

# GOSPEL

## The Good News Of Christmas Is That We Always Have Something To Be Pumped About!

December 17, 2017 - Luke 1:39-56

### Mary Visits Elizabeth

39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,  
40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be[a] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

### Mary's Song of Praise: The Magnificat

46 And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.  
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
50 And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
51 He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;  
52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;  
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
55 as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

56 And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

## LECTURE IV

## LUKE 1:39-56

This passage contains an account of the visit of the Virgin Mary to Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias. Having announced to Mary the divine purpose that she was to be the mother of Messiah, in a miraculous way, the angel, in order to strengthen her faith, and to convince her that the promise could easily be accomplished by that God with whom nothing was impossible, informed her that it was now the sixth month with Elisabeth, who was well stricken in years, and called barren. Guided by a divine impulse, and struck, we may suppose, with the coincidence between Elisabeth's case and her own, and rightly judging that the visit would prove in various ways comfortable and useful to her, that it would increase her light, confirm her faith, and enliven her hope, and be the means of gaining her the friendship and countenance of two such respectable persons as Elisabeth and Zacharias, which would cause the account she gave of her state to be credited, and thus prevent injurious suspicions as to her character, "*Mary in those days,*" about that time, and soon after the angel's visit, "*arose and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.*"

Though the name of the city is not here mentioned, the description of its situation, and the circumstance of Zacharias, who was a priest, dwelling in it, render it sufficiently plain that it was Hebron. In Joshua 20:7, it is thus mentioned among the cities of refuge: "Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah." The journey from Nazareth to Hebron was of considerable length; some say forty miles. Having arrived at the city, Mary entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. We are not told what she said. It is the natural conclusion, however, from the whole bearing of the passage, that little was said by her, except what courtesy required, by way of introduction and salutation on such an occasion. It seems, therefore, that the sentiments which Elisabeth soon expressed were not at all the result of her own reflections on information which her visitor had communicated to her, but the result of immediate inspiration. She was led to interpret her extraordinary emotions and sensations at the time, as indicative of the arrival of her who was to be the mother of Messiah; and it is expressly said, "*Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost;*" that is, she was immediately so filled by the Holy Spirit, as to be endowed with the gift of prophecy. In this, and such instances, was fulfilled the prophecy by Joel: "It shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids will I pour out my Spirit."

Under the influence of this inspiration, and in holy rapture, Elisabeth said, not in a whisper, but in a loud voice, as not ashamed, or afraid, but as glorying in what she was to speak: "*Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*" The first part of this sentence corresponds exactly with what was said by the angel. Doubtless, Mary was highly honoured, and very happy in being the mother of him who was the Son of God, and

who came into the world to rescue men from the most dreadful ruin, and to procure for them, and bestow on them, the most precious blessings. And blessed beyond all description and all human conception was the fruit of her womb; most blessed was he, and is he, in respect of the glories and the happiness of his nature, and in the prosecution of his most benevolent saving work. Most worthy is he to receive all blessing, and glory, and honour, and power. "Men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed." With regard, however, to Mary herself, it is proper to recollect that highly blessed as she was, as the mother of Christ, she was far more blessed as one of Christ's believers and disciples. When the woman cried out to him from the crowd, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," he said: "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." In thinking, or speaking, therefore, of Mary, we should avoid the extremes both of superstition and disrespect.

*"And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"* In the view which Elisabeth here takes of Christ, she acknowledges both his divine and human nature. She acknowledges his divine nature and exalted dignity and power, by calling him Lord; and she acknowledges his human nature by saying that Mary was his mother. Jesus Christ is indeed Lord; he is Lord of all. He is possessed of power to save, and of a right to rule. Elisabeth called him *her* Lord, thereby testifying her own submission to his grace and government. We, too, call him Lord, Lord; and we say well, for so he is. Let us see to it, however, that we do indeed individually submit ourselves to him. Let each of us, in the contemplation of his personal glory and mediatorial work, be enabled to cry out from the heart, "My Lord, and my God." And let us ever practically remember his own words: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

