8-24.

*Three years and six months* From <sup><4180></sup>1 Kings 18:1,45, it would seem that the rain fell on the “third year” — that is, at the “end” of the third year after the rain had ceased to fall at the usual time. There were two seasons of the year when rains fell in Judea — in October and April, called the “early” and “latter” rain; consequently there was an interval between them of six months. To the three years, therefore, when rain was withheld “at the usual times,” are to be added the previous six months, when no rain fell as a matter of course, and consequently three years “and six months” elapsed without rain.

*A great famine* A great want of food, from long continued and distressing drought.

◀QEB▶ **Luke 4:26.** *Save unto Sarepta* Sarepta was a town between Tyre and Sidon, near the Mediterranean Sea. It was not a “Jewish” city, but a Sidonian, and therefore a “Gentile” town. The word “save” in this verse does not express the meaning of the original. It would seem to imply that the city was Jewish. The meaning of the verse is this: “He was sent to none of the widows in Israel. He was not sent except to Sarepta, to a woman that was a “Sidonian.” Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 232-236) regards Sarepta as the modern Sarafend. He says that the ruins have been frequently dug over for stone to build the barracks at Beirout, and that the broken columns, marble slabs, sarcophagi, and other ruins indicate that it was once a flourishing city. A large town was built there in the time of the Crusades.

◀QEB▶ **Luke 4:27.** *Many lepers* For an account of the leprosy see the notes at ◀HRI▶ Matthew 8:1.

*Time of Eliseus* Time of Elisha. The word “Eliseus” is the Greek way of writing the word Elisha, as Elias is of Elijah.

*Saving Naaman the Syrian* The account of his cure is contained in 2 Kings 5.

◀QEB▶ **Luke 4:28.** *Filled with wrath* They were enraged, probably, for the following reasons:

1. They saw that the cases applied to themselves, because they would not receive the miraculous evidences of his mission.
2. That he would direct his attention to others, and not to them.
3. That the “Gentiles” were objects of compassion with God, and that God often showed more favor to a “single” Gentile than to multitudes of Jews in the same circumstances.
4. That they might be “worse” than the Gentiles. And,
5. That it was a part of his design to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and not confine his labors to them only.

On these accounts their favor was soon turned to wrath, and the whole transaction shows us:

1. That popular applause is of little value.
2. That the slightest circumstances may soon turn the warmest professed friendship to hatred. And,
3. That people are exceedingly unreasonable in being unwilling to hear the truth and profit by it.

◀1123▶ **Luke 4:29.** *The brow of the hill whereon ...* The region in which Nazareth was is hilly, though Nazareth was situated “between” two hills, or in a vale among mountains. The place to which they led the Saviour is still shown, and is called the “Mount of Precipitation.” It is at a short distance to the south of Nazareth. See the notes at ▶1123▶ Matthew 2:23.

*Cast him down* This was the effect of a popular tumult. They had no legal right to take life on any occasion, and least of all in this furious and irregular manner. The whole transaction shows:

1. That the character given of the Galileans elsewhere as being especially wicked was a just one.
2. To what extremities the wickedness of the heart will lead people when it is acted out. And,
3. That people are opposed to the truth, and that they would do anything, if not restrained, to manifest their opposition.

◀1124▶ **Luke 4:30.** *Passing through the midst of, them, went his way* This escape was very remarkable. It is remarkable that he should escape out of their hands when their very object was to destroy him, and that he should escape in so peaceful a manner, without violence or conflict. A similar case is recorded in ▶1124▶ John 8:59. There are but two ways of accounting for this:

1. That “other Nazarenes,” who had not been present in the synagogue, heard what was doing and came to rescue him, and in the contest that rose between the two parties Jesus silently escaped.
2. More probably that Jesus by divine power, by the force of a word or look, stilled their passions, arrested their purposes, and passed silently through them. That he “had” such a power over the spirits of people we



learn from the occurrence in Gethsemane, when he said, “I am he; and they went backward and fell to the ground,” ~~<BIB>~~John 18:6.

~~<BIB>~~**Luke 4:31-44.** See this explained in the notes at ~~<BIB>~~Mark 1:21-39.

## NOTES ON LUKE 5

**☞ Luke 5:1.** *The people pressed upon his* Multitudes came to hear.

There were times in the life of our Saviour when thousands were anxious to hear him, and when many, as we have no reason to doubt, became his true followers. Indeed, it is not possible to tell what “might” have been his success, had not the Pharisees and scribes, and those who were in office, opposed him, and taken measures to draw the people away from his ministry; “for the common people heard him gladly,” ~~☞1123~~ Mark 12:37.

*The Lake of Gennesaret* Called also the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberias.

“Gennesaret was the more ancient name of the lake, taken from a small territory or plain of that name on its western borders. See ~~☞641~~ Numbers 34:11; ~~☞695~~ Joshua 19:35, where, after the Hebrew orthography, it is called Chinnereth” (Owen).

The plain lying between Capernaum and Tiberias is said by Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 536) to be a little longer than thirty, and not quite twenty furlongs in breadth. It is described by Josephus as being, in his time, universally fertile. “Its nature is wonderful as well as its beauty. Its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it, and the inhabitants accordingly plant all sorts of trees there; for the temperature of the air is so well mixed that it agrees very well with those several sorts; particularly walnuts, which require the coldest air, flourish there in vast plenty. One may call this the ambition of nature, where it forces those plants which are naturally enemies to one another to agree together. It is a happy conjunction of the seasons, as if every one laid claim to this country; for it not only nourishes different sorts of autumnal fruits beyond people’s expectations, but preserves them a great while. It supplies people with the principal fruits; with grapes and figs continually during ten months of the year, and the rest of the fruits, as they become ripe, through the whole year; for, besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a most fertile fountain.” Dr. Thomson describes it now as “preeminently fruitful in thorns.” This was the region of the early toils of our Redeemer. Here he performed some of his first and most amazing miracles; here he selected his disciples; and here, on the shores of this little and retired lake, among people of poverty and inured to the privations of fishermen, he laid

the foundation of a religion which is yet to spread through all the world, and which has already blessed millions of guilty and miserable people, and translated them to heaven.

**<ARB> Luke 5:2. *Two ships*** The ships used on so small a lake were probably no more than fishing-boats without decks, and easily drawn up on the beach. Josephus says there were 230 of them on the lake, attended by four or five men each. That they were small is also clear from the account commonly given of them. A single large draught of fishes endangered them and came near sinking them.

*Standing by the lake* Anchored by the lake, or drawn up upon the beach.

**<ARB> Luke 5:3. *Which was Simon's*** Simon Peter's.

*Prayed him* Asked him.

*He sat down* This was the common posture of Jewish teachers. They seldom or never spoke to the people "standing." Compare **<ARB> Matthew 5:1**. It may be somewhat difficult to conceive why Jesus should go into a boat and put off from the shore in order to speak to the multitude; but it is probable that this was a small bay or cove, and that when he was "in" the boat, the people on the shore stood round him in the form of an amphitheater. It is not improbable that the lake was still; that scarcely a breeze passed over it; that all was silence on the shore, and that there was nothing to disturb his voice. In such a situation he could be heard by multitudes; and no spectacle could be more sublime than that of the Son of God — the Redeemer of the world — thus speaking from the bosom of a placid lake — the emblem of the peaceful influence of his own doctrines — to the poor, the ignorant, and the attentive multitudes assembled on the shore. Oh how much "more" effect may we suppose the gospel would have in such circumstances, than when proclaimed among the proud, the joyful, the honored, even when assembled in the most splendid edifice that wealth and art could finish!

**<ARB> Luke 5:4. *Launch, out*** Go out with your vessels.

*Into the deep* Into the sea; at a distance from the shore.

*For a draught* A draught of fish; or let down your nets for the "taking" of fish.

◀REF▶ **Luke 5:5.** *Master* This is the first time that the word here translated “Master” occurs in the New Testament, and it is used only by Luke. The other evangelists call him Rabbi, or Lord. The word here used means a “prefect,” or one placed “over” others, and hence, it comes to mean “teacher” or “guide.”

*At thy word* At thy command. Though it seemed so improbable that they would take anything after having in vain toiled all night, yet he was willing to trust the WORD of Jesus and make the trial. This was a remarkable instance of “faith.” Peter, as it appears, knew little then of Jesus. He was not then a chosen apostle. Jesus came to these fishermen almost a stranger and unknown, and yet at his command Peter resolved to make another trial, and go once more out into the deep. Oh, if ALL would as readily obey him, all would be in like manner blessed. If sinners would thus obey him, they would find ALL his promises sure. He never disappoints. He asks only that we have “confidence” in him, and he will give to us every needful blessing.

◀REF▶ **Luke 5:6.** *Their net brake* Or their net “began” to break, or was “about” to break. This is all that is implied in the Greek word. If their nets had actually “broken,” as our English word seems to suppose, the fish would have escaped; but no more is meant than that there was such a multitude of fishes that their net was “on the point” of being torn asunder.

◀REF▶ **Luke 5:7.** *They beckoned* They gave signs. Perhaps they were at a considerable distance, so that they could not be easily heard.

*Their partners* James and John. See ◀REF▶ Luke 5:10. The following remarks of Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. ii. p. 80, 81) will furnish a good illustration of this passage. After describing the mode of fishing with the “hand-net” and the “dagnet,” he adds: “Again, there is the bag-net and basket-net, of various kinds, which are so constructed and worked as to inclose the fish out in deep water. I have seen them of almost every conceivable size and pattern. It was with some one of this sort, I suppose, that Simon had toiled all night without catching anything, but which, when let down at the command of Jesus, inclosed so great a multitude that the net broke, and they filled two ships with the fish until they began to sink. Peter here speaks of toiling all night; and there are certain kinds of fishing always carried on at night. It is a beautiful sight. With blazing torch the boat glides over the flashing sea, and the men stand gazing keenly into it

until their prey is sighted, when, quick as lightning, they fling their net or fly their spear; and often you see the tired fishermen come sullenly into harbor in the morning, having toiled all night in vain. Indeed, every kind of fishing is uncertain. A dozen times the angler jerks out a naked hook; the hand-net closes down on nothing; the drag-net brings in only weeds; the bag comes up empty. And then again, every throw is successful — every net is full; and frequently without any other apparent reason than that of throwing it on the right side of the ship instead of the left, as it happened to the disciples here at Tiberias.”

◀418▶ **Luke 5:8.** *When Simon Peter saw it* Saw the great amount of fishes; the remarkable success of letting down the net.

*He fell down at Jesus' knees* This was a common posture of “supplication.” He had no doubt now of the power and knowledge of Jesus. In amazement, wonder, and gratitude, and not doubting that he was in the presence of some divine being, he prostrated himself to the earth, trembling and afraid. So should sinful people “always” throw themselves at the feet of Jesus at the proofs of his power; so should they humble themselves before him at the manifestations of his goodness.

*Depart from me* This is an expression of Peter’s humility, and of his consciousness of his unworthiness. It was not from want of love to Jesus; it did not show that he would not be pleased with his favor and presence; but it was the result of being convinced that Jesus was a messenger from God — a high and holy being; and he felt that HE was unworthy to be in his presence. In his deep consciousness of sin, therefore, he requested that Jesus would depart from him and his little vessel. Peter’s feeling was not unnatural, though it was not proper to request Jesus to leave him. It was an involuntary, sudden request, and arose from ignorance of the character of Jesus. We “are” not worthy to be with him, to be reckoned among his friends, or to dwell in heaven with him; but he came to seek the lost and to save the impure. He graciously condescends to dwell with those who are humble and contrite, though they are conscious that they are not worthy of his presence; and we may therefore come boldly to him, and ask him to receive us to his home — to an eternal dwelling with him in the heavens.

◀450▶ **Luke 5:10.** *Fear not* He calmed their fears. With mildness and tenderness he stilled all their troubled feelings, and to their surprise

announced that henceforward they should be appointed as heralds of salvation.

*From henceforth* Hereafter.

*Shalt catch men* Thou shalt be a minister of the gospel, and thy business shall be to win people to the truth that they may be saved.

**Luke 5:11.** *Forsook all* It was not “much” that they left — a couple of small boats and their nets; but it was all they had, even all their living. But this showed their love of Jesus, and their willingness to deny themselves, as “really” as if they had forsaken palaces and gold. All that Jesus asks is that we should leave “all” we have for him; that we should love him “more” than we do whatever friends or property we may possess, and be willing to give them all up when he requires it.

**Luke 5:12-16.** See the notes at **Matthew 8:2-4.**

**Luke 5:17-26.** See this passage explained in the notes at **Matthew 9:1-7.**

**Luke 5:17.** *On a certain day* The time and place are not particularly mentioned here, but from **Matthew 9:1** it seems it was at Capernaum.

**Luke 5:19.** *The tiling* See the notes at **Matthew 9:1-7.**

**Luke 5:27-32.** See the notes at **Matthew 9:9-13.**

**Luke 5:29.** *Made him a great feast* This circumstance “Matthew,” or “Levi” as he is here called, has omitted in his own gospel. This fact shows how little inclined the evangelists are to say anything in favor of themselves or to praise themselves. True religion does not seek to commend itself, or to speak of what it does, even when it is done for the Son of God. It seeks retirement; it delights rather in the consciousness of doing well than in its being known; and it leaves its good deeds to be spoken of, if spoken of at all, by others. This is agreeable to the direction of Solomon (**Proverbs 27:2**): “Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth.” This feast was made expressly for our Lord, and was attended by many publicans, probably people of wicked character; and it is not improbable that Matthew got them together for the purpose of bringing them into contact with our Lord to do them good. Our Saviour did not refuse to go, and to go, too, at the risk of being accused of being a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a

friend of publicans and sinners, <sup><0119></sup>Matthew 11:19. But his motives were pure. In the thing itself there was no harm. It afforded an opportunity of doing good, and we have no reason to doubt that the opportunity was improved by the Lord Jesus. Happy would it be if all the “great feasts” that are made were made in honor of our Lord; happy if HE would be a welcome guest there; and happy if ministers and pious people who attend them demeaned themselves as the Lord Jesus did, and they were always made the means of advancing his kingdom. But, alas! there are few places where our Lord would be “so unwelcome” as at great feasts, and few places that serve so much to render the mind gross, dissipated, and irreligious.

<sup><0133></sup>**Luke 5:33-39.** See this passage illustrated in the notes at <sup><0114></sup>Matthew 9:14-17.

<sup><0139></sup>**Luke 5:39.** *Having drunk old wine ...* Wine increases its strength and flavor, and its mildness and mellowness, by age, and the old is therefore preferable. They who had tasted such mild and mellow wine would not readily drink the comparatively sour and astringent juice of the grape as it came from the press. The meaning of this proverb in this place seems to be this: You Pharisees wish to draw my disciples to the “austere” and “rigid” duties of the ceremonial law — to fasting and painful rites; but they have come under a milder system. They have tasted the gentle and tender blessings of the gospel; they have no “relish” for your stern and harsh requirements. To insist NOW on their observing them would be like telling a man who had tasted of good, ripe, and mild wine to partake of that which is sour and unpalatable. At the proper time all the sterner duties of religion will be properly regarded; but “at present,” to teach them to fast when they see “no occasion” for it — when they are full of joy at the presence of their Master — would be like putting a piece of new cloth on an old garment, or new wine into old bottles, or drinking unpleasant wine after one had tasted that which was more pleasant. It would be ill-timed, inappropriate, and incongruous.

## NOTES ON LUKE 6

☞ **Luke 6:1-11.** See this passage explained in the notes at ☞ Matthew 12:1-13.

☞ **Luke 6:1.** *Second sabbath after the first* See the notes at ☞ Matthew 12:1. This phrase has given great perplexity to commentators. A “literal” translation would be, “on the Sabbath called “second first,”” or second first Sabbath. The word occurs nowhere else. It is therefore exceedingly difficult of interpretation. The most natural and easy explanation is that proposed by Scaliger. The “second day” of the Passover was a great festival, on which the wave-sheaf was offered, ☞ Leviticus 23:11. From “that day” they reckoned “seven weeks,” or seven “Sabbaths,” to the day of Pentecost. The “first” Sabbath after that “second day” was called the “second first,” or the first from the second day of the feast. The “second” Sabbath was called the “second second,” or the second Sabbath from the second day of the feast; the third the “third second, etc.” This day, therefore, on which the Saviour went through the fields, was the first Sabbath that occurred after the second day of the feast.

*Rubbing them in their hands* The word “corn” here means wheat or barley, and not maize, as in America. They rubbed it in their hands to separate the grain from the chaff. This was common and allowable. Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. ii. p. 510, 511) says:

“I have often seen my muleteers, as we passed along the wheat fields, pluck off ears, rub them in their hands, and eat the grains, unroasted, just as the apostles are said to have done. This also is allowable. The Pharisees did not object to the thing itself, only to the time when it was done. They said it was not lawful to do this on the Sabbath-day. It was work forbidden by those who, through their traditions, had made man for the Sabbath, not the Sabbath for man.”

So Professor Hackett (“Illustrations of Scripture,” p. 176, 177) says:

“The incident of plucking the ears of wheat, rubbing out the kernels in their hands, and eating them (☞ Luke 6:1), is one which the traveler sees often at present who is in Palestine at the time of the



gathering of the harvest. Dr. Robinson relates the following case: ‘Our Arabs were an hungered, and, going into the fields, they plucked the ears of grain and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. On being questioned, they said this was an old custom, and no one would speak against it; they were supposed to be hungry, and it was allowed as a charity.’ (Biblical Researches, vol. ii. p. 192.) The Pharisees complained of the disciples for violating the Sabbath, and not any rights of property.”

◀◀▶▶ **Luke 6:8.** *But he knew there thoughts* He knew their thoughts — their dark, malicious designs — by the question, which they proposed to him, whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days (Matthew). In “reply” to their question, Jesus asked them whether they would not release a “sheep” on the Sabbath-day if it was fallen into a pit, and also asked “them” whether it was better to do good than to do evil on that day, implying that to “omit” to do “good” was, in fact, doing “evil.”

◀◀▶▶ **Luke 6:11.** *Were filled with madness* Probably,

1. Because he had shown his “power” to work a miracle.
2. Because he had shown his power to do it “contrary” to what “they” thought was right.
3. Because by doing it he had shown that he was from “God,” and that “they” were therefore “wrong” in their views of the Sabbath. And,
4. Because he had shown no respect “to their views” of what the law of God demanded.

Pride, obstinacy, malice, and disappointed self-confidence were “all” combined, therefore, in producing madness. Nor were they alone. Men are often enraged because others do good in a way which “they” do not approve of. God gives success to others; and because he has not accommodated himself to “their” views of what is right, and done it in the way which “they” would have prescribed, they are enraged, and filled with envy at people more successful than themselves.

*Communed one with another* Spoke together, or laid a plan.

**◀462▶ Luke 6:12.** *And it came to pass in those days* The designation of the time here is very general. It means “about” the time when the events occurred which had been just narrated.

*He went out into a mountain* Jesus was accustomed to resort to such places to hold communion with God, **◀4066▶ Mark 6:46**. He did it because it was retired, free from interruption, and fitted by impressiveness and grandeur to raise the thoughts to the God that had formed the high hills and the deep-shaded groves.

*And continued all night in prayer to God* There has been a difference of opinion about this passage, whether it means that he spent the night in the act of “praying” to God, or in a “place” of prayer. The Jews had places of prayer, called “oratories,” built out of their cities or towns, where they could retire from the bustle of a city and hold communion with God. They were built on the banks of rivers (compare **◀4163▶ Acts 16:13**), in groves, or on hills. They were rude inclosures, made by building a rough wall of stone around a level piece of ground, and capable of accommodating a small number who might resort thither to pray. But the more probable opinion is that he spent the whole night in supplication; for:

1. This is the obvious meaning of the passage.
2. The object for which he went out was “to pray.”
3. It was an occasion of great importance. He was about to send out his apostles — to lay the foundation of his religion — and he therefore set apart this time especially to seek the divine blessing.
4. It was no unusual thing for Jesus to spend much time in prayer, and we are not to wonder that he passed an entire night in supplication. If it be asked why Jesus should pray “at all” if he was divine, it may be replied that he was also a “man” — a man subject to the same sufferings as others, and, “as a man,” needing the divine blessing. There was no more inconsistency in his “praying” than there was in his “eating.” Both were “means” employed for an end, and both were equally consistent with his being divine. But Jesus was also “Mediator,” and as such it was proper to seek the divine direction and blessing. In “this” case he has set us an example that we should follow. In great emergencies, when we have important duties, or are about to encounter special difficulties, we should seek the divine blessing and direction by “prayer.” We should set apart an unusual

portion of time for supplication. Nay, if we pass the “whole night” in prayer, it should not be charged as enthusiasm. Our Saviour did it. Men of the world often pass whole nights in plans of gain or in dissipation, and shall it be esteemed strange that Christians should spend an equal portion of time in the far more important business of religion?

◀163▶ **Luke 6:13-16.** See the notes at ▶100▶ Matthew 10:1-4.

◀167▶ **Luke 6:17.** *And stood in the plain* It is not affirmed, however, that he stood in the plain when he delivered the following discourse. There has been some doubt whether the following discourse is the same as that recorded in Matthew 5; 6; 7, or whether the Saviour “repeated” the substance of that discourse, and that Luke recorded it as he repeated it. The reasons which have led many to suppose that they refer to the same are:

1. That the beginning and the close are alike.
2. That the “substance” of each is the same. And,
3. That “after” the discourse was delivered, both affirm that Jesus went to Capernaum and healed the servant of the centurion, ▶105▶ Matthew 8:5-13; ▶107▶ Luke 7:1-10.

On the other hand, “Matthew” says that the sermon was delivered on the “mountain” (▶101▶ Matthew 5:1); it is thought to be implied that “Luke” affirms that it was in the “plain.” Matthew says that he “sat;” Luke, that he “stood.” Yet there is no reason to suppose that there is a difference in the evangelists. Jesus spent the night on the mountain in prayer. In the morning he descended into the open plain and healed many. While there, as Luke says, he “stood” and received those who came to him, and healed their diseases. There is no impropriety in supposing that, being pressed by multitudes, he retired into the mountain again, or to an eminence in the plain, or to the side of the mountain, where the people might be more conveniently arranged and seated to hear him. There he “sat,” as recorded by Matthew, and delivered the discourse; for it is to be observed that Luke does “not” say that he delivered the sermon “on the plain,” but only that he “healed the sick there.”

*Tyre and Sidon* See the notes at ▶102▶ Matthew 11:21.

◀168▶ **Luke 6:18.** *Vexed* The word “vex” with us means to provoke, or irritate by petty provocations. Here it means, however, to “afflict,” to “torment” — denoting deep and heavy trials.

*Unclean spirits* Demons that were impure and unholy, having a delight in tormenting, and in inflicting painful and loathsome diseases.

◀169▶ **Luke 6:19.** *Virtue* Healing power. See the notes at ▶165▶ Mark 5:30.

◀170▶ **Luke 6:20-49.** See this passage fully illustrated in the sermon on the mount, in Matthew 5—7.

◀171▶ **Luke 6:21.** *That hunger now* Matthew has it, “that hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Matthew has expressed more fully what Luke has briefly, but there is no contradiction.

◀172▶ **Luke 6:24-26.** These verses have been omitted by Matthew. They seem to have been spoken to the Pharisees.

*Who are rich* In this world’s goods. They loved them; they had sought for them; they found their consolation in them. It implies, farther, that they would not seek or receive consolation from the gospel. They were proud, and would not seek it; satisfied, and did not desire it; filled with cares, and had no time or disposition to attend to it. All the consolation which they had reason to expect they had received. Alas! how poor and worthless is such consolation, compared with that which the gospel would give!

*Woe unto you that are full!* Not hungry. Satisfied with their wealth, and not feeling their need of anything better than earthly wealth can give. Many, alas! are thus “full.” They profess to be satisfied. They desire nothing but wealth, and a sufficiency to satisfy the wants of the body. They have no anxiety for the riches that shall endure forever.

*Ye shall hunger* Your property shall be taken away, or you shall see that it is of little value; and then you shall see the need of something better. You shall feel your want and wretchedness, and shall “hunger” for something to satisfy the desires of a dying, sinful soul.

*That laugh now* Are happy, or thoughtless, or joyful, or filled with levity.

*Shall mourn and weep* The time is coming when you shall sorrow deeply. In sickness, in calamity, in the prospect of death, in the fear of eternity,

your laughter shall be turned into sorrow. “There is” a place where you cannot laugh, and there you will see the folly of having passed the “proper time” of preparing for such scenes in levity and folly. Alas! how many thus spend their youth! and how many weep when it is too late! God gives them over, and “laughs” at THEIR “calamity,” and mocks when their fear comes, <sup><005></sup>Proverbs 1:26. To be happy in “such scenes,” it is necessary to be sober, humble, pious in early life. “Then” we need not weep in the day of calamity; then there will be no terror in death; then there will be nothing to fear in the grave.

<sup><005></sup>**Luke 6:26.** *When all men shall speak well of you* When they shall praise or applaud you. The people of the world will not praise or applaud “my” doctrine; they are “opposed” to it, and therefore, if they speak well of “you” and of “your teachings,” it is proof that you do not teach the true doctrine. If you do “not” do this, then there will be woe upon you. If men teach false doctrines for true; if they declare that God has spoken that which he has not spoken, and if they oppose what he “has” delivered, then heavy punishments will await them.

*For so did their fathers* The fathers or ancestors of this people; the ancient Jews.

*To the false prophets* Men who pretended to be of God — who delivered their “own” doctrines as the truth of God, and who accommodated themselves to the desires of the people. Of this number were the prophets of Baal, the false prophets who appeared in the time of Jeremiah, etc.

<sup><007></sup>**Luke 6:27,28.** See <sup><0154></sup>Matthew 5:44,45.

<sup><009></sup>**Luke 6:29.** See <sup><0159></sup>Matthew 5:39,40.

<sup><010></sup>**Luke 6:30.** See <sup><0152></sup>Matthew 5:42.

<sup><011></sup>**Luke 6:31.** See <sup><0172></sup>Matthew 7:12.

<sup><012></sup>**Luke 6:32-36.** See <sup><0156></sup>Matthew 5:46-48.

<sup><013></sup>**Luke 6:37-42.** See <sup><0171></sup>Matthew 7:1-9.

<sup><014></sup>**Luke 6:38.** *Good measure* They shall give you good measure, or “full” measure.

*Pressed down* As figs or grapes might be, and thus many more might be put into the measure.

*Shaken together* To make it more compact, and thus to give more.

*Running over* So full that the measure would overflow.

*Shall men give* This is said to be the reward of “giving” to the poor and needy; and the meaning is that the man who is liberal will find others liberal to him in dealing with them, and when he is also in circumstances of want. A man who is himself kind to the poor — who has that “character” established — will find many who are ready to help “him” abundantly when he is in want. He that is parsimonious, close, niggardly, will find few or none who will aid him.

*Into your bosom* That is, to you. The word “bosom” here has reference to a custom among Oriental nations of making the bosom or front part of their garments large, so that articles could be carried in them, answering the purpose of our pockets. Compare <sup><0406></sup>Exodus 4:6,7; <sup><0427></sup>Proverbs 6:27; <sup><0435></sup>Ruth 3:15.

<sup><0439></sup>**Luke 6:39.** *A parable* A proverb or similitude.

*Can the blind lead the blind?* See the notes at <sup><0454></sup>Matthew 15:14.

<sup><0460></sup>**Luke 6:40.** *The disciple is not ...* The learner is not above his teacher, does not know more, and must expect to fare no better. This seems to have been spoken to show them that they were not to expect that their disciples would go “beyond them” in attainments; that if they were blind, their followers would be also; and that therefore it was important for them to understand fully the doctrines of the gospel, and not to be blind leaders of the blind.

*Every one that is perfect* The word rendered “is perfect” means sometimes to repair or mend, and is thus applied to mending nets, <sup><0421></sup>Matthew 4:21; <sup><0419></sup>Mark 1:19. Hence, it means to repair or amend in a moral sense, or to make whole or complete. Here it means, evidently, “thoroughly instructed” or “informed.” The Christian should be like his Master — holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners. He should copy his example, and grow into the likeness of his Redeemer. Nor can any other be a Christian.

<sup><0464></sup>**Luke 6:41,42.** See the notes at <sup><0473></sup>Matthew 7:3-5.

~~<066>~~ **Luke 6:43,44.** See the notes at ~~<076>~~ Matthew 7:16-18.

~~<065>~~ **Luke 6:45.** This verse is not found in the sermon on the mount as recorded by Matthew, but is recorded by him in ~~<025>~~ Matthew 12:35. See the notes at that passage.

~~<066>~~ **Luke 6:46-49.** See the notes at ~~<071>~~ Matthew 7:21-27.

## NOTES ON LUKE 7

◀170▶ **Luke 7:1-10.** See the notes at ▶185▶ Matthew 8:5-13.

◀170▶ **Luke 7:1.** *In the audience of the people* In the hearing of the people.

◀170▶ **Luke 7:2.** *Who was dear unto him* That is, he was valuable, trusty, and honored.

◀170▶ **Luke 7:4.** *They besought him instantly* Urgently or earnestly.

*He was worthy* The centurion. He had showed favor to the Jews, and it was not improper to show him a kindness.

◀171▶ **Luke 7:11.** *A city called Nain* This city was in Galilee, in the boundaries of the tribe of Issachar. It was about two miles south of Mount Tabor, and not far from Capernaum; It is now a small village inhabited by Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. ii. p. 158) locates it on the northwest corner of a mount now called Jebel ed Duhy, one hour’s ride from the foot of Mount Tabor. Of this place he says:

“This mount is now called Jebel ed Duhy and that small hamlet on the northwest corner of it is Nain, famous for the restoration of the widow’s son to life. It was once a place of considerable extent, but is now little more than a cluster of ruins, among which dwell a few families of fanatical Moslems. It is in keeping with the one historic incident that renders it dear to the Christian, that its only antiquities are tombs. These are situated mainly on the east of the village, and it was in that direction, I presume, that the widow’s son was being carried on that memorable occasion. It took me just an hour to ride from the foot of Tabor to Nain.”

◀171▶ **Luke 7:12.** *The gate of the city* Cities were surrounded by walls, to defend them from their enemies. They were entered through “gates” placed at convenient distances from each other. In most cities it was not allowed to bury the dead within the walls; hence, they were carried to some convenient burial-place in the vicinity of the city.



*A dead man carried out* A funeral procession. Anciently no Jews were buried within the walls of the city, except the kings and distinguished persons, <sup><B></sup>1 Samuel 28:3; <sup><C></sup>2 Kings 21:18. The custom of burying within cities, and especially within the walls of churches or in their vicinity, had its origin among Christians very early; yet perhaps few customs are more deleterious to health than burials within large cities, especially within the walls of frequented buildings. The effluvia from dead bodies is excessively unwholesome. Burial-places should be in situations of retirement, far from the tread of the happy and busy world, where all the feelings may be still and calm, and where there can be no injury to health from the mouldering bodies of the dead.

<sup><E></sup>**Luke 7:16.** *Came a fear on all* An “awe” or solemnity at the presence of one who had power to raise the dead, and at the miracle which had been performed.

*Glorified God* Praised or honored God that he had sent such a prophet.

*And, That God hath visited his people* Some said one thing and some another, but all expressing their belief that God had showed special favor to the people.

*Hath visited* See <sup><F></sup>Luke 1:68.

The raising of this young man was one of the most decisive and instructive of our Lord’s miracles. There was no doubt that he was dead. There could be no delusion, and no agreement to impose on the people. He came near to the city with no reference to this young man; he met the funeral procession, as it were, by accident, and by a word he restored him to life. All those who had the best opportunity of judging — the mother, the friends — believed him to be dead, and were about to bury him. The evidence that he came to life was decisive. He sat up, he spoke, and “all” were impressed with the full assurance that God had raised him to life. Many witnesses were present, and none doubted that Jesus “by a word” had restored him to his weeping mother.

The whole scene was affecting. Here was a widowed mother who was following her only son, her stay and hope, to the grave. He was carried along — one in the prime of life and the only comfort of his parent — impressive proof that the young, the useful, the vigorous, and the lovely may die. Jesus met them, apparently a stranger. He approached the

procession as if he had something important to say; he touched the bier and the procession stood still. He was full of compassion for the weeping parent, and by a word restored the youth, stretched upon the bier, to life. He sat up, and spoke. Jesus therefore had power over the dead. He also has power to raise sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, to life. He can speak the word, and, though in their death of sin they are borne along toward ruin, he can open their eyes, and raise them up, and restore them revived to REAL life or to their friends. Often he raises up children in this manner, and gives them, converted to God, to their friends, imparting as REAL joy as he gave to the widow of Nain by raising her son from the dead, And every child should remember, if he has pious parents, that there is “no way” in which he can give so much joy to them as by embracing Him who is the resurrection and the life, and resolving to live to his glory.

◀1719▶ **Luke 7:19-35.** See this passage explained in ◀1112▶ Matthew 11:2-19.

◀1719▶ **Luke 7:29.** *The people* The common people.

*That heard him* That heard “John.”

*The publicans* The tax-gatherers, the worst kind of people, who had, however, been converted.

*Justified God* Considered God as “just” or “right” in the counsel which he gave by John — to wit, in calling people to repentance, and in denouncing future wrath on the impenitent. Compare ◀1119▶ Matthew 11:19.

*Being baptized ...* They “showed” that they approved of the message of God by submitting to the ordinance which he commanded — the ordinance of baptism. This verse and the following are not to be considered as the words of “Luke,” but the continuation of the discourse of our Lord. He is saying what took place in regard to John. Among the common people he was approved and obeyed among the rich and learned he was despised.

◀1719▶ **Luke 7:30.** *But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected ...* It appears from ◀1119▶ Matthew 3:7 that some of the Pharisees came to John to be baptized; but still this is entirely consistent with the supposition that the great mass of Pharisees and lawyers rejected him.

*The counsel of God* The counsel of God toward them was the solemn admonition by John to “repent” and be baptized, and be prepared to receive the Messiah. This was the command or revealed will of God in

relation to them. When it is said that they “rejected” the counsel of God, it does not mean that they could frustrate his purposes, but merely that they violated his commands. Men cannot frustrate the “real” purposes of God, but they can contemn his messages, they can violate his commands, and thus they can reject the counsel which he gives them, and treat with contempt the desire which he manifests for their welfare.

*Against themselves* To their own hurt or detriment. God is wise and good. He knows what is best for us. He, therefore, that rejects what God commands, rejects it to his own injury. It “cannot” be well for any mortal to despise what God commands him to do.

⌌**Luke 7:31-35.** See this passage explained in the notes at ⌌**Matthew 11:16-19.** “And the Lord said.” This clause is wanting in almost all the manuscripts, and is omitted by the best critics.

⌌**Luke 7:36.** *One of the Pharisees* His name was Simon, ⌌**Luke 7:10.** Nothing more is known of him. It is not improbable, however, from what follows (⌌**Luke 7:40-47**), that he had been healed by the Saviour of some afflictive disease, and made this feast to show his gratitude.

*Sat down to meat* The original word here means only that he placed himself or reclined at the table. The notion of “sitting” at meals is taken from modern customs, and was not practiced by the Jews. See the notes at ⌌**Matthew 23:6.**

*Meat* Supper. Food of any kind. Sat down to eat.

⌌**Luke 7:37.** *In the city* What city is meant is unknown. Some have supposed it was Nain; some Capernaum; some Magdala; and some Jerusalem.

*Which was a sinner* Who was depraved or wicked. This woman, it seems, was known to be a sinner — perhaps an abandoned woman or a prostitute. It is certain that she had much to be forgiven, and she had probably passed her life in crime. There is no evidence that this was the woman commonly called Mary Magdalene.

*An alabaster-box ...* See the notes at ⌌**Mark 14:3.**

⌌**Luke 7:38.** *Stood at his feet behind him* They reclined, at their meals, on their left side, and their feet, therefore, were extended from the table, so

that persons could easily approach them. See the notes at <sup>4216</sup>Matthew 23:6.

*Began to wash his feet* The Jews wore sandals. These were taken off when they entered a house. It was an act of hospitality and kindness to wash the feet of a guest. “She” therefore began to show her love for the Saviour, and at the same time her humility and penitence, by pouring forth a flood of tears, and washing his feet in the manner of a servant.

*Kissed his feet* The kiss was an emblem of love and affection. In this manner she testified her love for the Lord Jesus, and at the same time her humility and sense of sin by kissing his feet. There could be few expressions of penitence more deep and tender than were these. A sense of all her sins rushed over her mind; her heart burst at the remembrance of them, and at the presence of the pure Redeemer; with deep sorrow she humbled herself and sought forgiveness. She showed her love for him by a kiss of affection; her humility, by bathing his feet; her veneration, by breaking a costly box — perhaps procured by a guilty life — and anointing his feet. In this way we should all come, embracing him as the loved Redeemer, humbled at his feet, and offering all we have — all that we have gained in lives of sin, in our professions, by merchandise and toil, while we were sinners — offering “all” to his service. Thus shall we show the sincerity of our repentance, and thus shall we hear his gracious voice pronounce our sins forgiven.

<sup>4217</sup>**Luke 7:39.** *He spake within himself* Thought.

*If he were a prophet* The word “prophet” here means, not one who predicts future events, but one who knows the hearts of people. If Jesus had been sent from God as a prophet, he supposed that he would have known the character of the woman and would have rebuked her.

*Would have known ...* Because Jesus did not rebuke her and drive her from his presence, he inferred that he could not be acquainted with her character. The Pharisees considered it improper to hold communion with those who were notorious sinners. They judged our Saviour by their own rules, and supposed that “he” would act in the same way; and Simon therefore concluded that he did not know her character and could not be a prophet. Jesus did not refuse the society of the guilty. He came to save the lost; and no person ever came to him so sure of finding a “friend,” as those

who came conscious that they were deeply depraved, and mourning on account of their crimes.

*That toucheth him* The “touch” of a Gentile, or a person singularly wicked, they supposed to be polluting, and the Pharisees avoided it. See ~~491~~ Matthew 9:11.

~~474~~ **Luke 7:41.** *A certain creditor* A man who had lent money or sold property, the payment for which was yet due.

*Five hundred pence* About 69 dollars 26 cents, or 14 British pounds, 11 shilling, 8d. See the notes at ~~483~~ Matthew 18:28.

*Fifty* About 7 dollars, or 1 British pound, 9 shillings, and 2d.

~~472~~ **Luke 7:42.** *Frankly forgave* Freely forgave, or forgave entirely without any compensation. This is not designed to express anything about the way in which God forgives sinners. He forgives — forgives freely, but it is in connection with the “atonement” made by the Lord Jesus. If it was a mere “debt” which we owed to God, he might forgive, as this creditor did, without an equivalent. But it is “crime” which he forgives. He pardons as a moral governor. A parent might forgive a “debt” without any equivalent; but he cannot pardon an offending child without regarding his own “character” as a parent, the “truth” of his threatenings, the good order of his house, and the maintenance of his authority. So our sins against God, though they are called “debts,” are called so “figuratively.” It is not an affair of “money,” and God cannot forgive us without maintaining his word, the honor of his government, and law — in other words, without an “atonement.” It is clear that by the creditor here our Saviour meant to designate GOD, and by the “debtors,” sinners and the woman present. Simon, whose life had been comparatively upright, was denoted by the one that owed “fifty” pence; the woman, who had been an open and shameless sinner, was represented by the one that owed “five hundred.” Yet “neither” could pay. Both must be forgiven or perish. So, however much difference there is among people, “all” need the pardoning mercy of God, and “all,” without that, must perish.

~~473~~ **Luke 7:43.** *I suppose ...* He saw not “the point” of our Lord’s parable. By thus saying, therefore, he condemned himself, and prepared the way for our Lord’s reproof.

**Luke 7:44.** *Seest thou this woman?* You see what this woman has done to me, compared with what you have done. She has shown me expressions of regard which you, in your own house, have not shown.

*I entered into thine house* I came at your invitation, where I might expect all the usual rites of hospitality.

*Thou gavest me no water for my feet* Among Eastern people it was customary, before eating, to wash the feet; and to do this, or to bring water for it, was one of the rites of hospitality. See <sup><01804></sup>Genesis 18:4; <sup><07921></sup>Judges 19:21. The reasons for this were, that they wore “sandals,” which covered only the bottom of the feet, and that when they ate they reclined on couches or sofas. It became therefore necessary that the feet should be often washed.

**Luke 7:45.** *Thou gavest me no kiss* The kiss was a token of affection or a common mode of salutation, and Simon had even neglected this mark of welcoming him to his house. It was often used among “men” as a sign of salutation. Compare <sup><01304></sup>Genesis 33:4; <sup><02837></sup>Exodus 18:7; <sup><01649></sup>Matthew 26:49.

*Hath not ceased to kiss my feet* How striking the difference between the conduct of Simon and this woman! HE, with all the richness of a splendid preparation, had omitted the common marks of regard and affection. SHE, in humility, had bowed at his feet, had watered them with tears, and had not ceased to kiss them. The most splendid entertainments do not always express the greatest welcome. There may be in such entertainments much insincerity — much seeking of popularity or some other motive; but no such motive could have operated in inducing a broken-hearted sinner to wash the Saviour’s “feet” with tears.

**Luke 7:46.** *My head with oil* The custom of pouring oil upon the head was universal among the Jews. The oil used was sweet oil or oil of olives, prepared in such a way as to give an agreeable smell. It was also used to render the hair more smooth and elegant. See <sup><0003></sup>Ruth 3:3; <sup><0021></sup>2 Samuel 12:20; 14:2; <sup><0235></sup>Psalms 23:5.

*With ointment* This “ointment” was a mixture of various aromatics, and was therefore far more costly and precious than the “oil” commonly used for anointing the head. Her conduct, compared with that of Simon, was therefore more striking. “He” did not give even the common oil “for his head” used on such occasions. “She” had applied to “his feet” a far more

precious and valuable “unguent.” “He” therefore, showed comparatively “little” love. “She” showed “much.”

~~174~~ **Luke 7:47.** *Wherefore I say unto thee* As the result of this, or because she has done this; meaning by this that she had given “evidence” that her sins had been forgiven. The inquiry with Simon was whether it was proper for Jesus to “touch her” or to allow her to touch him, because she was such a sinner, ~~173~~ Luke 7:39. Jesus said, in substance, to Simon, “Grant that she has been as great a sinner as you affirm, and even grant that if she had “continued so” it might be improper to suffer her to touch me, yet “her conduct” shows that her sins have been forgiven. She has evinced so much love for me as to show that she is no longer “such a sinner” as you suppose, and it is not, therefore, “improper” that she should be suffered to come near me.”

*For she loved much* In our translation this would seem to be given as a reason why her sins had been forgiven — that she had loved much “before” they were pardoned; but this is clearly not the meaning. This would be contrary to the whole New Testament, which supposes that love “succeeds,” not “precedes” forgiveness; and which nowhere supposes that sins are forgiven “because” we love God. It would be also contrary to the design of the Saviour here. It was not to show “why” her sins had been forgiven, but to show that she had given evidence that they actually “had” been, and that it was proper, therefore, that she should come near to him and manifest this love. The meaning may be thus expressed: “That her sins, so many and aggravated, have been forgiven — that she is no longer such a sinner as you suppose, is manifest from her conduct. She shows deep gratitude, penitence, love. Her conduct is the “proper expression” of that love. While you have shown comparatively little evidence that you felt that “your sins” were great, and comparatively little love at their being forgiven, “she” has shown that she “felt” hers to be great, and has loved much.”

