

Expository Thoughts On Luke - Luke 8:16-21

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

A LAMP ON A STAND

These verses form a practical application of the famous parable of the sower. They are intended to nail and clench in our minds the mighty lesson which that parable contains. They deserve the especial attention of all true-hearted hearers of the Gospel of Christ.

We learn, firstly, from these verses, that spiritual knowledge ought to be diligently used. Our Lord tells us that it is like a lighted candle, utterly useless, when covered with a bushel, or put under a bed--only useful when set upon a candlestick, and placed where it can be made serviceable to the wants of men.

When we hear this lesson, let us first think of OURSELVES. The Gospel which we possess was not given us only to be admired, talked of, and professed--but to be practiced. It was not meant merely to reside in our intellect, and memories, and tongues--but to be seen in our lives. Christianity is a talent committed to our charge, and one which brings with it great responsibility. We are not in darkness like the heathen. A glorious light is put before us. Let us take heed that we use it. While we have the light let us walk in the light. (John 12:35.)

But let us not only think of ourselves. Let us also think of OTHERS. There are millions in the world who have no spiritual light at all. They are without God, without Christ, and without hope. (Ephes. 2:12.) Can we do nothing for them? There are thousands around us, in our own land, who are unconverted and dead in sins, seeing nothing and knowing nothing aright. Can we do nothing for them? These are questions to which every true Christian ought to find an answer. We should strive, in every way, to spread our religion. The highest form of selfishness is that of the man who is content to go to heaven alone. The truest charity is to endeavor to share with others every spark of religious light we possess ourselves, and so to hold up our own candle that it may give light to every one around us. Happy is that soul, which, as soon as it receives light from heaven, begins to think of others as well as itself! No candle which God lights was ever meant to burn alone.

We learn, secondly, from these verses, the great importance of right hearing. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to impress that lesson deeply on our hearts. He says, "Take heed how you hear."

The degree of benefit which men receive from all the means of grace depends entirely on the way in which they use them. Private PRAYER lies at the very foundation of religion; yet the mere formal repetition of a set of words, when "the heart is far away," does good to no man\

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