In this passage, too, Elisabeth expresses a feeling of most becoming and exemplary humility. "Whence is this unto me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me?" In respect of outward station, there is every reason to think that Elisabeth was by much the superior of the two. She was the wife of a priest, who was not only of official respectability, but of much personal worth. Mary's parents, it is true, were of worthy character, and also descended from an illustrious house, but they were poor and little known. Elisabeth, however, deems herself highly honoured by her visit, and speaks of it as something far beyond what she deserved, or could have expected. In this she was, no doubt, right, and evidenced the strength of her faith: and yet it was commendable to make the acknowledgment. True piety is always accompanied with true humility. "What am I," said David, "and what is my, father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" "I have need," said John, "to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" "I am not worthy," said the centurion, "that thou shouldest come under my roof." So Elisabeth, "Whence is this unto me?" But, my friends, have not all believers at least as good cause for humble gratitude as she? Have they not also experienced, at least, as signal proofs of condescension? It is true, that Mary does not come to their house and abide with them for months: but Mary's Son comes to their door, and enters, and fixes with them his permanent residence. "Behold,"

says he, "I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"—"If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." What is man, that the Lord should thus be mindful of him, and visit him? God grant that we may be blessed and honoured with the fellowship of the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and enabled to regulate our dwellings and our hearts, as becomes the dignity of our heavenly guests.

Having expressed her sense of the honour conferred on her by the visit, and having also stated the emotions of joy which that visit occasioned, Elisabeth added:

*"And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."* This is a confirmation of what we already remarked, as to Mary's happiness consisting chiefly in her being a believer. It is not unlikely that Elisabeth may have here intended an oblique, though, as was becoming, a tender and delicate, reference to Zacharias' unbelief, which brought on him so marked a chastisement. As for him, he still continued deaf and dumb; he was unable to bid Mary welcome when she arrived at his threshold, and he was incapable of holding any oral conversation with her, now that she was an inmate in his family. But as for Mary, she at once gave full credit to the promise, and was, therefore, to have its fulfilment without any check or rebuke. This verse may fairly be considered as affirming the blessedness and the security of all believers. This blessedness, in the most important sense, may be ours. "Blessed are they," said Jesus to Thomas, "who have not seen, and yet have believed." "Whom having not seen," says Peter, "ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." They are happy, indeed, who, interested in the promises, have to rely on the absolute certainty of these promises, and the unchanging faithfulness of God. Not one good thing shall fail them of what the Lord has spoken; but all shall come to pass.

After this account of Elisabeth's inspired address to her guest, there follows what is commonly called the song of the Virgin Mary—a song so full and particular, so beautiful and sublime, that the paraphrases which have been made of it must be allowed to have failed of coming near the text as it stands in our Bibles—a song which seems rather to discourage than invite any lengthened comment, as if the true way to feel its beauty, and to enter into its spirit, were to read it exactly as it is. And yet we can hardly pass it over in this way, but feel inclined to linger over it, were it only to repeat some of its lines. Many of its sentiments will be found to coincide with those of the song of Hannah, in the 2d chapter of 1 Samuel; and though some ideas refer to what was peculiar to Mary herself, the general strain of the song may be taken up by every believer.

Mary being, no doubt, greatly animated by the congratulations in which she had just been addressed, and being also especially influenced by the Holy Spirit, breaks out all at once in the language of devout adoration and holy rapture: *"My soul doth magnify the Lord."* Creatures cannot magnify God in the sense in which he magnifies them; they cannot, strictly speaking, make him great; they cannot add to his dignity. But they are said to

magnify, or, which is much the same, to glorify him, when they confess him, and proclaim him to be great and glorious, as he is, when they honour him in their life, and when they offer him actual worship and praise.

*“And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.”* Soul and spirit are probably two words for the same thing, and teach us, that the mind must go along with our tongue, and that we must praise God cheerfully, and with our whole heart and soul. We may observe here, too, that as Mary rejoiced in God, and did not rest in the honour done to herself, that, and that only, is true religious joy, when we do not make the mere sensible good the primary object of our joy, but God himself, and when we rest in him as our rejoicing. Mary here, also, rejoiced in God as her Saviour, in which character alone he can be contemplated with satisfaction by sinners of mankind.