*To whom little is forgiven* He who feels that little has been forgiven — that his sins were not as great as those of others. A man’s love to God will be in proportion to the obligation he “feels” to him for forgiveness. God is to be “loved” for his perfections, apart from what he has “done” for us. But still it is proper that our love should be increased by a consideration of his goodness; and they who feel — as Christians do — that they are the “chief of sinners,” will feel under infinite obligation to love God and their

Redeemer, and that no “expression” of attachment to him can be “beyond” what is due.

~~<078>~~ **Luke 7:48.** *Thy sins are forgiven* What a gracious assurance to the weeping, loving penitent! How that voice, spoken to the troubled sinner, stills his anguish, allays his troubled feelings, and produces peace to the soul! And how manifest is it that he that could say thus “must” be God! No man has a “right” to forgive sin. No man “can” speak peace to the soul, and give assurance that its transgressions are pardoned: Here, then, Jesus gave indubitable proof that he was God as well as man; that he was Lord of the conscience as well as the pitying friend; and that he was as able to read the heart and give peace there, as he was to witness the external expression of sorrow for sin.

~~<079>~~ **Luke 7:49.** *Who is this ...* A very pertinent question. Who COULD he be but God? Man could not do it, and there is no wonder that they were amazed.

~~<075>~~ **Luke 7:50.** *Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace* See the notes at ~~<073>~~ Mark 5:34.



## NOTES ON LUKE 8

◀BIB▶ **Luke 8:1.** *Every city and village* Of Galilee.

*Preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God* That the kingdom of God was about to come, or that his reign in the gospel was about to be set up over people. See the notes at ▶BIB▶ Matthew 3:2.

*The twelve* The twelve apostles.

◀BIB▶ **Luke 8:2.** *Infirmities* Sickness.

*Mary called Magdalene* So called from “Magdala,” the place of her residence. It was situated on the Sea of Galilee, south of Capernaum. To this place Jesus retired after feeding the 4,000. See the notes at ▶BIB▶ Matthew 15:39.

*Out of whom went* By the power of Jesus.

*Seven devils* The word “seven” is often used for an indefinite number, and “may” signify merely “many” devils. The expression is used to signify that she was grievously tormented, and rendered, doubtless, insane by the power of evil spirits. See the notes at ▶BIB▶ Matthew 4:24. It has been commonly supposed that Mary Magdalene was a woman of abandoned character, but of this there is not the least evidence. All that we know of her is that she was formerly grievously afflicted by the presence of those evil spirits, that she was perfectly cured by Jesus, and that afterward she became one of his most faithful and humble followers. She was at his crucifixion (▶BIB▶ John 19:25) and burial (▶BIB▶ Mark 15:47), and she was among those who had prepared the materials to embalm him (▶BIB▶ Mark 16:1), and who first went to the sepulchre after the resurrection; and what is particularly interesting in her history, she was the first to whom the risen Redeemer appeared (▶BIB▶ Mark 16:9), and his conversation with her is exceeded in interest and pathos by no passage of history, sacred or profane, ▶BIB▶ John 20:11-18.

◀BIB▶ **Luke 8:3.** *Herod’s steward* Herod Antipas, who reigned in Galilee. He was a son of Herod the Great. The word “steward” means one who has charge of the domestic affairs of a family, to provide for it. This office was

generally held by a “slave” who was esteemed the most faithful, and was often conferred as a reward of fidelity.

*Ministered* Gave for his support.

*Of their substance* Their property; their possessions. Christians then believed, when they professed to follow Christ, that it was proper to give “all” up to him — their property as well as their hearts; and the same thing is still required that is, to commit all that we have to his disposal; to be willing to part with it for the promotion of his glory, and to leave it when he calls us away from it.

~~<1884>~~ **Luke 8:4-15.** See the parable of the sower explained in the notes at ~~<1883>~~ Matthew 13:1-23.

~~<1816>~~ **Luke 8:16-18.** See the notes at ~~<1821>~~ Mark 4:21-25.

~~<1819>~~ **Luke 8:19-21.** See the notes at ~~<1826>~~ Matthew 12:46-50.

~~<1822>~~ **Luke 8:22-39.** See this passage explained in the notes at ~~<1823>~~ Matthew 8:23-34, and ~~<1825>~~ Mark 5:1-20.

~~<1840>~~ **Luke 8:40-56.** See this passage explained in the notes at ~~<1828>~~ Matthew 9:18-26, and ~~<1827>~~ Mark 5:21-43.

## NOTES ON LUKE 9

◀891▶ **Luke 9:1-6.** See the notes at ▶400▶ Matthew 10:1-14.

◀891▶ **Luke 9:7-9.** See the notes at ▶404▶ Matthew 14:1,2. Compare ▶4064▶ Mark 6:14-16.

◀891▶ **Luke 9:10-17.** See the notes at ▶4043▶ Matthew 14:13-21, and ▶4060▶ Mark 6:30-44.

◀891▶ **Luke 9:10.** *Bethsaida* A city on the east bank of the river Jordan, near where the river enters into the Sea of Tiberias. In the neighborhood of that city were extensive wastes or deserts.

◀892▶ **Luke 9:12.** *Day began to wear away* To decline, or as it drew near toward evening.

◀898▶ **Luke 9:18-26.** See the notes at ▶4063▶ Matthew 16:13-27; ▶4087▶ Mark 8:27-38.

◀891▶ **Luke 9:20.** *The Christ of God* The “Anointed” of God. The “Messiah” appointed by God, and who had been long promised by him. See the notes at ▶4001▶ Matthew 1:1.

◀898▶ **Luke 9:28-36.** See an account of the transfiguration in ▶4071▶ Matthew 17:1-13, and ▶4081▶ Mark 9:2-13.

◀899▶ **Luke 9:29.** *The fashion* The “appearance.”

*Glistering* Shining like lightning — of a bright, dazzling whiteness. As Mark says, “more white than any fuller could make it.”

◀898▶ **Luke 9:31.** *In glory* Of a glorious appearance. Of an appearance like that which the saints have in heaven.

*His decease* literally, his “exit” or “departure.” The word translated here “decease” — that is, exit, or “going out” — is elsewhere used to denote death. See ▶6015▶ 2 Peter 1:15. Death is a departure or going out from this life. In “this” word there may be an allusion to the “departure” of the children of Israel from Egypt. As that was going out from “bondage,” pain, and humiliation, so death, to a saint, is but going forth from a land of captivity

and thralldom to one of plenty and freedom; to the land of promise, the Canaan in the skies.

*He should accomplish* Which was about to take place.

**Luke 9:32.** *Heavy with sleep* Borne down with sleep — oppressed, overcome with sleep. It may seem remarkable that they should fall asleep on such an occasion; but we are to bear in mind that this may have been in the night, and that they were weary with the toils of the day. Besides, they did not “fall asleep” while the transfiguration lasted. While Jesus was praying, or perhaps after he closed, they fell asleep. “While” they were sleeping his countenance was changed, and Moses and Elias appeared. The first that “they” saw of it was after they awoke, having been probably awakened by the shining of the light around them.

**Luke 9:36.** *Jesus was found alone* That is, the two men had left him. In respect to “them” he was alone.

**Luke 9:37-43.** See this passage explained in the notes at **Matthew 17:14-21**, and **Mark 9:14-29**.

**Luke 9:44.** *Let these sayings* Probably this refers to the “sayings of the people,” who had seen his miracles, and who on that account had praised and glorified God. On that ground they had acknowledged him to be the Christ. As if he had said, “I am about to die. “You” will then be disconsolate, and perhaps doubtful about my being the Christ. “Then” do you remember these miracles, and the confessions of the people — the evidence which I gave you that I was from God.” Or it may mean, “Remember that I am about to die, and let my sayings in regard to that sink down into your hearts, for it is a most important event; and you will have need of remembering, when it takes place, that I told you of it. This last interpretation, however, does not agree as well with the Greek as the former.

**Luke 9:45.** *It was hid from them* They had imbibed the common notions of the Jews that he was to be a prince and a conqueror, to deliver the nation. They could not understand how that could be, if he was soon to be delivered into the hands of his enemies to die. In this way it was hid from them — not by God, but by their previous false belief. And from this we may learn that the plainest truths of the Bible are unintelligible to many because they have embraced some belief or opinion before which is

erroneous, and which they are unwilling to abandon. The proper way of reading the Bible is to lay aside all previous opinions and submit entirely to God. The apostles should have supposed that their previous notions of the Messiah were wrong, and should have renounced them. They should have believed that what Jesus “then” said was consistent with his being the Christ. So “we” should believe that “all” that God says is consistent with truth, and should forsake all other opinions.

**Luke 9:46-50.** See the notes at **Matthew 18:1-5**. Compare **Mark 9:33-38**.

**Luke 9:51.** *Should be received up* The word here translated “received up” means literally a removal from a lower to a higher place, and here it refers evidently to the solemn ascension of Jesus to heaven. It is often used to describe that great event. See **Acts 1:11,22**; **Mark 16:19**; **1 Timothy 3:16**. The time appointed for him to remain on the earth was about expiring, and he resolved to go to Jerusalem and die. And from this we learn that Jesus made a VOLUNTARY sacrifice; that he “chose” to give his life for the sins of people. Humanly speaking, had he remained in Galilee he would have been safe; but that it might appear that he did not shun danger, and that he was really a VOLUNTARY sacrifice that no man had power over his life except as he was PERMITTED (**John 19:11** — he chose to put himself in the way of danger, and even to go into scenes which he knew would end in his death.

*He stedfastly set his face* He determined to go to Jerusalem, or he set out resolutely. When a man goes toward an object, he may be said to set his face toward it. The expression here means only that he “resolved” to go, and it implies that he was not appalled by the dangers — that he was determined to brave all, and go up into the midst of his enemies — to die.

**Luke 9:52.** *Sent messengers* In the original the word is “angels;” and the use of that word here shows that the word “angel” in the Bible does not always mean heavenly beings.

*To make ready* To prepare a place, lodgings, refreshments. He had no reason to expect that he would experience any kind treatment from the Samaritans if he came suddenly among them, and if they saw that he was going to Jerusalem. He therefore made provision beforehand, and thus has shown us that it is not “improper” to look out beforehand for the supply of our wants, and to guard against want and poverty.

*Samaritans* See the notes at <sup><005></sup>Matthew 10:5. They had no dealings with the Jews, <sup><049></sup>John 4:9.

<sup><035></sup>**Luke 9:53.** *They did not receive him* Did not entertain him hospitably, or receive him with kindness.

*Because his face was ...* Because they ascertained that he was going to Jerusalem. One of the subjects of dispute between the Jews and Samaritans pertained to the proper situation of the temple. The Jews contended that it should be at Jerusalem; the Samaritans, on Mount Gerizim, and accordingly they had built one there. They had probably heard of the miracles of Jesus, and that he claimed to be the Messiah. Perhaps they had hoped that he would decide that “they” were right in regard to the building of the temple. Had he decided the question in that way, they would have received him as the Messiah gladly; but when they saw that he was going among the Jews — that “by going” he would decide in their favor, they resolved to have nothing to do with him, and they rejected him. And from this we may learn:

1. That people wish all the teachers of religion to fall in with their own views.
2. That if a doctrine does not accord with their selfish desires, they are very apt to reject it.
3. That if a religious teacher or a doctrine favors a rival sect, it is commonly rejected without examination. And,
4. That people, from a regard to their own views and selfishness, often reject the true religion, as the Samaritans did the Son of God, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

<sup><035></sup>**Luke 9:54.** *James and John* They were called Boanerges — sons of thunder — probably on account of their energy and power in preaching the gospel, or of their vehement and rash zeal — a remarkable example of which we have in this instance, <sup><037></sup>Mark 3:17.

*Wilt thou ...* The insult had been offered to Jesus, their friend, and they felt it; but their zeal was rash and their spirit bad. Vengeance belongs to God: it was not theirs to attempt it.

*Fire from heaven* Lightning, to consume them.

*As Elias did* By this they wished to justify their zeal. Perhaps, while they were speaking, they saw Jesus look at them with disapprobation, and to vindicate themselves they referred to the case of Elijah. The case is recorded in <sup><1110></sup>2 Kings 1:10-12.

<sup><1115></sup>**Luke 9:55.** *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of* You suppose that you are actuated by a proper love for me; but you know not yourselves. It is rather a love of revenge; rather revengeful feelings toward the “Samaritans” than proper feelings toward “me.” We learn here:

1. That “apparent” zeal for God may be only improper opposition toward our fellow-men.
2. That people, when they wish to honor God, should examine their spirit, and see if there is not lying at the bottom of their professed zeal for God some bad feeling toward their fellow-men.
3. That the highest opposition which Jesus met with was not inconsistent with “his” loving those who opposed him, and with his seeking to do them good.

<sup><1125></sup>**Luke 9:56.** *For the Son of man ...* You should imitate, in your spirit, the Son of man. “He” came not to destroy. If he had come for that purpose, he would have destroyed these Samaritans; but he came to save. He is not soon angry. “He” bears patiently opposition to himself, and “you” should bear opposition to “him.” You should catch his spirit; temper your zeal like his; seek to do good to those who injure you and him; be mild, kind, patient, and forgiving.

<sup><1135></sup>**Luke 9:57-60.** See the notes at <sup><1139></sup>Matthew 8:19-22.

<sup><1145></sup>**Luke 9:61.** *Bid them farewell* To take leave, inform them of the design, and set things at home in order. Jesus did not suffer this, because he probably saw that he would be influenced by a love of his friends, or by their persuasions, not to return to him. The purpose to be a Christian requires “decision.” Men should not tamper with the world. They should not consult earthly friends about it. They should not even allow worldly friends to give them “advice” whether to be Christians or not. God is to be obeyed rather than man, and they should come forth boldly, and resolve at once to give themselves to his service.

☞ **Luke 9:62.** *No man, having put his hand ...* To put one's hand to a plow is a proverbial expression to signify undertaking any business. In order that a plowman may accomplish his work, it is necessary to look onward — to be intent on his employment — not to be looking back with regret that he undertook it. So in religion. He that enters on it must do it with his whole heart, He that comes still loving the world — still looking with regret on its pleasures, its wealth, and its honors — that has not “wholly” forsaken them as his portion, cannot be a Christian, and is not fit for the kingdom of God. How searching is this test to those who profess to be Christians! And how solemn the duty of all people to renounce all earthly objects, and to be not only “almost,” but “altogether,” followers of the Son of God! It is perilous to tamper with the world — to look at its pleasures or to seek its society. He that would enter heaven must come with a heart full of love to God; giving “all” into his hands, and prepared always to give up all his property, his health, his friends, his body, his soul to God, when he demands them, or he cannot be a Christian. Religion is everything or nothing. He that is not willing to sacrifice “everything” for the cause of God, is really willing to sacrifice nothing.



## NOTES ON LUKE 10

**Luke 10:1.** *After these things* After the appointment of the twelve apostles, and the transactions recorded in the previous chapters.

*Other seventy* Seventy others besides the apostles. They were appointed for a different purpose from the apostles. The apostles were to be with him; to hear his instructions; to be witnesses of his miracles, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection and ascension, that they might “then” go and proclaim all these things to the world. The seventy were sent out to preach immediately, and chiefly where he himself was about to come. They were appointed for a temporary object. They were to go into the villages and towns, and prepare the way for his coming. The number “seventy” was a favorite number among the Jews. Thus, the family of Jacob that came into Egypt consisted of seventy, <sup><0462></sup>Genesis 46:27. The number of elders that Moses appointed to aid him was the same, <sup><04116></sup>Numbers 11:16,25. The number which composed the great Sanhedrin, or council of the nation. was the same. It is not improbable that our Saviour appointed this number with reference to the fact that it so often occurred among the Jews, or after the example of Moses, who appointed seventy to aid him in his work; but it is evident that the office was “temporary” — that it had a specific design — and of course that it would be improper to attempt to find now a “continuation” of it, or a parallel to it, in the Christian ministry.

*Two and two* There was much wisdom in sending them in this manner. It was done, doubtless, that they might aid one another by mutual counsel, and that they might sustain and comfort one another in their persecutions and trials. Our Lord in this showed the propriety of having “a religious friend,” who would be a confidant and help. Every Christian, and especially every Christian minister, needs such a friend, and should seek some one to whom he can unbosom himself, and with whom he can mingle his feelings and prayers.

**Luke 10:2.** See the notes at <sup><0488></sup>Matthew 9:36,37.

**Luke 10:3.** See the notes at <sup><0406></sup>Matthew 10:16.

**Luke 10:4.** *Purse ... scrip ... shoes* See the notes at <sup><0400></sup>Matthew 10:10.

*Salute no man by the way* Salutations among the Orientals did not consist, as among us, of a slight bow or an extension of the hand, but was performed by many embraces and inclinations, and even prostrations of the body on the ground. All this required much “time;” and as the business on which the seventy were sent was urgent, they were required not to “delay” their journey by long and formal salutations of the persons whom they met. “If two Arabs of equal rank meet each other, they extend to each other the right hand, and having clasped, they elevate them as if to kiss them. Each one then draws back his hand and kisses it instead of his friend’s, and then places it upon his forehead. The parties then continue the salutation by kissing each other’s beard. They gave thanks to God that they are once more permitted to see their friend — they pray to the Almighty in his behalf. Sometimes they repeat not less than ten times the ceremony of grasping hands and kissing.” It may also be added, in the language of Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 534), that

“there is such an amount of insincerity, flattery, and falsehood in the terms of salutation prescribed by etiquette, that our Lord, who is truth itself, desired his representatives to dispense with them as far as possible, perhaps tacitly to rebuke them. These ‘instructions’ were also intended to reprove another propensity which an Oriental can scarcely resist, no matter how urgent his business. If he meets an acquaintance, he must stop and make an endless number of inquiries and answer as many. If they come upon people making a bargain or discussing any other matter, they must pause and intrude their own ideas, and enter keenly into the business, though it in no wise concerns them; and more especially, an Oriental can never resist the temptation to assist “where accounts are being settled or money counted out.”

The clink of coin has a positive fascination to them. Now the command of our Saviour strictly forbade all such loiterings. They would waste time, distract attention, and in many ways hinder the prompt and faithful discharge of their important mission.” The salutation of friends, therefore, was a ceremony which consumed much time; and it was on this account that our Lord on this occasion forbade them to delay their journey to greet others. A similar direction is found in ~~10:9~~ 2 Kings 4:29.

~~20:5~~ **Luke 10:5.** See the notes at ~~4:10:3~~ Matthew 10:13.

**<2016> Luke 10:6.** *The son of peace* That is, if the “house” or “family” be “worthy,” or be disposed to receive you in “peace” and kindness. See **<2003> Matthew 10:13.** “The son of peace” means one “disposed” to peace, or peaceful and kind in his disposition. Compare **<4000> Matthew 1:1.**

**<2007> Luke 10:7.** See the notes at **<4001> Matthew 10:11.** On this passage Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 534) remarks:

“The reason (for the command, ‘Go not from house to house’) is very obvious to one acquainted with Oriental customs. When a stranger arrives in a village or an encampment, the neighbors, one after another, must invite him to eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy, and a failure in the due observance of this system of hospitality is violently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds among neighbors; it also consumes much time, causes unusual distraction of mind, leads to levity, and every way counteracts the success of a spiritual mission.”

**<2008> Luke 10:8-12.** See the notes at **<4004> Matthew 10:14,15.**

**<2003> Luke 10:13-15.** See the notes at **<4012> Matthew 11:21-24.**

**<2006> Luke 10:16.** See the notes at **<4000> Matthew 10:40.**

**<2007> Luke 10:17.** *The devils are subject unto us* The devils obey us. We have been able to cast them out.

*Through thy name* When commanded in thy name to come out of those who are possessed.

**<2008> Luke 10:18.** *I beheld Satan ...* “Satan” here denotes evidently the prince of the devils who had been cast out by the seventy disciples, for the discourse was respecting their power over evil spirits. “Lightning” is an image of “rapidity” or “quickness.” I saw Satan fall “quickly” or rapidly — as quick as lightning. The phrase “from heaven” is to be referred to the lightning, and does not mean that he saw “Satan” fall “from heaven,” but that he fell as quick as lightning from heaven or from the clouds. The whole expression then may mean, “I saw at your command devils immediately depart, as quick as the flash of lightning. I gave you this

power — I saw it put forth — and I give also now, in addition to this, the power to tread on serpents,” etc.

**<209> Luke 10:19.** *To tread on serpents* Preservation from danger. If you tread on a poisonous reptile that would otherwise injure you, I will keep you from danger. If you go among bitter and malignant enemies that would seek your life, I will preserve you. See the notes at **<4168> Mark 16:18**.

*Scorpions* The scorpion is an animal with eight feet, eight eyes and a long jointed tail, ending in a pointed weapon or sting. It is found in tropical climates, and seldom exceeds 4 inches in length. Its sting is extremely poisonous, and it is sometimes fatal to life. It is in Scripture the emblem of malicious and crafty men. When rolled up it has some resemblance to an egg, **<2112> Luke 11:12**; **<3116> Ezekiel 2:6**. The annexed cut will give an idea of its usual form and appearance.



*The enemy* Satan. The meaning of this verse is, that Jesus would preserve them from the power of Satan and all his emissaries — from all wicked and crafty men; and this shows that he had divine power. He that can control Satan and his hosts that can be present to guard from all their machinations, see all their plans, and destroy all their designs, must be clothed with no less than almighty power.

**<2111> Luke 10:20.** *Rather rejoice ...* Though it was an honor to work miracles, though it is an honor to be endowed with talents, and influence, and learning, yet it is a subject of “chief” joy that we are numbered among the people of God, and have a title to everlasting life.

*Names are written in heaven* The names of citizens of a city or state were accustomed to be written in a book or register, from which they were blotted out when they became unworthy, or forfeited the favor of their country. Compare **<1928> Psalm 69:28**; **<1932> Exodus 32:32**; **<1914> Deuteronomy 9:14**; **<1915> Revelation 3:5**. That their “names were written in heaven,” means that they were “citizens” of heaven; that they were friends of God and

“approved” by him, and would be permitted to dwell with him. This was of far more value than all “earthly” honor, power, or wealth, and “in” this people should rejoice more than in eminent endowments of influence, learning, talents, or possessions.

<2121> **Luke 10:21,22.** See the notes at <2125> Matthew 11:25-27.

<2123> **Luke 10:23,24,** See the notes at <21316> Matthew 13:16,17.

<2125> **Luke 10:25.** *A certain lawyer* One who professed to be well skilled in the laws of Moses, and whose business it was to explain them.

*Stood up* Rose — came forward to address him.

*Tempted him* Feigned a desire to be instructed, but did it to perplex him, or to lead him, if possible, to contradict some of the maxims of the law.

*Inherit eternal life* Be saved. This was the common inquiry among the Jews. “They” had said that man must keep the commandments — the written and oral law.

<2126> **Luke 10:26.** *What is written ...* Jesus referred him to the “law” as a safe rule, and asked him what was said there. The lawyer was doubtless endeavoring to justify himself by obeying the law. He trusted to his own works. To bring him off from that ground — to make him feel that it was an unsafe foundation, Jesus showed him what the law “required,” and thus showed him that he needed a better righteousness than his own. This is the proper use of the law. By comparing ourselves with “that” we see our own defects, and are thus prepared to welcome a better righteousness than our own — that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the law becomes a schoolmaster to lead us to him, <8124> Galatians 3:24.

<2127> **Luke 10:27,28.** See this subject explained in the notes at <11257> Matthew 22:37-40.

<2129> **Luke 10:29.** *To justify himself* Desirous to appear blameless, or to vindicate himself, and show that he had kept the law. Jesus wished to lead him to a proper view of his own sinfulness, and his real departure from the law. The man was desirous of showing that he had kept the law; or perhaps he was desirous of justifying himself for asking the question; of showing that it could not be so easily settled; that a mere reference to the “words” of the law did not determine it. It was still a question what was meant by

“neighbor.” The Pharisees held that the “Jews” only were to be regarded as such, and that the obligation did not extend at all to the Gentiles. The lawyer was probably ready to affirm that he had discharged faithfully his duty to his countrymen, and had thus kept the law, and could justify himself. Every sinner is desirous of “justifying himself.” He seeks to do it by his own works. For this purpose he perverts the meaning of the law, destroys its spirituality, and brings “down” the law to “his” standard, rather than attempt to frame his life by “its” requirements.

**◀203▶ Luke 10:30.** *Jesus answering* Jesus answered him in a very different manner from what he expected. By one of the most tender and affecting narratives to be found anywhere, he made the lawyer his own judge in the case, and constrained him to admit what at first he would probably have denied. He compelled him to acknowledge that a Samaritan — of a race most hated of all people by the Jews — had shown the kindness of a neighbor, while a “priest” and a “Levite” had denied it “to their own countrymen.”

*From Jerusalem to Jericho* Jericho was situated about 15 miles to the northeast of Jerusalem, and about 8 miles west of the river Jordan. See the notes at **◀103▶** Matthew 20:29.

*Fell among thieves* Fell among “robbers.” The word “thieves” means those who merely take “property.” These were highwaymen and not merely took the property, but endangered the life. They were “robbers.” From Jerusalem to Jericho the country was rocky and mountainous, and in some parts scarcely inhabited. It afforded, therefore, among the rocks and fastnesses, a convenient place for highwaymen. This was also a very frequented road. Jericho was a large place, and there was much traveling to Jerusalem. At this time, also, Judea abounded with robbers. Josephus says that at one time Herod the Great dismissed 40,000 men who had been employed in building the temple, a large part of whom became highwaymen (Josephus “Antiquities,” xv. 7). The following remarks of Professor Hackett, who visited Palestine in 1852, will furnish a good illustration of the scene of this parable. It is remarkable that a parable uttered more than eighteen hundred years ago might still be appropriately located in this region. Professor Hackett (“Illustrations of Scripture,” p. 215, 216) says of this region:

“It is famous at the present day as the haunt of thieves and robbers. No part of the traveler’s journey is so dangerous as the expedition

to Jericho and the Dead Sea. The Oriental pilgrims who repair to the Jordan have the protection of an escort of Turkish soldiers; and others who would make the same journey must either go in company with them, or provide for their safety by procuring a special guard. I was so fortunate as to be able to accompany the great caravan at the time of the annual pilgrimage. Yet, in spite of every precaution, hardly a season passes in which some luckless wayfarer is not killed or robbed in going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. The place derives its hostile character from its terrible wildness and desolation. If we might conceive of the ocean as being suddenly congealed and petrified when its waves are tossed mountain high, and dashing in wild confusion against each other, we should then have some idea of the aspect of the desert in which the Saviour has placed so truthfully the parable of the good Samaritan. The ravines, the almost inaccessible cliffs, the caverns, furnish admirable lurking-places for robbers. They can rush forth unexpectedly upon their victims, and escape as soon almost beyond the possibility of pursuit.

“Every circumstance in this parable, therefore, was full of significance to those who heard it. The Saviour delivered it near Bethany, on the border of the frightful desert, ~~Q105~~ Luke 10:25,38. Jericho was a sacerdotal city. The passing of priests and Levites between that place and Jerusalem was an everyday occurrence. The idea of a caravanserai or ‘inn’ on the way was not invented, probably, for the sake of the allegory, but borrowed from the landscape. There are the ruins now of such a shelter for the benighted or unfortunate on one of the heights which overlook the infested road. Thus it is that the instructions of our Lord derive often the form and much of their pertinence from the accidental connections of time and place.”

~~Q105~~ **Luke 10:31.** *By chance* Accidentally, or as it happened. It means that he did not do it with a “design” to aid the man that was wounded.

*A certain priest* It is said that not less than 12,000 priests and Levites dwelt at Jericho; and as their business was at Jerusalem, of course there would be many of them constantly traveling on that road.

*When he saw him* He saw him lie, but came not near him.

*Passed by on the other side* On the farther side of the way. Did not turn out of his course even to come and see him.

**Luke 10:32.** *A Levite* The Levites, as well as the priests, were of the tribe of Levi, and were set apart to the duties of religion. The special duty of the priest was “to offer sacrifice” at the temple; to present incense; to conduct the morning and evening services of the temple, etc. The office or duty of the “Levites” was to render assistance to the priests in their services. In the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness, it was their duty to transport the various parts of the tabernacle and the sacred utensils. It was their duty to see that the tabernacle and the temple were kept clean; to prepare supplies for the sanctuary, such as oil, incense, wine, etc. They had also the care of the sacred revenues, and after the time of David they conducted the sacred “music” of the temple service, <sup><0486></sup>Numbers 8:5-22; <sup><337></sup>1 Chronicles 23:3-5,24-32; 24:27-31.

*Came and looked on him* It is remarked by critics, here, that the expression used does not denote, as in the case of the priest, that he accidentally saw him and took no farther notice of him, but that he came and looked on him more attentively, but still did nothing to relieve him.

**Luke 10:33.** *A certain Samaritan* The Samaritans were the most inveterate foes of the Jews. They had no dealings with each other. See the notes at <sup><0105></sup>Matthew 10:5. It was this fact which rendered the conduct of this good man so striking, and which was thus set in strong contrast with the conduct of the priest and the Levite. “They” would not help their own afflicted, and wounded countryman. “He,” who could not be expected to aid a Jew, overcame all the usual hostility between the people; saw in the wounded man a neighbor, a brother, one who needed aid; and kindly denied himself to show kindness to the stranger.

**Luke 10:34.** *Pouring in oil and wine* These were often used in medicine to heal wounds. Probably they were mingled together, and had a highly sanative quality. How strikingly is his conduct contrasted with the priest and Levite! And, how particularly as well as beautifully by this does our Saviour show what we ought to do to those who are in circumstances of need! He does not merely say “in general” that he showed him kindness, but he “told how” it was done. He stopped — came where he was — pitied him — bound up his wound — set him on his own beast — conducted him to a tavern — passed the night with him, and then secured



the kind attentances of the landlord, promising him to pay him for his trouble and all this without desiring or expecting any reward. If this had been by a Jew, it would have been signal kindness; if it had been by a Gentile, it would also have been great kindness; but it was by a Samaritan — a man of a nation most hateful to the Jews, and therefore it most strikingly shows what we are to do to friends and foes when they are in distress.

~~Q105~~ **Luke 10:35.** *Two pence* About 27 cents, or 1 shilling, 2d. This may seem a small sum, but we are to remember that that sum was probably ten times as valuable then as now — that is, that it would purchase ten times as much food and the common necessaries of life as the same sum would now. Besides, it is probable that all the man wanted was “attention” and kindness, and for all these it was the purpose of the Samaritan to pay when he returned.

*The host* The innkeeper.

~~Q106~~ **Luke 10:36.** *Was neighbour* Showed the kindness of a neighbor, or evinced the proper feelings of a neighbor. The lawyer had asked him who was his neighbor? Jesus in this beautiful narrative showed him who and what a neighbor was, and he did this in a way that disarmed his prejudice, deeply affected him in regard to his own duty, and evinced the beauty of religion. Had he “at first” told him that a Samaritan might be a neighbor to a Jew and deserve his kindness, he would have been at once revolted at it; but when, by a beautiful and affecting narrative, he brought the “man himself” to see that it might be, he was constrained to admit it. Here we see the beauty of a parable and its use. It disarmed prejudice, fixed the attention, took the mind gently yet irresistibly, and prevented the possibility of cavil or objection. Compare, also, the address of Nathan to David, ~~Q107~~ 2 Samuel 12:1-7.

~~Q108~~ **Luke 10:37.** *He that showed mercy* His “Jewish” prejudice would not permit him “to name” the Samaritan, but there was no impropriety, even in his view, in saying that the man who showed so much mercy was really the neighbor to the afflicted, and not he who “professed” to be his neighbor, but who would “do nothing” for his welfare.

*Go, and do thou likewise* Show the same kindness to “all” — to friend and foe — and “then” you will have evidence that you keep the law, and not

“till” then. Of this man we know nothing farther; but from this inimitably beautiful parable we may learn:

1. That the knowledge of the law is useful to make us acquainted with our own sinfulness and need of a Saviour.
2. That it is not he who “professes” most kindness that really loves us most, but he who will most deny himself that he may do us good in times of want.
3. That religion requires us to do good to “all” people, however “accidentally” we may become acquainted with their calamities.
4. That we should do good to our enemies. Real love to them will lead us to deny ourselves, and to sacrifice our own welfare, that we may help them in times of distress and alleviate their wants.
5. That he is really our neighbor who does us the most good — who helps us in our necessities, and especially if he does this when there has been “a controversy or difference” between us and him.
6. We hence see the beauty of religion. Nothing else will induce people to surmount their prejudices, to overcome opposition, and to do good to those who are at enmity with them. True religion teaches us to regard every man as our neighbor; prompts us to do good to all, to forget all national or sectional distinctions, and to aid all those who are in circumstances of poverty and want. If religion were valuable for nothing “but this,” it would be the most lovely and desirable principle on earth, and all, especially in their early years, should seek it. Nothing that a young person can gain will be so valuable as the feeling that regards all the world as one great family, and to learn early to do good TO ALL.
7. The difference between the Jew and the Samaritan was a difference in “religion” and “religious opinion;” and from the example of the latter we may learn that, while people differ in “opinions” on subjects of religion, and while they are zealous for what they hold to be the truth, still they should treat each other kindly; that they should aid each other in necessity; and that they should thus show that religion is a principle superior to the love of sect, and that the cord which binds man to man is one that is to be sundered by no difference of opinion, that Christian kindness is to be marred by no forms of worship, and by no bigoted attachment for what we esteem the doctrines of the gospel.

**<2138> Luke 10:38.** *A certain village* Bethany. See **<6100> John 11:1**. It was on the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives. See the notes at **<4210> Matthew 21:1**.

*Received him* Received him kindly and hospitably. From this it would seem that “Martha” was properly the mistress of the house. Possibly she was a widow, and her brother Lazarus and younger sister Mary lived with her; and as “she” had the care of the household, this will also show why she was so diligently employed about domestic affairs.

**<2139> Luke 10:39.** *Sat at Jesus’ feet* This was the ancient posture of disciples or learners. They sat at the “feet” of their teachers — that is, beneath them, in a humble place. Hence, Paul is represented as having been brought up at the “feet” of Gamaliel, **<4213> Acts 22:3**. When it is said that Mary sat at Jesus’ feet, it means that she was “a disciple” of his; that she listened attentively to his instructions, and was anxious to learn his doctrine.

**<2140> Luke 10:40.** *Martha was cumbered about much serving* Was much distracted with the cares of the family, and providing suitably to entertain the Saviour. It should be said here that there is no evidence that Martha had a worldly or covetous disposition. Her anxiety was to provide suitable entertainment for the Lord Jesus. As mistress of the family, this care properly devolved on her; and the only fault which can be charged on her was too earnest a desire to make such entertainment, when she might have sat with Mary at his feet, and, perhaps, too much haste and fretfulness in speaking to Jesus about Mary.

*Dost thou not care ...* This was an improper reproof of our Lord, as if “he” encouraged Mary in neglecting her duty. Or perhaps Martha supposed that Mary was sitting there to show him the proper expressions of courtesy and kindness, and that she would not think it proper to leave him without his direction and permission. She therefore “hinted” to Jesus her busy employments, her need of the aid of her sister, and requested that he would signify his wish that Mary should assist her.

**<2141> Luke 10:41.** *Thou art careful* Thou art anxious.

*Troubled* Disturbed, distracted, very solicitous.

*Many things* The many objects which excite your attention in the family. This was probably designed as a slight reproof, or a tender hint that she was improperly anxious about those things, and that she should, with Mary, rather choose to hear the discourses of heavenly wisdom.

**Luke 10:42.** *But one thing is needful* That is, religion, or piety. This is eminently and especially needful. Other things are of little importance. This should be secured first, and then all other things will be added. See **1 Timothy 4:8;** **Matthew 6:33.**

*That good part* The portion of the gospel; the love of God, and an interest in his kingdom. She had chosen to be a Christian, and to give up her time and affections to God.

*Which shall not be taken away* God will not take away his grace from his people, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand, **John 10:28,29.**

From this interesting narrative we learn:

- 1.** That the cares of this life are dangerous, even when they seem to be most lawful and commendable. Nothing of a worldly nature could have been more proper than to provide for the Lord Jesus and supply his wants. Yet even “for this,” because it too much engrossed her mind, the Lord Jesus gently reproofed Martha. So a care for our families may be the means of our neglecting religion and losing our souls.
- 2.** It is of more importance to attend to the instructions of the Lord Jesus than to be engaged in the affairs of the world. The one will abide forever; the other will be but for a little time.
- 3.** There “are” times when it is proper to suspend worldly employments, and to attend to the affairs of the soul. It “was” proper for Mary to do it. It would have been proper for Martha to have done it. It “is” proper for all on the Sabbath and at other occasional seasons — seasons of prayer and for searching the word of God — to suspend worldly concerns and to attend to religion.
- 4.** If attention to religion be omitted at “the proper time,” it will always be omitted. If Mary had neglected to hear Jesus “then,” she might never have heard him.

**5.** Piety is the chief thing needed. Other things will perish. We shall soon die. All that we can gain we must leave. But the “soul” will live. There is a judgment-seat; there is a heaven; there is a hell; and “all” that is needful to prepare us to die, and to make us happy forever, is to be a friend of Jesus, and to listen to his teaching.

**6.** Piety is the chief ornament in a female. It sweetens every other virtue; adorns every other grace; gives new loveliness to the tenderness, mildness, and grace of the female character. Nothing is more lovely than a female sitting at the feet of the meek and lowly Jesus, like Mary; nothing more unlovely than entire absorption in the affairs of the world, like Martha. The most lovely female is she who has most of the spirit of Jesus; the least amiable, she who neglects her soul — who is proud, frivolous, thoughtless, envious, and unlike the meek and lowly Redeemer. At his feet are peace, purity, joy. Everywhere else an alluring and wicked world steals the affections and renders us vain, frivolous, wicked, proud, and unwilling to die.

## NOTES ON LUKE 11

**Luke 11:1.** *As he was praying* Luke has taken notice of our Saviour's praying often. Thus, at his baptism (**Luke 3:21**); in the wilderness (**Luke 5:16**); before the appointment of the apostles, he continued all night in prayer (**Luke 6:12**); he was alone praying (**Luke 9:18**); his transfiguration also took place when he went up to pray (**Luke 9:28,29**).

*Teach us to pray* Probably they had been struck with the excellency and fervor of his prayers, and, recollecting that "John" had taught his disciples to pray, they asked him also to teach "them." We learn, therefore:

1. That the gifts and graces of others should lead us to desire the same.
2. That the true method of praying can be learned only by our being properly taught. Indeed, we cannot pray acceptably at all unless God shall teach us how to pray.
3. That it is proper for us to meditate beforehand what we are to ask of God, and to arrange our thoughts, that we may not come thoughtlessly into his presence.

**Luke 11:2-4.** See this passage explained in the notes at **Matthew 6:9-13**.

**Luke 11:4.** *For we also forgive ...* This is somewhat different from the expression in Matthew, though the sense is the same. The idea is, that unless we forgive others, God will not forgive us; and unless we come to him "really" forgiving all others, we cannot expect pardon. It does not mean that by forgiving others we "deserve" forgiveness ourselves, or "merit it," but that this is a disposition or state of mind without which God cannot consistently pardon us.

*Every one that is indebted to us* Every one that has "injured" us. This does not refer to pecuniary transactions, but to offences similar to those which "we" have committed against God, and for which we ask forgiveness. Besides the variations in the "expressions" in this prayer, Luke has omitted the doxology, or close, altogether; and this shows that Jesus did not intend that we should always use just this "form," but that it was a general

direction how to pray; or, rather, that we were to pray for these “things,” though not always using the same words.

**◀2115▶ Luke 11:5-7.** *And he said unto them ...* Jesus proceeds to show that, in order to obtain the blessing, it was necessary to “persevere” in asking for it. For this purpose he introduces the case of a friend’s asking bread of another for one who had come to him unexpectedly. His design is solely to show the necessity of being “importunate” or persevering in prayer to God.

*At midnight* A time when it would be most inconvenient for his friend to help him; an hour when he would naturally be in bed and his house shut.

*Three loaves* There is nothing particularly denoted by the number “three” in this place. Jesus often threw in such particulars merely to fill up the story, or to preserve the consistency of it.

*My children are with me in bed* This does not necessarily mean that they were in the “same bed” with him, but that they were “all” in bed, the house was still, the door was shut, and it was troublesome for him to rise at that time of night to accommodate him. It should be observed, however, that the customs of Orientals differ in this respect from our own. Among them it is not uncommon indeed it is the common practice for a whole family — parents, children, and servants — to sleep in the same room. See “The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 180. This is “not” to be applied to God, as if it were troublesome to him to be sought unto, or as if “he” would ever reply to a sinner in that manner. All that is to be applied to God in this parable is simply that it is proper to “persevere” in prayer. As a “man” often gives because the request is “repeated,” and as one is not discouraged because the favor that he asks of his neighbor is “delayed,” so God often answers us after long and importunate requests.

**◀2115▶ Luke 11:8.** *I tell you* The Latin Vulgate here adds, “if he shall continue knocking.” Though this is not in the Greek, yet it is indispensable that it should be understood in order to the sense. Knocking “once” would not denote “importunity,” but it was because he “continued” knocking.

*His importunity* His troublesome perseverance; his continuing to disturb the man, and refusing to take any denial. The word “importunity” denotes perseverance in an object, without any regard to time, place, or circumstances — an improper perseverance. By this the man was influenced. Rather than be disturbed he would rise and give what was

asked. This is to be applied to God in no other sense than that he often hears prayers and grants blessings even “long after” they appear to be unanswered or withheld. He does not promise to give blessings “at once.” He promises only that he will do it, or “will answer” prayer. But he often causes his people long to wait. He tries their faith. He leaves them to persevere for months or years, until they “feel” entirely their dependence on him, until they see that they can obtain the blessing in no other way, and until they are “prepared” to receive it. Often they are not prepared to receive it when they ask it at first. They may be proud, or have no just sense of their dependence, or they would not value the blessing, or it may “at that time” not be best for them to obtain it. But let no one despair. If the thing is for “our” good, and if it is proper that it “should” be granted, God will give it. Let us first ask aright; let us see that our minds are in a proper state; let us feel our need of the blessing; let us inquire whether God has “promised such” a blessing, and “then” let us persevere until God gives it. Again: people, when they ask anything of God, often give over seeking. They go “once,” and if it is not granted they are discouraged. It is not so when we ask anything of people. “Then” we persevere; we take no denial; we go again, and “press” the matter until we obtain it. So we should of God. We should go again and again, until the prayer is heard, and God grants what we ask of him.

◀2119▶ **Luke 11:9-12.** See this explained in the notes at ▶1017▶ Matthew 7:7-11.

