

## EXCERPTS FROM THE PULPIT COMMENTARY

by the Very Reverend Henry Donald Maurice Spence

### THE DIVINE LAW OF INCREASE AND DECLINE.

For this is not a mere action done on one particular occasion; there is nothing exceptional or arbitrary about it. It is a Divine method invariably adopted; a Divine principle running through the whole economy; a Divine law with illustrations on every hand. It affects us at every turn of our life, in every part of our nature. It applies to us considered ...

#### Spiritual sensibility.

The little child is open to impression, and, if he yields to the truth he knows, that truth will always be effective; but if he rejects it his heart becomes hardened, and he becomes increasingly unresponsive: from him that has not, etc. Thus God's holy Law engirds us on every side; we cannot step outside it. It is determining our character and our destiny. We must act upon it, must turn it to good account. We must see to it that we really have what we seem to have, that we are using the talent, the opportunity, that is at our command. Then to us will be given—here, on the earth, in the shape of increased faculty and multiplied usefulness; there, in the heavens, in the way of a far broader sphere of celestial service.—C.

### I. A VALUABLE REMINDER OF HIS POWER OF SELF-RESTRAINT.

He had been moving among men as “one that serveth,” as one that “ministered.” He had moved as a very humble traveller along the path of human life. But how easy it would have been for

him to call forth the honour of the people, and to live amid the excitements of popularity, and to reach the high places of power! But this he resolutely declined to do, choosing deliberately the lowlier but the nobler path of humble, holy service.

### II. A STRIKING INDICATION OF HIS ACCEPTANCE WITH THE PEOPLE.

No one can say that Christ's teaching was not profound; it was deep as the very fountains of truth. No philosophy went further; he went down into the deep places of the human soul. Yet, while the philosophers made their appeal to the cultured, Christ addressed himself to the multitude, to the common human heart. And “all the people were very attentive to hear him.” So here, while the men who prided themselves on their knowledge looked on with angry disdain, the people and the children were enthusiastic in his favour—they recognized in the Prophet of Nazareth the true Teacher that had come from God. Better be numbered among the simple-hearted who can appreciate the Divine than among the wise and learned who misread the providence of God, and stand sullen and silent while everything is inviting to joy and praise. Better be the ignorant cottager whose heart is full of reverence, or the little child who has the songs of Zion on his lips and the love of Jesus in his heart, than the learned critic who never bends the knee or bows the heart in homage to the true and the eternal.

### III. A HINT OF CHRIST'S TRUE ROYALTY.

The Messiah of the Jews was to be a King. To that conclusion prophecy pointed with unflinching finger, and on that event Jewish faith rested with gathering hope. The Son of David was to occupy his father's throne, the daughters of Jerusalem were to rejoice because “her King was coming.” Claiming the Messiahship, Jesus was bound to claim this sovereignty, but how do this without encouraging the current fallacy as to his temporal and visible royalty? Is not this simple secure the answer? Christ then and thus said, “I am the King you are awaiting.” But its extreme simplicity and its transcendence showed that he did not intend to wear the trappings and be surrounded with the common grandeurs of earthly royalty; it showed that he came not for pomps and pageanties and outward triumphs, but to seek a sovereignty of another kind in another realm altogether. That very simple and passing regal state was only an emblem of the spiritual sovereignty which was immeasurably higher and more to be desired. Sweet to his ear may have been the acclaim of the populace and the hosannas of the children; but how much sweeter is the voice of man or woman or of little child who goes in glad submission to his feet to offer loyal service to the Divine Redeemer, to place heart and life beneath his gracious and benignant sway!

### IV. A PROPHECY OF FAR FUTURE GLORY.

Never on this earth will that scene be re-enacted; but there is an hour coming when, in another realm, it will be amplified and perpetuated. Christ will be acknowledged King by all the hosts celestial and terrestrial. The transient gladness of the sacred city will be nothing to the everlasting joy of the new Jerusalem; the passing enthusiasm of that happy demonstration to the abiding

blessedness of the life in the heavenly land. Yet may we take that one hour of Jerusalem's acceptance of her King as a prelude and a prophecy of the adoration which the redeemed of every kindred and tribe shall pay him when they cast their crowns at his feet. “Oh that with yonder sacred throng, We at his feet may fall,” etc.!

#### PRACTICAL LESSONS. We gather:

1. That Jesus Christ is now claiming the real, spiritual sovereignty of ourselves. He is calling upon us not to strew his path with palm branches, but to offer him the first place in our heart; to yield him our perfect trust, our unflinching and unending love, our cheerful and constant obedience.
2. That the rest of soul which follows such surrender of ourselves is incomparably better than the passing exultation of a triumphal entry.
3. That by loyal and devoted service in his cause we shall gain a place in the acclaiming company that will praise the King in his celestial glory.—C.

[Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.). (1909). *St Luke* (Vol. 2, pp. 152-154). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.]

- Dave Note: I tend to stay away from older commentaries because of the more archaic and verbose nature of the language. Also the older formatting and the more condensed layout and unfamiliar organization of the information seem to make the author's thought harder to follow. But the *The Pulpit Commentary: St. Luke Vol. I & II* is just excellent. So good, in fact, that I purchased the entire set. I hope you find the same blessing in these excerpts.