*“For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.”* The word is properly rendered “low estate,” as referring to her outward condition. It would be contrary to the proper acceptance of the word, as well as to sound doctrine, to suppose that Mary, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, should speak of her humility of mind, or of any other qualification, as the meritorious cause of the honour which was about to be conferred on her. She had more true humility than to be guilty of this. She thankfully and humbly acknowledged that the Lord regarded her—that is, looked to her with an eye of favour, poor, lowly, and unworthy as she was. So, in general, the special favour of God is often extended to those who are in the humblest walks of life. So far is his grace from being confined to the wealthy and the high, that as their number altogether is but small in comparison with others, so the proportion of believers among them is also small: “Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” This fact should be improved by those whose station in life is more favourable, to teach them not to trust in uncertain riches, or human wisdom, or human power, but in the living God; and it should be improved by the lowest, to teach them contentment under all their outward disadvantages, seeing that by far the most important blessings are equally accessible to them as to the greatest; and it should inspire them with gratitude, if they have been enabled to choose the better part, and thus to become rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom.

Elisabeth had already called Mary blessed, but that was not enough—*“all generations”* were to call her so. Accordingly, she continues, and will continue, to be esteemed and acknowledged peculiarly happy and honoured. It is unnecessary to repeat here what has been already stated as to the extremes of disrespect and of superstitious and idolatrous regard.

*“For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.”* Where infinite power and infinite holiness meet together, great things may be expected as the result. It is very observable here, too, how Mary attributes all to God, and nothing to herself. She thus teaches future generations in what sense they were to call her blessed—namely, not as one

who had merited any thing at the hands of God, but as one to whom he had shown great grace.

*“And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.”\** After dwelling for some time on her personal reasons of gratitude to God, Mary takes a wider view of the subject, and glances at the displays of divine mercy, more or less clearly manifested, through a Redeemer, to God’s people in all ages. While, in one sense, God’s tender mercies are over all his works, and while his mercy, in the strictest sense, is offered to all offenders, his mercy is actually upon those who fear him. It is received in its pardoning and sanctifying energy by believers of all generations. It extended back to the first believer after the fall, and it will extend forward to the last believer, before the general conflagration.

*“He hath showed strength with his arm.”* Speaking after the manner of men, the finger, or hand, or arm of the Lord, is used to denote his power, though it must not for a moment be imagined that God, who is a spirit, has any bodily shape or parts. “Thou hast a mighty arm,” says the Psalmist; “strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. O sing unto the Lord, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.” Never, certainly, did the Lord do so great things for men, as when he sent his Son into the world to save them. The same power, too, which was exerted in this great and leading work, in general, must be engaged in our behalf in particular, if we are to expect to be saved. If we stand opposed to his arm, we must to a certainty be destroyed. If we are under its protection, nothing can harm us. May the arm of the Lord be savingly revealed to us, that we may be made willing in the day of his power; so shall he be our help and shield, and under his covert we shall be safe.

*“He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.”* Often had God, in former times, shown his power and wisdom in scattering those who, in their wickedness and pride, rose up against him, and in confounding the devices which they had framed in the imaginations, or reasonings, of their own mind: “In the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them.” It seems, indeed, to be his usual method, in the course of providence, to disappoint the expectations of his enemies, to blast their projects, and to bring them into inextricable difficulties, by means of those very schemes by which they expected to carry all before them. He turns the counsel of many an Ahithophel into foolishness. But never were God’s might and contrivance, in this way, so signally illustrated as in the method of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. The death of Jesus, on which wicked men and devils were so much bent, was the great means of the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness; and the scheme of free salvation is admirably suited both to promote the restoration of sinners to the favour and image of their Maker, and to stain the pride of all human glory. If, my friends, we would be saved, we must learn to give way before the wisdom and power of the God of grace, and to cease from our own wisdom, which, after all, is but foolishness. May the weapons, the arguments, and the influences which he employs, prove mighty to pull down all our mental strongholds, to cast down all our imaginations, and to bring our every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

*“He hath put down the mighty from their seats,”* or thrones, *“and exalted them of low degree.”* In illustration of the way in which these two contrasted truths were exemplified in ancient times, it may suffice, without quoting their histories at length, to mention, on the one hand, Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar; and on the other, Joseph, David, and Daniel. Occasional instances of a similar nature occur throughout the whole tenor of human history. The extraordinary exaltations and reverses which have occurred during our own times, must be fresh in the memory of most of us. All these we ought to view, not as the fortuitous result of mere human passions, and human agency, but as the orderly steps in a divinely arranged plan. “Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.” It is likely that Mary had here an eye to herself being taken from a lowly station to be the mother of the Saviour. Often does God, in his kingdom of providence, advance persons of abject condition to situations of wealth, and power, and splendour: “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.” But this is the method which the Lord always follows in his kingdom of grace. In what state does he originally find his people, but lying in the dust of spiritual degradation, and defilement, and debt, and beggary? And it is from this forlorn condition that he, with his own gracious hand, lifts them up, that he may bless them with all the blessings, and honour them with all the honours of his favour, and make them kings and priests to himself.