◀2112▶ **Luke 11:12.** “A scorpion” See the notes at ▶2109▶ Luke 10:19. Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 379) says:

“There is no imaginable likeness between an egg and the ordinary black scorpion of this country, neither in color nor size, nor, when the tail is extended, in shape; but old writers speak of a “white” scorpion, and such a one, with the tail folded up, as in specimens of fossil trilobites, would not look unlike a small egg. Perhaps the contrast, however, refers only to the different properties of the egg and the scorpion, which is sufficiently emphatic.”

Pliny (“N. H.,” xi. 25) says that in Judea the scorpions are about the size of an egg, and not unlike one in shape.

◀2114▶ **Luke 11:14-23.** See this passage explained in the notes at ▶1022▶ Matthew 12:22-30.



**Luke 11:24-26.** See the notes at **Matthew 12:43-45.**

**Luke 11:27,28.** *A certain woman* One of the crowd.

*Blessed is the womb ...* She thought that the “mother” of such a person must be especially happy in having such a son.

*Yea, rather blessed ...* Jesus admits that she was happy — that it was an honor to be his mother, but he says that the chief happiness, the highest honor, was to obey the word of God. Compared with this, all earthly distinctions and honors are as nothing. Man’s greatest dignity is in keeping the holy commandments of God, and in being prepared for heaven. See the notes at **Luke 10:20.**

**Luke 11:29-32.** See the notes at **Matthew 12:38-42.**

**Luke 11:33-36.** These verses are found in Matthew, but in a different connection. See the notes at **Matthew 5:15; 6:22,23.**

**Luke 11:37.** *And as he spake* While he was addressing the people, and particularly while he was reproving that generation and declaring its crimes.

*A certain Pharisee* The Pharisees had been particularly referred to in the discourse of the Saviour recorded in the previous verses. This one, perhaps, having felt particularly the force of the remarks of Jesus, and being desirous of being alone with him, invited him to go home with him. There is little doubt that this was for the purpose of drawing him away from the people; that he did it with a malignant intention, perhaps with a design to confute Jesus in private, or to reprove him for thus condemning the whole nation as he did. He might have seen that those who attacked Jesus “publicly” were commonly unsuccessful, and he desired, probably, to encounter him more privately.

*Besought him* Asked him.

*To dine with him* The Jews, as well as the Greeks and Romans, had but two principal meals. The first was a slight repast, and was taken about ten or eleven o’clock of our time, and consisted chiefly of fruit, milk, cheese, etc. The second meal was partaken of about three o’clock P.M., and was their principal meal. The “first” is the one here intended.

*He went in* Though he knew the evil design of the Pharisee, yet he did not decline the invitation. He knew that it might afford him an opportunity to do good. These two things are to be observed in regard to our Saviour's conduct in such matters:

**1.** That he did not decline an invitation to dine with a man simply because he was a Pharisee, or because he was a wicked man. Hence, he was charged with being gluttonous, and a friend of publicans and sinners, <sup><0119></sup>Matthew 11:19.

**2.** He seized upon all occasions to do good. He never shrank from declaring the truth, and making such occasions the means of spreading the gospel. If Christians and Christian ministers would follow the example of the Saviour always, they would avoid all scandal, and might do even in such places a vast amount of good.

*Sat down* Reclined at the table. See the notes at <sup><0126></sup>Matthew 23:6.

<sup><0138></sup>**Luke 11:38.** *Saw it* Saw that he sat immediately down without washing.

*Marvelled* Wondered. Was amazed. It was so unusual, and in his view so improper.

*Had not first washed* He wondered particularly, as he had been among a mixed multitude, and they esteemed the "touch" of such persons polluting. They never ate, therefore, without such washing. The origin of the custom of washing with so much formality "before" they partook of their meals was that they did not use, as we do, knives and forks, but used their hands only. Hence, as their hands would be often in a dish on the table, it was esteemed proper that they should be washed clean before eating. Nor was their impropriety in the thing itself, but the Pharisees made it a matter of ceremony; they placed no small part of their religion in such ceremonies; and it was right, therefore, that our Lord should take occasion to reprove them for it. Compare <sup><0104></sup>Mark 7:4.

<sup><0139></sup>**Luke 11:39.** See <sup><0125></sup>Matthew 23:25. "Ravening." Robbery, plunder. Here the sense is that the cup and platter were filled with what had been unjustly taken from others. That is, they lived by their wickedness; their food was procured by dishonesty and extortion. This was a most terrible charge; and as it was applied, among others, to the man who had invited the Saviour to dine with him, it shows that nothing would prevent his

dealing faithfully with the souls of people. Even in the Pharisee's own house, and when expressly invited to partake of his hospitality, he loved his soul so much that he faithfully warned him of his crimes.

◀214▶ **Luke 11:40.** *Ye fools* How unwise and wicked is your conduct! The word denotes not only “want of wisdom,” but also wickedness. Compare ▶941▶ Psalm 14:1; ▶2039▶ Proverbs 13:19; 14:9. Your conduct is not merely “foolish,” but it is a cloak for sin — designed to countenance wickedness.

*Did not he ...* Did not God, who made the “body,” make also the “soul?” You Pharisees take great pains to cleanse the “body,” under a pretence of pleasing “God.” Did “he” not also make the “mind?” and is it not of as much importance that “that” should be pure, as that the body should?

◀214▶ **Luke 11:41.** *Alms* Charity. Benefactions to the poor.

*Such things as ye have* Your property; though it has been gained unjustly: though you have lived by rapine, and have amassed wealth in an improper manner, yet, since “you have it,” it is your duty to make the best of it and do good. By giving to the poor, you may show your repentance for your crimes in amassing money in this manner. You may show that you disapprove of your former course of life, and are disposed henceforward to live honestly. If this be the meaning of this passage, then it shows what is the duty of those who have by unjust gains become wealthy, and who are “then” converted to God. It may not be possible for them in every case to make exact restitution to those whom they have injured; thousands of instances of wrong they may have forgotten; many persons whom they have injured may have died; but still they may show, by giving to others, that they do not think their gains acquired honestly, and that they truly repent. They may devote their property to God; distribute it to the poor; or give it to send the gospel to the heathen world. Thus may they show that they disapprove of their former conduct; and thus may be seen one great principle of God's government — “that good finally comes out of evil.”

*And behold ...* Doing this will show that you are a true penitent, and the remainder of your property you will enjoy with a feeling that you have done your duty, and no longer be smitten with the consciousness of hoarding unjust gains. The object of the Saviour here seems to have been to bring the Pharisee to repentance. Repentance consists in sorrow for sin, and in forsaking it. This he endeavored to produce by showing him:

1. The “evil” and hypocrisy of his conduct; and,
2. By “exhorting” him to “forsake” his sins, and to “show” this by doing good.

Thus doing, he would evince that the “mind” was clean as well the “body;” the “inside” as well as the “outside.”

◀214▶ **Luke 11:42.** See ▶123▶ Matthew 23:23.

*Rue* This is a small garden plant, and is used as a medicine. It has a rosy flower, a bitter, penetrating taste, and a strong smell.

◀214▶ **Luke 11:43,44.** See ▶123▶ Matthew 23:6,27.

◀214▶ **Luke 11:45.** *Lawyers* Men learned in the law; but it is not known in what way the lawyers differed from the “scribes,” or whether they were Pharisees or Sadducees.

*Thus saying, thou ...* He felt that the remarks of Jesus about loving the chief seats, etc., applied to them as well as to the Pharisees. His conscience told him that if “they” were to blame, “he” was also, and he therefore applied the discourse to himself.

*Reproachest* Accusest. Dost calumniate or blame us, for we do the same things. Sinners often consider “faithfulness” as “reproach” — they know not how to separate them. Jesus did “not” reproach or abuse them. He dealt faithfully with them; reprovved them; told them the unvarnished truth. Such faithfulness is rare; but when it “is” used, we must expect that people will flinch, perhaps be enraged. Though their consciences tell them they are “guilty,” still they will consider it as abuse.

◀214▶ **Luke 11:46.** See the notes at ▶123▶ Matthew 23:4.

◀214▶ **Luke 11:47-51.** See the notes at ▶123▶ Matthew 23:29-36.

◀214▶ **Luke 11:49.** *The wisdom of God* By the “wisdom of God,” here, is undoubtedly meant the Saviour himself. What he immediately says is not written in the Old Testament. Jesus is called “the word of God” (▶300▶ John 1:1), because he is the medium by which God “speaks” or makes his will known. He is called “the wisdom of God,” because by him God makes his wisdom known in creation (▶501▶ Colossians 1:13-18 and in redemption (▶403▶ 1

Corinthians 1:30). Many have also thought that the Messiah was referred to in the 8th chapter of Proverbs, under the name of Wisdom.

*I will send ...* See <sup><2108></sup>Luke 10:3; <sup><0106></sup>Matthew 10:16.

*Shall slay ...* Compare <sup><3142></sup>John 16:2; <sup><4075></sup>Acts 7:52,59; <sup><3050></sup>James 5:10; <sup><4122></sup>Acts 12:2; 22:19; <sup><7124></sup>2 Corinthians 11:24,25; <sup><1365></sup>2 Chronicles 36:15,16.

<sup><2152></sup>**Luke 11:52.** *Woe unto you, lawyers!* See the notes at <sup><4293></sup>Matthew 23:13.

*The key of knowledge* A key is made to open a lock or door. By their false interpretation of the Old Testament they had taken away the true key or method of understanding it. They had hindered the people from understanding it aright. “You endeavor to prevent the people also from understanding the Scriptures respecting the Messiah, and those who were coming to “me” ye hindered.” If there is any sin of special magnitude, it is that of keeping the people in ignorance; and few people are so guilty as they who by false instructions prevent them from coming to a knowledge of the truth, and embracing it as it is in Jesus.

<sup><2153></sup>**Luke 11:53.** *To urge him vehemently* To press upon him “violently.” They were enraged against him. They therefore pressed upon him; asked him many questions; sought to entrap him, that they might accuse him.

*Provoke him ...* This means that they put many questions to him about various matters, without giving him proper time to answer. They proposed questions as fast as possible, and about as many things as possible, that they might get him, in the hurry, to say something that would be wrong, that they might thus accuse him. This was a remarkable instance of their cunning, malignity, and unfairness.

<sup><2154></sup>**Luke 11:54.** *Laying wait for him* Or, rather, laying “snares” for him. It means that they endeavored to entangle him in his talk; that they did as men do who catch birds — who lay snares, and deceive them, and take them unawares.

*That they might accuse him* Before the Sanhedrin, or great council of the nation, and thus secure his being put to death.

From this we may learn:

- 1.** That faithful reproofs must be expected to excite opposition and hatred. Though the “conscience” may be roused, and may testify against the man that is reproofed, yet that does not prevent his hating the reproof and the reprover.
- 2.** We see here the manner in which wicked people endeavor to escape the reproofs of conscience. Instead of repenting, they seek vengeance, and resolve to put the reprover to shame or to death.
- 3.** We see the exceeding malignity which people have against the Lord Jesus. Well was it said that he was set for the fall of many in Israel, that thereby the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed! ~~1023~~ Luke 2:34,35. Men, now, are not by nature less opposed to Jesus than they were then.
- 4.** We see the wisdom, purity, and firmness of the Saviour. To their souls he had been faithful. He had boldly reproofed them for their sins. They sought his life. Multitudes of the artful and learned gathered around him, to endeavor to draw out something of which they might accuse him, yet in vain. Not a word fell from his lips of which they could accuse him. Everything that he said was calm, mild, peaceful, wise, and lovely. Even his cunning and bitter adversaries were always confounded, and retired in shame and confusion. Here, surely, must have been something more than man. None but “God manifest in the flesh” could have known all their designs, seen all their wickedness and their wiles, and escaped the cunning stratagems that were laid to confound and entangle him in his conversation.
- 5.** The same infinitely wise Saviour can still meet and confound all his own enemies and those of his people, and deliver all his followers, as he did himself, from all the snares laid by a wicked world to lead them to sin and death.

## NOTES ON LUKE 12

◀211▶ **Luke 12:1.** *In the mean time* While he was discoursing with the scribes and Pharisees, as recorded in the last chapter.

*An innumerable multitude* The original word is “myriads,” or ten thousands. It is used here to signify that there was a great crowd or collection of people, who were anxious to hear him. Multitudes were attracted to the Saviour’s ministry, and it is worthy of remark that he never had more to hear him than when he was most faithful and severe in his reproofs of sinners. Men’s consciences are on the side of the faithful reprover of their sins; and though they deeply feel the reproof, yet they will still respect and hear him that reproves.

*To his disciples first of all* This does not mean that his disciples were, before all others, to avoid hypocrisy, but that this was the “first” or chief thing of which they were to beware. The meaning is this: “He said to his disciples, “Above all things beware,” etc.

*The leaven* See the notes at ▶406▶ Matthew 16:6.

*Which is hypocrisy* See the notes at ▶407▶ Matthew 7:5. Hypocrisy is like leaven or yeast, because:

1. It may exist without being immediately detected. Leaven mixed in flour is not known until it produces its effects.
2. It is insinuating. Leaven will soon pervade the whole mass. So hypocrisy will, if undetected and unremoved, soon pervade all our exercises and feelings.
3. It is swelling. It puffs us up, and fills us with pride and vanity. No man is more proud than the hypocrite, and none is more odious to God. When Jesus cautions them to beware of “the leaven of the Pharisees,” he means that they should be cautious about imbibing their spirit and becoming like them. The religion of Jesus is one of sincerity, of humility, of an entire want of disguise. The humblest man is the best Christian, and he who has the least disguise is most like his Master.

◀211▶ **Luke 12:2-9.** *Nothing covered* See the notes at ▶406▶ Matthew 10:26-32.

**Luke 12:3.** *Shall be proclaimed upon the housetops* See the notes at **Matthew 10:27**. The custom of making proclamation from the tops or roofs of houses still prevails in the East. Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 51, 52) says:

“At the present day, local governors in country districts cause their commands thus to be published. Their proclamations are generally made in the evening, after the people have returned from their labors in the field. The public crier ascends the highest roof at hand, and lifts up his voice in a long-drawn call upon all faithful subjects to give ear and obey. He then proceeds to announce, in a set form, the will of their master, and demand obedience thereto.”

**Luke 12:10.** See the notes at **Matthew 12:32**.

**Luke 12:11,12.** See the notes at **Matthew 10:17-20**.

**Luke 12:13.** *One of the company* One of the multitude. This man had probably had a dispute with his brother, supposing that his brother had refused to do him justice. Conceiving that Jesus had power over the people — that what he said must be performed — he endeavored to secure him on his side of the dispute and gain his point. From the parable which follows, it would appear that he had no “just” claim on the inheritance, but was influenced by covetousness. Besides, if he “had” any just claim, it might have been secured by the laws of the land.

*Speak to my brother* Command my brother.

*Divide the inheritance* An inheritance is the property which is left by a father to his children. Among the Jews the older brother had two shares, or twice as much as any other child, **Deuteronomy 21:17**. The remainder was then equally divided among all the children.

**Luke 12:14.** *Who made me a judge?* It is not my business to settle controversies of this kind. They are to be settled by the magistrate. Jesus came for another purpose — to preach the gospel, and so to bring people to “a willingness to do” right. Civil affairs are to be left to the magistrate. There is no doubt that Jesus “could” have told him what was right in this case, but then it would have been interfering with the proper office of the magistrates; it might have led him into controversy with the Jews; and it was, besides, evidently apart from the proper business of his life. We may



remark, also, that the appropriate business of ministers of the gospel is to attend to spiritual concerns. They should have little to do with the temporal matters of the people. If they can “persuade men” who are at variance to be reconciled, it is right; but they have no power to take the place of a magistrate, and to settle contentions in a legal way.

**◀2125** **Luke 12:15.** *Beware of covetousness* One of these brothers, no doubt, was guilty of this sin; and our Saviour, as was his custom, took occasion to warn his disciples of its danger.

*Covetousness* An unlawful desire of the property of another; also a desire of gain or riches beyond what is necessary for our wants. It is a violation of the tenth commandment (◀1217 Exod. 20:17), and is expressly called idolatry (◀5185 Colossians 3:5). Compare, also, ◀4183 Ephesians 5:3, and ◀8185 Hebrews 13:5.

*A man's life* The word “life” is sometimes taken in the sense of happiness or felicity, and some have supposed this to be the meaning here, and that Jesus meant to say that a man's comfort does not depend on affluence — that is, on more than is necessary for his daily wants; but this meaning does not suit the parable following, which is designed to show that property will not lengthen out a man's life, and therefore is not too ardently to be sought, and is of little value. The word “life,” therefore, is to be taken “literally.”

*Consisteth not* Rather, “dependeth” not on his possessions. His possessions will not prolong it. The passage, then, means: Be not anxious about obtaining wealth, for, however much you may obtain, it will not prolong your life. “That” depends on the will of God, and it requires something besides wealth to make us ready to meet him. This sentiment he proceeds to illustrate by a beautiful parable.

**◀2126** **Luke 12:16.** *A parable* See the notes at ◀4183 Matthew 13:3.

*Plentifully* His land was fertile, and produced even beyond his expectations, and beyond what he had provided for.

**◀2127** **Luke 12:17.** *He thought within himself* He reasoned or inquired. He was anxious and perplexed. Riches increase thought and perplexity. Indeed, this is almost their only effect — to engross the thoughts and steal the heart away from better things, in order to take care of the useless wealth.

*No room* Everything was full.

*To bestow* To place, to hoard, to collect.

*My fruits* Our word “fruits” is not applied to “grain;” but the Greek word is applied to all the produce of the earth — not only “fruit,” but also grain. This is likewise the old meaning of the English word, especially in the plural number.

**◀2128▶ Luke 12:18.** *I will pull down my barns* The word “barns” here, properly means, “granaries,” or places exclusively designed to put wheat, barley, etc. They were commonly made, by the ancients, “underground,” where grain could be kept a long time more safe from thieves and from vermin. If it be asked why he did not let the old ones remain and build new ones, it may be answered that it would be easier to “enlarge” those already excavated in the earth than to dig new ones.

**◀2129▶ Luke 12:19.** *Much goods* Much property. Enough to last a long while, so that there is no need of anxiety or labor.

*Take thine ease* Be free from care about the future. Have no anxiety about coming to want.

*Eat, drink, and be merry* This was just the doctrine of the ancient Epicureans and atheists, and it is, alas! too often the doctrine of those who are rich. They think that all that is valuable in life is to eat, and drink, and be cheerful or merry. Hence, their chief anxiety is to obtain the “delicacies of the season “ — the luxuries of the world; to secure the productions of every clime at any expense, and to be distinguished for splendid repasts and a magnificent style of living. What a portion is this for an immortal soul! What folly to think that “all” that a man lives for is to satisfy his sensual appetites; to forget that he has an intellect to be cultivated, a heart to be purified, a soul to be saved!

**◀2121▶ Luke 12:20.** *Thou fool* If there is any supreme folly, it is this. As though riches could prolong life, or avert for a moment the approach of pain and death.

*This night ...* What an awful sentence to a man who, as he thought, had got just ready to live and enjoy himself! In a single moment all his hopes were blasted, and his soul summoned to the bar of his long-forgotten God. So, many are surprised as suddenly and as unprepared. They are snatched from

their pleasures, and hurried to a world where there is no pleasure, and where all their wealth cannot purchase one moment's ease from the gnawings of the worm that never dies.

*Shall be required of thee* Thou shalt be required to die, to go to God, and to give up your account.

*Then whose ...* Whose they may be is of little consequence to the man that lost his soul to gain them; but they are often left to heirs that dissipate them much sooner than the father procured them, and thus they secure "their" ruin as well as his own. See <sup><4916></sup>Psalm 39:6; <sup><2128></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:18,19.

<sup><4121></sup>**Luke 12:21.** *So is he* This is the portion or the doom.

*Layeth up treasure for himself* Acquires riches for his own use — for "himself." This is the characteristic of the covetous man. It is all for "himself." His plans terminate there. He lives only for himself, and acts only with regard to his own interest.

*Rich toward God* Has no inheritance in the kingdom of God — no riches laid up in heaven. His affections are all fixed on this world, and he has none for God.

From this instructive parable we learn:

1. That wicked people are often signally prospered — their ground brings forth plentifully. God gives them their desire, but sends leanness into their souls.
2. That riches bring with them always an increasing load of cares and anxieties.
3. That they steal away the affections from God — are sly, insinuating, and dangerous to the soul.
4. That the anxiety of a covetous man is not what "good" he may do with his wealth, but where he may hoard it, and keep it secure from doing any good.
5. That riches cannot secure their haughty owners from the grave. Death will come upon them suddenly, unexpectedly, awfully. In the very midst of the brightest anticipations — in a moment — in the twinkling of an eye it may come, and all the wealth that has been accumulated cannot alleviate one pang, or drive away one fear, or prolong life for one moment.

**6.** That the man who is trusting to his riches in this manner is a fool in the sight of God. Soon, also, he will be a fool in his “own” sight, and will go to hell with the consciousness that his life has been one of eminent folly.

**7.** That the path of true wisdom is to seek first the kingdom of God, and to be ready to die; and “then” it matters little what is our portion here, or how suddenly or soon we are called away to meet our Judge. If our affections are not fixed on our riches, we shall leave them without regret. If our treasures are laid up in heaven, death will be but “going home,” and happy will be that moment when we are called to our rest.

<2172> **Luke 12:22-31.** See this passage explained in the notes at <4125> Matthew 6:25-33.

<2173> **Luke 12:32.** *Little flock* Our Saviour often represents himself as a shepherd, and his followers as a flock or as sheep. The figure was beautiful. In Judea it was a common employment to attend flocks. The shepherd was with them, defended them, provided for them, led them to green pastures and beside still waters. In all these things Jesus was and is eminently the Good Shepherd. His flock was small. Few “really” followed him, compared with the multitude who professed to love him. But, though small in number, they were not to fear. God was their Friend. He would provide for them. It was his purpose to give them the kingdom, and they had nothing to fear. See <4169> Matthew 6:19-21.

<2174> **Luke 12:33.** *Sell that ye have* Sell your property. Exchange it for that which you can use in distributing charity. This was the condition of their being disciples. Their property they gave up; they forsook it, or they put it into common stock, for the sake of giving alms to the poor, <4124> Acts 2:44; 4:32; <4316> John 12:6; <4482> Acts 5:2.

*Bags which wax not old* The word “bags,” here, means “purses,” or the bags attached to their girdles, in which they carried their money. See the notes at <4158> Matthew 5:38. By bags which wax not old Jesus means that we should lay up treasure in heaven; that our aim should be to be prepared to enter there, where all our wants will be forever provided for. Purses, here, grow old and useless. Wealth takes to itself wings. Riches are easily scattered, or we must soon leave them; but that wealth which is in heaven abides forever. It never is corrupted; never flies away; never is to be left.

*Wax* This word is from an old Saxon word, and in the Bible means to “grow.”

**<1235> Luke 12:35,36.** *Let your loins ...* This alludes to the ancient manner of dress. They wore a long flowing robe as their outer garment. See the notes at **<1058> Matthew 5:38-41**. When they labored, or walked, or ran, it was necessary to “gird” or tie this up by a “sash” or girdle about the body, that it might not impede their progress. Hence, to gird up the loins means to be “ready,” to be active, to be diligent. Compare **<1109> 2 Kings 4:29; 9:1;** **<2017> Jeremiah 1:17;** **<4128> Acts 12:8**.

*Your lights burning* This expresses the same meaning. Be ready at all times to leave the world and enter into rest, when your Lord shall call you. Let every obstacle be out of the way; let every earthly care be removed, and be prepared to follow him into his rest. Servants were expected to be ready for the coming of their lord. If in the night, they were expected to keep their lights trimmed and burning. When their master was away in attendance on a wedding, as they knew not the hour when he would return, they were to be continually ready. So we, as we know not the hour when God shall call us, should be “always” ready to die. Compare the notes at **<1071> Matthew 25:1-13**.

**<2027> Luke 12:37.** *Shall gird himself* Shall take the place of the servant himself. Servants who waited on the table were girded in the manner described above.

*Shall make them sit ...* Shall place them at his table and feast them. This evidently means that if we are faithful to Christ, and are ready to meet him when he returns, he will receive us into heaven — will admit us to all its blessings, and make us happy there — as if “he” should serve us and minister to our wants. It will be as if a master, instead of sitting down at the table “himself,” should place his faithful “servants” there, and be himself the servant. This shows the exceeding kindness and condescension of our Lord. For “us,” poor and guilty sinners, he denied himself, took the form of a servant (**<3107> Philippians 2:7**), and ministered to our wants. In our nature he has worked out salvation, and he has done it in one of the humblest conditions of the children of men. How should our bosoms burn with gratitude to him, and how should “we” be willing to serve one another! See the notes at **<8101> John 13:1-17**.

**<2128> Luke 12:38-46.** See the notes at **<1242> Matthew 24:42-51**.

*Second watch* See the notes at <sup><4145></sup>Matthew 14:25.

<sup><2147></sup>**Luke 12:47.** *Which knew his lord's will* Who knew what his master wished him to do. He that knows what God commands and requires.

*Many stripes* Shall be severely and justly punished. They who have many privileges, who are often warned, who have the gospel, and do not repent and believe, shall be far more severely punished than others. They who are early taught in Sunday schools, or by pious parents, or in other ways, and who grow up in sin and impenitence, will have much more to answer for than those who have no such privileges.

<sup><2148></sup>**Luke 12:48.** *Few stripes* The Jews never inflicted more than forty stripes for one offence, <sup><1833></sup>Deuteronomy 25:3. For smaller offences they inflicted only four, five, six, etc., according to the nature of the crime. In allusion to this, our Lord says that he “that knew not” — that is, he who had comparatively little knowledge — would suffer a punishment proportionally light. He refers, doubtless, to those who have fewer opportunities, smaller gifts, or fewer teachers.

*Much is given* They who have much committed to their disposal, as stewards, etc. See the parable of the talents in <sup><1254></sup>Matthew 25:14-30.

<sup><2149></sup>**Luke 12:49.** *I am, come ...* The result of my coming will be that there will be divisions and contentions. He does not mean that he came “for” that purpose, or that he “sought” and “desired” it; but that such was the state of the human heart, and such the opposition of people to the truth, that that would be the “effect” of his coming. See the notes at <sup><1031></sup>Matthew 10:34.

*Fire* Fire, here, is the emblem of discord and contention, and consequently of calamities. Thus it is used in <sup><1662></sup>Psalms 66:12; <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 43:2.

*And what will I ...* This passage might be better expressed in this manner: “And what would I, but that it were kindled. Since it is “necessary” for the advancement of religion that such divisions should take place; since the gospel cannot be established without conflicts, and strifes, and hatreds, I am even desirous that they should come. Since the greatest blessing which mankind can receive must be attended with such unhappy divisions, I am willing, nay, desirous that they should come.” He did not wish evil in itself; but, as it was the occasion of good, he was desirous, if it “must” take place, that it should take place soon. From this we learn:

1. That the promotion of religion may be expected to produce many contests and bitter feelings.
2. That the heart of man must be exceedingly wicked, or it would not oppose a work like the Christian religion.
3. That though God cannot look on evil with approbation, yet, for the sake of the benefit which may grow out of it, he is willing to permit it, and suffer it to come into the world.

◀1125▶ **Luke 12:50.** *A baptism* See the notes at ▶1112▶ Matthew 20:22.

*Am I straitened* How do I earnestly desire that it were passed! Since these sufferings “must” be endured, how anxious am I that the time should come! Such were the feelings of the Redeemer in view of his approaching dying hour. We may learn from this:

1. That it is not improper to “feel deeply” at the prospect of dying. It is a sad, awful, terrible event; and it is impossible that we should look at it aright “without” feeling — scarcely without trembling.
2. It is not improper to desire that the time should come, and that the day of our release should draw nigh, ▶10123▶ Philippians 1:23. To the Christian, death is but the entrance to life; and since the pains of death “must” be endured, and since they lead to heaven, it matters little how soon he passes through these sorrows, and rises to his eternal rest.

◀1125▶ **Luke 12:51-53.** See the notes at ▶10184▶ Matthew 10:34-36.

◀1125▶ **Luke 12:54-57.** See the notes at ▶10112▶ Matthew 16:2,3.

*South wind* To the south and southwest of Judea were situated Arabia, Egypt, and Ethiopia, all warm or hot regions, and consequently the air that came from those quarters was greatly heated.

*How is it that ye do not discern this time!* You see a cloud rise, and predict a shower; a south wind, and expect heat. These are regular events. So you see my miracles; you hear my preaching; you have the predictions of me in the prophets; why do you not, in like manner, infer that “this is the time” when the Messiah should appear?

◀1125▶ **Luke 12:58,59.** See the notes at ▶10125▶ Matthew 5:25,26.

## NOTES ON LUKE 13

**◀213▶ Luke 13:1.** *There were present* That is, some persons who were present, and who had heard his discourse recorded in the previous chapter. There was probably a pause in his discourse, when they mentioned what had been done by Pilate to the Galileans.

*At that season* At that time — that is the time mentioned in the last chapter. At what period of our Lord's ministry this was, it is not easy to determine.

*Some that told him* This was doubtless an event of recent occurrence. Jesus, it is probable, had not before heard of it. Why they told him of it can only be a matter of conjecture. It might be from the desire to get him to express an opinion respecting the conduct of Pilate, and thus to involve him in difficulty with the reigning powers of Judea. It might be as a mere matter of news. But, from the answer of Jesus, it would appear that "they" supposed that the Galileans "deserved" it, and that they meant to pass a judgment on the character of those people, a thing of which they were exceedingly fond. The answer of Jesus is a reproof of their habit of hastily judging the character of others.

*Galileans* People who lived in Galilee. See the notes at **◀112▶** Matthew 2:22. They were not under the jurisdiction of Pilate, but of Herod. The Galileans, in the time of Christ, were very wicked.

*Whose blood Pilate had mingled ...* That is, while they were sacrificing at Jerusalem, Pilate came suddenly upon them and killed them, and "their" blood was mingled with the blood of the animals that they were slaying for sacrifice. It does not mean that Pilate "offered" their blood in sacrifice, but only that as they were sacrificing he killed them. The fact is not mentioned by Josephus, and nothing more is known of it than what is here recorded. We learn, however, from Josephus that the Galileans were very wicked, and that they were much disposed to broils and seditions. It appears, also, that Pilate and Herod had a quarrel with each other (**◀2312▶** Luke 23:12), and it is not improbable that Pilate might feel a particular enmity to the subjects of Herod. It is likely that the Galileans excited a tumult in the temple, and that Pilate took occasion to come suddenly upon them, and show his



opposition to them and Herod by slaying them. “Pilate.” The Roman governor of Judea. See the notes at <sup><212D></sup>Matthew 27:2.

<sup><212D></sup>**Luke 13:2,3.** *Suppose ye ...* From this answer it would appear that they supposed that the fact that these men had been slain in this manner proved that they were very great sinners.

*I tell you, Nay* Jesus assured them that it was not right to draw such a conclusion respecting these men. The fact that men come to a sudden and violent death is not proof that they are especially wicked.

*Except ye repent* Except you forsake your sins and turn to God. Jesus took occasion, contrary to their expectation, to make a practical use of that fact, and to warn them of their own danger. He never suffered a suitable occasion to pass without warning the wicked, and entreating them to forsake their evil ways. The subject of religion was always present to his mind. He introduced it easily, freely, fully. In this he showed his love for the souls of people, and in this he set us an example that we should walk in his steps.

*Ye shall all likewise perish* You shall all be destroyed in a similar manner. Here he had reference, no doubt, to the calamities that were coming upon them, when thousands of the people perished. Perhaps there was never any reproof more delicate and yet more severe than this. They came to him believing that these men who had perished were especially wicked. He did not tell them that “they” were as bad as the Galileans, but left them to “infer” it, for if they did not repent, they must soon likewise be destroyed. This was remarkably fulfilled. Many of the Jews were slain in the temple; many while offering sacrifice; thousands perished in a way very similar to the Galileans. Compare the notes at Matthew 24. From this account of the Galileans we may learn:

- (1) That people are very prone to infer, when any great calamity happens to others, that they are especially guilty. See the Book of Job, and the reasonings of his three “friends.”
- (2) That that conclusion, in the way in which it is usually drawn, is erroneous. If we see a man bloated, and haggard, and poor, who is in the habit of intoxication, we may infer properly that he is guilty, and that God hates his sin and punishes it. So we may infer of the effects of licentiousness. But we should not thus infer when a man’s house is burned

down, or when his children die, or when he is visited with a loss of health; nor should we infer it of the nations that are afflicted with famine, or the plague, or with the ravages of war; nor should we infer it when a man is killed by lightning, or when he perishes by the blowing up of a steamboat. Those who thus perish may be far more virtuous than many that live.

(3) This is not a world of retribution. Good and evil are mingled; the good and the bad suffer, and all are exposed here to calamity.

(4) There is another world a future state — a world where the good will be happy and the wicked punished. There all that is irregular on earth will be regulated; all that appears unequal will be made equal; all that is chaotic will be reduced to order.

(5) When people are disposed to speak about the great guilt of others, and the calamities that come upon them, they should inquire about “themselves.” What is “their” character? What is “their” condition? It “may” be that they are in quite as much danger of perishing as those are whom they regard as so wicked.

(6) WE MUST REPENT. We must ALL repent or we shall perish. No matter what befalls others, “we” are sinners; “we” are to die; “we” shall be lost unless we repent. Let us, then, think of “ourselves” rather than of “others;” and when we hear of any signal calamity happening to others, let us remember that there is calamity in another world as well as here; and that while our fellow-sinners are exposed to trials “here,” we may be exposed to more awful woes “there.” Woe “there” is eternal; here, a calamity like that produced by a falling tower is soon over.

**Luke 13:4.** *Or those eighteen* Jesus himself adds another similar case, to warn them — a case which had probably occurred not long before, and which it is likely they judged in the same manner.

*Upon whom the tower in Siloam fell* The name Siloah or Siloam is found only three times in the Bible as applied to water — once in <sup><2385></sup>Isaiah 8:6, who speaks of it as running water; once as a pool near to the king’s garden in <sup><4185></sup>Nehemiah 3:15; and once as a pool, in the account of the Saviour’s healing the man born blind, in <sup><4307></sup>John 9:7-11. Josephus mentions the fountain of Siloam frequently as situated at the mouth of the Valley of Tyropoeon, or the Valley of Cheesemongers, where the fountain long indicated as that fountain is still found. It is on the south side of Mount

Moriah, and between that and the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The water at present flows out of a small artificial basin under the cliff, and is received into a large reservoir 53 feet in length by 18 feet in breadth. The small upper basin or fountain excavated in the rock is merely the entrance, or rather the termination of a long and narrow subterranean passage beyond, by which the water comes from the Fountain of the Virgin. For what purpose the “tower” here referred to was erected is not known; nor is it known at what time the event here referred to occurred. It is probable that it was not far from the time when the Saviour made use of the illustration, for the manner in which he refers to it implies that it was fresh in the recollection of those to whom he spoke.

◀217▶ **Luke 13:5.** *I tell you, Nay* It is improper to suppose that those on whom heavy judgments fall in this world are the worst of people. This is not a world of retribution. Often the most wicked are suffered to prosper here, and their punishment is reserved for another world; while the righteous are called to suffer much, and “appear” to be under the sore displeasure of God, Psalm 73. This only we know, that the wicked will not always escape; that God is just; and that none who do suffer here or hereafter, suffer more than they deserve. In the future world, all that seems to be unequal here will be made equal and plain.

◀217▶ **Luke 13:6.** *This parable* See the notes at ◀413▶ Matthew 13:3.

*Vineyard* A place where vines were planted. It was not common to plant fig-trees in them, but our Lord represents it as having been sometimes done.

◀217▶ **Luke 13:7.** *The dresser of his vineyard* The man whose duty it was to trim the vines and take care of his vineyard.

*These three years* These words are not to be referred to the time which Christ had been preaching the gospel, as if he meant to specify the exact period. They mean, as applicable to the vineyard, that the owner had been “a long time” expecting fruit on the tree. For three successive years he had been disappointed. In his view it was long enough to show that the tree was barren and would yield no fruit, and that therefore it should be cut down.

*Why cumbereth it the ground?* The word “cumber” here means to render “barren” or “sterile.” By taking up the juices of the earth, this useless tree

rendered the ground sterile, and prevented the growth of the neighboring vines. It was not merely “useless,” but was doing mischief, which may be said of all sinners and all hypocritical professors of religion. Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 539) says of the barren fig-tree:

“There are many such trees now; and if the ground is not properly cultivated, especially when the trees are young — as the one of the parable was, for only “three” years are mentioned they do not bear at all; and even when full grown they quickly fail, and wither away if neglected. Those who expect to gather good crops of well-flavored figs are particularly attentive to their culture — not only plow and dig about them frequently, and manure them plentifully, but they carefully gather out the stones from the orchards, contrary to their general slovenly habits.”

This parable is to be taken in connection with what goes before, and with our Saviour’s calling the Jewish nation to repentance. It was spoken to illustrate the dealings of God with them, and their own wickedness under all his kindness, and we may understand the different parts of the parable as designed to represent:

- 1.** God, by the man who owned the vineyard.
- 2.** The vineyard as the Jewish people.
- 3.** The coming of the owner for fruit, the desire of God that they should produce good works.
- 4.** The barrenness of the tree, the wickedness of the people.
- 5.** The dresser was perhaps intended to denote the Saviour and the other messengers of God, pleading that God would spare the Jews, and save them from their enemies that stood ready to destroy them, as soon as God should permit.
- 6.** His waiting denotes the delay of vengeance, to give them an opportunity of repentance. And,
- 7.** The remark of the dresser that he might “then” cut it down, denotes the acquiescence of all in the belief that such a judgment would be just.

We may also remark that God treats sinners in this manner now; that he spares them long; that he gives them opportunities of repentance; that

many live but to cumber the ground; that they are not only useless to the church, but pernicious to the world; that in due time, when they are fairly tried, they shall be cut down; and that the universe will bow to the awful decree of God, and say that their damnation is just.

◀2131▶ **Luke 13:11.** *There was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity* Was infirm, or was weak and afflicted. This was produced by Satan, ▶2136▶ Luke 13:16.

*Eighteen years* This affliction had continued a long time. This shows that the miracle was REAL; that the disease was not feigned. Though thus afflicted, yet it seems she was regular in attending the worship of God in the synagogue. There in the sanctuary, is the place where the afflicted find consolation; and there it was that the Saviour met her and restored her to health. It is in the sanctuary and on the Sabbath, also, that he commonly meets his people, and gives them the joys of his salvation.

◀2132▶ **Luke 13:12.** *Thou art loosed from thine infirmity* This was a remarkable declaration. It does not appear that the woman “applied” to him for a cure; yet Jesus addressed her, and the disease departed. How clear would be the proofs from such a case that he was the Messiah! And how mighty the power of him that by a word could restore her to health!

◀2133▶ **Luke 13:13.** *Glorified God* Praised God. Gave thanks to him for healing her. They who are restored to health from sickness owe it to God; and they should devote their lives to his service, as expressive of their sense of gratitude to him who has spared them.

◀2134▶ **Luke 13:14.** *Answered with indignation, because ...* He considered this a violation of the Sabbath, doing work contrary to the fourth commandment. If he had reasoned aright, he would have seen that he who could perform such a miracle could not be a violator of the law of God. From this conduct of the ruler we learn:

1. That people are often opposed to good being done, because it is not done “in their own way” and “according to their own views.”
2. That they are more apt to look at what they consider a violation of the law in others, than at the good which others may do.
3. That this opposition is manifested not only against those who do good, but also against those who are “benefited.” The ruler of the synagogue

seemed particularly indignant that “the people” would come to Christ to be healed.

**4.** That this conduct is often the result of envy. In this case it was rather hatred that the people should follow Christ instead of the Jewish rulers, and therefore envy at the popularity of Jesus, than any real regard for religion.

**5.** That opposition to the work of Jesus may put on the appearance of great professed regard for religion. Many people oppose revivals, missions, Bible societies, and Sunday-schools — strange as it may seem — “from professed regard to the purity of religion.” They, like the ruler here, have formed their notions of religion as consisting in something “very different from doing good,” and they oppose those who are attempting to spread the gospel throughout the world.

**¶1315** **Luke 13:15.** *Thou hypocrite!* You condemn “me” for an action, and yet you perform one exactly similar. You condemn “me” for doing to a woman what you do to a beast. To her I have done good on the Sabbath; you provide for your cattle, and yet blame me for working a miracle to relieve a sufferer on that day.

**Stall** A place where cattle are kept to be fed, and sheltered from the weather.

**¶1316** **Luke 13:16.** *A daughter of Abraham* A descendant of Abraham. See the notes at **¶1003** Matthew 1:1. She was therefore a Jewess; and the ruler of the synagogue, professing a special regard for the Jewish people, considering them as especially favored of God, should have rejoiced that she was loosed from this infirmity.

**Whom Satan hath bound** Satan is the name given to the prince or leader of evil spirits, called also the devil, Beelzebub, and the old serpent, **¶1024** Matthew 12:24; **¶629** Revelation 12:9; 20:2. By his “binding” her is meant that he had inflicted this disease upon her. It was not properly a “possession” of the devil, for that commonly produced derangement; but God had suffered him to afflict her in this manner, similar to the way in which he was permitted to try Job. See the notes at **¶8012** Job 1:12; 2:6,7. It is no more “improbable” that God would suffer “Satan” to inflict pain, than that he would suffer a wicked “man” to do it; yet nothing is more common than for one “man” to be the occasion of bringing on a disease in another which may terminate only with the life. He that seduces a virtuous man and

leads him to intemperance, or he that wounds him or strikes him, may disable him as much as Satan did this woman. If God permits it in one case, he may, for the same reason, in another.

~~2137~~ **Luke 13:17.** *Adversaries* The ruler of the synagogue, and those who felt as he did.

*All the people* The persons who attended the synagogue, and who had witnessed the miracle. It is to be remarked:

1. That those who opposed Christ were chiefly the “rulers.” They had an “interest” in doing it. Their popularity was at stake. They were afraid that he would draw off the people from them.
2. The common people heard him gladly. Many of them believed in him. The condition of the poor, and of those in humble life, is by far the most favorable for religion, and most of the disciples of Jesus have been found there.

~~2138~~ **Luke 13:18-21.** See these parables explained in the notes at ~~1033~~ Matthew 13:31,32.

~~2132~~ **Luke 13:22.** *Cities and villages* Chiefly of Galilee, and those which were between Galilee and Jerusalem.

*Teaching and journeying* This evinces the diligence of our Lord. Though on a journey, yet he remembered his work. He did not excuse himself on the plea that he was in haste. Christians and Christian ministers should remember that when their Master traveled he did not “conceal” his character, or think that he was then freed from obligation to do good.

~~2133~~ **Luke 13:23.** *Then said one* Who this was does not appear. It is probable that he was not one of the disciples, but one of the Jews, who came either to perplex him, or to involve him in a controversy with the Pharisees.

