

Matthew: 11:25–30

From Catena Aurea:

25. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

GLOSS. (non occ.) Because the Lord knew that many would doubt respecting the foregoing matter, namely, that the Jews would not receive Christ whom the Gentile world has so willingly received, He here makes answer to their thoughts; And Jesus answered and said, I confess unto thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.

GLOSS. (ord.) That is, Who makest of heaven, or leavest in earthliness, whom Thou wilt. Or literally,

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 67. 1.) If Christ, from whom all sin is far, said, I confess, confession is not proper for the sinner only, but sometimes also for him that gives thanks. We may confess either by praising God, or by accusing ourselves. When He said, I confess unto thee, it is, I praise Thee, not I accuse Myself.

JEROME. Let those hear who falsely argue, that the Saviour was not born but created, how He calls His Father Lord of heaven and earth. For if He be a creature, and the creature can call its Maker Father, it was surely foolish here to address Him as Lord of heaven and earth, and not of Him (Christ) likewise. He gives thanks that His coming has opened to the Apostles sacraments, which the Scribes and Pharisees knew not, who seemed to themselves wise, and understanding in their own eyes; That thou hast hid these things from the wise and understanding, and hast revealed them unto babes.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 67. 5.) That the wise and understanding are to be taken as the proud, Himself opens to us when He says, and hast revealed them unto babes; for who are babes but the humble?

CHRYSOSTOM. (Horn. xxxviii.) Or when He says, The wise, He does not speak of true wisdom, but of that which the Scribes and Pharisees seemed to have by their speech. Wherefore He said not, 'And hast revealed them to the foolish,' but, to babes, that is, uneducated, or simple; teaching us in all things to keep ourselves from pride, and to seek humility.

HILARY. The hidden things of heavenly words and their power are hid from the wise, and revealed to the babes; babes, that is, in malice, not in understanding; hid from the wise because of their presumption of their own wisdom, not because of their wisdom.

CHRYSOSTOM. That it is revealed to the one is matter of joy, that it is hid from the other not of joy, but of sorrow; He does not therefore joy on this account, but He joys that these have known what the wise have not known.

HILARY. The justice of this the Lord confirms by the sentence of the Father's will, that they who disdain to be made babes in God, should become fools in their own wisdom; and therefore He adds, Even so, Father; for so it seemed good before thee.

JEROME. In these words moreover He speaks to the Father with the desire of one petitioning, that His mercy begun in the Apostles might be completed in them.

CHRYSOSTOM. These things which the Lord spoke to His disciples, made them more zealous. As afterwards they thought great things of themselves, because they cast out dæmons, therefore He here reproves them; for what they had, was by revelation, not by their own efforts. The Scribes who esteemed themselves wise and understanding were excluded because of them-pride, and therefore He says, Since on this account the mysteries of God were hid from them, fear ye, and abide as babes, for this it is that has made you partakers in the revelation. But as when Paul says, God gave them, over to a reprobate mind, (Rom. 1:28), he does not mean that God did this, but they who gave Him cause, so here, Thou hast hid these things from the wise and understanding. And wherefore were they hid from them? Hear Paul speaking, Seeking to set up their own righteousness, they were not subject to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3.)

11:27

27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

CHRYSOSTOM. Because He had said, I confess unto thee, Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise, that you should not suppose that He thus thanks the Father as though He Himself was excluded from this power, He adds, All things are committed to me by my Father. Hearing the words are committed, do not admit suspicion of any thing human, for He uses this word that you may not think there be two gods unbegotten. For at the time that He was begotten He was Lord of all.

JEROME. For if we conceive of this thing according to our weakness, when he who receives begins to have, he who gives begins to be without. Or when He says, All things are committed to him, He may mean, not the heaven and earth and the elements, and the rest of the things which He created and made, but those who through the Son have access to the Father.

HILARY. Or that we may not think that there is any thing less in Him than in God, therefore He says this.

AUGUSTINE. (cont. Maximin. ii. 12.) For if He has aught less in His power than the Father has, then all that the Father has, are not His; for by begetting Him the Father gave power to the Son, as by begetting Him He gave all things which He has in His substance to Him whom He begot of His substance.

HILARY. And also in the mutual knowledge between the Father and the Son, He teaches us that there is nothing in the Son beyond what was in the Father, for it follows, And none knoweth the Son but the Father, nor does any man know the Father but the Son.