*“He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.”* The sovereign goodness of God towards Mary herself was but a specimen of his general method of procedure both in providence and in grace. He often supplies the wants, nay, enriches the condition, of the literally hungry and poor, and he often reduces the literally rich to penury and distress. But it is in the spiritual sense that this declaration seems chiefly intended to be understood, and is most edifying. The rich are the self-righteous, who imagine themselves in possession of excellence of character, and of the divine power—who think they are rich and increased in goods, and stand in need of nothing, and know not that they are wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. The hungry are they who are sensible of their ignorant, and guilty, and sinful, and perishing condition. If the rich, in their own esteem, condescend to apply to God at all, they do so in so proud and unbecoming a manner that he dismisses them without granting their request. But on the hungry—those who feel their need of Christ, and earnestly long for mercy—on those God bestows in rich abundance all the blessings of salvation. This is strikingly taught in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee did not come to ask for any thing, but in the spirit of pride thanked God that he was not like other men; the Publican came to ask all, knowing that he needed all, and he anxiously cried out: “God be merciful to me a sinner.” “I tell you,” said our Lord, “this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Let us, therefore, habitually keep in mind this principle in the divine procedure. In retiring to seek the Lord in secret, or in approaching into his presence in public, let us

remember that he resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Let us beware of the high look and the vaunting word, and even of the self-complacent thought, lest our services be sin, our presence odious in his sight, and our departure unblessed, and unaccompanied with any communications of light, or love, or holiness. Let us study to feel ourselves poor and helpless, as we really are, and also to long earnestly for the supply of our wants—to hunger and thirst after righteousness, that we may be blessed and filled. Let us draw near to God with humility and abasement; let us mourn before him the iniquities of our past lives, and the manifold sins and infirmities which still beset us; let us implore mercy with an earnest and a trembling heart; let us, according to God's own appointed way, cast ourselves on his free grace, offered through faith in the atonement of his Son; let us abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes; and let us pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, that he would fill us with the good things of his promises, and supply all our need out of his riches in glory by Jesus Christ. In this way, we may expect that there will come upon us the blessedness of the poor in spirit, and that ours will be the kingdom of heaven.

Mary concludes her sublime song in these words, verses 54, 55: "*He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.*" Israel is here called God's "servant."\* The word originally signifies, and might have been rendered "child," or son: Israel was, doubtless, both God's servant and son. Probably the word may be used here by way of endearment, as when God calls Ephraim his "dear son, and a pleasant child."† In its most comprehensive sense, the word "Israel" includes all believers in every age. Often had God helped Israel before, but the greatest help he ever sent him was when he sent Messiah. This he did in remembrance and in fulfilment of the promise made to the patriarchs, and especially to Abraham, in whose seed all the families of the earth were to be blessed. This was a promise of mercy for ever, of everlasting mercy which was to be upon all the believing seed of Abraham to latest generations.

Mary prolonged her stay with Elisabeth (verse 56) for about three months, till Elisabeth's full time was come, and then returned to her own home at Nazareth.

From this passage let us learn,

1. *To seek the society of the pious.* We have seen that Mary took a long journey to visit Elisabeth, and remained with her three months. We have also considered what passed between them on Mary's arrival, and there can be no doubt that the general tenor of their intercourse during the whole period was mutually delightful and edifying. Now, the example of two so honoured and pious individuals well deserves to be carefully considered and imitated. It is a great privilege, when it is the lot of pious persons to be permanently residing under the same roof with those who are of like mind with themselves. All who are thus situated ought to be grateful to God, attached to each other, and studious to be of all the use to each other they can. In addition to this, but especially where this is wanting, it will be found useful for Christians prudently to cultivate occasional intercourse with well-disposed persons who are not members of their own family. As to who these associates ought to be, by what means they should contrive to meet, how frequently their