*Are there few that be saved?* It was the prevalent opinion among the Jews that few would enter heaven. As but two of all the hosts that came out of Egypt entered into the land of Canaan, so some of them maintained that a proportionally small number would enter into heaven (Lightfoot). On this subject the man wished the opinion of Jesus. It was a question of idle curiosity. The answer to it would have done little good. It was far more

important for the man to secure his own salvation, than to indulge in such idle inquiries and vain speculations. Our Lord therefore advised “him,” as he does “all, to strive” to enter into heaven.

**Luke 13:24.** *Strive* Literally, “agonize.” The word is taken from the Grecian games. In their races, and wrestlings, and various athletic exercises, they “strove or agonized,” or put forth all their powers to gain the victory. Thousands witnessed them. They were long trained for the conflict, and the honor of victory was one of the highest honors among the people. So Jesus says that we should strive to enter in; and he means by it that we should be diligent, be active, be earnest; that we should make it our first and chief business to overcome our sinful propensities, and to endeavor to enter into heaven. This same figure or allusion to the Grecian games is often used in the New Testament, <sup><4192></sup>1 Corinthians 9:24-26; <sup><1476></sup>Philippians 2:16; <sup><8201></sup>Hebrews 12:1.

*Strait gate* See the notes at <sup><4173></sup>Matthew 7:13,14. Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 32) says:

“I have seen these strait gates and narrow ways, `with here and there a traveler.’ They are in retired corners, and must be sought for, and are opened only to those who knock; and when the sun goes down and the night comes on, they are shut and locked. It is then too late.”

*Will seek to enter in* Many in various ways manifest some desire to be saved. They seek it, but do not agonize for it, and hence, they are shut out. But a more probable meaning of this passage is that which refers this “seeking” to a time that shall be “too late;” to the time when the master has risen up, etc. In this life they neglect religion, and are engaged about other things. At death, or at the judgment, they will seek to enter in; but it will be too late — the door will be shut; and because they did not make religion the chief business of their life, they cannot “then” enter in.

*Shall not be able* This is not designed to affirm anything respecting the inability of the sinner, provided he seeks salvation in a proper time and manner. It means that at the time when many WILL seek — when the door is shut — they will not be able then to enter in, agreeable to <sup><4172></sup>Matthew 7:22. In the proper time, when the day of grace was lengthened out, they “might” have entered in; but there “will be” a time when it will be too late. The day of mercy will be ended, and death will come, and the doors of



heaven barred against them. How important, then, to strive to enter in while we have opportunity, and before it shall be too late!

**Luke 13:25.** *When once the master ...* The figure here used is taken from the conduct of a housekeeper, who is willing to see his friends, and who at the proper time keeps his doors open. But there is a proper time for closing them, when he will not see his guests. At night it would be improper and vain to seek an entrance — the house would be shut. So there is a proper time to seek an entrance into heaven; but there will be a time when it will be too late. At death the time will have passed by, and God will be no longer gracious to the sinner's soul.

**Luke 13:26.** *We have eaten ...* Compare **Matthew 7:22,23.** To have eaten with one is evidence of acquaintanceship or friendship. So the sinner may allege that he was a professed follower of Jesus, and had some evidence that Jesus was his friend. There is no allusion here, however, to the sacrament. The figure is taken from the customs of people, and means simply that they had professed attachment, and perhaps supposed that Jesus was their friend.

*In thy presence* With thee — as one friend does with another.

*Thou hast taught* Thou didst favor us, as though thou didst love us. Thou didst not turn away from us, and we did not drive thee away. All this is alleged as proof of friendship. It shows us:

**1.** On how slight evidence people will suppose themselves ready to die. How slender is the preparation which even many professed friends of Jesus have for death! How easily they are satisfied about their own piety! A profession of religion, attendance on the preaching of the word or at the sacraments, or a decent external life, is all they have and all they seek. With this they go quietly on to eternity — go to disappointment, wretchedness, and woe!

**2.** None of these things will avail in the day of judgment. It will be only true love to God, a real change of heart, and a life of piety, that can save the soul from death. And oh! how important it is that all should search themselves and see what is the real foundation of their hope that they shall enter into heaven!

**Luke 13:27.** See the notes at **Matthew 7:23.**

◀2138▶ **Luke 13:28-30.** See the notes at ▶2181▶ Matthew 8:11,12.

◀2138▶ **Luke 13:31.** *Came certain of thee Pharisees* Their coming to him in this manner would have the appearance of friendship, as if they had conjectured or secretly learned that it was Herod's intention to kill him. Their suggestion had much appearance of probability. Herod had killed John. He knew that Jesus made many disciples, and was drawing away many of the people. He was a wicked man, and he might be supposed to fear the presence of one who had so strong a resemblance to John, whom he had slain. It might seem probable, therefore, that he intended to take the life of Jesus, and this might appear as a friendly hint to escape him. Yet it is more than possible that Herod might have sent these Pharisees to Jesus. Jesus was eminently popular, and Herod might not dare openly to put him to death; yet he desired his removal, and for this purpose he sent these people, as if in a friendly way, to advise him to retire. This was probably the reason why Jesus called him a fox.

*Herod* Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. He ruled over Galilee and Perea, and wished Jesus to retire beyond these regions. See the notes at ▶2181▶ Luke 3:1.

◀2138▶ **Luke 13:32.** *Tell that fox* A fox is an emblem of slyness, of cunning, and of artful mischief. The word is also used to denote a dissembler. Herod was a wicked man, but the “particular thing” to which Jesus here alludes is not his “vices,” but his “cunning, his artifice,” in endeavoring to remove him out of his territory. He had endeavored to do it by stratagem — by sending these people who pretended great friendship for his life.

*Behold, I cast out devils ...* Announce to him the fact that I am working miracles in his territory, and that I shall continue to do it. I am not afraid of his art or his enmity. I am engaged in my appropriate work, and shall continue to be as long as is proper, in spite of his arts and his threats.

*Today and tomorrow* A little time. The words seem here to be used not strictly, but proverbially — to denote a short space of time. Let not Herod be uneasy. I am doing no evil; I am not violating the laws. I only cure the sick, etc. In a little time this part of my work will be done, and I shall retire from his dominions.

*The third day* After a little time. Perhaps, however, he meant “literally” that he would depart on that day for Jerusalem; that for two or three days

more he would remain in the villages of Galilee, and then go on his way to Jerusalem.

*I shall be perfected* Rather, I shall have ended my course “here;” I shall have “perfected” what I purpose to do in Galilee. It does not refer to his “personal” perfection, for he was always perfect, but it means that he would have “finished or completed” what he purposed to do in the regions of Herod. He would have completed his work, and would be ready then to go.

**Luke 13:33.** *I must walk ...* I must remain here this short time. These three days I must do cures here, and then I shall depart, though not for fear of Herod. It will be because my time will have come, and I shall go up to Jerusalem to die.

*For it cannot be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem* I have no fear that Herod will put me to death in Galilee. I shall not depart on that account. “Jerusalem” is the place where the prophets die, and where “I” am to die. I am not at all alarmed, therefore, at any threats of “Herod,” for my life is safe until I arrive at Jerusalem. Go and tell him, therefore, that I fear him not. I shall work here as long as it is proper, and shall then go up to Jerusalem to die. The reason why he said that a prophet could not perish elsewhere than in Jerusalem might be:

1. That he knew that he would be tried on a charge of blasphemy, and no other court could have cognizance of that crime but the great council or Sanhedrin, and so he was not afraid of any threats of Herod.,
2. It “had been” the fact that the prophets had been chiefly slain there. The meaning is, “It cannot easily be done elsewhere; it is not usually done. Prophets have generally perished there, and there I am to die. I am safe, therefore, from the fear of Herod, and shall not take the advice given and leave his territory.”

**Luke 13:34,35.** See the notes at **Matthew 23:37-39**.

From the message which Jesus sent to Herod we may learn:

1. That our lives are safe in the hands of God, and that wicked people can do no more to injure us than he shall permit. Compare **John 19:11**.

- 2.** That we “should” go on fearlessly in doing our duty, and especially if we are doing good. We should not regard the threats of people. God is to be obeyed; and even if obedience should involve us in difficulty and trials, still we should not hesitate to commit our cause to God and go forward.
- 3.** We should be on our guard against crafty and unprincipled people. They often “profess” to seek our good when they are only plotting our ruin. Even those professedly coming from our enemies to caution us are often also our enemies, and are secretly plotting our ruin or endeavoring to prevent our doing good.
- 4.** We see here the nature of religion. It shrinks at nothing which is duty. It goes forward trusting in God. It comes out boldly and faces the world.  
And,
- 5.** How beautiful and consistent is the example of Christ! How “wise” was he to detect the arts of his foes! how “fearless” in going forward, in spite of all their machinations, to do what God had appointed for him to do!

## NOTES ON LUKE 14

◀241▶ **Luke 14:1.** *It came to pass* It so happened or occurred.

*As he went ...* It is probable that he was invited to go, being in the neighborhood (◀242▶ Luke 14:12); and it is also probable that the Pharisee invited him for the purpose of getting him to say something that would involve him in difficulty.

*One of the chief Pharisees* One of the Pharisees who were “rulers,” or members of the great council or the Sanhedrin. See the notes at ◀4162▶ Matthew 5:22. It does not mean that he was the head of the “sect” of the Pharisees, but one of those who happened to be a member of the Sanhedrin. He was, therefore, a man of influence and reputation.

*To eat bread* To dine. To partake of the hospitalities of his house.

*On the sabbath-day* It may seem strange that our Saviour should have gone to dine with a man who was a stranger on the Sabbath; but we are to remember:

1. That he was traveling, having no home of his own, and that it was no more improper to go there than to any other place.
2. That he did not go there for the purpose of feasting and amusement, but to do good.
3. That as several of that class of persons were together, it gave him an opportunity to address them on the subject of religion, and to reprove their vices.

If, therefore, the example of Jesus should be pled to authorize accepting an invitation to dine on the Sabbath, it should be pled JUST AS IT WAS. If we can go “just as he did,” it is right. If when away from home; if we go to do good; if we make it an occasion to discourse on the subject of religion and to persuade people to repent, then it is not improper. Farther than this we cannot plead the example of Christ. And surely this should be the last instance in the world to be adduced to justify dinner-parties, and scenes of riot and gluttony on the Sabbath.

*They watched him* They malignantly fixed their eyes on him, to see if he did anything on which they could lay hold to accuse him.

◀244▶ **Luke 14:2.** *A certain man before him* In what way he came there we know not. He might have been one of the Pharisee's family, or might have been placed there by the Pharisees to see whether he would heal him. This last supposition is not improbable, since it is said in ▶241◀ Luke 14:1 that they watched him.

*The dropsy* A disease produced by the accumulation of water in various parts of the body; very distressing, and commonly incurable.

◀244▶ **Luke 14:3.** *Jesus, answering* To "answer," in the Scriptures, does not always imply, as among us, that anything had been said before. It means often merely to "begin" or to take up a subject, or, as here, to remark on the case that was present.

*Is it lawful ...* He knew that they were watching him. If he healed the man at once, they would accuse him. He, therefore, proposed the question to them, and when it was asked, they could not say that it was not lawful.

◀244▶ **Luke 14:4.** *They held their peace* They were silent. They "could" not say it was not lawful, for the law did not forbid it. If it had they would have said it. Here was the time for them to make objections if they had any, and not after the man was healed; and as they "made" no objection "then," they could not with consistency afterward. They were, therefore, effectually silenced and confounded by the Saviour.

*He took him* Took hold of the man, or perhaps took him apart into another room. By taking hold of him, or touching him, he showed that the power of healing went forth from himself.

◀245▶ **Luke 14:5,6.** See the notes at ▶4021▶ Matthew 12:11.

*Which of you ...* In this way Jesus refuted the notion of the Pharisees. If it was lawful to save an ox on the Sabbath, it was also to save the life of a man. To this the Jews had nothing to answer.

◀244▶ **Luke 14:7.** *A parable* The word parable, here, means rather a "precept, an injunction." He gave a "rule or precept" about the proper manner of attending a feast, or about the humility which ought to be manifested on such occasions.

*That were bidden* That were invited by the Pharisee. It seems that he had invited his friends to dine with him on that day.

*When he marked* When he observed or saw.

*Chief rooms* The word “rooms” here does not express the meaning of the original. It does not mean “apartments,” but “the higher places” at the table; those which were nearest the head of the table and to him who had invited them. See the notes at <sup><1216></sup>Matthew 23:6. That this was the common character of the Pharisees appears from <sup><1216></sup>Matthew 23:6.

<sup><248></sup>**Luke 14:8,9.** *Art bidden* Are invited.

*To a wedding* A wedding was commonly attended with a feast or banquet.

*The highest room* The seat at the table nearest the head.

*A more honourable man* A more aged man, or a man of higher rank. It is to be remarked that our Saviour did not consider the courtesies of life to be beneath his notice. His chief design here was, no doubt, to reprove the pride and ambition of the Pharisees; but, in doing it, he teaches us that religion does not violate the courtesies of life. It does not teach us to be rude, forward, pert, assuming, and despising the proprieties of refined social contact. It teaches humility and kindness, and a desire to make all happy, and a willingness to occupy our appropriate situation and rank in life; and this is true “politeness,” for true politeness is a desire to make all others happy, and a readiness to do whatever is necessary to make them so. They have utterly mistaken the nature of religion who suppose that because they are professed Christians, they must be rude and uncivil, and violate all the distinctions in society. The example and precepts of Jesus Christ were utterly unlike such conduct. He teaches us to be kind, and to treat people according to their rank and character. Compare <sup><1221></sup>Matthew 22:21: <sup><5137></sup>Romans 13:7; <sup><1027></sup>1 Peter 2:17.

<sup><240></sup>**Luke 14:10.** *The lowest room* The lowest seat at the table; showing that you are not desirous of distinctions, or greedy of that honor which may properly belong to you.

*Shalt have worship* The word “worship” here means “honor.” They who are sitting with you shall treat you with respect. They will learn your rank by your being invited nearer to the head of the table, and it will be better to

learn it thus than by putting yourself forward. They will do you honor because you have shown a humble spirit.

**◀241▶ Luke 14:11. *Whosoever exalteth ...*** This is universal among people, and it is also the way in which God will deal with people. “Men” will perpetually endeavor to bring down those who endeavor to exalt themselves; and it is a part of God’s regular plan to abase the proud, to bring down the lofty, to raise up those that be bowed down, and show “his” favors to those who are poor and needy.

**◀242▶ Luke 14:12. *Call not thy friends ...*** This is not to be understood as commanding us not to entertain “at all” our relatives and friends; but we are to remember the “design” with which our Lord spoke. He intended, doubtless, to reprove those who sought the society of the wealthy, and particularly rich relatives, and those who claimed to be intimate with the great and honorable, and who, to show their intimacy, were in the habit of “seeking” their society, and making for them expensive entertainments. He meant, also, to commend charity shown to the poor. The passage means, therefore, call “not only” your friends, but call also the poor, etc. Compare **◀248▶ Exodus 16:8;** **◀152▶ 1 Samuel 15:22;** **◀202▶ Jeremiah 7:22,23;** **◀193▶ Matthew 9:13.**

*Thy kinsmen* Thy relations.

*A recompense* Lest they feel themselves bound to treat you with the same kindness, and, in so doing, neither you nor they will show any kind spirit, or any disposition to do good beyond what is repaid.

**◀243▶ Luke 14:13. *The poor*** Those who are destitute of comfortable food.

*The maimed* Those who are deprived of any member of their body, as an arm or a leg or who have not the use of them so that they can labor for their own support.

**◀244▶ Luke 14:14. *Shalt be blessed*** Blessed in the “act” of doing good, which furnishes more “happiness” than riches can give, and blessed or rewarded “by God” in the day of judgment.

*They cannot recompense thee* They cannot invite you again, and thus pay you; and by inviting “them” you show that you have a “disposition” to do good.



*The resurrection of the just* When the just or holy shall be raised from the dead. Then “God” shall reward those who have done good to the poor and needy from love to the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup><400></sup>Matthew 10:42; 25:34-36.

<sup><245></sup>**Luke 14:15.** *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God*

The kingdom of God here means the kingdom which the Messiah was to set up. See the notes at <sup><400></sup>Matthew 3:2. The Jews supposed that he would be a temporal prince, and that his reign would be one of great magnificence and splendor. They supposed that the “Jews” then would be delivered from all their oppressions, and that, from being a degraded people, they would become the most distinguished and happy nation of the earth. To that period they looked forward as one of great happiness. There is some reason to think that they supposed that the ancient just people would then be raised up to enjoy the blessings of the reign of the Messiah. Our Saviour having mentioned the “resurrection of the just,” this man understood it in the common way of the Jews, and spoke of the special happiness which they expected at that time. The Jews “only,” he expected, would partake of those blessings. Those notions the Saviour corrects in the parable which follows.

<sup><246></sup>**Luke 14:16.** *A great supper* Or great feast. It is said to be “great” on account of the number who were invited.

*Bade many* Invited many beforehand. There is little difficulty in understanding this parable. The man who made the supper is, without doubt, designed to represent God; the supper, the provisions which he has made for the salvation of people; and the invitation, the offers which he made to people, particularly to the Jews, of salvation. See a similar parable explained in the notes at <sup><421></sup>Matthew 22:1-14.

<sup><247></sup>**Luke 14:17.** *Sent his servant* An invitation had been sent before, but this servant was sent at the time that the supper was ready. From this it would seem that it was the custom to announce to those invited just the time when the feast was prepared. The custom here referred to still prevails in Palestine. Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 178) says:

“If a sheikh, beg, or emeer invites, he always sends a servant to call you at the proper time. This servant often repeats the very formula mentioned in <sup><247></sup>Luke 14:17: Tefuddulu, el`asha hader. Come, for the supper is ready. The fact that this custom is mainly confined to the wealthy and to the nobility is in strict agreement with the

parable, where the certain man who made the great supper and bade many is supposed to be of this class. It is true now, as then, that to refuse is a high insult to the maker of the feast, nor would such excuses as those in the parable be more acceptable to a Druse emeer than they were to the lord of this `great supper.'”

◀248▶ **Luke 14:18.** *I have bought a piece of ground* Perhaps he had purchased it on condition that he found it as good as it had been represented to him.

*I must needs go* I have necessity, or am obliged to go and see it; possibly pleading a contract or an agreement that he would go soon and examine it. However, we may learn from this that sinners sometimes plead that they are under a “necessity” to neglect the affairs of religion. The affairs of the world, they pretend, are so pressing that they cannot find time to attend to their souls. They have no time to pray, or read the Scriptures, or keep up the worship of God. In this way many lose their souls. God cannot regard such an excuse for neglecting religion with approbation. He commands us to seek “first” the kingdom of God and his righteousness, nor can he approve any excuse that people may make for not doing it.

◀249▶ **Luke 14:19.** *I go to prove them* To try them, to see if he had made a good bargain. It is worthy of remark that this excuse was very trifling. He could as easily have tried them at any other time as then, and his whole conduct shows that he was more disposed to gratify “himself” than to accept the invitation of his friend. He was selfish; just as all sinners are, who, to gratify their own worldliness and sins, refuse to accept the offers of the gospel.

◀249▶ **Luke 14:20.** *I have married a wife ...* Our Saviour here doubtless intends to teach us that the love of earthly relatives and friends often takes off the affections from God, and prevents our accepting the blessings which he would bestow on us. This was the most trifling excuse of all; and we cannot but be amazed that “such” excuses are suffered to interfere with our salvation, and that people can be satisfied for “such” reasons to exclude themselves from the kingdom of God.

◀249▶ **Luke 14:21.** *Showed his lord* Told his master of the excuses of those who had been invited. Their conduct was remarkable, and it was his duty to acquaint him with the manner in which his invitation had been received.

*Being angry* Being angry at the people who had slighted his invitation; who had so insulted him by neglecting his feast, and preferring “for such reasons” their own gratification to his friendship and hospitality. So it is no wonder that God is angry with the wicked every day. So foolish as well as wicked is the conduct of the sinner, so trifling is his excuse for not repenting and turning to God, that it is no wonder if God cannot look upon their conduct but with abhorrence.

*Go out quickly* The feast is ready. There is no time to lose. They who partake of it must do it soon. So the gospel is ready; time flies; and they who partake of the gospel must do it soon, and they who preach it must give diligence to proclaim it to their fellow-men.

*The streets and lanes of the city* The places where the poor, etc., would be found. Those first invited were the rich, who dwelt at ease in their own houses. By these the Jews were intended; by those who were in the streets, the Gentiles. Our Lord delivered this parable to show the Jews that the Gentiles would be called into the kingdom of God. They despised the Gentiles, and considered them cast out and worthless, as they did those who were in the lanes of the city.

*The maimed ...* See the notes at <sup><2413></sup>Luke 14:13.

<sup><2422></sup>**Luke 14:22.** *Yet there is room* He went out and invited all he found in the lanes, and yet the table was not full. This he also reported to his master. “There is room!” What a glorious declaration is this in regard to the gospel! There yet is room. Millions have been saved, but there yet is room. Millions have been invited, and have come, and have gone to heaven, but heaven is not yet full. There is a banquet there which no number can exhaust; there are fountains which no number can drink dry; there are harps there which other hands may strike; and there are seats there which others may occupy. Heaven is not full, and there yet is room. The Sunday school teacher may say to his class, there yet is room; the parent may say to his children, there yet is room; the minister of the gospel may go and say to the wide world, there yet is room. The mercy of God is not exhausted; the blood of the atonement has not lost its efficacy; heaven is not full. What a sad message it “would” be if we were compelled to go and say, “There is no more room — heaven is full — not another one can be saved. No matter what their prayers, or tears, or sighs, they cannot be saved. Every place is filled; every seat is occupied.” But, thanks be to God, this is not the message which we are to bear; and if there yet is room,

come, sinners, young and old, and enter into heaven. Fill up that room, that heaven may be full of the happy and the blessed. If any part of the universe is to be vacant, O let it be the dark world of woe!

**◀14:23▶ Luke 14:23.** *Go out into the highways* Since enough had not been found in the lanes and streets, he commands the servant to go into the roads — the public highways out of the city, as well as to the streets “in” it — and invite them also.

*Hedges* A hedge is the inclosure around a field or vineyard. It was commonly made of thorns, which were planted thick, and which kept the cattle out of the vineyard.

“A common plant for this purpose is the prickly pear, a species of cactus, which grows several feet high, and as thick as a man’s body, armed with sharp thorns, and thus forming an almost impervious defense” (Professor Hackett, “Scripture Illustrations,” p. 174).

Those in the hedges were poor laborers employed in planting them or trimming them — people of the lowest class and of great poverty. By his directing them to go first into the streets of the city and then into the highways, we are not to understand our Saviour as referring to different classes of people, but only as denoting the “earnestness” with which God offers salvation to people, and his willingness that the most despised should come and live. Some parts of parables are thrown in for the sake of “keeping,” and they should not be pressed or forced to obtain any obscure or fanciful signification. The great point in this parable was, that God would call in the Gentiles after the Jews had rejected the gospel. This should be kept always in view in interpreting all the parts of the parable.

*Compel them* That is, urge them, press them earnestly, one and all. Do not hear their excuses on account of their poverty and low rank of life, but urge them so as to overcome their objections and lead them to the feast. This expresses the “earnestness” of the man; his anxiety that his table should be filled, and his purpose not to reject any on account of their poverty, or ignorance, or want of apparel. So God is earnest in regard to the most polluted and vile. He commands his servants, his ministers, to “urge” them to come, to “press” on them the salvation of the gospel, and to use ALL the means in their power to bring into heaven poor and needy sinners.

**<214> Luke 14:24.** *For I say unto you* These may be considered as the words of Jesus, making an application of the parable to the Pharisees before him.

*None of those men* This cannot be understood as meaning that no “Jews” would be saved, but that none of those who had “treated him, in that manner” — none who had so decidedly rejected the offer of the gospel — would be saved. We may here see how dangerous it is “once” to reject the gospel; how dangerous to grieve away the Holy Spirit. How often God forsakes forever the sinner who has been once awakened, and who grieves the Holy Spirit. The invitation is full and free; but when it is rejected, and people turn willfully away from it, God leaves them to their chosen way, and they are drowned in destruction and perdition. How important, then, is it to embrace the gospel “at once;” to accept the gracious invitation, and enter without delay the path that conducts to heaven!

**<215> Luke 14:25,26,27.** See the notes at **<406> Matthew 10:37,38.**

**<216> Luke 14:26.** *And hate not* The word “hate,” here, means simply to “love less.” See the meaning of the verse in **<406> Matthew 10:37**. It may be thus expressed: “He that comes after me, and does not love his father less than he loves me, etc., cannot be my disciple.” We are not at liberty literally to “hate” our parents. This would be expressly contrary to the fifth commandment. See also **<406> Ephesians 6:1-3;** **<506> Colossians 3:20**. But we are to love them “less” than we love Christ; we are to obey Christ rather than them; we are to be willing to forsake them if he calls us to go and preach his gospel; and we are to submit, without a complaint, to him when he takes them away from us. This is not an uncommon meaning of the word “hate” in the Scriptures. Compare **<300> Malachi 1:2,3;** **<0290> Genesis 29:30,31;** **<6215> Deuteronomy 21:15-17**.

**<218> Luke 14:28.** *Intending to build a tower* See **<4213> Matthew 21:33**. A tower was a place of defense or observation, erected on high places or in vineyards, to guard against enemies. It was made “high,” so as to enable one to see an enemy when he approached; and “strong,” so that it could not be easily taken.

*Counteth the cost* Makes a calculation how much it will cost to build it.

**<219> Luke 14:29.** *Haply* Perhaps.

*To mock him* To ridicule him. To laugh at him.

☞ **Luke 14:31.** *With ten thousand to meet ...* Whether he will be able, with the forces which he “has,” to meet his enemy. Christ here perhaps intends to denote that the enemies which we have to encounter in following him are many and strong, and that “our” strength is comparatively feeble. “To meet him.” To contend with him. To gain a victory over him.

☞ **Luke 14:32.** *Or else* If he is not able. If he is satisfied that he would be defeated.

*An embassy* Persons to treat with an enemy and propose terms of peace. These expressions are not to be improperly pressed in order to obtain from them a spiritual signification. The general scope of the parable is to be learned from the connection, and may be thus expressed:

1. Every man who becomes a follower of Jesus should calmly and deliberately look at all the consequences of such an act and be prepared to meet them.
2. Men in other things act with prudence and forethought. They do not begin to build without a reasonable prospect of being able to finish. They do not go to war when there is every prospect that they will be defeated.
3. Religion is a work of soberness, of thought, of calm and fixed purpose, and no man can properly enter on it who does not resolve by the grace of God to fulfil all its requirements and make it the business of his life.
4. We are to expect difficulties in religion. It will cost us the mortification of our sins, and a life of self-denial, and a conflict with our lusts, and the enmity and ridicule of the world. Perhaps it may cost us our reputation, or possibly our lives and liberties, and all that is dear to us; but we must cheerfully undertake all this, and be prepared for it all.
5. If we do not deliberately resolve to leave all things, to suffer all things that may be laid on us, and to persevere to the end of our days in the service of Christ, we cannot be his disciples. No man can be a Christian who, when he makes a profession, is resolved after a while to turn back to the world; nor can he be a true Christian if he “expects that he will” turn back. If he comes not with a “full” purpose “always” to be a Christian; if he means not to persevere, by the grace of God, through all hazards, and trials, and temptations; if he is not willing to bear his cross, and meet

contempt, and poverty, and pain, and death, without turning back, he “cannot” be a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

**Luke 14:34,35.** See the notes at <sup><4163></sup>Matthew 5:13; <sup><4194></sup>Mark 9:49,50.

*Salt is good* It is useful. It is good to preserve life and health, and to keep from putrefaction.

*His savour* Its saltness. It becomes tasteless or insipid.

*Be seasoned* Be salted again.

*Fit for the land* Rather, it is not fit “for land,” that is, it will not bear fruit of itself. You cannot sow or plant on it.

*Nor for the dunghill* It is not good for manure. It will not enrich the land.

*Cast it out* They throw it away as useless.

*He that hath ears ...* See <sup><4115></sup>Matthew 11:15. You are to understand that he that has not grace in his heart; who merely makes a profession of religion, and who sustains the same relation to true piety that this insipid and useless mass does to good salt, is useless in the church, and will be rejected.

“Real” piety, true religion, is of vast value in the world. It keeps it pure, and saves it from corruption, as salt does meat; but a mere “profession” of religion is fit for nothing. It does no good. It is a mere encumbrance, and all such professors are fit only to be cast out and rejected. All such “must” be rejected by the Son of God, and cast into a world of wretchedness and despair. Compare <sup><4172></sup>Matthew 7:22,23; 8:12; 23:30; 25:30; <sup><4186></sup>Revelation 3:16; <sup><4183></sup>Job 8:13; 36:13.

## NOTES ON LUKE 15

◀2157▶ **Luke 15:1.** *Publicans and sinners* See the notes at ▶4190▶ Matthew 9:10.

◀2157▶ **Luke 15:2.** *Murmured* They affected to suppose that if Jesus treated sinners kindly he must be fond of their society, and be a man of similar character. “They” considered it disgraceful to be with them or to eat with them, and they, therefore, brought a charge against him for it. They “would” not suppose that he admitted them to his society for the purpose of doing them good; nor did they remember that the very object of his coming was to call the wicked from their ways and to save them from death.

*Receiveth sinners* Receives them in a tender manner; treats them with kindness; does not drive them from his presence.

*And eateth with them* Contrary to the received maxims of the scribes. By eating with them he showed that he did not despise or overlook them.

◀2157▶ **Luke 15:3.** *This parable* See the notes at ▶4113▶ Matthew 13:3.

◀2157▶ **Luke 15:4-6.** See the notes at ▶4182▶ Matthew 18:12,13.

◀2157▶ **Luke 15:7.** *Likewise joy ...* It is a principle of human nature that the “recovery” of an object in danger of being lost, affords much more intense joy than the quiet “possession” of many that are safe. This our Saviour illustrated by the case of the lost sheep and of the piece of silver. It might also be illustrated by many other things. Thus we rejoice most in our health when we recover from a dangerous disease; we rejoice over a child rescued from danger or disease more than over those who are in health or safety. We rejoice that property is saved from conflagration or the tempest more than over much more that has not been in danger. This feeling our Lord represents as existing in heaven. “Likewise,” in like manner, or on the same principle, there is joy.

*In heaven* Among the angels of God. Compare ▶2150▶ Luke 15:10. Heavenly beings are thus represented as rejoicing over those who repent on earth. They see the guilt and danger of people; they know what God has done for the race, and they rejoice at the recovery of any from the guilt and ruins of sin. *One sinner* One rebel against God, however great may be his sins or



however small. If a sinner, he must perish unless he repents; and they rejoice at his repentance because it recovers him back to the love of God, and because it will save him from eternal death.

*That repenteth* See the notes at <sup><409></sup>Matthew 9:13.

*Just persons* The word “persons” is not in the original. It means simply “just ones,” or those who have not sinned. The word may refer to angels as well as to people. There are no “just” people on earth who need no repentance, <sup><217></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:20; <sup><194></sup>Psalms 14:2,3; <sup><810></sup>Romans 3:10-18. Our Saviour did not mean to imply that there were any such. He was speaking of what took place “in heaven,” or among “angels,” and of “their” emotions when they contemplate the creatures of God; and he says that “they” rejoiced in the repentance of one “sinner” more than in the holiness of many who had not fallen. We are not to suppose that he meant to teach that there were just ninety-nine holy angels to one sinner. He means merely that they rejoice more over the “repentance” of one sinner than they do over many who have not fallen. By this he vindicated his own conduct. The Jews did not deny the existence of angels. They would not deny that their feelings were proper. If “they” rejoiced in this manner, it was not improper for “him” to show similar joy, and especially to seek their conversion and salvation. If they rejoice also, it shows how desirable is the repentance of a sinner. They know of how much value is an immortal soul. They see what is meant by eternal death; and they do not feel “too much,” or have “too much anxiety” about the soul that can never die. Oh that people saw it as “they” see it! and oh that they would make an effort, such as angels see to be proper, to save their own souls and the souls of others from eternal death!

<sup><218></sup>**Luke 15:8-10.** *Ten pieces of silver* In the original, ten “drachmas.” The drachma was about the value of fifteen cents, and consequently the whole sum was about a dollar and a half, or six shillings. The sum was small, but it was all she had. The loss of one piece, therefore, was severely felt.

*There is joy in the presence ...* Jesus in this parable expresses the same sentiment which he did in the preceding. A woman would have more immediate, present, joy at finding a lost piece, than she would in the possession of those which had not been lost. “So,” says Christ, there is joy among the angels at the recovery of a single sinner.

<2151> **Luke 15:11** *And he said* Jesus, to illustrate still farther the sentiment which he had uttered, and to show that it was proper to rejoice over repenting sinners, proceeds to show it by a most beautiful and instructive parable. We shall see its beauty and propriety by remembering that the “design” of it was simply to “justify his conduct in receiving sinners,” and to show that to rejoice over their return was proper. This he shows by the feelings of a “father” rejoicing over the “return” of an ungrateful and dissipated son.

<2152> **Luke 15:12.** *And the younger of them said* By this younger son we are to understand the publicans and sinners to be represented. By the older, the Pharisees and scribes.

*Give me the portion* The part.

*Of goods* Of property.

*That falleth to me* That is properly my share. There is no impropriety in supposing that he was of age; and, as he chose to leave his father’s house, it was proper that his father should, if he chose, give him the part of the estate which would be his.

*He divided unto them his living* His property, or “means” of living. The division of property among the Jews gave the older son twice as much as the younger. In this case it seems the younger son received only money or movable property, and the older chose to remain with his father and dwell on the paternal estate. The lands and fixed property remained in their possession. Among the ancient Romans and Syrophenicians, it was customary, when a son came to the years of maturity, if he demanded his part of the inheritance, for the father to give it to him. This the son might claim by law. It is possible that such a custom may have prevailed among the Jews, and that our Saviour refers to some such demand made by the young man.

<2153> **Luke 15:13.** *Gathered all together* Collected his property. If he had received flocks or grain, he sold them and converted them into money. As soon as this arrangement had been made he left his father’s house.

*Took his journey* Went, or traveled.

*Into a far country* A country far off from his father's house. He went probably to trade or to seek his fortune, and in his wanderings came at last to this dissipated place, where his property was soon expended.

*Wasted his substance* Spent his property.

*In riotous living* Literally, "Living without saving anything." He lived extravagantly, and in the most dissolute company. See <sup><2150></sup>Luke 15:30. By his wandering away we may understand that sinners wander far away from God; that they fall into dissolute and wicked company; and that their wandering so far off is the reason why they fall into such company, and are so soon and so easily destroyed.

<sup><2154></sup>**Luke 15:14.** *A mighty famine* Famines were common in Eastern nations. They were caused by the failure of the crops — by a want of timely rains, a genial sun, or sometimes by the prevalence of the plague or of the pestilence, which swept off numbers of the inhabitants. In this case it is very naturally connected with the luxury, the indolence, and the dissipation of the people in that land.

<sup><2155></sup>**Luke 15:15.** *Joined himself* Entered the service of that citizen. Hired himself out to him. It would seem that he engaged to do any kind of work, even of the lowest kind.

*A citizen* One of the inhabitants of one of the cities or towns of that region, probably a man of property.

*Into the fields* Out of the city where the owner lived.

*To feed swine* This was a very low employment, and particularly so to a "Jew." It was forbidden to the Jews to eat swine, and of course it was unlawful to keep them. To be compelled, therefore, to engage in such an employment was the deepest conceivable degradation. The "object" of this image, as used by the Saviour in the parable, is to show the loathsome employments and the deep degradation to which sin leads people, and no circumstance could possibly illustrate it in a more striking manner than he has done here. Sin and its results everywhere have the same relation to that which is noble and great, which the feeding of swine had, in the estimation of a Jew, to an honorable and dignified employment.

<sup><2156></sup>**Luke 15:16.** *He would fain* He would gladly. He desired to do it.

*The husks* The word “husks” with us denotes the outward covering of grain. In this there is little nourishment, and it is evident that this is not intended here; but the word used here denotes not only “husks,” but also leguminous plants, as beans, etc. It is also used to denote the fruit of a tree called the “carob or kharub-tree,” which is common in Ionia, Syria, and Rhodes. The tree is more bushy and thick set than the apple tree, and the leaves are larger and of a much darker green. The following is Dr. Thomson’s description of the fruit of this tree (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 22):

“The `husks’ — a mistranslation — are fleshy pods, somewhat like those of the locust-tree, from six to ten inches long and one broad, laid inside with a gelatinous substance, not wholly unpleasant to the taste when thoroughly ripe. I have seen large orchards of this kharub in Cyprus, where it is still the food which the swine do eat. The kharub is often called John’s Bread, and also Locust-tree, from a mistaken idea about the food of the Baptist in the wilderness.”

The cut will give an idea of these “pods,” or “husks,” as they are called in our translation.

*No man gave unto him* Some have understood this as meaning “no one gave him anything — any bread or provisions;” but the connection requires us to understand it of the “husks.” He did not go a begging — his master was bound to provide for his wants; but the provision which he made for him was so poor that he would have preferred the food of the swine. He desired a portion of “their food,” but that was not given him. A certain quantity was measured out for “them,” and “he” was not at liberty to eat it himself. Nothing could more strikingly show the evil of his condition, or the deep degradation, and pollution, and wretchedness of sin.

**ⲘⲓⲦⲏ** **Luke 15:17.** *He came to himself* This is a very expressive phrase. It is commonly applied to one who has been “deranged,” and when he recovers we say he has “come to himself.” In this place it denotes that the folly of the young man was a kind of derangement — that he was insane. So it is of every sinner. Madness is in their hearts (<sup>ⲘⲓⲦⲏ</sup> Ecclesiastes 9:3); they are estranged from God, and led, by the influence of evil passions, contrary to their better judgment and the decisions of a sound mind.

*Hired servants* Those in a low condition of life — those who were not born to wealth, and who had no friends to provide for them.

*I perish* I, who had property and a kind father, and who might have been provided for and happy.

**◀2158▶ Luke 15:18.** *I will arise* This is a common expression among the Hebrews to denote “entering on a piece of business.” It does not imply that he was “sitting,” but that he meant immediately to return. This should be the feeling of every sinner who is conscious of his guilt and danger.

*To My father* To his father, although he had offended him, and treated him unkindly, and had provoked him, and dishonored him by his course of conduct. So the sinner. He has nowhere else to go but to “God.” He has offended him, but he may trust in his kindness. If “God” does not save him he cannot be saved. There is no other being that has an arm strong enough to deliver from sin; and though it is painful for a man to go to one whom he has offended — though he cannot go but with shame and confusion of face — yet, unless the sinner is willing to go to “God” and confess his faults, he can never be saved.

*I have sinned* I have been wicked, dissipated, ungrateful, and rebellious.

*Against heaven* The word “heaven” here, as it is often elsewhere, is put for God. I have sinned against “God.” See **◀4125▶** Matthew 21:25. It is also to be observed that one evidence of the genuineness of repentance is the feeling that our sins have been committed chiefly against “God.” Commonly we think most of our offences as committed against “man;” but when the sinner sees the true character of his sins, he sees that they have been aimed chiefly against “God,” and that the sins against “man” are of little consequence compared with those against God. So David, even after committing the crimes of adultery and murder after having inflicted the deepest injury on “man” — yet felt that the sin as committed against “God” shut every other consideration out of view: “Against thee, thee ONLY, have I sinned,” etc., **◀3014▶** Psalm 2:4.

*Before thee* This means the same as “against” thee. The offences had been committed mainly against God, but they were to be regarded, also, as sins against his “father,” in wasting property which he had given him, in neglecting his counsels, and in plunging himself into ruin. He felt that he had “disgraced” such a father. A sinner will be sensible of his sins against his relatives and friends as well as against God. A true penitent will be as ready to “acknowledge” his offences against his fellow-men as those against his Maker.

**<2159> Luke 15:19.** *No more worthy ...* “Such has been my conduct that I have been a disgrace to my father. I am not fit to be honored by being called the son of a man so kind and virtuous.”

*Make me as one ...* “Treat me as a servant. Let me come again into your family, but I do not ask to be treated as a son. I am willing to come in if you will give me only the support that you give to a servant.” This evinced,

1. Deep humility — such as a sinner should have.
2. Love for his father’s house — such as all penitents should have toward God’s dwelling-place in heaven.
3. Confidence in his father that he would treat him kindly, even if he treated him as a servant. Such confidence all returning penitents feel in God. They are assured that God will treat them kindly that whatever he gives them will be more than they deserve, and they are, therefore, willing to be in his hands. Yet,
4. He had no adequate sense of his father’s kindness. He did not fully appreciate his character. He was far more kind than he had dared to hope he would be; just as all sinners undervalue the character of God, and find him always more kind than they had supposed. No sinner comes to God with a just and adequate view of his character, but “always” finds him more merciful than he had dared to hope.

**<2159> Luke 15:20.** *He arose, and came* Was coming. But here is no indication of “haste.” He did not “run,” but came driven by his wants, and, as we may suppose, filled with shame, and even with some doubts whether his father would receive him.

*A great way off* This is a beautiful description — the image of his father’s happening to see him clad in rags, poor, and emaciated, and yet he recognized “his son,” and all the feelings of a father prompted him to go and embrace him.

*Had compassion* Pitied him. Saw his condition — his poverty and his wretched appearance — and was moved with compassion and love.

*And ran* This is opposed to the manner in which the son came. The beauty of the picture is greatly heightened by these circumstances. The son came

slowly — the father “ran.” The love and joy of the old man were so great that he hastened to meet him and welcome him to his home.

*Fell on his neck* Threw his arms around his neck and embraced him.

*And kissed him* This was a sign at once of affection and reconciliation. This must at once have dissipated every doubt of the son about the willingness of his father to forgive and receive him. A kiss is a sign of affection, <sup><0101></sup>1 Samuel 10:1; <sup><0293></sup>Genesis 29:13. This is evidently designed to denote the “readiness of God” to pity and pardon returning sinners. In this verse of inimitable beauty is contained the point of the parable, which was uttered by the Saviour to vindicate “his own conduct” in receiving sinners kindly. Who could “blame” this father for thus receiving his repenting son? Not even a Pharisee could blame him; and our Saviour thus showed them, so that “they” could not resist it, that “God” received returning sinners, and that it was right for “him” also to receive them and treat them with attention.

<sup><0152></sup>**Luke 15:22.** *The best robe* The son was probably in rags. The joy of the father is expressed by clothing him in the best raiment, that he might appear well. The “robe” here mentioned is probably the outer garment; and the father told them to put on him the best one that was in the house — one reserved for festival occasions. See <sup><0275></sup>Genesis 27:15.

*A ring on his hand* To wear a ring on the hand was one mark of wealth and dignity. The rich and those in office commonly wore them. Compare <sup><0312></sup>James 2:2. To “give” a ring was a mark of favor, or of affection, or of conferring office. Compare <sup><0442></sup>Genesis 41:42; Est. 8:2. Here it was expressive of the “favor” and affection of the father.