CHRYSOSTOM. By this that He only knows the Father, He shews covertly that He is of one substance with the Father. As though He had said, What wonder if I be Lord of all, when I have somewhat yet greater, namely to know the Father and to be of the same substance with Him?

HILARY. For this mutual knowledge proclaims that they are of one substance, since He that should know the Son, should know the Father also in the Son, since all things were delivered to Him by the Father.

CHRYSOSTOM. When He says, Neither does any know the Father but the Son, He does not mean that all men are altogether ignorant of Him; but that none knows Him with that knowledge wherewith He knows Him; which may also be said of the Son. For it is not said of some unknown God (i. e. who was not the Creator.) as Marcion declares.

AUGUSTINE. (De Trin. i. 8.) And because their substance is inseparable, it is enough sometimes to name the Father, sometimes the Son, nor is it possible to separate from either His Spirit, who is especially called the Spirit of truth.

JEROME. Let the heretic Eunomius therefore blush hereat who claims to himself such a knowledge of the Father and the Son, as they have one of another. But if he argues from what follows, and props up his madness by that, And he to whom the Son will reveal him, it is one thing to know what you know by equality with God, another to know it by His vouchsafing to reveal it.

AUGUSTINE. (De Trin. vii. 3.) The Father is revealed by the Son, that is, by His Word. For if the temporal and transitory word which we utter both shews itself, and what we wish to convey, how much more the Word of God by which all things were made, which so shews the Father as He is Father, because itself is the same and in the same manner as the Father.

AUGUSTINE. (Quæst. Ev. i. 1.) When He said, None knoweth the Son but the Father, He did not add, And he to whom the Father will reveal the Son. But when He said, None knoweth the Father but the Son, He added, And he to whom the Son will reveal him. But this must not be so understood as though the Son could be known by none but by the Father only; while the Father may be known not only by the Son, but also by those to whom the Son shall reveal Him. But it is rather expressed thus, that we may understand that both the Father and the Son Himself are revealed by the Son, inasmuch as He is the light of our mind; and what is afterwards added, And he to whom the Son will reveal, is to be understood as spoken of the Son as well as the Father, and to refer to the whole of what had been said. For the Father declares Himself by His Word, but the Word declares not only that which is intended to be declared by it, but in declaring this declares itself.

CHRYSOSTOM. If then He reveals the Father, He reveals Himself also. But the one he omits as a thing manifest, but mentions the other because there might be a doubt concerning it. Herein also He instructs us that He is so one with the Father, that it is not possible for any to come to the Father, but through the Son. For this had above all things given offence, that He seemed to be against God, and therefore He strove by all means to overthrow this notion.

11:28–30

28. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

CHRYSOSTOM. By what He had said, He brought His disciples to have a desire towards Him, shewing them His unspeakable excellence; and now He invites them to Him, saying, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 69. 1.) Whence do we all thus labour, but that we are mortal men, bearing vessels of clay which cause us much difficulty. But if the vessels of flesh are straitened, the regions of love will be enlarged. To what end then does He say, Come unto me, all ye that labour, but that ye should not labour?

HILARY. He calls to Him those that were labouring under the hardships of the Law, and those who are burdened with the sins of this world.

JEROME. That the burden of sin is heavy the Prophet Zachariah bears witness, saying, that wickedness sitteth upon a talent of lead. (Zech. 5:7.) And the Psalmist fills it up, Thy iniquities are grown heavy upon me. (Ps. 38:4)

CHRYSOSTOM. He said not, Come ye, this man and that man, but All whosoever are in trouble, in sorrow, or in sin, not that I may exact punishment of you, but that I may remit your sins. Come ye, not that I have need of your glory, but that I seek your salvation. And I will refresh you; not, I will save you, only; but that is much greater, I will refresh you, that is, I will set you in all quietness.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 69. 1.) Not to create a world, or to do miracles in that world; but that I am meek and lowly in heart. Wouldest thou be great? Begin with the least. Wouldest thou build up a mighty fabric of greatness? First think of the foundation of humility; for the mightier building any seeks to raise, the deeper let him dig for his foundation. Whither is the summit of our building to rise? To the sight of God.