visits ought to be made, and how long protracted—these, and similar questions, must be settled by the good sense of the parties in each particular case. As to the propriety and utility, however, of such intercourse, generally speaking, there can be no doubt. Remember, my friends, that a sincere inward attachment to the followers of Christ, is one of the most intelligible marks of a state of grace. “We know,” says John, “that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.” And are not such persons highly deserving of your love and esteem? Are not the saints the excellent of the earth, in whom should be all your delight? And if you really esteem them as you ought, will you not feel inclined to seek their society? Such has been the practice of the people of God in all ages, and it would be well that it were still more attended to. “I am a companion” said David, “of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.” When serious persons are met together, the example of Mary and Elisabeth teaches them how they ought to be employed. Let not the time be wasted on trifles: but needful and becoming attention being paid to the demands of courtesy and common life, let the concerns of religion occupy a prominent place in their conversation. Such intercourse is most acceptable to God: “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” Such intercourse will be most advantageous to yourselves. It will be the means of your being better informed, for the “lips of the wise increase knowledge.” It will operate as a check on all that is evil, and as a stimulus to all that is good. It will give an opportunity of comparing your experience, which will greatly encourage and edify you. “As face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man,” and the heart of Christian to Christian. It will greatly comfort you and encourage you in the faith and obedience of the gospel. “I long to see you,” said Paul to the Romans, “to the end that ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.” It will elicit many a latent spark of affection and of zeal. “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” It will support your minds under temptation, and steel your hearts with resolution to act a decided part in life; for it will convince you and keep you in mind that there are some of the same sentiments with yourselves, who are anxiously watching your conduct, and deeply concerned for your stability. Nor can you deem it a light matter that you will thus secure the countenance, the sympathy, and the prayers of the faithful. Cultivate such society, and you will find those who will be safeguards to you in the time of your prosperity, and who will not forsake you in the time of your trouble. The hour of sorrow, of sickness, and of dissolution, is drawing on apace—an hour in which worldly associates would withdraw, as conscious of their unfitness for such a scene, or, if they remained, would prove but miserable comforters; but an hour in which those who know and love the truth would delight to stand by you, that, as instruments in your heavenly Father’s hand, they might suggest whatever might be comfortable and edifying, and assist in cheering you during the last moments of life, and in smoothing to you the pillow of death. Nay, seek the society of the pious, and there will then be formed by you a friendship which, though it may be for a short season interrupted in its exercise by death, will be renewed

with increased endearment, where no infirmities shall ever trouble you, and where no separation shall ever divide you.

2. *Let us, from the example of Elisabeth, learn to rejoice at the superior graces and honours of others.* We have seen how Elisabeth, instead of feeling hurt by the superior honour conferred on Mary, or being slow to acknowledge it, rejoiced on account of it, spoke out strongly in her commendation, and declared herself highly honoured by her condescending to visit her. In direct opposition to this spirit, we are too ready, by nature, to feel jealous and envious of those who excel us. Even among the disciples, there was a strife who should be accounted greatest. The Christian, however, must learn a very different lesson, however difficult that lesson may be. It is his duty, indeed, to seek to excel by his own exertions and by divine assistance; but he must beware of the wish to bring himself into notice by the failure of others, and he must carefully shun all discontent on account of their being distinguished for what is good. He is no worse that they are better; but he is the better for feeling and acknowledging their attainments and their worth. He ought, then, greatly to rejoice at their progress, readily to show deference where deference is due, and liberally to commend whatever may be deserving of commendation. "Be kindly affectioned," says Paul, "one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself."

Finally, *Let us accompany Mary in her song of praise for redemption through the incarnation of the Son of God.* Though there is some reference to Mary's individual case in this song, its general strain is quite suitable to all believers. It becomes those who have experienced the Lord's goodness to join in the cheerful note of praise. Let our souls also magnify the Lord, and let our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." Here is a source of joy which far surpasses, and which will long survive, all other. Though the fig tree should not blossom, though all earthly comforts should flee from us, and all earthly troubles should environ us, still we may rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation. When in the midst of this song we think, too, as we ought, of our own great unworthiness, our admiration of the divine condescension will be increased, and the tones of our hymn will be accented. "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him who alone doeth wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever. Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever. And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Foote, J. (1849). *Lectures on the Gospel according to Luke* (Second Edition, Vol. 1, pp. 50–63). Edinburgh; London: John Johnstone.