*Shoes on his feet* Servants, probably, did not usually wear shoes. The son returned, doubtless, without shoes a condition very unlike that in which he was when he left home. When, therefore, the father commanded them to put shoes on him, it expressed his wish that he should not be treated “as a servant,” but “as a son.” The word “shoes” here, however, means no more than “sandals,” such as were commonly worn. And the meaning of all these images is the same — “that God will treat those who return to him with kindness and affection.” These images should not be attempted to be “spiritualized.” They are beautifully thrown in to fill up the narrative, and to express with more force the “general” truth that “God” will treat returning penitents with mercy and with love. To dress up the son in this

manner was a proof of the father's affection. So God will bestow on sinners the marks of his confidence and regard.

**Luke 15:23.** *Be merry* Literally, “eating, let us rejoice.” The word “merry” does not quite express the meaning of the Greek. “Merriment” denotes a light, playful, jovial mirth. The Greek denotes simply “joy — let us be happy, or joyful.”

**Luke 15:24.** *Was dead* This is capable of two significations:

1. “I supposed” that he was dead, but I know now that he is alive.
2. He was “dead to virtue” — he was sunk in pleasure and vice.

The word is not unfrequently thus used. See **1 Timothy 5:6**; **Matthew 8:22**; **Romans 6:13**. Hence, to be restored to “virtue” is said to be restored again to life, **Romans 6:13**; **Revelation 3:1**; **Ephesians 2:1**. It is probable that this latter is the meaning here. See **Luke 15:32**.

*Was lost* Had wandered away from home, and we knew not where he was.

**Luke 15:25.** *In the field* At work. This eldest son is designed to represent the Pharisees who had found fault with the Saviour. Their conduct is likened to that of this envious and unnatural brother.

*Music and dancing* Dancing was not uncommon among the Hebrews, and was used on various occasions. Thus Miriam celebrated the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt in dances as well as songs, **Exodus 15:20**. David danced before the ark, **2 Samuel 6:14**. It was common at Jewish feasts (**Judges 21:19-21**) and in public triumphs (**Judges 11:34**), and at all seasons of mirth and rejoicings, **Psalm 30:11**; **Jeremiah 31:4,13**. It was also used in religious services by the idolaters (**Exodus 32:19**), and also by the Jews, at times, in their religious services, **Psalm 149:3; 150:4**. In this case it was an expression of rejoicing. Our Lord expresses no opinion about its “propriety.” He simply states “the fact,” nor was there occasion for comment on it. His “mentioning it” cannot be pleaded for its lawfulness or propriety, any more than his mentioning the vice of the younger son, or the wickedness of the Pharisees, can be pleaded to justify their conduct. It is an expressive image, used in accordance with the known customs of the country, to express joy. It is farther to be remarked, that if the example of persons in Scripture be



pleaded for dancing, it can be “only for just such dances as they pactised” — for sacred or triumphal occasions.

◀DISB▶ **Luke 15:26-28.** *Safe and sound* In health.

◀DISB▶ **Luke 15:29.** *A kid* A young goat. This was of less value than the calf; and he complains that while his father had never given “him” a thing of so little value as “a kid,” he had now given his other son the “fatted calf.”

*Make merry with* Entertain them give them a feast. This complaint was unreasonable, for his father had divided his property, and he “might” have had his portion, and his father had uniformly treated him with kindness. But it serves to illustrate the conduct of the scribes and Pharisees, and the folly of their complaint.

◀DISB▶ **Luke 15:30.** *This thy son* This son of “thine.” This is an expression of great contempt. He did not call him “his brother,” but “his father’s son,” to show at once his contempt for his younger brother, and for his father for having received him as he did. Never was there a more striking instance of petty malice, or more unjustifiable disregard of a father’s conduct and will.

*Thy living* Thy property. This is still designed to irritate the father, and set him against his younger son. It was true that the younger son had been guilty, and foolish, and ungrateful; but he was penitent, and “that” was of more consequence to the father than all his property; and in the joy that he was penitent and was safe, he forgot his ingratitude and folly. So should the older son have done.

◀DISB▶ **Luke 15:31.** *All I have is thine* The property was divided. What remained was in reality the older son’s. He was heir to it all, and had a right, if he chose, to use it. He had, therefore, no right to complain.

This instructive and beautiful parable was designed to vindicate the conduct of Jesus to show that it was right to receive sinners, and that the conduct of the Pharisees was unreasonable. The older son represents the Pharisees; the younger, the returning sinner, whether Jew or Gentile; and the father, God, who is willing to receive them. The parable had the designed effect. It silenced the adversaries of Jesus and vindicated his own conduct. There is not, perhaps, anywhere to be found a more beautiful and touching narrative than this. Every circumstance is tender and happily chosen; every word has a meaning; every image is beautiful; and the

narrative closes just where it is fitted to make the deepest impression. In addition to what has been suggested, we may learn from this parable the following lessons:

- 1.** That the disposition of a sinner is selfish. He desires to get all that he can, and is impatient of delay, <sup><2152></sup>Luke 15:12.
- 2.** Sinners waste their blessings, and reduce themselves to a state of want and wretchedness, <sup><2153></sup>Luke 15:13. A life of sin brings on spiritual want and misery. It destroys the faculties, benumbs the mind, hardens the heart, abuses the beneficence of God, and makes us careless of him who gave us all that we have, and indifferent to the consequences of our own conduct.
- 3.** Sinners disregard the future woes that will come upon them. The young man cared not for any calamities that might be the result of his conduct. He went on heedlessly — like every sinner to enjoy himself, and to squander what the toils of his father had procured for him.
- 4.** Afflictions are often the means of bringing sinners to reflection, <sup><2154></sup>Luke 15:14. While his property lasted the prodigal cared little about his father. When that was gone, and he was in the midst of a famine, he thought of his ways. When sinners are in prosperity they think little about God. When he takes away their mercies, and they are called to pass through afflictions, then they think of their ways, and remember that God can give them comfort.
- 5.** We have here an impressive exhibition of the wants and woes of a sinner.
  - (1)** He had spent all. He had nothing. So the sinner. He has no righteousness, no comfort.
  - (2)** He was far from God, away from his father, and in a land of strangers. The sinner has wandered, and has no friend. His miseries came upon him “because” he was so far away from God.
  - (3)** His condition was wretched. He was needy, in famine, and without a friend. So the sinner. His condition is aptly denoted by that of the prodigal, who would gladly have partaken of the food of the swine. The sinner has taken the world for his portion, and it neither supplies the wants of his soul, nor gives him comfort when he is far away from his Father’s home and from God.

**6.** The sinner in this situation often applies to the wrong source for comfort, <sup><2155></sup>Luke 15:15. The prodigal should at once have returned to his father, but he rather chose to become a servant of a citizen of that region. The sinner, when sensible of his sins, should return at once to God; but he often continues still to wander. He tries new objects. He seeks new pleasures and new friends, and finds them equally unsatisfactory. He engages in new pursuits, but all in vain. He is still comfortless, and in a strange, a famished land.

**7.** The repentance required in the gospel is a return to a right mind, <sup><2157></sup>Luke 15:17. Before his conversion the sinner was alienated from God. He was spiritually deranged. He saw not things as they are. Now he looks on the world as vain and unsatisfactory, and comes to himself. He thinks “aright” of God, of heaven, of eternity, and resolves to seek his happiness there. No man regards things as they are but he who sees the world to be vain, and eternity to be near and awful; and none acts with a “sane mind” but he who acts on the belief that he must soon die; that there is a God and a Saviour — a heaven and a hell.

**8.** When the sinner returns he becomes sensible of the following things:

**(1)** That he is in danger of perishing, and must soon die but for relief — “I perish with hunger.”

**(2)** That God is willing and able to save him — “How and to spare.” There is abundance of mercy for all, and all may come.

**(3)** He begins to cherish a hope that this may be his. God is willing, and he feels that all that is needful is for him to go to him.

**(4)** He resolves to go to God — “I will arise and go.”

**(5)** He comes to him willing to confess all his sins, and desirous of concealing none — “I will say, Father, I have sinned.”

**9.** True repentance is a voluntary act. It is not forced. It is the resolution of the sinner to go, and he cheerfully and cordially arises and goes, <sup><2158></sup>Luke 15:18.

**10.** A real penitent feels that his sins have been committed against GOD, <sup><2158></sup>Luke 15:18.

- 11.** A true penitent also is willing to acknowledge his offences against his parents, brothers, friends, and all people, ~~<DIS>~~ Luke 15:18.
- 12.** A real penitent is humble, ~~<DIS>~~ Luke 15:18. He has no wish to conceal anything, or to be thought more highly of than he “ought” to be.
- 13.** God is willing to receive the true penitent, and has made the richest provision for his return and for his comfort. None need to hesitate to go. All who go, feeling that they are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, will find God willing to receive them, and none will be sent empty away.
- 14.** The joy at the return of sinners is great. Angels rejoice over it, and all holy beings are glad.
- 15.** We should not be envious at any favors that God may be pleased to bestow on others, ~~<DIS>~~ Luke 15:32. He has given “us” more than we deserve; and if, by the sovereignty of his grace, he is pleased to endow others with more grace, or to give them greater talents, or to make them more useful, “we” have no cause to complain. We should rather rejoice that he is pleased to give such mercies to any of our race, and should praise him for the manifestation of his goodness, whether made to us or to other people.
- 16.** The sensible joy when the sinner returns to God is often greater than that which may be felt “after” the return, and yet the real “cause” of rejoicing be no greater. In times of revival, the sensible joy of Christians may be greater than in ordinary seasons. Their graces are quickened, their zeal kindled, and their hopes strengthened.
- 17.** If God is willing to receive sinners, if all holy beings rejoice, then how should Christians strive for their conversion, and seek for their return!
- 18.** If God is willing to receive sinners “now,” then all should at once return. There “will” be a time when he will not be willing to receive them. The day of mercy will be ended; and from the misery and want of this wretched world, they will go down to the deeper miseries and wants of a world of despair where hope never comes; from whence the sinner can never return; and where the cheering thought can never enter the mind that in his Father’s house there is bread enough and to spare, or where he must feel that if there “is,” it will be forever untasted by the wretched prodigal in the land of eternal famine and death.

## NOTES ON LUKE 16

**☞ Luke 16:1.** *His disciples* The word “disciples,” here, is not to be restricted to the twelve apostles or to the seventy. The parable appears to have been addressed to all the professed followers of the Saviour who were present when it was delivered. It is connected with that in the preceding chapter. Jesus had there been discoursing with the scribes and Pharisees, and vindicating his conduct in receiving kindly publicans and sinners. These “publicans and sinners” are here particularly referred to by the word “disciples.” It was with reference to “them” that the whole discourse had arisen. After Jesus had shown the Pharisees, in the preceding chapter, the propriety of his conduct, it was natural that he should turn and address his disciples. Among them there might have been some who were wealthy. The “publicans” were engaged in receiving taxes, in collecting money, and their chief danger arose from that quarter — from covetousness or dishonesty. Jesus always adapted his instructions to the circumstances of his hearers, and it was proper, therefore, that he should give “these disciples” instructions about their “special” duties and dangers. He related this parable, therefore, to show them “the danger of the love of money;” the guilt it would lead to (☞ Luke 16:1); the perplexities and shifts to which it would drive a man when once he had been dishonest (☞ Luke 16:3-7); the necessity of using money aright, since it was their chief business (☞ Luke 16:9); and the fact that if they would serve God aright they must give up supreme attachment to money (☞ Luke 16:13); and that the first duty of religion demanded that they should resolve to serve God, and be honest in the use of the wealth intrusted to them. This parable has given great perplexity, and many ways have been devised to explain it. The above solution is the most simple of any; and if these plain principles are kept in view, it will not be difficult to give a consistent explanation of its particular parts. It should be borne in mind, however, that in this, as well as in other parables, we are not to endeavor to spiritualize every circumstance or allusion. We are to keep in view the great moral truth taught in it, that we cannot serve God and mammon, and that all attempts to do this will involve us in difficulty and sin.

*A steward* One who has charge of the affairs of a family or household; whose duty it is to provide for the family, to purchase provisions, etc. This is, of course, an office of trust and confidence. It affords great opportunity

for dishonesty and waste, and for embezzling property. The master's eye cannot always be on the steward, and he may, therefore, squander the property, or hoard it up for his own use. It was an office commonly conferred on a slave as a reward for fidelity, and of course was given to him that, in long service, had shown himself most trustworthy. By the "rich man," here, is doubtless represented God. By the "steward," those who are his professed followers, particularly the "publicans" who were with the Saviour, and whose chief danger arose from the temptations to the improper use of the money intrusted to them.

*Was accused* Complaint was made.

*Had wasted* Had squandered or scattered it; had not been prudent and saving.

**◀214▶ Luke 16:2.** *Give an account* Give a statement of your expenses and of your conduct while you have been steward. This is not to be referred to the day of judgment. It is a circumstance thrown into the parable to prepare the way for what follows. It is true that all will be called to give an account at the day of judgment, but we are not to derive that doctrine from such passages as this, nor are we to interpret this as teaching that our conscience, or the law, or any beings will "accuse us" in the day of judgment. All that will be indeed true, but it is not the truth that is taught in this passage.

**◀215▶ Luke 16:3.** *Said within himself* Thought, or considered.

*My lord* My master, my employer.

*I cannot dig* This may mean either that his employment had been such that he could not engage in agriculture, not having been acquainted with the business, or that he was "unwilling" to stoop to so low an employment as to work daily for his support. "To dig," here, is the same as to till the earth, to work at daily labor.

*To beg* These were the only two ways that presented themselves for a living — either to work for it, or to beg.

*I am ashamed* He was too proud for that. Besides, he was in good health and strength, and there was no good reason "why" he should beg — nothing which he could give as a cause for it. It is proper for the sick, the lame, and the feeble to beg; but it is "not" well for the able-bodied to do it,

nor is it well to aid them, except by giving them employment, and compelling them to work for a living. He does a beggar who is able to work the most real kindness who sets him to work, and, as a general rule, we should not aid an able-bodied man or woman in any other way. Set them to work, and pay them a fair compensation, and you do them good in two ways, for the habit of labor may be of more value to them than the price you pay them.

**Luke 16:4.** *I am resolved* He thought of his condition. He looked at the plans which occurred to him. He had been dishonest, and knew that he must lose his place. It would have been better to have “considered before this,” and resolved on a proper course of life, and to be faithful to his trust; and his perplexity here teaches us that dishonesty will sooner or later lead us into difficulty, and that the path of honesty is not only the “right” path, but is the path that is filled with most comfort and peace.

*When I am put out ...* When I lose my place, and have no home and means of support.

*They may receive me ...* Those who are now under me, and whom I am resolved now to favor. He had been dishonest to his master, and, having “commenced” a course of dishonesty, he did not shrink from pursuing it. Having injured his master, and being now detected, he was willing still farther to injure him, to take revenge on him for removing him from his place, and to secure his own interest still at his expense. He was resolved to lay these persons under such obligations, and to show them so much kindness, that they could not well refuse to return the kindness to him and give him a support. We may learn here,

1. That one sin leads on to another, and that one act of dishonesty will be followed by many more, if there is opportunity.
2. Men who commit one sin cannot get along “consistently” without committing many more. One lie will demand many more to make it “appear” like the truth, and one act of cheating will demand many more to avoid detection. The beginning of sin is like the letting out of waters, and no man knows, if he indulges in one sin, where it will end.
3. Sinners are selfish. They care more about “themselves” than they do either about God or truth. If they seek salvation, it is only for selfish ends,

and because they desire a comfortable “abode” in the future world rather than because they have any regard to God or his cause.

**Luke 16:5.** *Called every one* As he was “steward,” he had the management of all the affairs, and, of course, debts were to be paid to him.

*Debtors* Those who “owed” his master, or perhaps “tenants;” those who rented land of his master.

**Luke 16:6.** *A hundred measures* The measure here mentioned is the “bath” which contained, according to Dr. Arbuthnot’s tables, 7 1/2 gallons, or, according to the marginal note, about 9 gallons and 3 quarts.

*Oil* Oil of olives, or sweet oil. It was much used for lamps, as an article of food (<sup><1231></sup>Exodus 29:2), and also for anointing, and, of course, as an article of commerce, <sup><1151></sup>1 Kings 5:11. These were persons, doubtless, who had “rented” land of the rich man, and who were to give him a certain proportion of the produce.

*Thy bill* The contract, obligation, or “lease.” It was probably written as a “promise” by the debtor and signed by the steward, and thus became binding. Thus he had power to alter it, without supposing that his master would detect it. The bill or contract was in the hands of the steward, and he gave it back to him to write a new one.

*Quickly* He supposed that his master would soon remove him, and he was, therefore, in haste to have all things secure beforehand. It is worthy of remark, also, that “all” this was wrong. His master had called for the account: but, instead of rendering it, he engaged in other business, disobeyed his lord still, and, in contempt of his commands, sought his own interest. All sinners would be slow to give in their account to God if they could do it; and it is only because, when God calls them by death, they “cannot but go,” that they do not engage still in their own business and disobey him.

**Luke 16:7.** *Measures of wheat* The measure here mentioned — the “kor,” or homer — contained, according to the tables of Dr. Arbuthnot, about 32 pecks, or 8 bushels; or, according to the marginal note, about 14 bushels and a “pottle.” A “pottle” is 4 pints. The Hebrew “kor,” <sup>A3734</sup>rKo, or “homer,” <sup><12563></sup>rmj, was equal to 10 baths or 70 gallons, and the actual amount of the measure, according to this, was not far from 8 gallons.



Robinson, Lexicon), however, supposes that the bath was 11 1/2 gallons, and the kor or homer 14 to 45 bushels. The amount is not material to the proper understanding of the parable.

*Fourscore Eighty.*

**Luke 16:8.** *The lord commended* Praised, or expressed admiration at his wisdom. These are not the words of Jesus, as commending him, but a part of the narrative or parable. His “master” commended him — saw that he was wise and considerate, though he was dishonest.

*The unjust steward* It is not said that his master commended him because he was “unjust,” but because he was “wise.” This is the only thing in his conduct of which there is any approbation expressed, and this approbation was expressed by “his master.” This passage cannot be brought, therefore, to prove that Jesus meant to commend his dishonesty. It was a commendation of his “shrewdness or forethought;” but the master could no more “approve” of his conduct as a moral act than he could the first act of cheating him.

*The children of this world* Those who are “devoted” to this world; who live for this world only; who are careful only to obtain property, and to provide for their temporal necessities. It does not mean that they are especially wicked and profligate, but only that they are “worldly,” and anxious about earthly things. See **Matthew 13:22**; **2 Timothy 4:10**.

*Are wiser* More prudent, cunning, and anxious about their particular business. They show more skill, study more plans, contrive more ways to provide for themselves, than the children of light do to promote the interests of religion.

*In their generation* Some have thought that this means “in their manner of living, or in managing their affairs.” The word “generation” sometimes denotes the manner of life, **Genesis 6:9**; **37:2**. Others suppose that it means “toward or among the people of their own age.” They are more prudent and wise than Christians in regard to the people of their own time; they turn their connection with them to good account, and make it subserve their worldly interests, while Christians fail much more to use the world in such a manner as to subserve their spiritual interests.

*Children of light* Those who have been enlightened from above — who are Christians. This may be considered as the application of the parable. It does

not mean that it is more wise to be a worldly man than to be a child of light, but that those who “are” worldly show much prudence in providing for themselves; seize occasions for making good bargains; are active and industrious; try to turn everything to the best account, and thus exert themselves to the utmost to advance their interests; while Christians often suffer opportunities of doing good to pass unimproved; are less steady, firm, and anxious about eternal things, and thus show less wisdom. Alas! this is too true; and we cannot but reflect here how different the world would be if all Christians were as anxious, and diligent, and prudent in religious matters as others are in worldly things.

◀119▶ **Luke 16:9.** *I say unto you* I, Jesus, say to you, my disciples.

*Make to yourselves friends* Some have understood the word “friends,” here, as referring to the poor; others, to holy angels; and others, to God. Perhaps, however, the word should not be considered as referring to any particular “persons,” but is used in accordance with the preceding parable; for in the application our Saviour uses the “language” appropriated to the conduct of the steward to express the “general” truth that we are to make a proper use of riches. The steward had so managed his pecuniary affairs as to secure future comfort for himself, or so as to find friends that would take care of him “beyond” the time when he was put out of the office. That is, he would not be destitute, or cast off, or without comfort, when he was removed from his office. So, says our Saviour to the publicans and those who had property, so use your property as “to secure” happiness and comfort beyond the time when you shall be removed from the present life. “Have reference,” in the use of your money, to the future. Do not use it so that it shall not avail you anything hereafter; but so employ it that, as the steward found friends, comfort, and a home by “his” wisdom in the use of it, so “you” may, after you are removed to another world, find friends, comfort, and a home — that is, may be happy in heaven. Jesus, here, does not say that we should do it “in the same way” that the steward did, for that was unjust; but only that we should “secure the result.” This may be done by using our riches as we “should do;” that is, by not suffering them to entangle us in cares and perplexities dangerous to the soul, engrossing the time, and stealing away the affections; by employing them in works of mercy and benevolence, aiding the poor, contributing to the advance of the gospel, bestowing them where they will do good, and in such a manner that God will “approve” the deed, and will bless us for it. Commonly riches are a “hindrance” to piety. To many they are snares; and, instead of positively

“benefiting” the possessor, they are an injury, as they engross the time and the affections, and do not contribute at all to the eternal welfare of the soul. Everything may, by a proper use, be made to contribute to our welfare in heaven. Health, wealth, talents, and influence may be so employed; and this is what our Saviour doubtless means here.

*Of the mammon* “By means” of the mammon.

*Mammon* A Syriac word meaning riches. It is used, also, as an idol the god of riches.

*Of unrighteousness* These words are an Hebrew expression for “unrighteous mammon,” the noun being used for an adjective, as is common in the New Testament. The word “unrighteous,” here, stands opposed to “the true riches” in [Luke 16:11](#), and means “deceitful, false, not to be trusted.” It has this meaning often. See [1 Timothy 6:17](#); [Luke 12:33](#); [Matthew 6:19](#); [19:21](#). It does not signify, therefore, that they had acquired the property “unjustly,” but that property was “deceitful” and not to be trusted. The wealth of the steward was deceitful; he could not rely on its continuance; it was liable to be taken away at any moment. So the wealth of the world is deceitful. We cannot “calculate” on its continuance. It may give us support or comfort now, but it may be soon removed, or we taken from “it,” and we should, therefore, so use it as to derive benefit from it hereafter.

*When ye fail* When ye “are left,” or when ye “die.” The expression is derived from the parable as referring to the “discharge” of the steward; but it refers to “death,” as if God then “discharged” his people, or took them from their stewardship and called them to account.

*They may receive you* This is a form of expression denoting merely “that you may be received.” The plural form is used because it was used in the corresponding place in the parable, [Luke 16:4](#). The direction is, so to use our worldly goods that “we may be received” into heaven when we die. “God” will receive us there, and we are to employ our property so that he will not cast us off for abusing it.

*Everlasting habitations* Heaven, the eternal “home” of the righteous, where all our wants will be supplied, and where there can be no more anxiety, and no more removal from enjoyments, [2 Corinthians 5:1](#).

**<21610> Luke 16:10.** *He that is faithful ...* This is a maxim which will almost universally hold true. A man that shows fidelity in small matters will also in large; and he that will cheat and defraud in little things will also in those involving more trust and responsibility. Fidelity is required in small matters as well as in those of more importance.

**<21611> Luke 16:11.** *Who will commit ...* If you are not faithful in the small matters pertaining to this world, if you do not use aright your property and influence, you cannot expect that God will commit to you the true riches of his grace. Men who are dishonest and worldly, and who do not employ the deceitful mammon as they ought, cannot expect to grow in grace. God does not confer grace upon them, and their being unfaithful in earthly matters is evidence that they “would be” also in much greater affairs, and would likewise “misimprove” the true riches.

*True riches* The graces of the gospel; the influences of the Spirit; eternal life, or religion. The riches of this world are false, deceitful, not to be trusted (**<21611>** Luke 16:9); the treasures of heaven are “true,” faithful, never-failing, **<11619>** Matthew 6:19,20.

**<21612> Luke 16:12.** *Another man’s* The word “man’s” is not in the original. It is, “If ye have been unfaithful managers for another.” It refers, doubtless, to “God.” The wealth of the world is “his.” It is committed to us as his stewards. It is uncertain and deceitful, and at any moment he can take it away from us. It is still “his;” and if, while intrusted with “this,” we are unfaithful, we cannot expect that he will confer on us the rewards of heaven.

*That which is your own* The riches of heaven, which, if once given to us, may be considered as “ours” — that is, it will be permanent and fixed, and will not be taken away “as if” at the pleasure of another. We may “calculate” on it, and look forward with the assurance that it will “continue” to be “ours” forever, and will not be taken away like the riches of this world, “as if” they were not ours. The meaning of the whole parable is, therefore, thus expressed: If we do not use the things of this world as we ought — with honesty, truth, wisdom, and integrity, we cannot have evidence of piety, and shall not be received into heaven. If we are true to that which is least, it is an evidence that we are the children of God, and he will commit to our trust that which is of infinite importance, even the eternal riches and glory of heaven.

<2163> **Luke 16:13.** See the notes at <4163> Matthew 6:24.

<2164> **Luke 16:14,15.** *They derided him* The fact that they were “covetous” is here stated as the reason why they derided him, or, as it is literally, “they turned up the nose at him.” They contemned or despised the doctrine which he had laid down, probably because it showed them that with their love of money they could not be the true friends of God, or that their profession of religion was really false and hollow. They were “attempting” to serve God and mammon, and they, therefore, looked upon his doctrine with contempt and scorn.

*Justify yourselves* “Attempt” to appear just; or; you aim to appear righteous in the sight of people, and do not regard the heart.

*That which is highly esteemed* That is, mere external works, or actions performed merely to “appear” to be righteous.

*Is abomination* Is abominable, or hateful. The word used here is the one that in the Old Testament is commonly given to “idols,” and denotes God’s “abhorrence” of such conduct. These words are to be applied “chiefly” to what Jesus was discoursing about. There are many things esteemed among people which are “not” abomination in the sight of God; as, for example, truth, parental and filial affection, industry, etc. But many things, much sought and admired, “are” hateful in his sight. The love of wealth and show, ambition and pride, frivolous and splendid vices, and all the wickedness that people contrive to “gild” and to make appear like virtue — external acts that “appear” well while the heart is evil — are abominable in the sight of God, and “should be” in the sight of people. Compare <2181> Luke 18:11-14; <0167> 1 Samuel 16:7.

<2166> **Luke 16:16.** See the notes at <4112> Matthew 11:12-14.

*Every man* Many people, or multitudes. This is an expression that is very common, as when we say everybody is engaged in a piece of business, meaning that it occupies general attention.

<2167> **Luke 16:17.** See the notes at <4168> Matthew 5:18.

<2168> **Luke 16:18.** See the notes at <4162> Matthew 5:32. These verses occur in Matthew in a different order, and it is not improbable that they were spoken by our Saviour at different times. The design, here, seems to be to reprove the Pharisees for not observing the law of Moses, notwithstanding

their great pretensions to external righteousness, and to show them that they had “really” departed from the law.

**Luke 16:19.** *There was a certain rich man* Many have supposed that our Lord here refers to a “real history,” and gives an account of some man who had lived in this manner; but of this there is no evidence. The probability is that this narrative is to be considered as a parable, referring not to any particular case which “had” actually happened, but teaching that such cases “might” happen. The “design” of the narrative is to be collected from the previous conversation. He had taught the danger of the love of money (<sup>2169</sup>Luke 16:1,2); the deceitful and treacherous nature of riches (<sup>2169</sup>Luke 16:9-11); that what was in high esteem on earth was hateful to God (<sup>2165</sup>Luke 16:15); that people who did not use their property aright could not be received into heaven (<sup>2161</sup>Luke 16:11,12); that they ought to listen to Moses and the prophets (<sup>2166</sup>Luke 16:16,17); and that it was the duty of people to show kindness to the poor. The design of the parable was to impress all these truths more vividly on the mind, and to show the Pharisees that, with all their boasted righteousness and their external correctness of character, they might be lost. Accordingly he speaks of no great fault in the rich man — no external, degrading vice — no open breach of the law; and leaves us to infer that the “mere possession of wealth” may be dangerous to the soul, and that a man surrounded with every temporal blessing may perish forever. It is remarkable that he gave no “name” to this rich man, though the poor man is mentioned by name. If this was a parable, it shows us how unwilling he was to fix suspicion on anyone. If it was not a parable, it shows also that he would not drag out wicked people before the public, but would conceal as much as possible all that had any connection with them. The “good” he would speak well of by name; the evil he would not “injure” by exposing them to public view.

*Clothed in purple* A purple robe or garment. This color was expensive as well as splendid, and was chiefly worn by princes, nobles, and those who were very wealthy. Compare <sup>4173</sup>Matthew 27:28. See the notes at <sup>2018</sup>Isaiah 1:18.

*Fine linen* This linen was chiefly produced of the flax that grew on the banks of the Nile, in Egypt, <sup>1076</sup>Proverbs 7:16; <sup>3270</sup>Ezekiel 27:7. It was especially soft and white, and was, therefore, much sought as an article of luxury, and was so expensive that it could be worn only by princes, by

priests, or by those who were very rich, <sup><0442></sup>Genesis 41:42; <sup><1317></sup>1 Chronicles 15:27; <sup><0285></sup>Exodus 28:5.

*Fared sumptuously* Feasted or lived in a splendid manner.

*Every day* Not merely occasionally, but constantly. This was a mark of great wealth, and, in the view of the world, evidence of great happiness. It is worthy of remark that Jesus did not charge on him any crime. He did not say that he had acquired this property by dishonesty, or even that he was unkind or uncharitable; but simply that he “was a rich man,” and that his riches did not secure him from death and perdition.

<sup><0161></sup>**Luke 16:20,21.** *Beggar* Poor man. The original word does not mean “beggar,” but simply that he was “poor.” It should have been so translated to keep up the contrast with the “rich man.”

*Named Lazarus* The word Lazarus is Hebrew, and means a man destitute of help, a needy, poor man. It is a name given, therefore, to denote his needy condition.

*Laid at his gate* At the door of the rich man, in order that he might obtain aid.

*Full of sores* Covered with ulcers; afflicted not only with poverty, but with loathsome and offensive ulcers, such as often are the accompaniments of poverty and want. These circumstances are designed to show how different was his condition from that of the rich man. “He” was clothed in purple; the poor man was covered with sores; “he” fared sumptuously; the poor man was dependent even for the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table.

*The dogs came* Such was his miserable condition that even the dogs, as if moved by pity, came and licked his sores in kindness to him. These circumstances of his misery are very touching, and his condition, contrasted with that of the rich man, is very striking. It is not affirmed that the rich man was unkind to him, or drove him away, or refused to aid him. The narrative is designed simply to show that the possession of wealth, and all the blessings of this life, could not exempt from death and misery, and that the lowest condition among mortals may be connected with life and happiness beyond the grave. There was no provision made for the helpless poor in those days, and consequently they were often laid at the gates of the rich, and in places of public resort, for charity. See <sup><4812></sup>Acts 3:2. The gospel has been the means of all the public charity now made for the needy,

as it has of providing hospitals for those who are sick and afflicted. No pagan nation ever had a hospital or an almshouse for the needy, the aged, the blind, the insane. Many heathen nations, as the Hindoos and the Sandwich Islanders, destroyed their aged people; and “all” left their poor to the miseries of public begging, and their sick to the care of their friends or to private charity.

**2162** **Luke 16:22.** *Was carried by the angels* The Jews held the opinion that the spirits of the righteous were conveyed by angels to heaven at their death. Our Saviour speaks in accordance with this opinion; and as he expressly affirms the fact, it seems as proper that it should be taken literally, as when it is said the rich man died and was buried. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who are heirs of salvation (**3014** Hebrews 1:14), and there is no more improbability in the supposition that they attend departing spirits to heaven, than that they attend them while on earth.

*Abrahams bosom* This is a phrase taken from the practice of reclining at meals, where the head of one lay on the bosom of another, and the phrase, therefore, denotes intimacy and friendship. See the notes at **4176** Matthew 23:6. Also **6123** John 13:23; 21:20. The Jews had no doubt that Abraham was in paradise. To say that Lazarus was in his bosom was, therefore, the same as to say that he was admitted to heaven and made happy there. The Jews, moreover, boasted very much of being the friends of Abraham and of being his descendants, **4189** Matthew 3:9. To be his friend was, in their view, the highest honor and happiness. Our Saviour, therefore, showed them that this poor and afflicted man might be raised to the highest happiness, while the rich, who prided themselves on their being descended from Abraham, might be cast away and lost forever.

*Was buried* This is not said of the poor man. Burial was thought to be an honor, and funerals were, as they are now, often expensive, splendid, and ostentations. This is said of the rich man to show that he had “every” earthly honor, and all that the world calls happy and desirable.

**2163** **Luke 16:23.** *In hell* The word here translated hell (“Hades”) means literally a dark, obscure place; the place where departed spirits go, but especially the place where “wicked” spirits go. See the notes at **3802** Job 10:21,22; **2349** Isaiah 14:9. The following circumstances are related of it in this parable:



1. It is “far off” from the abodes of the righteous. Lazarus was seen “afar off.”
2. It is a place of torment.
3. There is a great gulf fixed between that and heaven, <sup><4163></sup>Luke 16:26.
4. The suffering is great. It is represented by “torment” in a flame, <sup><4163></sup>Luke 16:24.
5. There will be no escape from it, <sup><4163></sup>Luke 16:26.

The word “hell” here means, therefore, that dark, obscure, and miserable place, far from heaven, where the wicked shall be punished forever.

*He lifted up his eyes* A phrase in common use among the Hebrews, meaning “he looked,” <sup><4130></sup>Genesis 13:10; 18:2; 31:10; <sup><4183></sup>Deuteronomy 8:3; <sup><4163></sup>Luke 6:20.

*Being in torment* The word “torment” means “pain, anguish” (<sup><4024></sup>Matthew 4:24); particularly the pain inflicted by the ancients in order to induce people to make confession of their crimes. These “torments” or tortures were the keenest that they could inflict, such as the rack, or scourging, or burning; and the use of the word here denotes that the sufferings of the wicked can be represented only by the extremest forms of human suffering.

*And seeth Abraham ...* This was an aggravation of his misery. One of the first things that occurred in hell was to look up, and see the poor man that lay at his gate completely happy. What a contrast! Just now he was rolling in wealth, and the poor man was at his gate. He had no expectation of these sufferings: now they have come upon him, and Lazarus is happy and forever fixed in the paradise of God. It is more, perhaps, than we are authorized to infer, that the wicked will “see” those who are in paradise. That they will “know” that they are there is certain; but we are not to suppose that they will be so near together as to be seen, or as to make conversation possible. These circumstances mean that there will be “a separation,” and that the wicked in hell will be conscious that the righteous, though on earth they were poor or despised, will be in heaven. Heaven and hell will be far from each other, and it will be no small part of the misery of the one that it is far and forever removed from the other.

<sup><4124></sup>**Luke 16:24.** *Father Abraham* The Jews considered it a signal honor that Abraham was their “father” — that is, that they were “descendants”

from him. Though this man was now in misery, yet he seems not to have abandoned the idea of his relation to the father of the faithful. The Jews supposed that departed spirits might know and converse with each other. See Lightfoot on this place. Our Saviour speaks in conformity with that prevailing opinion; and as it was not easy to convey ideas about the spiritual world without some such representation, he, therefore, speaks in the language which was usual in his time. We are not, however, to suppose that this was “literally” true, but only that it was designed to represent more clearly the sufferings of the rich man in hell.

*Have mercy on me* Pity me. The rich man is not represented as calling on “God.” The mercy of God will be at an end when the soul is lost. Nor did he “ask” to be released from that place. Lost spirits “know” that their sufferings will have no end, and that it would be in vain to ask to escape the place of torment. Nor does he ask to be admitted where Lazarus was. He had no “desire” to be in a holy place, and he well knew that there was no restoration to those who once sink down to hell.

*Send Lazarus* This shows how low he was reduced, and how the circumstances of people change when they die. Just before, Lazarus was laid at his gate full of sores; now he is happy in heaven. Just before, he had nothing to give, and the rich man could expect to derive no benefit from him; now he asks, as the highest favor, that he might come and render him relief. Soon the poorest man on earth, if he is a friend of God, will have mercies which the rich, if unprepared to die, can never obtain. The rich will no longer despise such people; they would “then” be glad of their friendship, and would beg for the slightest favor at their hands.

*Dip the tip ...* This was a small favor to ask, and it shows the greatness of his distress when so small a thing would be considered a great relief.

*Cool my tongue* The effect of great “heat” on the body is to produce almost insupportable thirst. Those who travel in burning deserts thus suffer inexpressibly when they are deprived of water. So “pain” of any kind produces thirst, and particularly if connected with fever. The sufferings of the rich man are, therefore, represented as producing burning “thirst,” so much that even a drop of water would be refreshing to his tongue. We can scarce form an idea of more distress and misery than where this is continued from one day to another without relief. We are not to suppose that he had been guilty of any particular wickedness with his “tongue” as

the cause of this. It is simply an idea to represent the natural effect of great suffering, and especially suffering in the midst of great heat.

*I am tormented* I am in anguish — in insupportable distress.

*In this flame* The lost are often represented as suffering “in flames,” because “fire” is an image of the severest pain that we know. It is not certain, however, that the wicked will be doomed to suffer in “material” fire. See the notes at ~~404~~ Mark 4:44.

~~2165~~ **Luke 16:25.** *Son* This is a representation designed to correspond with the word “father.” He was a descendant of Abraham a Jew — and Abraham is represented as calling this thing to his remembrance. It would not lessen his sorrows to remember that he was a “son” of Abraham, and that he ought to have lived worthy of that relation to him.

*Remember* This is a cutting word in this place. One of the chief torments of hell will be the “remembrance” of what was enjoyed and of what was done in this world. Nor will it be any mitigation of the suffering to spend an “eternity” where there will be nothing else to do, day or night, but to “remember” what “was” done, and what “might have been,” if the life had been right.

*Thy good things* That is, property, splendor, honor.

*Evil things* Poverty, contempt, and disease.

*But now ...* How changed the scene! How different the condition! And how much “better” was the portion of Lazarus, after all, than that of the rich man! It is probable that Lazarus had the most “real” happiness in the land of the living, for riches without the love of God can never confer happiness like the favor of God, even in poverty. But the comforts of the rich man are now gone forever, and the joys of Lazarus have just commenced. “One” is to be comforted, and “the other” to be tormented, to all eternity. How much better, therefore, is poverty, with the friendship of God, than riches, with all that the world can bestow! And how foolish to seek our chief pleasures only in this life!

~~2165~~ **Luke 16:26.** *A great gulf* The word translated “gulf” means chasm, or the broad, yawning space between two elevated objects. In this place it means that there is no way of passing from one to the other.

*Fixed* Strengthened — made firm or immovable. It is so established that it will NEVER be movable or passable. It will FOREVER divide heaven and hell.

*Which would pass* We are not to press this passage literally, as if those who are in heaven would “desire” to go and visit the wicked in the world of woe. The simple meaning of the statement is, that there can be no communication between the one and the other — there can be no passing from one to the other. It is impossible to conceive that the righteous would desire to leave their abodes in glory to go and dwell in the world of woe; nor can we suppose that they would wish to go for any reason unless it were possible to furnish relief. That will be out of the question. Not even a drop of water will be furnished as a relief to the sufferer,

*Neither can they pass to us ...* There can be no doubt that the wicked will DESIRE to pass the gulf that divides them from heaven. They would be glad to be in a state of happiness; but all such wishes will be vain. How, in the face of the solemn statement of the Saviour here, can people believe that there will be a “restoration” of all the wicked to heaven? He solemnly assures us that there can be no passage from that world of woe to the abodes of the blessed; yet, in the face of this, many Universalists hold that hell will yet be vacated of its guilty millions, and that all its miserable inhabitants will be received to heaven! Who shall conduct them across this gulf, when Jesus Christ says it CANNOT be passed? Who shall build a bridge over that yawning chasm which he says is “fixed?” No: if there is anything certain from the Scripture, it is that they who enter hell return no more; they who sink there sink forever.

◀167▶ **Luke 16:27,28.** *Five brethren* The number “five” is mentioned merely to preserve the appearance of verisimilitude in the story. It is not to be spiritualized, nor are we to suppose that it has any hidden or inscrutable meaning.

*May testify unto them* May bear “witness” to them, or may inform them of what is my situation, and the dreadful consequences of the life that I have led. It is remarkable that he did not ask to go himself. He knew that he COULD NOT be released, even for so short a time. His condition was fixed. Yet he had no wish that his friends should suffer, and he supposed that if one went from the dead they would hear him.

◀2163▶ **Luke 16:29.** *They have Moses* The writings of Moses. The first five books of the Bible.

*The prophets* The remainder of the Old Testament. What the prophets had written.

*Hear them* Hear them speak in the Scriptures. Read them, or hear them read in the synagogues, and ATTEND to what they have delivered.

◀2163▶ **Luke 16:30.** *Nay* No. They will NOT HEAR Moses and the prophets. They have heard them so long in vain, that there is no prospect now that they will attend to the message; but if one should go to them directly from the eternal world they would hear him. The novelty of the message would attract their attention, and they would listen to what he would say.

◀2163▶ **Luke 16:31.** *Be persuaded* Be convinced of the truth; of the danger and folly of their way; of the certainty of their suffering hereafter, and be induced to turn from sin to holiness, and from Satan unto God.

From this impressive and instructive parable we may learn:

1. That the souls of people do not die with their bodies.
2. That the soul is “conscious” after death; that it does not “sleep,” as some have supposed, until the morning of the resurrection.
3. That the righteous are taken to a place of happiness immediately at death, and the wicked consigned at once to misery.
4. That wealth does not secure from death.

*“How vain are riches to secure  
Their haughty owners from the grave!”*

The rich, the beautiful, the happy, as well as the poor, go down to the grave. All their pomp and apparel, all their honors, their palaces, and their gold cannot save them. Death can as easily find his way into the splendid mansions of the rich as into the cottages of the poor; and the rich shall turn to the same corruption, and soon, like the poor, be undistinguished from common dust and be unknown.

5. We should not envy the condition of the rich.

*“On slippery rocks I see them stand,  
And fiery billows roll below.*

*“Now let them boast how tall they rise,  
I’ll never envy them again;  
There they may stand with haughty eyes,  
Till they plunge deep in endless pain.*

*“Their fancied joys how fast they flee!  
Like dreams, as fleeting and as vain;  
Their songs of softest harmony  
Are but a prelude to their pain.”*

**6.** We should strive for a better inheritance than can be possessed in this life.

*“Now I esteem their mirth and wine  
Too dear to purchase with my blood;  
Lord, ‘tis enough that thou art mine —  
My life, my portion, and my God.”*

**7.** The sufferings of the wicked in hell will be indescribably great. Think what is represented by “torment;” by burning flame; by insupportable thirst; by that state where a single “drop” of water would afford relief. Remember that “all this” is but a representation of the pains of the damned, and that this will have no intermission day or night, but will continue from year to year, and age to age, without any end, and you have a faint view of the sufferings of those who are in hell.