CHRYSOSTOM. And therefore in beginning the Divine Law He begins with humility, and sets before us a great reward, saying, And ye shall find rest for your souls. This is the highest reward, you shall not only be made useful to others, but shall make yourself to have peace; and He gives you the promise of it before it comes, but when it is come, you shall rejoice in perpetual rest. And that they might not be afraid because He had spoken of a burden, therefore He adds, For my yoke is pleasant, and my burden light.

HILARY. He holds forth the inducements of a pleasant yoke, and a light burden, that to them that believe He may afford the knowledge of that good which He alone knoweth in the Father.

HILARY. And what is more pleasant than that yoke, what lighter than that burden? To be made better, to abstain from wickedness, to choose the good, and refuse the evil, to love all men, to hate none, to gain eternal things, not to be taken with things present, to be unwilling to do that to another which yourself would be pained to suffer.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 70. 1.) So then they who with unfeared neck have submitted to the yoke of the Lord endure such hardships and dangers, that they seem to be called not from labour to rest, but from rest to labour. But the Holy Spirit was there who, as the outward man decayed, renewed the inward man day by day, and giving a foretaste of spiritual rest in the rich pleasures of God in the hope of blessedness to come, smoothed all that seemed rough, lightened all that was heavy. Men suffer amputations and burnings, that at the price of sharper pain they may be delivered from torments less but more lasting, as boils or swellings. What storms and dangers will not merchants undergo that they may acquire perishing riches? Even those who love not riches endure the same hardships; but those that love them endure the same, but to them they are not hardships. For love makes right easy, and almost nought all things however dreadful and monstrous. How much more easily then does love do that for true happiness, which avarice does for misery as far as it can?

JEROME. And how is the Gospel lighter than the Law, seeing in the Law murder and adultery, but under the Gospel anger and concupiscence also, are punished? Because by the Law many things are commanded which the Apostle fully teaches us cannot be fulfilled; by the Law works are required, by the Gospel the will is sought for, which even if it goes not into act, yet does not lose its reward. The Gospel commands what we can do, as that we lust not; this is in our own power; the Law punishes not the will but the act, as adultery. Suppose a virgin to have been violated in time of persecution; as here was not the will she is held as a virgin under the Gospel; under the Law she is cast out as defiled.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

11:25 Things Hidden from the Wise

Revealed to the Gentiles.

Origen: Jesus praises and glorifies the Father, who had foreseen the entire trajectory of the Word first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. Our Lord here gives thanks to his Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, for his mission in becoming incarnate in the form of a servant. He speaks about the Father's good pleasure now to hide this mystery about himself from Israel, which might be expected to be wise, and to reveal it to the Gentiles, who were until now without understanding. It is thereby demonstrated that God did not forget to fulfill his purpose, nor did Christ's coming fail in its appointed end. These things indeed have

happened, God knowing them beforehand and having commanded beforehand the repentance of grace. The justice of God's good pleasure is here passed over in silence, but elsewhere it is clearly displayed. God's good will is not irrational. People do not fail to attain knowledge and wisdom about it for any reason other than their own deficiencies. Fragment 239.

Lord of Heaven and Earth.

Augustine: Jesus says, "My Father, Lord of heaven and earth," Father of him through whom all things were made. Surely all creation is embraced by these two nouns heaven and earth. Therefore the first book of God's Scripture says, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth." And "my help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." By the name of heaven is understood whatever is in heaven, and by the name of earth is understood whatever is on earth. Thus, by mentioning these two parts of creation no aspect of creation is overlooked, since the created object is either here or there. Moreover, when the Son speaks to his Father his confession, Jesus admonishes us that confession is owed to God not for our sins alone. For very often when it is heard in the Scriptures, "You shall confess to the Lord," many who hear this beat their breasts in remorse. They do not recall that the term confession means anything else except their accustomed use when they show repentance, confessing their sins and awaiting their just deserts from God, not because they deserve to suffer but because God deems it worthy to act mercifully. But if there were not confession in the act of praise, Jesus would not say, "I confess to you, Father," since he had no sin to confess. It is said in another book of the Scripture: "You shall confess to the Lord" and say in your confession that "all the works of the Lord are very good." This is certainly a confession of praise and not of fault. Sermon 68.2.

I Thank You, Father.

Cyril of Alexandria: He employs the phrase "I confess you" in accordance with human custom. Instead of saying "I acknowledge you," he brings in the phrase "I glorify you." For it is customary in the divinely inspired Scripture for the word confession to be taken in some such a sense. It is written, "Let the people give thanks," Lord, "to your great name, because it is formidable and holy." And again, "I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart."