**8.** There is a place of sufferings beyond the grave a hell. If there is not, then this parable has no meaning. It is impossible to make “anything” of it unless it be designed to teach that.

**9.** There will never be any escape from those gloomy regions. There is a gulf fixed — “fixed,” not movable. Nor can any of the damned beat a pathway across this gulf to the world of holiness.

**10.** We see the amazing folly of those who suppose there may be an “end” to the sufferings of the wicked, and who, on that supposition, seem willing to go down to hell to suffer a long time, rather than go at once to heaven. If man were to suffer but a thousand years, or even “one” year, why should he be so foolish as to choose that suffering rather than go at once to heaven, and be happy at once when he dies?

**11.** God gives us sufficient warning to prepare for death. He has sent his Word, his servants, his Son; he warns us by his Spirit and his providence; by the entreaties of our friends and by the death of sinners; he offers us heaven, and he threatens hell. If all this will not move sinners, what **WOULD** do it? There is **NOTHING** that would.

**12.** God will give us nothing farther to warn us. No dead man will come to life to tell us of what he has seen. If he **DID** we would not believe him. Religion appeals to man not by ghosts and frightful apparitions. It appeals to their reason, their conscience, their hopes, their fears. It sets life and death soberly before people, and if they “will not” choose the former, they must die. If you will not hear the Son of God and the warnings of the Scriptures, there is nothing which you **WILL** or **CAN** hear. You will **NEVER** be persuaded, and will **NEVER** escape the place of torment.

## NOTES ON LUKE 17

<217B> **Luke 17:1,2.** *It is impossible* It cannot but happen. Such is the state of things that “it will be.” See these verses explained in the notes at <1816> Matthew 18:6,7.

<217B> **Luke 17:3,4.** See the notes at <41815> Matthew 18:15,21,22. “Trespass against thee.” Sin against thee, or does anything that gives you an offence or does you an injury.

*Rebuke* Reprove. Go and tell him his fault, and seek an explanation. Acquaint him with what has been the effect of his conduct, and the state of your feelings, that he may acknowledge his error and repent.

<217B> **Luke 17:5.** *Increase our faith* This duty of forgiving offences seemed so difficult to the disciples that they strongly felt the need of an increase of faith. They felt that they were prone themselves to harbor resentments, and that it required an additional increase of true religion to enable them to comply with the requirements of Jesus. We may learn from this:

1. That Jesus has “the power” of increasing the faith of his people. Strength comes from him, and especially strength to believe the gospel. Hence, he is called the “Author and Finisher” of our faith, <3121D> Hebrews 12:2.
2. The duty of forgiving offences is one of the most difficult duties of the Christian religion. It is so contrary to our natural feelings; it implies such elevation above the petty feelings of malice and revenge, and is so contrary to the received maxims of the world, which teach us to “cherish” rather than to forgive the memory of offences, that it is no wonder our Saviour dwells much on this duty, and so strenuously insists on it in order to our having evidence that our hearts have been changed.

Some have thought that this prayer that he would increase their faith refers to the power of working miracles, and especially to the case recorded in <10716> Matthew 17:16-20.

<217B> **Luke 17:6.** See <10721D> Matthew 17:20. “Sycamine-tree.” This name, as well as sycamore, is given, among us, to the large tree commonly called the buttonwood; but the tree here mentioned is different. The Latin Vulgate



and the Syriac versions translate it “mulberry-tree.” It is said to have been a tree that commonly grew in Egypt, of the size and appearance of a mulberry-tree, but bearing a species of figs. This tree was common in Palestine. It is probable that our Lord was standing by one as he addressed these words to his disciples. Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. i. p. 22-24) says of this tree:

“It is generally planted by the wayside, in the open space where several paths meet.”

(Compare ~~290~~ Luke 19:4.)

“This sycamore is a remarkable tree. It not only bears several crops of figs during the year, but these figs grow on short stems along the trunk and large branches, and not at the end of twigs, as in other fruit-bearing trees. The figs are small, and of a greenish-yellow color. At Gaza and Askelon I saw them of a purple tinge, and much larger than they are in this part of the country. They were carried to market in large quantities, and appeared to be more valued there than with us. Still, they are, at best, very insipid, and none but the poorer classes eat them. It is easily propagated, merely by planting a stout branch in the ground, and watering it until it has struck its roots into the soil. This it does with great rapidity and to a vast depth. It was with reference to this latter fact that our Lord selected it to illustrate the power of faith. Now, look at this tree — its ample girth, its wide-spread arms branching off from the parent trunk only a few feet from the ground; then examine its enormous roots, as thick, as numerous, and as wide-spread into the deep soil below as the branches extend into the air above the very best type of invincible steadfastness. What power on earth can pluck up such a tree? Heaven’s thunderbolt may strike it down, the wild tornado may tear it to fragments, but nothing short of miraculous power can fairly pluck it up by the roots.”



**<2171> Luke 17:7. *Having a servant ...*** This parable appears to have been spoken with reference to the rewards which the disciples were expecting in the kingdom of the Messiah. The occasion on which it was spoken cannot be ascertained. It does not seem to have any particular connection with what goes before. It may be supposed that the disciples were somewhat impatient to have the kingdom restored to Israel (**<4106>** Acts 1:6) — that is, that he would assume his kingly power, and that they were impatient of the “delay,” and anxious to enter on “the rewards” which they expected, and which they not improbably were expecting in consequence of their devotedness to him. In answer to these expectations, Jesus spoke this parable, showing them,

1. That they should be rewarded as a servant would be provided for; but,
2. That this was not the “first” thing; that there was a proper “order” of things, and that thus the reward might be delayed, as a servant would be provided for, but at the proper time, and at the pleasure of the master; and,
3. That this reward was not to be expected as a matter of “merit,” but would be given at the good pleasure of God, for they were but unprofitable servants.

*By and by* This should have been translated “immediately.” He would not, “as the first thing,” or “as soon” as he returned from the field, direct him to eat and drink. Hungry and weary he might be, yet it would be proper for him first to attend upon his master. So the apostles were not to be “impatient” because they did not “at once” receive the reward for which they were looking.

*To meat* To eat; or, rather, place thyself at the table.

**<2178> Luke 17:8. *I may sup*** Make ready my supper.

*Gird thyself* See the notes at **<2125>** Luke 12:37.

**<2179> Luke 17:9. *I trow not*** I “think” not; or I “suppose” not.

**<2170> Luke 17:10. *Are unprofitable servants*** We have conferred no favor. We have “merited” nothing. We have not “benefited” God, or laid him under “obligation.” If he rewards us, it will be matter of unmerited favor. This is true in relation to Christians in the following respects:

1. Our services are not “profitable” to God (<sup><827D></sup>Job 22:2); he “needs” not our aid, and his essential happiness will not be increased by our efforts.
2. The grace to do his will comes from him only, and all the praise of that will be due to him.
3. All that we do is what is our “duty;” we cannot lay claim to having rendered any service that will “bind” him to show us favor; and
4. Our best services are mingled with imperfections. We come short of his glory (<sup><813D></sup>Romans 3:23); we do not serve him as sincerely, and cheerfully, and faithfully as we ought; we are far, very far from the example set us by the Saviour; and if we are saved and rewarded, it will be because God will be merciful to our unrighteousness, and will remember our iniquities no more, <sup><882D></sup>Hebrews 8:12.

<sup><2171></sup>**Luke 17:11.** *The midst of Samaria and Galilee* He went from Galilee, and probably traveled through the chief villages and towns in it and then left it; and as Samaria was situated “between” Galilee and Jerusalem, it was necessary to pass through it; or it may mean that he passed along on the borders of each toward the river Jordan, and so passed in the midst, “i.e. between” Galilee and Samaria. This is rendered more probable from the circumstance that as he went from Galilee, there would have been no occasion for saying that he passed “through it,” unless it be meant through the “confines” or borders of it, or at least it would have been mentioned before Samaria.

<sup><2172></sup>**Luke 17:12.** *There met him* They were in his way, or in his path, as he was entering the village. They were not allowed to enter the village while they were afflicted with the leprosy, <sup><81346></sup>Leviticus 13:46; <sup><848D></sup>Numbers 5:2,3.

*Lepers* See the notes at <sup><418D></sup>Matthew 8:2.

*Stood afar off* At a distance, as they were required by law. They were unclean, and it was not lawful for them to come near to those who were in health. As Jesus was traveling, they were also walking in the contrary way, and seeing him, and knowing that they were unclean, they stopped or turned aside, so that they might not expose others to the contagion.

<sup><2174></sup>**Luke 17:14.** *Go show yourselves ...* See the notes at <sup><418D></sup>Matthew 8:4. By this command he gave them an implied assurance that they would be

healed; for the “design” for which they were to go was to exhibit the “evidence” that they were restored, and to obtain permission from the priest to mingle again in society. It may also be observed that this required no small measure of “faith” on their part, for he did not “first” heal them, and then tell them to go; he told them to go without “expressly” assuring them that they would be healed, and without, “as yet,” any evidence to show to the priest. So sinners defiled with the leprosy of sin, should put faith in the Lord Jesus and obey his commands, with the fullest confidence that he is able to heal them, and that he “will” do it if they follow his directions; and that in due time they shall have the fullest evidence that their peace is made with God, and that their souls shall by him be declared free from the defilement of sin.

*Were cleansed* Were cured, or made whole.

<sup><4275></sup>**Luke 17:15,16.** *One of them ...* This man, sensible of the power of God and grateful for his mercies, returned to express his gratitude to God for his goodness. Instead of obeying “at once” the “letter” of the command, he “first” expressed his thanks to God and to his Great Benefactor. There is no evidence, however, that he did not, “after” he had given thanks to God, and had poured out his joy at the feet of Jesus, go to the priest as he was directed; indeed, he could not have been restored to society without doing it; but he “first” poured out his thanks to God, and gave him praise for his wonderful recovery. The first duty of sinners, after they have been forgiven and have the hope of eternal life, is to prostrate themselves at the feet of their Great Benefactor, and to consecrate themselves to his service. “Then” let them go and show to others the evidence that they are cleansed. Let them go and mingle, like a restored leper, with their families and friends, and show by the purity and holiness of their lives how great is the mercy that has cleansed them.

*He was a Samaritan* See the notes at <sup><4005></sup>Matthew 10:5. This rendered his conduct more remarkable and striking in the sight of the Jews. “They” considered the Samaritans as especially wicked, and “themselves” as especially holy. This example showed them, like the parable of the good Samaritan, that in this they were mistaken: and one design of this seems to have been to break down the “opposition” between the Jews and Samaritans, and to bring the former to more charitable judgments respecting the latter.

**<2177> Luke 17:17,18.** *Where are the nine?* Jesus had commanded them to go to the priest, and they were probably “literally” obeying the commandment. They were impatient to be healed and “selfish” in wishing it, and had no gratitude to God or their Benefactor. Jesus did not “forbid” their expressing gratitude to him for his mercy; he rather seems to reprove them for “not” doing it. One of the first feelings of the sinner cleansed from sin is a desire to praise his Great Benefactor; and a “real” willingness to obey his commandments is not inconsistent with a wish to render thanks to him for his mercy. With what singular propriety may this question now be asked, “Where are the nine?” And what a striking illustration is this of human nature, and of the ingratitude of man! One had come back to give thanks for the favor bestowed on him; the others were heard of no more. So now. When people are restored from dangerous sickness, here and there one comes to give thanks to God; but “where are the nine?” When people are defended from danger; when they are recovered from the perils of the sea; when a steamboat is destroyed, and a large part of crew and passengers perish, here and there one of those who are saved acknowledges the goodness of God and renders him praise; but where is the mass of them? They give no thanks; they offer no praise. They go about their usual employments, to mingle in the scenes of pleasure and of sin as if nothing had occurred. Few, few of all who have been rescued from “threatening graves” feel their obligation to God, or ever express it. They forget their Great Benefactor; perhaps the mention of his name is unpleasant, and they scorn the idea that they are under any obligations to him. Such, alas! is man, ungrateful man!

*This stranger* This foreigner; or, rather, this alien, or this man of another tribe. In the “Syraic” version, “this one who is of a foreign people.” This man, who might have been least “expected” to express gratitude to God. The most unlikely characters are often found to be most consistent and grateful. Men from whom we would expect “least” in religion, are often so entirely changed as to disappoint all our expectations, and to put to shame those who have been most highly favored. The poor often thus put to shame the rich; the ignorant the learned; the young the aged.

**<2179> Luke 17:19.** *Go thy way* To the “priest;” for without “his” certificate he could not again be restored to the society of his friends, or to the public worship of God. Having now appropriately expressed your gratitude, go to the priest and obey the law of God. Renewed sinners, while their hearts

overflow with gratitude to Jesus, “express” that gratitude by obeying God, and by engaging in the appropriate duties of their calling and of religion.

**◀272▶ Luke 17:20.** *Was demanded* Was asked.

*Of the Pharisees* This was a matter of much importance to them, and they had taught that it would come with parade and pomp. It is not unlikely that they asked this merely in “contempt,” and for the purpose of drawing out something that would expose him to ridicule.

*The kingdom of God* The “reign” of God; or the dispensation under the Messiah. See the notes at **◀418▶** Matthew 3:2.

*With observation* With scrupulous and attentive looking for it, or with such an appearance as to “attract” observation — that is, with pomp, majesty, splendor. He did not deny that, according to their views, the time was drawing near; but he denied that his kingdom would come in the “manner” in which they expected. The Messiah would “not” come with pomp like an earthly prince; perhaps not in such a manner as to be “discerned” by the eyes of sagacious and artful people, who were expecting him in a way agreeable to their own feelings. The kingdom of God is “within” people, and it makes its way, not by pomp and noise, but by silence, decency, and order, **◀434▶** 1 Corinthians 14:40.

**◀272▶ Luke 17:21.** “Lo here! or, Lo there!” When an earthly prince visits different parts of his territories, he does it with pomp. His movements attract observation, and become the common topic of conversation. The inquiry is, Where is he? which way will he go? and it is a matter of important “news” to be able to say where he is. Jesus says that the Messiah would not come in that manner. It would not be with such pomp and public attention. It would be silent, obscure, and attracting comparatively little notice. Or the passage may have reference to the custom of the “pretended” Messiahs, who appeared in this manner. They said that in this place or in that, in this mountain or that desert, they would show signs that would convince the people that they were the Messiah. Compare the notes at **◀418▶** Acts 5:36,37.

*Is within you* This is capable of two interpretations.

**1.** The reign of God is “in the heart.” It does not come with pomp and splendor, like the reign of temporal kings, merely to control the external “actions” and strike the senses of people with awe, but it reigns in the heart

by the law of God; it sets up its dominion over the passions, and brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

**2.** It may mean the new dispensation is “even now among YOU.” The Messiah has come. John has ushered in the kingdom of God, and you are not to expect the appearance of the Messiah with great pomp and splendor, for he is now among you. Most critics at present incline to this latter interpretation. The ancient versions chiefly follow the former.

**2172** **Luke 17:22.** (The days will come He here takes occasion to direct the minds of his disciples to the days of vengeance which were about to fall on the Jewish nation. Heavy calamities will befall the Jewish people, and you will desire a deliverer.

*Ye shall desire* You who now number yourselves among my disciples.

*One of the days of the Son of man* The Son of man here means “the Messiah,” without affirming that “he” was the Messiah. Such will be the calamities of those times, so great will be the afflictions and persecutions, that you will greatly desire “a deliverer” — one who shall come to you in the character in which “you have expected” the Messiah would come, and who would deliver you from the power of your enemies; and at that time, in the midst of these calamities, people shall rise up pretending “to be” the Messiah, and to be able to deliver you. In view of this, he takes occasion to caution them against being led astray by them.

*Ye shall not see it* You shall not see such a day of deliverance — such a Messiah as the nation has expected, and such an interposition as you would desire.

**2173** **Luke 17:23,24.** *And they shall say ...* Many false Christs, according to Josephus, appeared about that time, attempting to lead away the people. See the notes at **1823** Matthew 24:23-27.

**2175** **Luke 17:25.** See the notes at **1081** Mark 8:31.

**2176** **Luke 17:26,27.** See the notes at **1067** Matthew 24:37-39.

**2178** **Luke 17:28-30.** *They did eat ...* They were busy in the affairs of this life, as if nothing were about to happen.

*The same day ...* See <sup><11923></sup>Genesis 19:23-25. “It rained.” The word here used “might” have been rendered “he” rained. In Genesis it is said that the “Lord” did it.

*Fire and brimstone* God destroyed Sodom on account of its great wickedness. He took vengeance on it for its sins; and the example of Sodom is set before people to deter them from committing great transgressions, and as a “full proof” that God will punish the guilty. See <sup><6107></sup>Jude 1:7; also <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 1:10; <sup><2314></sup>Jeremiah 23:14. Yet, in overthrowing it, he used natural means. He is not to be supposed to have “created” fire and brimstone for the occasion, but to have “directed” the natural means at his disposal for their overthrow; as he did not “create” the waters to drown the world, but merely broke up the fountains of the great deep and opened the windows of heaven. Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim (<sup><1223></sup>Deuteronomy 29:23), were four great cities, on a plain where is now the Dead Sea, at the southeast of Palestine, and into which the river Jordan flows. They were built on ground which abounded, doubtless, as all that region now does, in “bitumen or naphtha,” which is easily kindled, and which burns with great intensity. The phrase “fire and brimstone” is a Hebrew form of expression, denoting sulphurous fire, or fire having the smell of sulphur; and may denote a volcanic eruption, or any burning like that of naphtha. There is no improbability in supposing either that this destruction was accomplished by lightning, which ignited the naphtha, or that it was a volcanic eruption, which, by direction of God, overthrew the wicked cities.

*From heaven* By command of God, or from the sky. To the people of Sodom it had “the appearance” of coming from heaven, as all volcanic eruptions would have. Hundreds of towns have been overthrown in this way, and all by the agency of God. He rules the elements, and makes them his instruments, at his pleasure, in accomplishing the destruction of the wicked.

<sup><2171></sup>**Luke 17:30.** *Even thus ...* Destruction came upon the old world, and upon Sodom, “suddenly;” when they were engaged in other things, and little expecting this. “So” suddenly and unexpectedly, says he, shall destruction come upon the Jewish people. See the notes at Matthew 24.

<sup><2171></sup>**Luke 17:31.** See the notes at <sup><1247></sup>Matthew 24:17,18.



<sup><2173></sup>**Luke 17:32.** *Remember Lot's wife* See <sup><01926></sup>Genesis 19:26. “She” looked back — she delayed — perhaps she “desired” to take something with her, and God made her a monument of his displeasure. Jesus directed his disciples, when they saw the calamities coming upon the Jews, to flee to the mountains, <sup><02416></sup>Matthew 24:16. He here charges them to be in haste — not to look back — not to delay — but to escape quickly, and to remember that by delaying the wife of Lot lost her life.

<sup><2173></sup>**Luke 17:33.** See the notes at <sup><01039></sup>Matthew 10:39.

<sup><2173></sup>**Luke 17:34-36.** See the notes at <sup><02440></sup>Matthew 24:40,41.

<sup><2173></sup>**Luke 17:37.** See the notes at <sup><02426></sup>Matthew 24:26.

*Where, Lord?* Where, or in what direction, shall these calamities come? The answer implies that it would be where there is the most “guilt and wickedness.” Eagles flock where there is prey. So, said he, these armies will flock to the place where there is the most wickedness; and by this their thoughts were directed at once to Jerusalem, the place of eminent wickedness, and the place, therefore, where these calamities might be expected to begin.

## NOTES ON LUKE 18

**◀212▶ Luke 18:1. *A parable*** See the notes at **◀413▶** Matthew 13:3.

*To this end* To show this.

*Always* At all times. That is, we must not neglect regular stated seasons of prayer; we must seize on occasions of remarkable providences as afflictions or signal blessings to seek God in prayer; we must “always” maintain a spirit of prayer, or be in a proper frame to lift up our hearts to God for his blessing, and we must not grow weary though our prayer seems not to be answered.

*Not to faint* Not to grow weary or give over. The parable is designed to teach us that, though our prayers should long appear to be unanswered, we should persevere, and not grow weary in supplication to God.

**◀212▶ Luke 18:2. *A judge which feared not God*** One appointed by law to determine causes brought before him. This judge had no reverence for God, and consequently no regard for the rights of man. These two things go together. He that has no regard for God can be expected to have none for man; and our Lord has here indirectly taught us what ought to be the character of a judge that he “should” fear God and regard the rights of man. Compare **◀3116▶** Deuteronomy 1:16,17.

*Regarded man* Cared not for man. Had no respect for the opinions or the rights of man.

**◀212▶ Luke 18:3. *A widow*** This is a circumstance that gives increasing interest to the parable. Judges were bound to show special attention to widows, **◀2317▶** Isaiah 1:17; **◀24218▶** Jeremiah 22:3. The reason of this was that they were defenseless, were commonly poor, and were liable to be oppressed by those in power.

*Avenge me* This would have been better translated, “Do me justice against my adversary, or vindicate me from him.” It does not denote vengeance or revenge, but simply that she wished to have “justice” done her — a thing which this judge was “bound” to do, but which it seems he had no disposition to do.

*Adversary* One opposed in law. In this case it seems that the judge was unwilling to do justice, and probably took advantage of her condition to oppress her.

~~<2104>~~ **Luke 18:4,5.** *For a while* Probably this means for a “considerable” time. It was his duty to attend to the claims of justice, but this was long delayed.

*Within himself* He thought, or came to a conclusion.

*Though I fear not ...* This contains the reason why he attended to the case at all. It was not from any regard to justice, or to the duties of his office. It was simply to avoid “trouble.” And yet his conduct in this case might have appeared very upright, and possibly might have been strictly according to law and to justice. How many actions are performed that “appear well,” when the doers of those actions know that they are mere hypocrisy! and how many actions are performed from the basest and lowest motives of “selfishness,” that have the appearance of external propriety and even of goodness!

*She weary me* The word used here, in the original, is that which was employed to denote the wounds and bruises caused by “boxers,” who beat each other, and blacken their eyes, and disable them. See the notes at ~~<4127>~~ 1 Corinthians 9:27. Hence, it means any vexatious and troublesome importunity that takes the time, and disables from other employment.

~~<2116>~~ **Luke 18:6.** *Hear ...* Give attention to this, and derive from it practical instruction.

~~<2117>~~ **Luke 18:7.** *Shall not God avenge ...* We are not to suppose that the character of God is at all represented by this judge, or that “his” principles of conduct are at all like those of the judge. This parable shows us conclusively that many “circumstances” of a parable are not to be interpreted closely: they are mere appendages to the narrative. The great truth which our Saviour “designed” to teach is what we ought to endeavor to find. In this case there can be no doubt what that truth is. He has himself told us that it is, that “men ought always to pray and not to faint.” This he teaches by the example in the parable; and the argument which it implies is this:

1. A poor widow, by her perseverance only, obtained from an unjust man what otherwise she would “not” have obtained.
2. God is not unjust. He is good, and disposed to do justice and to bestow mercy.

If, therefore, this “wicked man” by persevering prayer was induced to do justice, how much more shall “God,” who is good, and who is not actuated by any such selfish and base principles, do justice to them who apply to him!

*Avenge* Do justice to or vindicate them. This may have a twofold reference.

1. To the disciples in the time of Jesus, who were about to be oppressed and persecuted, and over whom calamities were about to come, “as if” God did not regard their cries and had forsaken them. To them Jesus gives the assurance that God “would” hear their petitions and come forth to vindicate them; and that, notwithstanding all these calamities, he would yet appear for their deliverance.
2. It may have a more “general” meaning. The people of God are often oppressed, calumniated, persecuted. They are few in number and feeble. They seem to be almost forsaken and cast down, and their enemies triumph. Yet in due time God will hear their prayers, and will come forth for their vindication. And even if it should not be “in this life,” yet he will do it in the day of judgment, when he will pronounce them blessed, and receive them forever to himself.

*His own elect* People of God, saints, Christians; so called because God has “chosen” them to be his. The term is usually given in the Scriptures to the true followers of God, and is a term of affection, denoting his great and special love in choosing them out of a world of sinners, and conferring on them grace, and mercy, and eternal life. See ~~1~~ 1 Thessalonians 1:4; ~~Colossians~~ Colossians 3:12; ~~1~~ 1 Peter 1:2; ~~Ephesians~~ Ephesians 1:4. It signifies here that they are especially dear to him; that he feels a deep interest in their welfare, and that he will, therefore, be ready to come forth to their aid. The judge felt no special interest in that widow, yet he heard her; God feels a particular regard, a tender love for his elect, and, therefore, he will hear and save.

*Which cry day and night* This expresses one striking characteristic of the elect of God; they pray, and pray constantly. No one can have evidence that he is chosen of God who is not a man of prayer. One of the best marks by which the electing love of God is known is that it disposes us to pray. This passage supposes that when the elect of God are in trouble and pressed down with calamities, they “will” cry unto him; and it affirms that if they do, he will hear their cries and answer their requests.

*Though he bear long with them* This passage has been variously interpreted, and there is some variety of reading in the manuscripts. Some read, “Will not God avenge his elect? Will he linger in their cause?” But the most natural meaning is, “Although he defers long to avenge them, and greatly tries their patience, yet he will avenge them.” He tries their faith; he suffers their persecutions and trials to continue a long time; and it almost “appears” as if he would not interpose. Yet he will do it, and will save them.

**◀DIB▶ Luke 18:8.** *Speedily* Suddenly, unexpectedly. He will surely vindicate them, and that at a time, perhaps, when they were nearly ready to give over and to sink into despair. This may refer to the deliverance of the disciples from their approaching trials and persecutions among the Jews; or, in general, to the fact that God will interpose and aid his people.

*Nevertheless* But. Notwithstanding this. Though this is true that God will avenge his elect, yet will he find his elect “faithful?” The danger is not that “God” will be unfaithful — he will surely be true to his promises; but the danger is that his elect — his afflicted people — will be discouraged; will not persevere in prayer; will not continue to have confidence in him; and will, under heavy trials, sink into despondency. The sole meaning of this phrase, therefore, is, that “there is more danger that his people would grow weary, than that God would be found unfaithful and fail to avenge his elect.” For this cause Christ spoke the parable, and by the “design” of the parable this passage is to be interpreted.

*Son of man cometh* This probably refers to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem — the coming of the Messiah, by his mighty power, to abolish the ancient dispensation and to set up the new.

*Faith* The word “faith” is sometimes taken to denote the “whole” of religion, and it has been understood in this sense here; but there is a close connection in what Christ says, and it should be understood as referring to

what he said before. The truth that he had been teaching was, that God would deliver his people from their calamities and save them, though he suffered them to be long tried. He asks them here whether, when he came, he should find “this faith,” or a belief of “this truth,” among his followers? Would they be found persevering in prayer, and “believing” that God would yet avenge them; or would they cease to pray “always, and faint?” This is not to be understood, therefore, as affirming that when Christ comes to judgment there will be few Christians on the earth, and that the world will be overrun with wickedness. That “may be” true, but it is not the truth taught here.

*The earth* The land referring particularly to the land of Judea. The discussion had particular reference to their trials and persecutions in that land. This question implies that “in” those trials many professed disciples might faint and turn back, and many of his “real” followers almost lose sight of this great truth, and begin to inquire whether God would interpose to save them. The same question may be asked respecting any other remarkable visitation of the Son of God in affliction. When tried and persecuted, do “we” believe that God will avenge us? Do “we” pray always and not faint? Have “we” faith to believe that, though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne? And when storms of persecution assail us, can “we” go to God and confidently commit our cause to him, and believe that he will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day?

◀18:9▶ **Luke 18:9.** *Unto certain* Unto some.

*Which trusted in themselves* Who confided in themselves, or who supposed that they were righteous. They did not trust to God or the Messiah for righteousness, but to their own works. They vainly supposed they had themselves complied with the demands of the law of God.

*Despised others* Others who were not as externally righteous as themselves. This was the character of the Pharisees. They trusted in their outward conformity to the ceremonies of the law. They considered all who did not do that as sinners. This, moreover, is the true character of self-righteousness. Men of that stamp always despise all others. They think they are far above them in holiness, and are disposed to say to them, Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou, ▶28:15▶ Isaiah 65:5. True religion, on the contrary, is humble. Those who trust in Christ for righteousness feel that “they” are, in themselves, poor, and miserable, and guilty, and they are

willing to admit that others may be much better than themselves. Certain it is, they “despise” no one. They love all people; they regard them, however vile, as the creatures of God and as going to eternity, and are disposed to treat them well, and to aid them in their journey toward another world.

◀2181▶ **Luke 18:10.** *The temple* Into one of the courts of the temple — the court where prayer was commonly offered. See the notes at ▶2112▶ Matthew 21:12.

*A Pharisee* See the notes at ▶4137▶ Matthew 3:7.

*Publican* See the notes at ▶4156▶ Matthew 5:46.

◀2181▶ **Luke 18:11.** *Stood and prayed thus with himself* Some have proposed to render this, “stood by himself” and prayed. In this way it would be characteristic of the sect of the Pharisees, who dreaded the contact of others as polluting, and who were disposed to say to all, Stand by yourselves. The Syraic so renders it, but it is doubtful whether the Greek will allow this construction. If not, it means, he said over to himself what he had done, and what was the ground on which he expected the favour of God.

*God, I thank thee* There was still in the prayer of the Pharisee an “appearance” of real religion. He did not profess to claim that he had made himself better than others. He was willing to acknowledge that God had done it for him, and that he had a right to his gratitude for it. Hypocrites are often the most orthodox in opinion of any class of people. They know the truth, and admit it. They use it frequently in their prayers and conversation. They will even persecute those who happen to differ from them in opinion, and who may be really wrong. We are not to judge of the “piety” of people by the fact that they admit the truth, or even that they use it often in their prayers. It is, however, not wrong to thank God that he has kept us from the gross sins which other people commit; but it should not be done in an ostentatious manner, nor should it be done forgetting still that we are great sinners and need pardon. These were the faults of the Pharisees.

*Extortioners* Rapacious; avaricious; who take away the goods of others by force and violence. It means, also, those who take advantage of the necessities of others, the poor and the oppressed, and extort their property.

*Unjust* They who are not fair and honest in their dealings; who get the property of others by “fraud.” They are distinguished from “extortioners” because they who are unjust may have the “appearance” of honesty; in the other case there is not.

<Q182> **Luke 18:12.** *I fast twice ...* This was probably the Jewish custom. The Pharisees are said to have fasted regularly on the second and fifth days of every week in private. This was “in addition” to the public days of fasting required in the law of Moses, and they, therefore, made more a matter of “merit” of it because it was voluntary.

*I give tithes* A tithe means the tenth part of a thing. A tenth part of the possessions of the Jews was required for the support of the Levites, <M182> Numbers 18:21. In addition to the tithes required strictly by law, the Pharisees had tithed everything which they possessed even the smallest matters — as mint, anise, cummin, etc., <Q142> Luke 11:42. It was “this,” probably, on which he so particularly prided himself. As this could not be proved to be strictly “required” in the law, it had more the “appearance” of great piety, and, therefore, he particularly dwelt on it.

*I possess* This may mean either all which I “have,” or all which I “gain” or acquire. It is not material which meaning be considered the true one.

The religion of the Pharisee, therefore, consisted in:

1. abstaining from injustice to others; in pretending to live a harmless, innocent, and upright life; and
2. a regular observance of all the external duties of religion.

His “fault” consisted in relying on this kind of righteousness; in not feeling and acknowledging that he was a sinner; in not seeking a religion that should dwell in the “heart” and regulate the feelings; and in making public and ostentatious professions of his own goodness. Most of all was this abominable in the sight of God, who “looks into the heart,” and who sees wickedness there when the external actions may be blameless. We may learn from the case of the Pharisee:

1. That it is not the man who has the most orthodox belief that has, of course, the most piety;
2. That people may be externally moral, and not be righteous in the sight of God;



3. That they may be very exact in the external duties of religion, and even go beyond the strict letter of the law; that they may assume a great appearance of sanctity, and still be strangers to true piety; and

4. That ostentation in religion, or a “boasting” before God of what we are and of what we have done, is abominable in his sight. This spoils everything, even if the life “should be” tolerably blameless, and if there should be real piety.

**Luke 18:13.** *Standing afar off* Afar off from the “temple.” The place where prayer was offered in the temple was the court of women. The Pharisee advanced to the side of the court nearest to the temple, or near as he could; the publican stood on the other side of the same court if he was a Jew, or in the court of the Gentiles if he was a pagan, as far as possible from the temple, being conscious of his unworthiness to approach the sacred place where God had his holy habitation.

*So much as his eyes ...* Conscious of his guilt. He felt that he was a sinner, and shame and sorrow prevented his looking up. Men who are conscious of guilt always fix their eyes on the ground.

*Smote upon his breast* An expression of grief and anguish in view of his sins. It is a sign of grief among almost all nations.

*God be merciful ...* The prayer of the publican was totally different from that of the Pharisee. He made no boast of his own righteousness toward God or man. He felt that he was a sinner, and, feeling it, was willing to acknowledge it. This is the kind of prayer that will be acceptable to God. When we are willing to confess and forsake our sins, we shall find mercy, **Proverbs 28:13.** The publican was willing to do this in any place; in the presence of any persons; amid the multitudes of the temple, or alone. He felt most that “God” was a witness of his actions, and he was willing, therefore, to confess his sins before him. While we should not “seek” to do this “publicly,” yet we should be willing at all times to confess our manifold transgressions, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same by God’s infinite goodness and mercy.” It is not dishonorable to make acknowledgment when we have done wrong. No man is so much dishonored as he who is a sinner and is not willing to confess it; as he who has done wrong and yet attempts to “conceal” the fault, thus adding hypocrisy to his other crimes.

◀2184▶ **Luke 18:14.** *I tell you* The Pharisees would have said that the first man here was approved. Jesus assures them that they judged erroneously. God judges of this differently from people.

*Justified* Accepted or approved of God. The word “justify” means to declare or treat as righteous. In this case it means that in their prayers the one was approved and the other not; the one went down with the favor of God in answer to his petitions, the other not.

*For every one ...* See the notes at ▶2141▶ Luke 14:11.

◀2185▶ **Luke 18:15-30.** See the notes at ▶2093▶ Matthew 19:13-30.

◀2187▶ **Luke 18:31-33.** See the notes at ▶2107▶ Matthew 20:17-19.

*By the prophets* Those who foretold the coming of the Messiah, and whose predictions are recorded in the Old Testament.

*Son of man* The Messiah. They predicted that certain things would take place respecting the Messiah that was to come. See the notes at ▶2025▶ Daniel 9:25-27; Isaiah 53. “These things,” Jesus said, would be accomplished “in him,” he being the Son of man, or the Messiah.

◀2184▶ **Luke 18:34.** *Understood none of these things* Though they were “plainly” revealed, yet such were their prejudices and their unwillingness to believe them that they did not understand them. They expected that he would be a temporal prince and a conqueror, and they were not “willing” to believe that he would be delivered into the hands of his enemies. They did not see how that could be consistent with the prophecies. To us now these things appear plain, and we may, hence, learn that those things which to us appear most mysterious may yet appear perfectly plain; and we should learn to trust in God, and “believe” just what he has spoken. See ▶2102▶ Matthew 16:21; 17:23.

◀2185▶ **Luke 18:35-43.** See this passage explained in the notes at ▶2103▶ Matthew 20:29-34.

## NOTES ON LUKE 19

**<201> Luke 19:1.** *And Jesus entered ...* See the notes at **<111> Matthew 20:29**. This means, perhaps, “he was passing” through Jericho when Zaccheus saw him. His house was “in” Jericho.

**<212> Luke 19:2.** *A man named Zaccheus* The name Zaccheus is Hebrew, and shows that this man was a “Jew.” The Hebrew name properly means “pure,” and is the same as Zacchai in **<1511> Ezra 2:9**; **<1714> Nehemiah 7:14**. The publicans, therefore, were not all foreigners.

*Chief among the publicans* Who presided over other tax-gatherers, or who “received” their collections and transmitted them to the Roman government.

*He was rich* Though this class of people was despised and often infamous, yet it seems that they were sometimes wealthy. They sustained, however, the general character of “sinners,” because they were particularly odious in the eyes of the Jews. See **<290> Luke 19:7**. The evangelist has thought it worthy of record that he was rich, perhaps, because it was so unlikely that a “rich man” should follow so poor and despised a personage as Jesus of Nazareth, and because it was so unusual a thing during his personal ministry. Not many rich were called, but God chiefly chose the poor of this world Compare **<4126> 1 Corinthians 1:26-29**.

**<213> Luke 19:3.** *Who he was* Rather “what sort of person,” he was, or how he appeared. He had that curiosity which is natural to people to see one of whom they have heard much. It would seem, also, that in this case mere “curiosity” led to his conversion and that of his family. Compare **<4142> 1 Corinthians 14:23-25**. God makes use of every principle — of curiosity, or sympathy, or affection, or hope, or fear — to lead people in the way of salvation, and to impress truth on the minds of sinners.

*The press* The crowd; the multitude that surrounded Jesus. Earthly princes are often borne in splendid equipages, or even carried, as in Eastern nations, in palanquins on the shoulders of people. Jesus mingled with the multitude, not seeking distinctions of that sort, and perhaps, “in appearance,” not distinguished from thousands that followed him.

*Little of stature* Short. Not a tall man.

◀294▶ **Luke 19:4.** *A sycamore-tree* See this described in the notes at  
 ▶276▶ Luke 17:6.

◀295▶ **Luke 19:5.** *Abide at thy house* Remain there, or put up with him. This was an honor which Zaccheus did not expect. The utmost, it seems, which he aimed at was to SEE Jesus; but, instead of that, Jesus proposed to remain with him, and to give him the benefit of his personal instruction. It is but one among a thousand instances where the Saviour goes, in bestowing mercies, far beyond the desert, the desire, or the expectation of men; and it is not improper to learn from this example that solicitude to behold the Saviour will not pass unnoticed by him, but will meet with his warm approbation, and be connected with his blessing. Jesus was willing to encourage efforts to come to him, and his benevolence prompted him to gratify the desires of the man who was solicitous to see him. He does not disdain the mansions of the rich any more than he does the dwelling-places of the poor, provided there be a humble heart; and he did not suppose there was “less” need of his presence in order to save in the house of the rich man than among the poor. He set an example to all his ministers, and was not afraid or ashamed to proclaim his gospel amid wealth. He was not awed by external splendor or grandeur.

◀297▶ **Luke 19:7.** *Murmured* Found fault, complained.

*To be a guest* To remain with, or to be entertained by.

*A man that is a sinner* All publicans they regarded as great sinners, and the “chief” of the publicans, therefore, they regarded as especially wicked. It would appear also from Zaccheus’ confession that his character “had been” that of an oppressive man. But the people seemed to forget that he might be a penitent, and that the Messiah came to save that which was lost.

◀298▶ **Luke 19:8.** *The half of my goods I give to the poor* It is not necessary to understand this as affirming that this “had” been his practice, or that he said this in the way of proclaiming his own righteousness. It maybe understood rather as a purpose which he “then” formed under the teaching of Christ. He seems to have been sensible that he was a sinner. Of this he was convinced, as we may suppose, by the presence and discourse of Jesus. At first, attracted only by curiosity, or, it may be, by partial conviction that this was the Messiah, he had sought to see the Saviour; but his presence and conversation convinced him of his guilt, and he stood and

openly confessed his sins, and expressed his purpose to give half his ill-gotten property to the poor. This was not a proclamation of his “own” righteousness, nor the “ground” of his righteousness, but it was the “evidence” of the sincerity of his repentance, and the confession which with the mouth is made unto salvation, <sup><5100></sup>Romans 10:10.

*And if I have taken* His office gave him the power of oppressing the people, and it seems that he did not deny that it had been done.

*By false accusation* This is the same word which in <sup><0814></sup>Luke 3:14 is rendered “neither accuse any falsely.” The accusation seems to have been so made that the person accused was obliged to pay much greater taxes, or so that his property came into the hands of the informer. There are many ways in which this might be done, but we do not know the exact manner.

*I restore him* We cannot suppose that this had been always his practice, for no man would wantonly extort money from another, and then restore him at once four times as much; but it means that he was made sensible of his guilt; perhaps that his mind had been a considerable time perplexed in the matter, and that now he was resolved to make the restoration. This was the “evidence” of his penitence and conversion. And here it may be remarked that this is “always” an indisputable evidence of a man’s conversion to God. A man who has hoarded ill-gotten gold, if he becomes a Christian, will be disposed to do good with it. A man who has injured others — who has cheated them or defrauded them, “even by due forms of law,” must, if he be a Christian, be willing, as far as possible, to make restoration. Zaccheus, for anything that appears to the contrary, may have obtained this property by the decisions of courts of justice, but he now felt that it was wrong; and though the defrauded people could not “legally” recover it, yet his conscience told him that, in order to his being a true penitent, he must make restitution. One of the best evidences of true conversion is when it produces this result; and one of the surest evidences that a “professed” penitent is not a “true” one, is when he is “not” disposed to follow the example of this son of Abraham and make proper restitution.

*Four-fold* Four times as much as had been unjustly taken. This was the amount that was required in the Jewish law when a sheep had been stolen, and a man was convicted of the theft by trial at law, <sup><0221></sup>Exodus 22:1. If he “confessed” it himself, without being “detected” and tried, he had only to restore what was stolen, and add to it a fifth part of its value, <sup><0116></sup>Numbers 5:6,7. The sincerity of Zaccheus’ repentance was manifest by his being

willing to make restoration as great as if it had been proved against him, evincing “his sense” of the wrong, and his purpose to make full restitution. The Jews were allowed to take “no interest” of their brethren (<sup><1855></sup>Leviticus 25:35,36), and this is the reason why that is not mentioned as the measure of the restitution. When injury of this kind is done in other places, the least that is proper is to restore the principal and interest; for the injured person has a right “to all” that his property would have procured him if it had not been unjustly taken away.

<sup><209></sup>**Luke 19:9.** *Salvation is come to this house* This family. They have this day received the blessings of the gospel, and become interested in the Messiah’s kingdom. Salvation “commences” when people truly receive Christ and their sins are pardoned; it is “completed” when the soul is sanctified and received up into heaven.

*Forasmuch* Because. For he has given “evidence” that he is a new man, and is disposed to forsake his sins and receive the gospel.

*The son of Abraham* Hitherto, although a Jew, yet he has been a sinner, and a great sinner. He was not worthy to be called a son of Abraham. Now, by repentance, and by receiving the Christ whose day Abraham saw and was glad (<sup><1856></sup>John 8:56), he has shown himself to be worthy to be called his son. Abraham was an example of distinguished piety; the father of the faithful (<sup><1801></sup>Romans 4:11), as well as the ancestor of the Jews. They were called his sons who were descended from him, and particularly they who “resembled” him. In this place the phrase is used in both senses.

<sup><210></sup>**Luke 19:10.** See the notes at <sup><1811></sup>Matthew 18:11.

<sup><211></sup>**Luke 19:11** *He spake a parable* This parable has in some respects a resemblance to the parable of the “talents” in <sup><1214></sup>Matthew 25:14-28, but it is not the same. They differ in the following respects: That was spoken “after” he had entered Jerusalem; this, while on his way there. That was delivered on the Mount of Olives; this, in the house of Zaccheus. That was delivered to teach them the necessity of “improving” the talents committed to them; this was for a different design. He was now near Jerusalem. A great multitude attended him. His disciples regarded him as the Messiah, and by this they understood a temporal prince who should deliver them from the dominion of the Romans and set them at liberty. They were anxious for that, and supposed that the time was at hand, and that “now,” as soon as he entered Jerusalem, he would assume the appearance of such

a prince and set up his kingdom. To “correct that notion” seems to have been the main design of this parable. To do that, he tells them of a man who had a right to the kingdom, yet who, “before” taking possession of it, went into another kingdom to receive a confirmation of his title, thus intimating that “he” would also go away “before” he would completely set up his kingdom (<sup><D1912></sup>Luke 19:12); he tells them that this nobleman left to his servants “property” to be improved in his absence, as “he” would leave to his disciples “talents” to be used in his service (<sup><D1912></sup>Luke 19:12,13); he tells them that this nobleman was rejected by his own citizens (<sup><D1914></sup>Luke 19:14), as “he” would be by the Jews; and that he received the kingdom and called them to an account, as he also would his own disciples.

*Because he was nigh to Jerusalem* The capital of the country, and where they supposed he would probably set up his kingdom.

*The kingdom of God should immediately appear* That the reign of the Messiah would immediately commence. He spoke the parable to “correct” that expectation.

<sup><D1912></sup>**Luke 19:12.** *A certain nobleman* A prince; a man descended from kings, and having a title, therefore, to succeed in the kingdom.

*Went into a far country ...* This expression is derived from the state of things in Judea in the time of the Saviour. Judea was subject to the Romans, having been conquered by Pompey about sixty years before Christ. It was, however, governed by “Jews,” who held the government “under” the Romans. It was necessary that the prince or king should receive a recognition of his right to the kingdom by the Roman emperor and, in order to this, that he should go to Rome; or, as it is said here, that he might receive to himself a kingdom. This actually occurred several times. Archelaus, a son of Herod the Great, about the time of the birth of Jesus, went to Rome to obtain a confirmation of the title which his father had left him, and succeeded in doing it. Herod the Great, his father, had done the same thing before to secure the aid and countenance of Antony. Agrippa the younger, grandson of Herod the Great, went to Rome also to obtain the favor of Tiberius, and to be confirmed in his government. Such instances, having frequently occurred, would make this parable perfectly intelligible to those to whom it was addressed. By the nobleman, here, is undoubtedly represented the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ; by his going into a far country is denoted his going to heaven, to the right hand of his

Father, “before” he should “fully” set up his kingdom and establish his reign among men.

**<2193> Luke 19:13. *Ten servants*** Nothing in particular is denoted by the number “ten.” It is a circumstance intended to keep up the narrative. In general, by these servants our Saviour denotes his disciples, and intends to teach us that talents are given us to be improved, for which we must give an account at his return.

***Ten pounds*** The word translated “pound” here denotes the Hebrew “minah,” which was equal to about 15 dollars, or 3 British pounds. The pounds here denote the talents which God has given to his servants on earth to improve, and for which they must give all account in the day of judgment.

***Occupy till I come*** The word “occupy” here means not merely to “possess,” as it often does in our language, but to “improve,” to employ “in business,” for the purpose of increasing it or of making “profit” on it. The direction was to use this money so as to gain “more” against his return. So Jesus commands his disciples to “improve” their talents; to make the most of them; to increase their capability of doing good, and to do it “until” he comes to call us hence, by death, to meet him. See **<46217>** 1 Corinthians 12:7; **<40417>** Ephesians 4:7.

**<2194> Luke 19:14. *But his citizens*** His “subjects,” or the people whom he was desirous of ruling.

***Hated him*** On account of his character, and their fear of oppression. This was, in fact, the case with regard to Archelaus, the Jewish prince, who went to Rome to be confirmed in his kingdom.

***Sent a message, saying ...*** His discontented subjects, fearing what would be the character of his reign, sent an embassy to remonstrate against his being appointed as the ruler. This actually took place. Archelaus went to Rome to obtain from Augustus a confirmation of his title to reign over that part of Judea which had been left him by his father, Herod the Great. The Jews, knowing his character (compare **<41122>** Matthew 2:22), sent an embassy of 50 men to Rome, to prevail on Augustus “not” to confer the title on him, but they could not succeed. He “received” the kingdom, and reigned in Judea in the place of his father. As this fact was “fresh” in the memory of the Jews, it makes this parable much more striking. By this part of it Christ



designed to denote that the Jews would reject “him” — the Messiah, and would say that they did not desire him to reign over them. See <sup><4111></sup>John 1:11. So it is true of all sinners that they do not “wish” Jesus to reign over them, and, if it were possible, would cast him off, and never submit to his reign.

<sup><2195></sup>**Luke 19:15.** See the notes at <sup><4259></sup>Matthew 25:19.

<sup><2196></sup>**Luke 19:16-19.** See the notes at <sup><4259></sup>Matthew 25:20,21.

*Ten cities* We are not to suppose that this will be “literally” fulfilled in heaven. Christ teaches here that our reward in heaven will be “in proportion” to our faithfulness in improving our talents on earth.

<sup><2197></sup>**Luke 19:20.** *A napkin* A towel. He means by it that he had not wasted it nor thrown it by carelessly, but had been “very careful” of it; so much so as to be at the pains to tie it up in a towel and put it in a safe place, as if he had been “very faithful” to his trust. So many people employ their talents, their learning, their property, their influence. They “have” them; they “keep” them; but they never “use” them in the service of the Lord Jesus; and, in regard to their influence on the church or the world, it would be the same if God had never conferred on them these talents.

<sup><2198></sup>**Luke 19:21.** *An austere man* Hard, severe, oppressive. The word is commonly applied to unripe fruit, and means “sour,” unpleasant; harsh. In this case it means that the man was taking every advantage, and, while “he” lived in idleness, was making his living out of the toils of others.

*Thou takest up ...* Thou dost exact of others what thou didst not give. The phrase is applied to a man who “finds” what has been lost by another, and keeps it himself, and refuses to return it to the owner. All this is designed to show the sinner’s view of God. He regards him as unjust, demanding more than man has “power” to render, and more, therefore, than God has a “right” to demand. See the notes at <sup><4254></sup>Matthew 25:24.

<sup><2199></sup>**Luke 19:22.** *Out of thine own mouth* By your own statement, or your own views of my character. If you “knew” that this was my character, and “knew” that I would be rigid, firm, and even severe, it would have been the part of wisdom in you to have made the best use of the money in your power; but as you “knew” my character beforehand, and was well acquainted with the fact that I should demand a strict compliance with your

obligation, you have no right to complain if you are condemned accordingly. We are not to suppose that God is “unjust or austere;” but what we are to learn from this is, that as people know that God will be “just,” and will call them to a strict account in the day of judgment, they ought to be prepared to meet him, and that they cannot then complain if God should condemn them.

**Luke 19:23.** *The bank* The treasury, or the place of exchange. Why did you not loan it out, that it might be increased?

*Usury* Interest.

**Luke 19:25.** *And they said unto him* Those standing around him said.

*He hath ...* This was probably an observation made by some of the bystanders, as if surprised at such a decision. “He has already ten pounds. Why take away this one, and add to what he already possesses? Why should his property be increased at the expense of this man, who has but one pound?” The answer to this is given in the following verse; that every one that hath, to him shall be given; every man who is faithful, and improves what God gives him, shall receive much more.

**Luke 19:26,27.** *For I say ...* These are the words of the “nobleman” declaring the principles on which he would distribute the rewards of his kingdom.

*But those mine enemies* By the punishment of those who would not that he should reign over them is denoted the ruin that was to come upon the Jewish nation for rejecting the Messiah, and also upon all sinners for not receiving him as their king. See the notes at the parable of the talents in Matthew 25.

**Luke 19:28-39.** See the notes at **Matthew 21:1-16.**

**Luke 19:40.** *The stones would ... cry out* It is “proper” that they should celebrate my coming. Their acclamations “ought” not to be suppressed. So joyful is the event which they celebrate — the coming of the Messiah — that it is not fit that I should attempt to impose silence on them. The expression here seems to be “proverbial,” and is not to be taken literally. Proverbs are designed to express the truth “strongly,” but are not to be taken to signify as much as if they were to be interpreted literally. The sense is, that his coming was an event of so much importance that it

“ought” to be celebrated in some way, and “would” be celebrated. It would be impossible to restrain the people, and improper to attempt it. The language here is strong proverbial language to denote that fact. We are not to suppose, therefore, that our Saviour meant to say that the stones were “conscious” of his coming, or that God would “make” them speak, but only that there was “great joy” among the people; that it was “proper” that they should express it in this manner, and that it was not fit that he should attempt to repress it.

**◀294▶ Luke 19:41-44.** *He wept over it* Showing his compassion for the guilty city, and his strong sense of the evils that were about to come upon it. See the notes at **◀1237▶ Matthew 23:37-39**. As he entered the city he passed over the Mount of Olives. From that mountain there was a full and magnificent view of the city. See the notes at **◀1201▶ Matthew 21:1**. The view of the splendid capital — the knowledge of its crimes — the remembrance of the mercies of God toward it — the certainty that it might have been spared if it had received the prophets and himself — the knowledge that it was about to put “him,” their long-expected Messiah, to death, and “for” that to be given up to utter desolation — affected his heart, and the triumphant King and Lord of Zion wept! Amid all “his” prosperity, and all the acclamations of the multitude, the heart of the Redeemer of the world was turned from the tokens of rejoicing to the miseries about to come on a guilty people. Yet they “might” have been saved. If thou hadst known, says he, even thou, with all thy guilt, the things that make for thy peace; if thou hadst repented, had been righteous, and had received the Messiah; if thou hadst not stained thy hands with the blood of the prophets, and shouldst not with that of the Son of God, then these terrible calamities would not come upon thee. But it is too late. The national wickedness is too great; the cup is full: mercy is exhausted; and Jerusalem, with all her pride and splendor, the glory of her temple, and the pomp of her service, “must perish!”

*For the days shall come ...* This took place under Titus, the Roman general, 70 A.D., about thirty years after this was spoken.

*Cast a trench about thee* The word “trench” now means commonly a “pit or ditch.” When the Bible was translated, it meant also “earth thrown up to defend a camp” (Johnson’s “Dictionary”). This is the meaning of the original here. It is not a pit or large “ditch,” but a pile of earth, stones, or wood thrown up to guard a camp, and to defend it from the approach of an

enemy. This was done at the siege of Jerusalem. Josephus informs us that Titus, in order that he might compel the city to surrender by “famine,” built a wall around the whole circumference of the city. This wall was nearly 5 miles in length, and was furnished with thirteen castles or towers. This work was completed with incredible labor in ten days. The professed design of this wall was “to keep” the city “in on every side.” Never was a prophecy more strikingly accomplished.

*Shall lay thee even with the ground ...* This was literally done. Titus caused a plow to pass over the place where the temple stood. See the notes at Matthew 24. All this was done, says Christ, because Jerusalem knew not the time of its visitation — that is, did not know, and “would not” know, that the Messiah had come. “His coming” was the time of their merciful visitation. That time had been predicted, and invaluable blessings promised as the result of his advent; but they would not know it. They rejected him, they put him to death, and it was just that they should be destroyed.

~~2195~~ **Luke 19:45,46.** See the notes at ~~2112~~ Matthew 21:12,13.

~~2197~~ **Luke 19:47.** *Daily in the temple* That is, for five or six days before his crucifixion.

~~2198~~ **Luke 19:48.** *Could not find ...* Were not able to accomplish their purpose; they did not know “how” to bring it about.

*Very attentive* literally, “hung upon him” to hear him. The word denotes an anxious desire, a fixed attention, a cleaving to him, and an unwillingness to “leave” him, so that they might hear his words. This is always the case when people become anxious about their salvation. They manifest it by hanging on the preaching of the gospel; by fixed attention; and by an unwillingness to leave the place where the word of God is preached. In view of the fact that the Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem, we may remark:

(1) It was on account of the sins and danger of the inhabitants, and of the fact that they had rejected offered mercy.

(2) There was “occasion” for weeping. Jesus would not have wept had there been no cause for it. If they were in no danger, if there was no punishment in the future world, why should he have wept? When the Lord Jesus weeps over sinners, it is the fullest proof that they are in danger.

**(3)** Sinners are in the same danger now. They reject Christ as sinners did then. They despise the gospel as they did then. They refuse now to come to him as the inhabitants of Jerusalem did. Why are they not then in the same danger?

**(4)** Deep feeling, gushing emotions, lively affections, are proper in religion. If the Saviour wept, it is not improper for us to weep — it is right. Nay, can it be right “not” to weep over the condition of lost man.

**(5)** Religion is tenderness and love. It led the Saviour to weep, and it teaches us to sympathize and to feel deeply. Sin hardens the heart, and makes it insensible to every pure and noble emotion; but religion teaches us to feel “for others’ woes,” and to sympathize in the danger of others.

**(6)** Christians and Christian ministers should weep over lost sinners. They have souls just as precious as they had then; they are in the same danger; they are going to the judgment-bar; they are wholly insensible to their danger and their duty.

*“Did Christ o’er sinners weep?  
And shall our cheeks be dry?  
Let floods of penitential grief  
Burst forth from every eye.*

*“The Son of God in tears.  
Angels with wonder see!  
Be thou astonished, O my soul;  
He shed those tears for thee.*

*“He wept that we might weep;  
Each sin demands a tear:  
In heaven alone no sin is found  
And there’s no weeping there.”*

## NOTES ON LUKE 20

**☞211☞ Luke 20:1-9.** See this passage explained in the notes at **☞4213☞ Matthew 21:23-27.**

**☞219☞ Luke 20:9-19.** See this parable explained in the notes at **☞4213☞ Matthew 21:33-45.**

**☞211☞ Luke 20:20-38.** See this explained in the notes at **☞4215☞ Matthew 22:15-33,** and **☞4123☞ Mark 12:13-27.**

**☞219☞ Luke 20:39.** See the notes at **☞4122☞ Mark 12:32.**

**☞214☞ Luke 20:40-44.** See the notes at **☞4214☞ Matthew 22:41-46.**

**☞215☞ Luke 20:45-47.** See the notes at **☞4211☞ Matthew 23:1.**

## NOTES ON LUKE 21

◀21:1▶ **Luke 21:1-4.** See this explained in the notes at ▶12:41▶ Mark 12:41-44.

◀21:4▶ **Luke 21:4.** *Penury* Poverty.

◀21:5▶ **Luke 21:5.** *Goodly stones* Beautiful stones. Either referring to the large, square, and well-finished stones of which the eastern wall was built, or to the precious stones which might have been used in decorating the temple itself. See the notes at ▶13:1▶ Mark 13:1.

*Gifts* This word properly denotes anything devoted or dedicated to God. Anciently warriors dedicated to their gods the spoils of war — the shields, and helmets, and armor, and garments of those slain in battle. These were suspended in the temples. It would seem that something of this kind had occurred in the temple of Jerusalem, and that the people, to express their gratitude to God, had suspended on the pillars and perches of the temple gifts and offerings. Josephus mentions particularly a golden “vine” with which Herod the Great had adorned the columns of the temple (“Antiq.” xiii. 8). See also 2 Macc. 5:16; 9:16.

◀21:6▶ **Luke 21:6.** See the notes at ▶24:2▶ Matthew 24:2.

◀21:7▶ **Luke 21:7-36.** The account of the destruction of Jerusalem contained in this chapter has been fully considered in the notes at Matthew 24. All that will be necessary here will be an explanation of a few words that did not occur in that chapter.

◀21:9▶ **Luke 21:9.** *Commotions* Insurrections. Subjects rising against their rulers.

◀21:11▶ **Luke 21:11.** *Fearful sights* See ▶24:7▶ Matthew 24:7.

◀21:12▶ **Luke 21:12,13.** *Synagogues, and into prisons* See the notes at ▶13:9,10▶ Mark 13:9,10.

◀21:14▶ **Luke 21:14.** *Settle it, therefore, in your hearts* Fix it firmly in your minds — so firmly as to become a settled principle — that you are always to depend on God for aid in all your trials. See ▶13:11▶ Mark 13:11.

**◀2115** **Luke 21:15.** *A mouth* Eloquence, ability to speak as the case may demand. Compare **◀1041** Exodus 4:11.

*Gainsay* Speak against. They will not be able to “reply” to it, or to “resist” the force of what you shall say.

**◀2118** **Luke 21:18.** *A hair of your head perish* This is a proverbial expression, denoting that they should not suffer any essential injury. This was strikingly fulfilled in the fact that in the calamities of Jerusalem there is reason to believe that no Christian suffered. Before those calamities came on the city they had fled to “Pella,” a city on the east of the Jordan. See the notes at **◀2148** Matthew 24:18.

**◀2119** **Luke 21:19.** *In your patience* Rather by your perseverance. The word “patience” here means constancy or perseverance in sustaining afflictions.

*Possess ye your souls* Some read here the “future” instead of the “present” of the verb rendered “possess.” The word “possess” means here to “preserve” or keep, and the word “souls” means “lives.” This passage may be thus translated: By persevering in bearing these trials you “will” save your lives, or you will be safe; or, by persevering “preserve” your lives; that is, do not yield to these calamities, but bear up under them, for he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. Compare **◀2143** Matthew 24:13.

**◀2122** **Luke 21:22.** *All things which are written may be fulfilled* Judgment had been threatened by almost all the prophets against that wicked city. They had spoken of its crimes and threatened its ruin. Once God had destroyed Jerusalem and carried the people to Babylon; but their crimes had been repeated when they returned, and God had again threatened their ruin. Particularly was this very destruction foretold by Daniel, **◀2106** Daniel 9:26,27: “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” See the notes at that passage.

**◀2124** **Luke 21:24.** *Shall fall ...* No less than one million one hundred thousand perished in the siege of Jerusalem.



*Shall be led away captive* More than 90,000 were led into captivity. See the notes at Matthew 24.

*Shall be trodden down by the Gentiles* Shall be in possession of the Gentiles, or be subject to them. The expression also implies that it would be an “oppressive” subjection, as when a captive in war is trodden down under the feet of the conqueror. Anciently conquerors “trod on” the necks of those who were subdued by them, <sup><610B></sup>Joshua 10:24; <sup><1234></sup>2 Samuel 22:41; <sup><629></sup>Ezekiel 21:29. The bondage of Jerusalem has been long and very oppressive. It was for a long time under the dominion of the Romans, then of the Saracens, and is now of the Turks, and is aptly represented by a captive stretched on the ground whose neck is “trodden” by the foot of the conqueror.

*Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled* This passage has been understood very differently by different expositors. Some refer it to the time which the Romans who conquered it had dominion over it, as signifying that “they” should keep possession of it until a part of the pagans should be converted, when it should be rebuilt. Thus it was rebuilt by the Emperor Adrian. Others suppose that it refers to the end of the world, when all the Gentiles shall be converted, and they shall “cease” to be Gentiles by becoming Christians, meaning that it should “always” be desolate. Others, that Christ meant to say that in the times of the millennium, when the gospel should spread universally, he would reign personally on the earth, and that the “Jews” would return and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. This is the opinion of the Jews and of many Christians. The meaning of the passage clearly is,

1. That Jerusalem would be completely destroyed.
2. That this would be done by Gentiles — that is, by the Roman armies.
3. That this desolation would continue as long as God should judge it proper in a fit manner to express his abhorrence of the crimes of the nation — that is, until the times allotted to “them” by God for this desolation should be accomplished, without specifying how long that would be, or what would occur to the city after that. It “may” be rebuilt, and inhabited by converted Jews. Such a thing is “possible,” and the Jews naturally seek that as their home; but whether this be so or not, the time when the “Gentiles,” as such, shall have dominion over the city is limited. Like all other cities on the earth, it will yet be brought under the influence of the

gospel, and will be inhabited by the true friends of God. Pagan, infidel, anti-Christian dominion shall cease there, and it will be again a place where God will be worshipped in sincerity — a place “even then” of special interest from the recollection of the events which have occurred there. “How long” it is to be before this occurs is known only to Him “who hath put the times and seasons in his own power,” <sup><400></sup>Acts 1:7.

<sup><275></sup>**Luke 21:25.** See the notes at <sup><104></sup>Matthew 24:29.

*Upon the earth distress of nations* Some have proposed to render the word “earth” by “land,” confining it to Judea. It often has this meaning, and there seems some propriety in so using it here. The word translated “distress” denotes anxiety of mind — such an anxiety as people have when they do not know what to do to free themselves from calamities; and it means here that the calamities would be so great and overwhelming that they would not know what to do to escape. There would be a want of counsel, and deep anxiety at the impending evils.

*With perplexity* Rather “on account” of their perplexity, or the desperate state of their affairs. The Syriac has it, “perplexity or wringing of hands,” which is a sign of deep distress and horror.

*The sea and the waves roaring* This is not to be understood literally, but as an image of great distress. Probably it is designed to denote that these calamities would come upon them like a deluge. As when in a storm the ocean roars, and wave rolls on wave and dashes against the shore, and each succeeding surge is more violent than the one that preceded it, so would the calamities come upon Judea. They would roll over the whole land, and each wave of trouble would be more violent than the one that preceded it, until the whole country would be desolate. The same image is also used in <sup><287></sup>Isaiah 8:7,8, and <sup><615></sup>Revelation 18:15.

<sup><275></sup>**Luke 21:26.** *Men’s hearts failing them* This is an expression denoting the highest terror. The word rendered “failing” commonly denotes to “die,” and here it means that the terror would be so great that people would faint and be ready to die in view of the approaching calamities. And if this was true in respect to the judgments about to come upon Judea, how much more so will it be in the day of judgment, when the wicked will be arraigned before the Son of God, and when they shall have before them the prospect of the awful sufferings of hell — the pains and woes which shall continue forever! It will be no wonder, then, if they call

on the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of God, and if their hearts sink within them at the prospect of eternal suffering.

**◀2128▶ Luke 21:28.** *Your redemption draweth nigh* See the notes at **◀1213▶** Matthew 24:33. This is expressed in **◀2131▶** Luke 21:31 thus: “the kingdom of God is nigh at hand” — that is, from that time God will signally build up his kingdom. It shall be fully established when the Jewish policy shall come to an end; when the temple shall be destroyed, and the Jews scattered abroad. Then the power of the Jews shall be at an end; they shall no longer be able to persecute you, and you shall be completely delivered from all these trials and calamities in Judea.

**◀2134▶ Luke 21:34.** *Lest at any time your hearts be overcharged ...* The meaning of this verse is, “Be continually expecting these things. Do not forget them, and do not be “secure” and satisfied with this life and the good things which it furnishes. Do not suffer yourselves to be drawn into the fashions of the world; to be conformed to its customs; to partake of its feasts and revelry; and so these calamities shall come upon you when you least expect them.” And from this we may learn — what alas! we may from the “lives” of many professing Christians — that there is need of cautioning the disciples of Jesus now that they do not indulge in the festivities of this life, and “forget” that they are to die and come to judgment. How many, alas! who bear the Christian name, have forgotten this caution of the Saviour, and live as if their lives were secure; as if they feared not death; as if there were no heaven and no judgment! Christians should feel that they are soon to die, and that their portion is not in this life; and, feeling this, they should be “looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.”

*Overcharged* Literally, “be made heavy,” as is the case with those who have eaten and drunken too much.

*Surfeiting* Excessive eating and drinking, so as to oppress the body; indulgence in the pleasures of the table. This word does not include “intoxication,” but merely indulgence in food and drink, though the food and drink should be in themselves lawful.

*Drunkeness* Intoxication, intemperance in drinking. The ancients were not acquainted with the poison that we chiefly use on which to become drunk. They had no distilled spirits. They became intoxicated on wine, and strong drink made of a mixture of dates, honey, etc. All nations have contrived

some way to become intoxicated — to bring in folly, and disease, and poverty, and death, by drunkenness; and in nothing is the depravity of men more manifest than in thus endeavoring to hasten the ravages of crime and death.

**Luke 21:35.** *As a snare* In Matthew and Mark Jesus compares the suddenness with which these calamities would come to the deluge coming in the days of Noah. Here he likens it to a snare. Birds are caught by a snare or net. It is sprung on them quickly, and when they are not expecting it. So, says he, shall these troubles come upon Judea. The figure is often used to denote the suddenness of calamities, <sup><1932></sup>Psalm 69:22; <sup><510></sup>Romans 11:9; <sup><1947></sup>Psalm 124:7; <sup><2347></sup>Isaiah 24:17.

**Luke 21:36.** *To stand before the Son of man* These approaching calamities are represented as the “coming of the Son of man” to judge Jerusalem for its crimes. Its inhabitants were so wicked that they were not worthy to stand before him and would be condemned, and the city would be overthrown. To “stand before him” here denotes approbation, acquittal, favor, and is equivalent to saying that “they” would be free from these calamities, while they should come upon others. See <sup><514></sup>Romans 14:4; <sup><1005></sup>Psalm 1:5; 130:3; <sup><1167></sup>Revelation 6:17. Perhaps, also, there is a reference here to the day of judgment. See the notes at Matthew 24.

**Luke 21:37,38.** See the notes at <sup><2117></sup>Matthew 21:17.

*Came early in the morning* He returned early from the Mount of Olives, and taught in the temple. Our Saviour did not waste his mornings in idleness or sleep. He rose early and repaired to the temple. The people, also, flocked to the sanctuary to hear him. This example is at once an encouragement to early rising and to the early worship of God. It is a reproof of those who spend the part of the day best fitted for devotion in unnecessary sleep; and it shows the propriety, where it can be done, of assembling early in the morning for prayer and the worship of God. Early prayer-meetings have the countenance of the Saviour, and will be found to be eminently conducive to the promotion of religion. The whole example of Jesus goes to show the importance of beginning the day with God, and of lifting up the heart to him for direction, for the supply of our wants, and for preservation from temptation, before the mind is engrossed by the cares, and distracted by the perplexities, and led away by the temptations of this life. Commencing the day with God is like arresting evil at the

fountain; prayer at any other time, without this, is an attempt to arrest it when it has swollen to a stream and rolls on like a torrent. Let the day be begun with God, and the work of piety is easy. Let the world have the ascendancy in the morning, and it will be likely to have it also at noonday and at evening.

## NOTES ON LUKE 22

◀221▶ **Luke 22:1,2.** See the notes at ▶480▶ Matthew 26:1,2.

◀223▶ **Luke 22:3.** *Then entered Satan into Judas* It is not necessary to suppose that Satan entered personally into the body of Judas, but only that he brought him under his influence; he filled his mind with an evil passion, and led him on to betray his Master. The particular passion of which Satan made use was “avarice” — probably the besetting sin of Judas. To show its exceeding evil and baseness, it is only necessary to say that when it produced its “appropriate” effect in this case, it led to the betraying and crucifixion of the Son of God. We may learn, also, that when Satan “tempts” people, he commonly does it by exciting and raising to the highest pitch their native passions. He does not make them act contrary to their nature, but leads them on to “act out” their proper disposition.

*Satan* This word properly means an adversary or an accuser. It is the name which in the Scriptures is commonly given to the prince or leader of evil spirits, and is given to him because he is the “accuser or calumniator” of the righteous (see ▶6120▶ Revelation 12:10; compare ▶8006▶ Job 1:6-9), as well as because he is the “adversary” of God.

*Being of the number of the twelve* One of the twelve apostles. This greatly aggravated his crime. He should have been bound by most tender ties to Jesus. He was one of his family — long with him, and, treated by him with every mark of kindness and confidence; and nothing could more enhance his guilt than thus to make use of this confidence for the commission of one of the basest crimes.

◀224▶ **Luke 22:4-6.** *Chief priests and captains* See the notes at ▶1034▶ Matthew 26:14. See the account of the bargain which Judas made with them explained in the notes at ▶1034▶ Matthew 26:14-16, and ▶4140▶ Mark 14:10,11.

*Absence of the multitude* The multitude, “the people,” were then favorable to Jesus. He had preached in the temple, and many of them believed that he was the Messiah. It was a hazardous thing, therefore, to take him by force, and in their presence, as they might rise and rescue him. Hence, they sought to take him when “he” was away from the multitude; and as Judas

knew of a place where he could be found “alone,” they were glad of the opportunity of so easily securing him.

◀2217▶ **Luke 22:7-13.** See this passage explained in the notes at ▶4157▶ Matthew 26:17-19, and ▶4142▶ Mark 14:12-16.

◀2214▶ **Luke 22:14.** *When the hour was come* The hour of eating the paschal lamb, which was in the evening. See the notes at ▶4153▶ Matthew 26:20.

◀2215▶ **Luke 22:15.** *With desire I have desired* This is a Hebrew form of expression, and means “I have greatly desired.” The reasons why he desired this we may suppose to have been:

1. That, as he was about to leave them, he was desirous once of seeing them together, and of partaking with them of one of the religious privileges of the Jewish dispensation. Jesus was “man” as well as God, and he never undervalued the religious rites of his country, or the blessings of social and religious contact; and there is no impropriety in supposing that even HE might feel that his human nature might be prepared by the service of religion for his great and terrible sufferings.
2. He doubtless wished to take an opportunity to prepare “them” for his sufferings, and to impress upon them more fully the certainty that he was about to leave them, that they might be prepared for it.
3. We may also suppose that he particularly desired it that he might institute for “their” use, and for the edification of all Christians, the supper which is called by his name — “the Lord’s Supper.” All his sufferings were the expression of love to his people, and he was desirous of testifying “always” his regard for their comfort and welfare.

*Before I suffer* Before I die.

◀2216▶ **Luke 22:16.** *Until it be fulfilled* See the notes at ▶4159▶ Matthew 26:29.

◀2217▶ **Luke 22:17.** *And he took the cup and gave thanks* This was not the “sacramental” cup, for that was taken “after” supper, ▶4221▶ Luke 22:20. This was one of the cups which were usually taken during the celebration of the Passover, and pertained to that observance. “After” he had kept this in the usual manner, he instituted the supper which bears his name, using the bread and wine which had been prepared for the Passover, and thus

ingrafted the Lord's Supper on the Passover, or superseded the Passover by another ordinance, which was intended to be perpetual.

◀22:19▶ **Luke 22:19,20.** See the notes at ▶18:26▶ Matthew 26:26-28.

◀22:21▶ **Luke 22:21-23.** See the notes at ▶18:21▶ Matthew 26:21-25.

◀22:24▶ **Luke 22:24.** *A strife* A contention or debate.

*Which of them should be the greatest* The apostles, in common with the Jews generally, had supposed that the Messiah would come as a temporal prince, and in the manner of other princes of the earth — of course, that he would have officers of his government, ministers of state, etc. Their contention was founded on this expectation, and they were disputing which of them should be raised to the highest office. They had before had a similar contention. See ▶18:1▶ Matthew 18:1; 20:20-28. Nothing can be more humiliating than that the disciples should have had “such” contentions, and in such a time and place. That just as Jesus was contemplating his own death, and laboring to prepare them for it, they should strive and contend about office and rank, shows how deeply seated is the love of power; how ambition will find its way into the most secret and sacred places; and how even the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus are sometimes actuated by this most base and wicked feeling.

◀22:25▶ **Luke 22:25.** *The kings of the Gentiles* The kings of the “nations,” or of the earth. They do this, and it is to be expected of them, and it is right. Our Lord does not mean to say that it was wrong that there should be such authority, but that “his” kingdom was to be of a different character, and they were not to expect it there.

*Over them* That is, over the “nations.”

*Are called benefactors* The word “benefactor” is applied to one who bestows “favor” on another. It was applied to kings by way of “compliment or flattery.” Some of them might have been truly benefactors of their people, but this was by no means true of “all.” Yet it was applied to all, and especially to the Roman emperors. It is found applied to them often in the writings of Josephus and Philo.

◀22:26,27▶ **Luke 22:26,27.** *But ye shall not be so* Christ here takes occasion to explain the nature of his kingdom. He assures them that it is established on different principles from those of the world; that his subjects were not to



expect titles, and power, and offices of pomp in his kingdom. He that would be most advanced in “his” kingdom would be he that was most humble; and in order to show them this, he took a towel and girded himself after the manner of a servant, and washed their feet, to show them what ought to be their feelings toward each other. See ~~<B17>~~ John 13:4-17.

*He that sitteth at meat* The master of the feast, or one of his guests.

*But I am among you ...* This was said in connection with his washing their feet. He “showed” them how they ought to feel and act toward each other. “They” ought, therefore, not to aim at office and power, but to be humble, and serve and aid one another.

~~<228>~~ **Luke 22:28.** *My temptations* My trials, my humiliations, and my assaults from the power of Satan and a wicked world.

*And I appoint unto you a kingdom* He assures them here that they should “have” a kingdom — their expectations would be realized. They had continued with him; they had seen how “he” had lived, and to what trials he had been subjected; they had all along expected a kingdom, and he assures them that they should not be disappointed.

*As my Father ...* They had seen how God had appointed a kingdom to “him.” It was not with pomp, and splendor, and external glory, but it was in poverty, want, persecution, and trial. So would “he” appoint to them a kingdom. They should “surely” possess it; but it would be not with external splendor, but by poverty and toil. The original word “appoint” has the force of a “covenant” or compact, and means that it should be “surely” or certainly done, or that he pledged himself to do it. All Christians must enter into the kingdom of heaven after the manner of their Lord — through much tribulation; but, though it must be, as it was with him, by many tears and sorrows, yet they shall surely reach the place of their rest and the reward of heaven, for it is secured to them by the covenant pledge and faithfulness of their Lord and King.

~~<223>~~ **Luke 22:30.** See the notes at ~~<1928>~~ Matthew 19:28.

~~<228>~~ **Luke 22:31.** *Simon* Peter. Jesus, foreseeing the danger of Peter, and knowing that he was about to deny him, took occasion to forewarn him and put him on his guard, and also to furnish him with a solace when he should be brought to repentance.

*Satan hath desired* Satan is the prince of evil. One of his works is to try the faith of believers to place temptations and trials in their way, that they may be tested. Thus God gave Job into his hands, that it might be seen whether he would be found faithful, or would apostatize. See the notes at ~~38007~~ Job 1:7-12. So Satan desired to have Peter in his hands, that he might also try him.

*May sift you as wheat* Grain was agitated or shaken in a kind of fan or sieve. The grain remained in the fan, and the chaff and dust were thrown off. So Christ says that Satan desired to try Peter; to place trials and temptations before him; “to agitate him” to see whether anything of faith would remain, or whether all would not be found to be chaff — mere natural order and false professions.

~~4222~~ **Luke 22:32.** *That thy faith fail not* The word “faith,” here, seems to be used in the sense of religion, or attachment to Christ, and the words “fail not” mean “utterly fail” or fail altogether — that is, apostatize. It is true that the “courage” of Peter failed; it is true that he had not that immediate confidence in Jesus and reliance on him which he had before had; but the prayer of Jesus was that he might not altogether apostatize from the faith. God heard Jesus “always” (~~43142~~ John 11:42); it follows, therefore, that EVERY prayer which he ever offered was answered; and it follows, as he asked here for a specific thing, that that thing was granted; and as he prayed that Peter’s faith might not utterly fail, so it follows that there was no time in which Peter was not really a pious man. Far as he wandered, and grievously as he sinned, yet he well knew that Jesus was the Messiah. He “did know” the man; and though his fears overcame him and led him to aggravated sin, yet the prayer of Christ was prevalent, and he was brought to true repentance.

*When thou art converted* The word “converted” means turned, changed, recovered. The meaning is, when thou art turned from this sin, when thou art recovered from this heinous offence, then use “your” experience to warn and strengthen those who are in danger of like sins. A man may be “converted or turned” from any sin, or any evil course. He is “regenerated” but once — at the beginning of his Christian life; he may be “converted” as often as he falls into sin.

*Strengthen thy brethren* Confirm them, warn them, encourage them. They are in continual danger, also, of sinning. Use your experience to warn them

of their danger, and to comfort and sustain them in their temptations. And from this we learn:

1. That one design of permitting Christians to fall into sin is to show their own weakness and dependence on God; and,
2. That they who have been overtaken in this manner should make use of their experience to warn and preserve others from the same path.

The two epistles of Peter, and his whole life, show that “he” was attentive to this command of Jesus; and in his death he manifested his deep abhorrence of this act of dreadful guilt in denying his blessed Lord, by requesting to be crucified with his head downward, as unworthy to suffer in the same manner that Christ did. Compare the notes at <sup><4218></sup>John 21:18.

<sup><4223></sup>**Luke 22:33,34.** See the notes at <sup><4253></sup>Matthew 26:33-35.

<sup><4225></sup>**Luke 22:35.** *When I sent you ...* See the notes at <sup><4009></sup>Matthew 10:9,10.

*Lacked ye ...* Did you want anything? Did not God fully provide for you? He refers to this to convince them that his words were true; that their past experience should lead them to put confidence in him and in God.

<sup><4226></sup>**Luke 22:36.** *But now* The Saviour says the times are changed. “Before,” he sent them out only for a little time. They were in their own country. Their journeys would be short, and there was no need that they should make preparation for a long absence, or for encountering great dangers. But “now” they were to go into the wide world, among strangers, trials, dangers, and wants. And as the time was near; as he was about to die; as these dangers pressed on, it was proper that they should make provision for what was before them.

*A purse* See the notes at <sup><4009></sup>Matthew 10:9. He intimates that they should “now” take money, as it would be necessary to provide for their wants in traveling.

*Scrip* See the notes at <sup><4000></sup>Matthew 10:10.

*And he that hath no sword* There has been much difficulty in understanding why Jesus directed his disciples to arm themselves, as if it was his purpose to make a defense. It is certain that the spirit of his religion is against the use of the sword, and that it was not his purpose to defend himself against

Judas. But it should be remembered that these directions about the purse, the scrip, and the sword were not made with reference to his “being taken” in the garden, but with reference “to their future life.” The time of the trial in Gethsemane was just at hand; nor was there “time” then, if no other reason existed, to go and make the purchase. It altogether refers to their future life. They were going into the midst of dangers. The country was infested with robbers and wild beasts. It was customary to go armed. He tells them of those dangers — of the necessity of being prepared in the usual way to meet them. This, then, is not to be considered as a specific, positive “command” to procure a sword, but an intimation that great dangers were before them; that their manner of life would be changed, and that they would need the provisions “appropriate to that kind of life.” The “common” preparation for that manner of life consisted in money, provisions, and arms; and he foretells them of that manner of life by giving them directions commonly understood to be appropriate to it. It amounts, then, to a “prediction” that they would soon leave the places which they had been accustomed to, and go into scenes of poverty, want, and danger, where they would feel the necessity of money, provisions, and the means of defense. All, therefore, that the passage justifies is:

**1.** That it is proper for people to provide beforehand for their wants, and for ministers and missionaries as well as any others.

**2.** That self-defense is lawful.

Men encompassed with danger may lawfully “defend” their lives. It does not prove that it is lawful to make “offensive” war on a nation or an individual.

*Let him sell his garment* His “mantle” or his outer garment. See the notes at <sup><4150></sup>Matthew 5:40. The meaning is, let him procure one at any expense, even if he is obliged to sell his clothes for it intimating that the danger would be very great and pressing.

<sup><2237></sup>**Luke 22:37.** *This that is written* See the notes at <sup><2512></sup>Isaiah 53:12.

*Was reckoned among the transgressors* Not reckoned as a transgressor, but “among or with” them — that is, he was treated as transgressors are. He was put to death in their company, and as he “would have been” if he had been a transgressor. He was innocent, holy, harmless, and undefiled, <sup><3126></sup>Hebrews 7:26. God knew this always, and could not “think” of him, or

make him “to be” otherwise than he was; yet it pleased him to bruise him, and to give him into the hands of people who did reckon him as a transgressor, and who treated him accordingly.

*Have an end* This may either mean, “shall be surely accomplished,” or “they are about to be fulfilled,” or “are now fulfilled.” The former is probably the meaning, denoting that “every” prophecy in regard to him would certainly be accomplished.

**Luke 22:38.** *Are two swords* The Galileans, it is said, often went armed. The Essenes did so also. The reason was that the country was full of robbers and wild beasts, and it was necessary to carry, in their travels, some means of defense. It seems that the disciples followed the customs of the country, and had with THEM some means of defense, though they had but two swords among the twelve.

*It is enough* It is difficult to understand this. Some suppose that it is spoken “ironically;” as if he had said, “You are bravely armed indeed, with two swords among twelve men, and to meet such a host!” Others, that he meant to reprove them for understanding him “literally,” as if he meant that they were then to procure swords for “immediate” battle. As if he had said, “This is absurd, or a perversion of my meaning. I did not intend this, but merely to foretell you of impending dangers after my death.” It is to be observed that he did not say “the two swords are enough,” but “it is enough;” perhaps meaning simply, enough has been said. Other matters press on, and you will yet understand what I mean.

**Luke 22:39-46.** See the notes at **Matthew 26:30-46;** **Mark 14:26-42.**

**Luke 22:43.** *Strengthening him* His human nature, to sustain the great burden that was upon his soul. Some have supposed from this that he was not divine as well as human; for if he was “God,” how could an angel give any strength or comfort? and why did not the divine nature “alone” sustain the human? But the fact that he was “divine” does not affect the case at all. It might be asked with the same propriety, If he was, as all admit, the friend of God, and beloved of God, and holy, why, if he was a mere man, did not “God” sustain him alone, without an angel’s intervening? But the objection in neither case would have any force. The “man, Christ Jesus,” was suffering. His human nature was in agony, and it is the “manner” of God to sustain the afflicted by the intervention of

others; nor was there any more “unfitness” in sustaining the human nature of his Son in this manner than any other sufferer.

◀224▶ **Luke 22:44.** *In an agony* See this verse explained in the notes at  
 ▶182▶ Matthew 26:42-44.

◀225▶ **Luke 22:45.** *Sleeping for sorrow* On account of the greatness of their sorrow. See the notes at ▶184▶ Matthew 26:40.

◀227▶ **Luke 22:47-53.** See this explained in ▶188▶ Matthew 26:48-56.

◀228▶ **Luke 22:48.** *Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* By the “Son of man” was evidently meant “the Messiah.” Judas had had the most satisfactory evidence of that, and did not doubt it. A kiss was the sign of affection. By that slight artifice Judas thought to conceal his base purpose. Jesus with severity reproaches him for it. Every word is emphatic. “Betrayest” thou — dost thou violate all thy obligations of fidelity, and deliver thy Master up to death? Betrayest “thou” — thou, so long with him, so much favored, so sure that this is the Messiah? Betrayest thou “the Son of man” — the Messiah, the hope of the nations, the desire of all people, the world’s Redeemer? Betrayest thou the Son of man “with a kiss” — the sign of friendship and affection employed in a base and wicked purpose, intending to add deceit, disguise, and the prostitution of a mark of affection to the “crime of treason?” Every word of this must have gone to the very soul of Judas. Perhaps few reproofs of crime more resemble the awful searchings of the souls of the wicked in the day of judgment.

◀225▶ **Luke 22:54-62.** See the notes at ▶187▶ Matthew 26:57-75.

◀225▶ **Luke 22:63-71.** See the notes at ▶187▶ Matthew 26:57-68.

## NOTES ON LUKE 23

◀23:1▶ **Luke 23:1.** See the notes at ▶47:1▶ Matthew 27:1,2.

◀23:2▶ **Luke 23:2.** *This fellow* The word “fellow” is not in the original. It conveys a notion of “contempt,” which no doubt they “felt,” but which is not expressed in the “Greek,” and which it is not proper should be expressed in the translation. It might be translated, “We found this man.”

*Perverting the nation* That is, exciting them to sedition and tumults. This was a mere wanton accusation, but it was plausible before a Roman magistrate; for,

1. The Galileans, as Josephus testifies, were prone to seditions and tumults.
2. Jesus drew multitudes after him, and they thought it was easy to show that this was itself promoting tumults and seditions.

*Forbidding ...* About their charges they were very cautious and cunning. They did not say that he “taught” that people should not give tribute — that would have been too gross a charge, and would have been easily refuted; but it was an “inference” which they drew. They said it “followed” from his doctrine. He professed to be a king. They “inferred,” therefore, if “he” was “a king,” that he must hold that it was not right to acknowledge allegiance to any foreign prince; and if they could make “this” out, they supposed that Pilate “must” condemn him of course.

*Tribute* Taxes.

*Caesar* The Roman emperor, called also Tiberius. The name “Caesar” was common to the Roman emperors, as “Pharaoh” was to the Egyptian kings. “All” the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh, or “the” Pharaoh; so all the Roman emperors were called “Caesar.”

◀23:3▶ **Luke 23:3.** See the notes at ▶47:1▶ Matthew 27:11.

◀23:4▶ **Luke 23:4.** *I find no fault* I see no evidence that he is guilty of what you charge him with. This was after Pilate had taken Jesus into the judgment-hall by himself and examined him “privately,” and had been satisfied in regard to the nature of his kingdom. See ▶48:33▶ John 18:33-38. He was “then” satisfied that though he claimed to be “a king,” yet his kingdom

was not of this world, and that “his” claims did not interfere with those of Caesar.

◀23:5▶ **Luke 23:5.** *The more fierce* The more urgent and pressing. They saw that there was a prospect of losing their cause, and they attempted to press on Pilate the point that would be most likely now to affect him. Pilate had, in fact, acquitted him of the charge of being an enemy to Caesar, and they, therefore, urged the other point more vehemently.

*Stirreth up the people* Excites them to tumult and sedition.

*All Jewry* All Judea.

*From Galilee to this place* To Jerusalem — that is, throughout the whole country. It is not merely in one place, but from one end of the land to the other.

◀23:6▶ **Luke 23:6.** *Whether he were a Galilean* He asked this because, if he was, he properly belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, who reigned over Galilee.

◀23:7▶ **Luke 23:7.** *Herod’s jurisdiction* Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great. This was the same Herod that put John the Baptist to death. Jesus had passed the most of his life in the part of the country where he ruled, and it was, therefore, considered that he belonged to his jurisdiction — that is, that it belonged to Herod, not to Pilate, to try this cause.

◀23:10▶ **Luke 23:10.** *Vehemently accused him* Violently or unjustly accused him, endeavoring to make it appear that he had been guilty of sedition in Herod’s province.

◀23:11▶ **Luke 23:11.** *Herod with his men of war* With his soldiers, or his body-guard. It is probable that in traveling he had “a guard” to attend him constantly.

*Set him at nought* Treated him with contempt and ridicule.

*A gorgeous robe* A white or shining robe, for this is the meaning of the original. The Roman princes wore “purple” robes, and “Pilate,” therefore, put such a robe on Jesus. The Jewish kings wore a “white” robe, which was often rendered very shining or gorgeous by much tinsel or silver interwoven. Josephus says that the robe which Agrippa wore was so bright



with silver that when the sun shone on it, it so dazzled the eyes that it was difficult to look on it. The Jews and Romans, therefore, decked him in the manner appropriate to their own country, for purposes of mockery. All this was unlawful and malicious, as there was not the least evidence of his guilt.

*Sent him to Pilate* It was by the interchange of these civilites that they were made friends. It would seem that Pilate sent him to Herod as a token of civility and respect, and with a design, perhaps, of putting an end to their quarrel. Herod returned the civility, and it resulted in their reconciliation.

**Luke 23:12.** *Made friends together ...* What had been the cause of their quarrel is unknown. It is commonly supposed that it was Pilate's slaying the Galileans in Jerusalem, as related in **Luke 13:1,2**. The occasion of their reconciliation seems to have been the civility and respect which Pilate showed to Herod in this case. It was not because they were united in "hating" Jesus, as is often the case with wicked people, for Pilate was certainly desirous of releasing him, and "both" considered him merely as an object of ridicule and sport. It is true, however, that wicked people, at variance in other things, are often united in opposing and ridiculing Christ and his followers; and that enmities of long standing are sometimes made up, and the most opposite characters brought together, simply to oppose religion. Compare **Psalm 83:5-7**.

**Luke 23:15.** *Nothing worthy of death is done unto him* Deserving of death. The charges are not proved against him. They had had every opportunity of proving them, first before Pilate and then before Herod, unjustly subjecting him to trial before "two" men in succession, and thus giving them a double opportunity of condemning him, and yet, after all, he was declared by both to be innocent. There could be no better evidence that he "was" innocent.

**Luke 23:16.** *I will therefore chastise him* The word "chastise" here means to "scourge or to whip." This was usually done before capital punishment, to increase the sufferings of the man condemned. It is not easy to see the reason why, if Pilate supposed Jesus to be "innocent," he should propose publicly to scourge him. It was as "really" unjust to do that as it was to crucify him. But probably he expected by this to conciliate the minds of his accusers; to show them that he was willing to gratify them if it "could" be done with propriety; and perhaps he expected that by seeing him whipped and disgraced, and condemned to ridicule, to contempt, and

to suffering, they would be satisfied. It is farther remarked that among the Romans it was competent for a magistrate to inflict a “slight” punishment on a man when a charge of gross offence was not fully made out, or where there was not sufficient testimony to substantiate the precise charge alleged. All this shows,

1. The palpable “injustice” of our Lord’s condemnation;
2. The persevering malice and obstinacy of the Jews; and,
3. The want of firmness in Pilate.

He should have released him at once; but the love of “popularity” led him to the murder of the Son of God. Man should do his duty in all situations; and he that, like Pilate, seeks only for public favor and popularity, will assuredly be led into crime.

<sup><2317></sup>**Luke 23:17.** See the notes at <sup><12715></sup>Matthew 27:15.

<sup><2318></sup>**Luke 23:18-23.** See the notes at <sup><12721></sup>Matthew 27:20-23.

<sup><2323></sup>**Luke 23:23-25.** See the notes at <sup><12726></sup>Matthew 27:26.

<sup><2326></sup>**Luke 23:26.** See the notes at <sup><12732></sup>Matthew 27:32.

*After Jesus* Probably to bear one end of the cross. Jesus was feeble and unable to bear it alone, and they compelled Simon to help him.

<sup><2328></sup>**Luke 23:28.** *Daughters of Jerusalem* Women of Jerusalem. This was a common mode of speaking among the Hebrews.

*Weep for yourselves ...* This refers to the calamities that were about to come upon them in the desolation of their city by the Romans.

<sup><2330></sup>**Luke 23:30.** *To the mountains, Fall on us ...* This is an image of great calamities and judgments. So great will be the calamities that they will seek for shelter from the storm, and will call on the hills to protect them. The same figure is used respecting the wicked in the day of judgment in <sup><11136></sup>Revelation 6:16,17. Compare also <sup><23121></sup>Isaiah 2:21.

<sup><2331></sup>**Luke 23:31.** *For if they do these things in a green tree ...* This seems to be a proverbial expression. A “green” tree is not easily set on fire; a dry

one is easily kindled and burns rapidly; and the meaning of the passage is

“If they, the Romans, do these things to me, who am innocent and blameless; if they punish me in this manner in the face of justice, what will they not do in relation to this guilty nation? What security have they that heavier judgments will not come upon them? What desolations and woes may not be expected when injustice and oppression have taken the place of justice, and have set up a rule over this wicked people?”

Our Lord alludes, evidently, to the calamities that would come upon them by the Romans in the destruction of their city and temple. The passage may be applied, however, without impropriety, and with great beauty and force, to the punishment of the wicked in the future world. Thus applied, it means that the sufferings of the Saviour, as compared with the sufferings of the guilty, were like the burning of a green tree as compared with the burning of one that is dry. A green tree is not adapted to burn; a dry one is. So the Saviour — innocent, pure, and holy — stood in relation to suffering. There were sufferings which an innocent being could not endure. There was remorse of conscience, the sense of guilt, punishment properly so called, and the eternity of woes. He had the consciousness of innocence, and he would not suffer forever. He had no passions to be enkindled that would rage and ruin the soul. The sinner is “adapted” to sufferings, like a dry tree to the fire. He is guilty, and will suffer all the horrors of remorse of conscience. He will be punished literally. He has raging and impetuous passions, and they will be enkindled in hell, and will rage forever and ever. The meaning is, that if the innocent Saviour suffered “so much,” the sufferings of the sinner forever in hell must be more unspeakably dreadful. Yet who could endure the sufferings of the Redeemer on the cross for a single day? Who could bear them forever and ever, aggravated by all the horrors of a guilty conscience, and all the terrors of unrestrained anger, and hate, and fear, and wrath? “Why WILL the wicked die?”

**Luke 23:32,33.** See the notes at **Matthew 27:35,38.**

**Luke 23:34.** *Father, forgive them* This is a fulfillment of the prophecy in **Isaiah 53:12**: “He made intercession for the transgressors.” The prayer was offered for those who were guilty of putting him to death. It is not quite certain whether he referred to the “Jews” or “to the Roman

soldiers.” Perhaps he referred to both. The Romans knew not what they did, as they were really ignorant that he was the Son of God, and as they were merely obeying the command of their rulers. The Jews knew, indeed, that he was “innocent,” and they had evidence, if they would have looked at it, that he was the Messiah; but they did not know what would be the effect of their guilt; they did not know what judgments and calamities they were bringing down upon their country. It may be added, also, that, though they had abundant evidence, if they would look at it, that he was the Messiah, and enough to leave then without excuse, yet they did not, “in fact,” believe that he was the Saviour promised by the prophets, and had not, “in fact,” any proper sense of his rank and dignity as “the Lord of glory.” If they had had, they would not have crucified him, as we cannot suppose that they would knowingly put to death their own Messiah, the hope of the nation, and him who had been so long promised to the fathers. See the notes at [1 Corinthians 2:8](#). We may learn from this prayer:

- 1.** The duty of praying for our enemies, even when they are endeavoring most to injure us.
- 2.** The thing for which we should pray for them is that “God” would pardon them and give them better minds.
- 3.** The power and excellence of the Christian religion. No other religion “teaches” people to pray for the forgiveness of enemies; no other “disposes” them to do it. Men of the world seek for “revenge;” the Christian bears reproaches and persecutions with patience, and prays that God would pardon those who injure them, and save them from their sins.
- 4.** The greatest sinners, through the intercession of Jesus, may obtain pardon. God heard him, and still hears him “always,” and there is no reason to doubt that many of his enemies and murderers obtained forgiveness and life. Compare [Acts 2:37,42,43; 6:7; 14:1](#).

*They know not what they do* It was done through ignorance, [Acts 3:17](#). Paul says that, “had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory,” [1 Corinthians 2:8](#). Ignorance does not excuse altogether a crime if the ignorance be willful, but it diminishes its guilt. They “had” evidence; they “might” have learned his character; they “might” have known what they were doing, and they “might” be held answerable for all this. But Jesus here shows the compassion of his heart, and as they were “really” ignorant, whatever might have been the cause of their ignorance,

he implores God to pardon them. He even urges it as a “reason” why they should be pardoned, that they were ignorant of what they were doing; and though people are often guilty for their ignorance, yet God often in compassion overlooks it, averts his anger, and grants them the blessings of pardon and life. So he forgave Paul, for he “did it in ignorance, in unbelief,” <sup><4013></sup>1 Timothy 1:13. So God “winked” at the ignorance of the Gentiles, <sup><4173></sup>Acts 17:30. Yet this is no excuse, and no evidence of safety, for those who in our day contemptuously put away from them and their children the means of instruction.

<sup><2235></sup>**Luke 23:35-39.** See the notes at <sup><1274></sup>Matthew 27:41-44.

<sup><2238></sup>**Luke 23:38.** *In letters of Greek ...* See the notes at <sup><1275></sup>Matthew 27:37.

<sup><2239></sup>**Luke 23:39.** *One of the malefactors* Matthew (<sup><1274></sup>Matthew 27:44) says “the thieves — cast the same in his teeth.” See the apparent contradiction in these statements reconciled in the notes at that place.

*If thou be Christ* If thou art the Messiah; if thou art what thou dost pretend to be. This is a taunt or reproach of the same kind as that of the priests in <sup><2235></sup>Luke 23:35.

*Save thyself and us* Save our lives. Deliver us from the cross. This man did not seek for salvation truly; he asked not to be delivered from his sins; if he had, Jesus would also have heard him. Men often, in sickness and affliction, call upon God. They are earnest in prayer. They ask of God to save them, but it is only to save them from “temporal” death. It is not to be saved from their sins, and the consequence is, that when God “does” raise them up, they forget their promises, and live as they did before, as this robber “would” have done if Jesus had heard his prayer and delivered him from the cross.

<sup><2240></sup>**Luke 23:40.** *Dost not thou fear God ...* You are condemned to die as well as he. It is improper for you to rail on him as the rulers and Romans do. God is just, and you are hastening to his bar, and you should, therefore, fear him, and fear that he will punish you for railing on this innocent man.

*Same condemnation* Condemnation to death; not death for the same thing, but the same “kind” of death.

◀23:41▶ **Luke 23:41.** *Due reward of our deeds* The proper punishment for our crimes. They had been highwaymen, and it was just that they should die.

◀23:42▶ **Luke 23:42.** *Remember me* This is a phrase praying for favor, or asking him to grant him an “interest” in his kingdom, or to acknowledge him as one of his followers. It implied that he believed that Jesus was what he claimed to be — the Messiah; that, though he was dying with them, yet he would set up his kingdom; and that he had full power to bless him, though about to expire. It is possible that this man might have heard him preach before his crucifixion, and have learned there the nature of his kingdom; or it may have been that while on the cross Jesus had taken occasion to acquaint them with the nature of his kingdom. While he might have been doing this, one of the malefactors may have continued to rail on him while the other became truly penitent. Such a result of preaching the gospel would not have been unlike what has often occurred since, where, while the gospel has been proclaimed, one has been “taken and another left;” one has been melted to repentance, another has been more hardened in guilt. The promise which follows shows that this prayer was answered. This was a case of repentance in the last hour, the trying hour of death; and it has been remarked that one was brought to repentance there, to show that no one should “despair” on a dying bed; and “but” one, that none should be presumptuous and delay repentance to that awful moment.

*When thou comest ...* It is impossible now to fix the precise idea which this robber had of Christ’s coming. Whether it was that he expected that he would rise from the dead, as some of the Jews supposed the Messiah would; or whether he referred to the day of judgment; or whether to an immediate translation to his kingdom in the heavens, we cannot tell. All that we know is, that he fully believed him to be the Messiah, and that he desired to obtain an interest in that kingdom which he knew he would establish.

◀23:43▶ **Luke 23:43.** *Today ...* It is not probable that the dying thief expected that his prayer would be so soon answered. It is rather to be supposed that he looked to some “future” period when the Messiah would rise or would return; but Jesus told him that his prayer would be answered that very day, implying, evidently, that it would be “immediately” at death. This is the more remarkable, as those who were crucified commonly lingered for several days on the cross before they died; but Jesus foresaw that measures

would be taken to “hasten” their death, and assured him that “that” day he should receive an answer to his prayer and be with him in his kingdom.

*Paradise* This is a word of “Persian” origin, and means “a garden,” particularly a garden of pleasure, filled with trees, and shrubs, and fountains, and flowers. In hot climates such gardens were especially pleasant, and hence, they were attached to the mansions of the rich and to the palaces of princes. The word came thus to denote any place of happiness, and was used particularly to denote the abodes of the blessed in another world. The Romans spoke of their Elysium, and the Greeks of the gardens of Hesperides, where the trees bore golden fruit. The garden of Eden means, also, the garden of “pleasure,” and in <sup><OCES></sup>Genesis 2:8 the Septuagint renders the word “Eden by Paradise.” Hence, this name in the Scriptures comes to denote the abodes of the blessed in the other world. See the notes at <sup><7124></sup>2 Corinthians 12:4. The Jews supposed that the souls of the righteous would be received into such a place, and those of the wicked cast down to Gehenna until the time of the judgment. They had many fables about this state which it is unnecessary to repeat. The plain meaning of the passage is, “Today thou shalt be made happy, or be received to a state of blessedness with me after death.” It is to be remarked that Christ says nothing about the “place where” it should be, nor of the condition of those there, excepting that it is a place of blessedness, and that its happiness is to commence immediately after death (see also <sup><1023></sup>Philippians 1:23); but from the narrative we may learn:

1. That the soul will exist separately from the body; for, while the thief and the Saviour would be in Paradise, their “bodies” would be on the cross or in the grave.
2. That immediately after death — the same day — the souls of the righteous will be made happy. They will feel that they are secure; they will be received among the just; and they will have the assurance of a glorious immortality.
3. That state will differ from the condition of the wicked. The promise was made to but one on the cross, and there is no evidence whatever that the other entered there. See also the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, <sup><2169></sup>Luke 16:19-31.
4. It is the chief glory of this state and of heaven to be permitted to see Jesus Christ and to be with him: “Thou shalt be with me.” “I desire to

depart and to be with Christ,” <sup><1023></sup>Philippians 1:23. See also <sup><6023></sup>Revelation 21:23; 5:9-14.

<sup><0234></sup>**Luke 23:44-46.** See the notes at <sup><0235></sup>Matthew 27:45-50.

<sup><0237></sup>**Luke 23:47-49.** See the notes at <sup><0232></sup>Matthew 27:52-55.

<sup><0238></sup>**Luke 23:48.** *The things which were done* The earthquake, the darkness, and the sufferings of Jesus.

*Smote their breasts* In token of alarm, fear, and anguish. They saw the judgments of God; they saw the guilt of the rulers; and they feared the farther displeasure of the Almighty.

<sup><0239></sup>**Luke 23:50-56.** See the notes at <sup><0237></sup>Matthew 27:57-61; <sup><4150></sup>Mark 15:42-47.



## NOTES ON LUKE 24

**Luke 24:1-12.** See the notes at **Matthew 28:1-11**.

**Luke 24:13.** “Two of them.” Two of the disciples. The name of one of them was “Cleopas,” **Luke 24:18**. Many have supposed that the other was Luke, and that he omitted his own name from modesty. Others have supposed that it was Peter. See **Luke 24:34**; **1 Corinthians 15:5**. There is no evidence to guide us here. Dr. Lightfoot has shown that “Cleopas” is the same name as “Alpheus,” who was the father of the apostle James, **Matthew 10:3**.

*Emmaus* In regard to the locality of Emmaus, it seems quite probable that it is the same village which is referred to by Josephus (“Jewish Wars,” vii. 6, Section 6), who states that, after the destruction of Jerusalem, Titus gave “Emmaus,” distant from Jerusalem threescore furlongs, to 800 of his troops, whom he had dismissed from his army, for their habitation. Dr. Thomson (“The Land and the Book,” vol. ii. p. 307, 540) regards it as the present Kuriet el ‘Aineb, which Dr. Robinson identifies with Kirjath-jearim. Of this place he says:

“Kuriet el ‘Aineb itself would be the proper distance from Jerusalem, and being on the road to Jaffa, and on the dividing ridge between the plain and the mountains, the Roman emperor might have deemed it an advantageous post for a colony made up of his disbanded soldiers, who could keep in check the surrounding country. Certain it is that in these later ages the occupants of this place have controlled the whole adjacent region, and for many a generation exercised their lawless tyranny upon helpless pilgrims.

“It took just three hours’ moderate riding from Kuriet el ‘Aineb to Jerusalem: first, a long descent into Wady Hanina, which passes between it and Soba; then a similar ascent, succeeded by a very steep pass, and a very slippery path down to Kulonia. At this place are some heavy foundations of church, convent, or castle by the road-side, which may be of almost any age, and also gardens of fruit-trees, irrigated by a fountain of excellent water. Kulonia is on a hill north of the road, and appears in a fair way to become a ruin itself before long. The path then winds up a valley, and stretches

over a dreary waste of bare rocks until within a mile of the city, when the view opens upon its naked ramparts and the mysterious regions toward the Dead Sea.”

*Threescore furlongs* Sixty furlongs, or about seven or eight miles. It is not certain that these were apostles, but the contrary seems to be implied in <sup><24B></sup>Luke 24:33. See the notes at that verse. If they were not, it is probable that they were intimate disciples, who may have been much with the Saviour during the latter part of his ministry and the closing scenes of his life. But it is wholly unknown why they were going to Emmaus. It may have been that this was their native place, or that they had friends in the vicinity. They seem to have given up all for lost, and to have come to the conclusion that Jesus was not the Messiah, though they naturally conversed about it, and there were many things which they could not explain. Their Master had been crucified contrary to their expectation, their hopes dashed, their anticipation disappointed, and they were now returning in sadness, and very naturally conversed, in the way, of the things which had happened in Jerusalem.

<sup><24C></sup>**Luke 24:15.** *Communed together* Talked together.

*And reasoned* They reasoned, doubtless, about the probability or improbability that Jesus was the Messiah; about the evidence of his resurrection; about what was to be done in the present state of things.

*Jesus himself drew near ...* The disciples were properly employed. Their minds were anxious about the state of things, and they endeavored to arrive at the truth. In this state of things Jesus came to solve their doubts, and to establish them in the belief that he was the Christ; and we may learn from this that Christ will guide those who are sincerely endeavoring to know the truth. They who candidly and seriously endeavor to ascertain what is true and right he will direct; and often in an unexpected manner he will appear, to dissipate their doubts and to scatter all their perplexities. “Our” duty is sincerely to strive to ascertain the truth, and to do his will; and if his people do this, he will not leave them to perplexity and wandering.

<sup><24D></sup>**Luke 24:16.** *Their eyes were holden* This expression is used merely to denote that they did not “know” who he was. It does not appear that there was anything supernatural or miraculous in it, or that God used any

power to blind them. It may easily be accounted for without any such supposition; for,

**1.** Jesus appeared “in another form” (<sup><41162></sup>Mark 16:12) — that is, different from his “usual” appearance.

**2.** They were not “expecting” to see him — indeed, they did not suppose that he was alive, and it required the strongest evidence to convince them that he was really risen from the dead.

<sup><2217></sup>**Luke 24:17.** *What manner of communications ...* What is the subject of your conversation? What is it that has so much affected your minds? They were deeply affected in the recollection of the death of Jesus; and, as became all Christians, they were conversing about him, and were sad at the overwhelming events that had come upon them.

<sup><2218></sup>**Luke 24:18.** *Art thou only a stranger? ...* This is an expression of surprise that he should be unacquainted with an affair that had made so much noise, and that had been attended with so remarkable circumstances. The word “stranger” here denotes one who had come to reside at a place only for a “time,” not a permanent inhabitant. Many Jews came up from all parts of the world to Jerusalem, to keep the Passover there. They appear to have taken Jesus to be such a stranger or foreigner. The meaning of this verse may be thus expressed: “The affair concerning which we are sad has been well known, and has made a great talk and noise, so that all, even the strangers who have come up to remain there but a little time, are well acquainted with it. Art thou the “only one” of them who has not heard it? Is everybody so well acquainted with it, and thou hast not heard of it? It is a matter of surprise, and we cannot account for it.”

<sup><2219></sup>**Luke 24:19.** *A prophet* A teacher sent from God. They did not now call him the “Messiah,” for his “death” had led them to doubt that, but they had no doubt that he was a distinguished “prophet.” The evidence of that was so clear that they “could” not call it in question.

*Mighty in deed* Powerful in working miracles, in raising the dead, healing the sick, etc.

*In word* In teaching.

*Before God and all the people* Manifestly; publicly. So that “God” owned him, and the people regarded him as a distinguished teacher.

<24> **Luke 24:20.** See the notes at <165> Matthew 26:59-66.

<24> **Luke 24:21.** *We trusted* We hoped and expected.

*Should have redeemed Israel* That he was the Messiah, who would have delivered the nation from the Romans.

*Besides all this* It is to be observed that Cleopas states things just as they occurred to his own mind. There is little connection. His mind is confused and distracted. There were so many things that were remarkable in Jesus; there was so much evidence that he was the Messiah; their hopes had been so suddenly dashed by his death, and the succeeding events had been so wonderful, that his mind was confused, and he knew not what to think. The things which he now stated served to increase his perplexity. The expressions here are perfectly natural. They bespeak an agitated mind. They are simple touches of nature, which show that the book was not forged. If the book had been the work of imposture, this artless and perplexed narrative would not have been thought of.

*Today is the third day ...* Jesus had foretold them that he would rise on the third day. This they did not understand; but it is not improbable that they looked to this day expecting something wonderful, and that the visit to the sepulchre had called it to their recollection, and they were more and more amazed when they put all these things together. As if they had said, “The third day is come, and we have not seen him. Yet we begin to remember his promise — the angels have informed us that he is alive — but we do not know how to put these things together, or what to make of them.”

<24> **Luke 24:22,23.** *Certain women* See <181> Matthew 28:1-7; <312> John 20:12.

*A vision of angels* An appearance of angels, or they had seen angels. See <312> John 20:12.

<24> **Luke 24:24.** *Certain of them which were with us* Peter and John. See <312> John 20:2-9.

<24> **Luke 24:25.** *O fools* The word “fool” sometimes is a term of reproach denoting “wickedness.” In this sense we are forbidden to employ it in addressing another, <4152> Matthew 5:22. That, however, is a different word in the Greek from the one which occurs here. The one there used implies contempt, but the one employed in this place denotes “weakness or

dulness.” He reproached them for not seeing what he had himself so clearly predicted, and what had been foretold by the prophets. The word used in the original does not imply as much “reproach” as the word “fool” does among us. It was not an expression of “contempt;” it was an expression denoting merely that they were “thoughtless,” and that they did not properly “attend to” the evidence that he must die and rise again.

*Slow of heart to believe* Not quick to perceive. Dull of learning. They had suffered their previous opinions and prejudices to prevent their seeing the evidence that he must die and rise from the dead.

*All that the prophets have spoken* Respecting the character and sufferings of the Messiah. See the notes at <sup><2267></sup>Luke 24:27.

<sup><2266></sup>**Luke 24:26.** *Ought not Christ ...* Ought not the “Messiah.” Was there not evidence that he would do it? and was it not indispensable that he should, in order to fulfil the prophecies? The “necessity” of his suffering these things referred to “here” was that it was foretold that he “would.” The reason why it was predicted, and why it was necessary that it should occur, was that it was proper that God should manifest his justice, and do honor to his law, and secure the due regard for his government, while he pardoned the guilty.

<sup><2267></sup>**Luke 24:27.** *Beginning at Moses* At the “writings” of Moses, or at the beginning of the Old Testament; or rather the word “beginning” should be separated from what follows, denoting simply that he “commenced” his discourse, and not that he began at the prophets as well as at Moses; thus, “And commencing his discourse, or replying to them, he expounded from Moses and the prophets,” etc.

*All the prophets* The books of the Old Testament generally.

*He expounded* He explained or interpreted it to them. Probably He showed them that their notions of the Messiah were not according to the Scriptures. “They” expected a temporal prince; they were perplexed because Jesus had not assumed the regal power, but had been put to death. He showed them that according to the prophecies he ought to suffer, and that his “death,” therefore, was no argument that he was not the Messiah.

*In all the scriptures* In all the “writings” of the Old Testament. They were called “scriptures” because they were “written,” the art of printing being then unknown.

*The things concerning himself* Concerning the Messiah. It does not appear that he “applied” them to himself, but left them, probably, to make the application. He showed what the Scriptures foretold, and “they” saw that these things applied to Jesus of Nazareth, and began to be satisfied that he was the Messiah. The most striking passages foretelling the character and sufferings of Christ are the following, which we may suppose it possible our Saviour dwelt upon to convince them that, though he was crucified, yet he was the Christ: <0015>Genesis 3:15; <0515>Deuteronomy 18:15; <0410>Genesis 49:10; <0205>Numbers 21:8,9; Isaiah 53; <2705>Daniel 9:25-27; <3306>Isaiah 9:6,7; Psalm 110; 16; 22; <3002>Malachi 4:2-6.

<0205>**Luke 24:28.** *He made as though he would have gone further* He did not “say” he would go farther, but he kept on as if it was not his intention to stop, and doubtless he “would” have gone on if they had not constrained him to tarry.

<0205>**Luke 24:29.** *Constrained him* They urged him, or pressingly invited him. They did not yet perceive that it was Jesus, but they had been charmed and delighted with his discourse, and they wished to hear him farther. Christians are delighted with communion with the Saviour. They seek it as the chief object of their desire, and they find their chief pleasure in fellowship with him. The two disciples felt it a privilege to entertain the stranger, as they supposed, who had so charmed them with his discourse; and so those to whom the gospel is preached, and who love it, feel it a privilege, and not a burden, to show kindness to those who bear to them the message of salvation.

*Abide with us* Remain with us, or pass the night in our house.

<0205>**Luke 24:30.** *Sat at meat* Reclined at the table, or while he was at supper.

*He took bread and blessed it ...* This was the office of the master of a feast, and perhaps this first attracted particularly their attention. Though he was in “their” house, yet he acted as “master” of the feast, as he used to do with them before his death. Perhaps, also, as he “gave” them the bread, they observed the “prints” in his hands, and they knew that it was Jesus. This was not a “sacramental,” but a common supper; yet our Saviour sought a blessing on the food, and thus set an example to all his followers to acknowledge God in their daily gifts, and to seek his benediction in all their enjoyments.

**◀226▶ Luke 24:31.** *Their eyes were opened* The obscurity was removed. They saw him to be the Messiah. Their doubts were gone, and they saw clearly that he was risen, and was truly, as they had long hoped, the Saviour of people. It is not meant that they were before “blind,” but that they did not know until then who he was.

*He vanished out of their sight* He suddenly departed. It does not appear that there was anything miraculous in this, but, during their surprise, he took the opportunity suddenly to withdraw from them.

**◀227▶ Luke 24:32.** *Our heart burn within us* This is an expression denoting the deep interest and pleasure which they had felt in his discourse before they knew who he was. They now recalled his instruction; they remembered how his words reached the “heart” as he spoke to them; how convincingly he had showed them that the Messiah ought to suffer, and how, while he talked to them of the Christ that they so much loved, their hearts glowed with intense love. This feeling was not confined to them alone. All the followers of Jesus know how precious and tender are the communications of the Saviour, and how the heart glows with love as they think or hear of his life, and sufferings, and death.

*He opened to us* He explained to us the Scriptures. See **◀227▶ Luke 24:27.**

This narrative shows us,

- 1.** How blind people may be to the plainest doctrines of the Scriptures until they are explained to them. These disciples had often read or heard the Scriptures, but never, until then, did they fully understand that the Messiah must suffer.
- 2.** It is proper there should be those whose office it is to explain the Scriptures. Jesus did it while on earth; he does it now by his Spirit; and he has appointed his ministers, whose business it is to explain them.
- 3.** If people attempt to explain the Bible, they should themselves understand it. They should give their time and talents to a suitable preparation to understand the sacred volume. Preaching should consist in “real,” and not “fancied” explanations of the Scriptures; the real doctrines which “God” has taught in his word, and not the doctrines that “men” have taught in their systems.

**4.** Here was convincing evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. This was but one of many instances where Jesus convinced his disciples, contrary to their previous belief. In this case the evidence was abundant. He first satisfied them from the Old Testament that the very things which had happened were foretold; he then dissipated every doubt by showing “himself” to them and convincing them that he was truly the Christ. There was no chance here for deception and juggling. Who would have met them and talked with them in this way but the real Saviour? Who would have thought of writing this narrative to help an imposture? What impostor would have recorded the dulness of the disciples as to the plain declarations of the Old Testament, and “then” have thought of this device to prop up the narrative? Everything about this narrative — its simplicity — its tenderness — its particularity — its perfect nature — its freedom from all appearance of trick — shows that it was taken from real life; and if so, then the Christian religion is true, for here is evidence that Jesus rose from the dead.

**☞ Luke 24:33.** *The same hour* Though it was late, and they had stopped, as they thought, for the night, yet such was their joy that they hastened to tell it to their companions and friends. This was natural and proper, and it shows how quick and ready they who have found the Saviour are to tell it to others. Compare **☞ John 1:41-45.** Young converts to Christ “should hasten” to tell their joy, and should not shrink at self-denial to proclaim to others what God hath done for the soul, **☞ Psalm 66:16.**

*“My lips and cheerful heart, prepare  
To make his mercies known:  
Come, ye that fear my God, and hear  
The wonders he hath done.*

*“When on my head huge sorrows fell,  
I sought his heavenly aid;  
He saved my sinking soul from hell,  
And death’s eternal shade.”*

*The eleven* The eleven apostles. Judas was now dead. This shows that the two that went to Emmaus were not apostles.

**☞ Luke 24:34.** *Saying* The eleven said this.



*Hath appeared to Simon* To Peter. It is not known precisely when this happened, as the time and place are not mentioned. Paul has referred to it in <sup><417></sup>1 Corinthians 15:5, from which it appears that he appeared to “Cephas or Peter” before he did to any other of the apostles. This was a mark of special love and favor, and particularly, after Peter’s denial, it showed how ready he was to pardon, and how willing to impart comfort to those who are penitent, though their sins are great.

<sup><28></sup>**Luke 24:36,37.** *Jesus stood in the midst of them* This was when the apostles were assembled, and when they had closed the doors for fear of the Jews, <sup><31></sup>John 20:19. It was this fact, as well as his sudden and unexpected appearance, that alarmed them. The doors were shut, and the suddenness of his appearance led them to suppose they had seen a spirit.

*Peace be unto you* This was a form of salutation among the Hebrews denoting a wish of peace and prosperity. See <sup><423></sup>Genesis 43:23. It was especially appropriate for Jesus, as he had said before his death that he left “his peace” with them as their inheritance (<sup><47></sup>John 14:27), and as they were now alarmed and fearful at their state, and trembling for fear of the Jews, <sup><31></sup>John 20:19.

<sup><28></sup>**Luke 24:38.** *Why are ye troubled?* Why are you alarmed or frightened?

*And why do thoughts ...* The word “thoughts” here means “doubts” or suspicions. It is used in this sense also in <sup><318></sup>1 Timothy 2:8. The doubts which they had were whether he was the Christ. He reproves them for doubting this; for,

1. The Scriptures had foretold his death;
2. He had himself repeatedly done it; and,
3. They had now the testimony of Peter that he had seen Jesus alive, and of the angels that he was risen. After all this evidence, Jesus reproves them for doubting whether he was truly the Messiah.

<sup><28></sup>**Luke 24:39-43.** *Behold my hands ...* Jesus proceeds to give them evidence that he was truly the same person that had been crucified. He first showed them his hands and his feet — still, pierced, and with the wounds made by the nails still open. Compare <sup><317></sup>John 20:27. He told them to handle him and see him. He ate before them. All this was to satisfy them

that he was not, as they supposed, a spirit. Nor could better evidence have been given. He appealed to their senses, and performed acts which a disembodied spirit could not do.

*Handle me* Or touch me; feel of me. Compare <sup><317></sup>John 20:27.

*And see* Be convinced, for you could not thus handle a spirit. The object here was to convince them that his body had really come to life.

*For a spirit ...* He appeals here to what they well knew; and this implies that the spirit may exist separate from the body. That was the view of the apostles, and our Saviour distinctly countenances that belief.

<sup><244></sup>**Luke 24:41.** *Believed not for joy* Their joy was so great, and his appearance was so sudden and unexpected, that they were bewildered, and still sought more evidence of the truth of what they “wished” to believe. This is nature. We have similar expressions in our language. “The news is too good to be true;” or, “I cannot believe it; it is too much for me.”

*Any meat* This word does not mean “meat” in our sense of it, but in the old English sense, denoting “anything to eat.”

<sup><244></sup>**Luke 24:42.** *Honey-comb* Honey abounded in Palestine, and was a very common article of food. Bees lived in caves of the rocks, in the hollows of trees, and were also kept as with us. The disciples gave, probably, just what was their own common fare, and what was ready at the time.

<sup><244></sup>**Luke 24:44.** *These are the words* Or this is the “fulfillment” of what I before told you respecting my death. See <sup><2183></sup>Luke 18:33; <sup><4103></sup>Mark 10:33.

*While I was yet with you* Before my death. While I was with you as a teacher and guide.

*In the law of Moses* The five books of Moses — Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Among the Jews this was the first division of the Old Testament, and was called the “law.”

*The prophets* This was the second and largest part of the Hebrew Scriptures. It comprehended the books of Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, which were called the “former prophets;” and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve smaller books from Daniel, to Malachi, which were called the “latter prophets.”

*The psalms* The word here used probably means what were comprehended under the name of “Hagiographa,” or holy writings. This consisted of the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and the two books of Chronicles. This division of the Old Testament was in use long before the time of Christ, and was what he referred to here; and he meant to say that in “each of” these divisions of the Old Testament there were prophecies respecting himself. The “particular” subject before them was his “resurrection from the dead.” A most striking prediction of this is contained in <sup><1919></sup>Psalm 16:9-11. Compare it with <sup><4124></sup>Acts 2:24-32; 13:35-37.

<sup><4245></sup>**Luke 24:45.** *Opened he their understanding* Enabled them fully to comprehend the meaning of the prophecies which foretold his death and resurrection. They had seen him die, they now saw him risen. Their prejudices were now, by his instructions, and by the facts which they could no longer call in question, removed, and they no longer doubted that he was the Messiah, and that all the “facts” in the case which had before confounded them could be easily accounted for. Hence, we may learn:

1. That “facts,” or the farther disclosure of truth, will yet remove the “mysteries” that we now see in religion.
2. That our prejudices and our preconceived opinions are one cause of our seeing so many mysteries in the Bible. If a man is willing to take the plain declarations of the Bible, he will commonly be little perplexed with mysteries.
3. That God only can open the mind so as fully to comprehend the Scriptures. He only can overcome our prejudices, open our hearts, and dispose us to receive the ingrafted word with meekness, and with the simplicity of a child. See <sup><4164></sup>Acts 16:14; <sup><3012></sup>James 1:21; <sup><4105></sup>Mark 10:15.
4. The design of God’s opening the understanding is that we may be acquainted with the Scriptures. It is not that we may be made wise above what is written, but that we may submit ourselves wholly to the Word of God.

<sup><4246></sup>**Luke 24:46.** *It behoved* It became; it was proper or necessary that the Messiah should thus suffer. It was predicted of him, and all things have happened as it was foretold.

◀247▶ **Luke 24:47.** *Repentance* Sorrow for sin and forsaking of it. It was proper that the “necessity” of repentance should be preached among all nations, for all were sinners. See ▶473▶ Acts 17:30.

*Remission of sins* Pardon or forgiveness of sins. It should be proclaimed that all people should repent, and that those who are penitent may be pardoned.

*In my name* By my command it should be proclaimed that people should repent, and by my merit that they may be pardoned. Pardon is offered by the authority of Christ to ALL nations, and this is a sufficient warrant to offer the gospel “to every man.”

*Beginning at Jerusalem* This was the dwelling of his murderers, and it shows his readiness to forgive the vilest sinners. It was the holy place of the temple, the habitation of God, the place of the solemnities of the ancient dispensation, and it was proper that pardon should be first proclaimed there. This was done — the gospel was first preached there. See Acts 2. Paul also, in his travels, preached the gospel “first” to the Jews, the ancient people of God, offering them pardon through their own Messiah; and, when “they” rejected it, turned to the Gentiles, ▶436▶ Acts 13:46.

◀248▶ **Luke 24:48.** *Are witnesses of these things* Of my life, my sufferings, my death, and my resurrection. How solemn was their office — to “testify” these things to the world, and, in the face of suffering and death, to go and proclaim them to all nations! In like manner, “all” Christians are witnesses for Christ. They are the “evidences” of his mercy and his love, and they should so live that others may be brought to see and love the Saviour.

◀249▶ **Luke 24:49.** *The promise of my Father* The promise which the Father had made to them “through” the Saviour. See ▶409▶ Matthew 10:19; ▶346▶ John 14:16,17,26. The promise was, that they should be aided by the power of the Holy Spirit. He also doubtless referred to the promise of God, made in the days of Joel, respecting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. See ▶212▶ Joel 2:28,29, compared with ▶416▶ Acts 2:16-21.

*Endued with power from on high* The power which would be given them by the descent of the Holy Spirit — the power of speaking with tongues, of working miracles, and of preaching the gospel with the attending blessing and aid of the Holy Spirit. This was accomplished in the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. See Acts 2.

**◀285▶ Luke 24:50,51. *To Bethany*** See the notes at **◀4169▶ Mark 16:19**.

Bethany was on the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives, from which our Lord was taken up to heaven, **◀4012▶ Acts 1:12**. Bethany was a favored place. It was the abode of Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus, and our Saviour delighted to be there. From this place, also, he ascended to his Father and our Father, and to his God and our God.

*While he blessed them* While he commanded his benediction to rest upon them; while he assured them of his favor, and commended them to the protection and guidance of God, in the dangers, trials, and conflicts which they were to meet in a sinful and miserable world.

**◀285▶ Luke 24:52. *They worshipped him*** The word “worship” does not “always” denote religious homage. See the notes at **◀4021▶ Matthew 2:11**. Compare **◀2440▶ Luke 14:10**. But here it is to be remarked,

- 1.** That they offered this worship to an “absent” Saviour. It was “after” he left them and had vanished out of their sight. It was, therefore, an act of religion, and was the “first” religious homage that was paid to Jesus after he had left the world.
- 2.** If “they” worshipped an absent Saviour — a Saviour unseen by the bodily eye, it is right for “us” to do it. It was an example which we “may and should” follow.
- 3.** If worship may be rendered to Jesus, he is divine. See **◀2206▶ Exodus 20:4,5**.

**◀285▶ Luke 24:53. *Were continually in the temple*** Until the day of Pentecost — that is, about ten days after. See Acts 2.

*Praising and blessing God* Chiefly for the full proof that the Messiah had come; had redeemed them, and had ascended to heaven. “Thus the days of their mourning were ended.” They were filled with happiness at the assurance of redemption, and expressed what every Christian should feel — fulness of joy at the glad tidings that a Saviour has died, and risen, and ascended to God; and an earnest desire to pour forth in the sanctuary prayers and thanksgivings to the God of grace for his mercy to a lost and ruined world.