But those who are perverted in mind say, "Look here, if he renders thanks to the Father, how then is he not less than the Father?" To this objection one who knows how to guard the doctrines of truth might say, "My good man, what prevents the consubstantial Son from accepting and praising his own Father,

who through him saves what is under heaven? If you believe because of this confession that he is in a lesser position than the Father, look also at what comes next. Jesus acknowledges and calls his Father Lord of heaven and earth. For he confesses him as 'Lord of heaven and earth' and at the same time he calls upon him as 'Father.' But the Son of God who is ruler of all is in every way with him the Lord and Master of all, not as one worse or differing in substance, but as God from God. He is crowned with equal renown, having substantially with him equality in everything whatsoever." Fragment 145.

Grace Revealed to Those Simple at Evil.

Theodore of Heraclea: Jesus called the Jews wise, either because they were entrusted with the oracles of God or because they were evil-doers and wise at doing evil, but he called the apostles children. He called the scribes and Pharisees wise, though they did not really possess wisdom but only what appeared to be wisdom because of their cleverness with words. He called the fishermen, who were unskilled in evil, children. In this way, the grace of God was clearly manifested as Jesus made himself known to simple men.... And even if it was Christ himself who, for the most part, did these things, nevertheless, by giving thanks for them as things done by the Father, he shows that they share a common will and gives thanks for God's love for us in the things by which we have received benefit. Fragment 80.

11:26 The Father's Gracious Will

11:27 Knowing the Father by the Son

All Things Delivered to Me by My Father.

Jerome: The Father entrusts. The Son receives. What is entrusted? All things have been entrusted to the Son, but this does not mean cosmically heaven and earth and the elements and the rest of nature which God himself made and established. Rather, it refers personally to the people who have access to the Father through the Son and who were formerly rebellious but afterward began to know God. Commentary on Matthew 2.11.27.

No One Knows the Father Except the Son.

Hilary: So that it might not be supposed that anything in him is less than what is in God, Jesus said that everything was entrusted to him by his Father, that he alone was known to his Father and that his Father

was known to him alone or to one to whom he himself had wished to reveal his Father. By this revelation Jesus showed that the same essence of both Father and Son existed in their knowledge of each other. One who could know the Son would also know the Father in his Son, because everything was handed down to him from the Father. Moreover, nothing else was handed down than what was known to the Father in the Son alone, but the things that belonged to the Father were known to be revealed in the Son alone. Thus in this mystery of mutual knowledge it is understood that nothing else existed in the Son than what was known to be in the Father. On Matthew 11.12.

Anyone to Whom the Son Chooses to Reveal Him.

Chrysostom: This may seem to the uninitiated quite disconnected with the passage that went before, but the two stand in full accord. Having said “all things have been delivered to me by my Father,” he adds, “and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” In this he is quietly signifying his great privilege of knowing the Father and being of the same substance with him, he being the only One who knows the Father so intimately....

Note the timing and context in which he said this. It was just after he had worked miracles and the disciples of John had received proofs of his might by his works. He then thanks the Father that “that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes.” The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 38.2.

Everything Handed Down from the Father.

Cyril of Alexandria: The one who sees the Son, who has the image of the Father in himself, sees the Father himself.... These things are to be understood in a manner befitting to God. He said, “Everything has been handed down to me” so that he might not seem to be a member of a different species or inferior to the Father. Jesus added this in order to show that his nature is ineffable and inconceivable, like the Father’s. For only the divine nature of the Trinity comprehends itself. Only the Father knows his own Son, the fruit of his own substance. Only the divine Son recognizes the One by whom he has been begotten. Only the Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God, the thought of the Father and the Son. Fragment 148.

11:28–29 Rest for Your Souls

Learn from My Lowliness.

Augustine: You are to “take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.” You are not learning from me how to refashion the fabric of the world, nor to create all things visible and invisible, nor to work miracles and raise the dead. Rather, you are simply learning of me: “that I am meek and lowly in heart.” If you wish to reach high, then begin at the lowest level. If you are trying to construct some mighty edifice in height, you will begin with the lowest foundation. This is humility. However great the mass of the building you may wish to design or erect, the taller the building is to be, the deeper you will dig the foundation. The building in the course of its erection rises up high, but he who digs its foundation must first go down very low. So then, you see even a building is low before it is high and the tower is raised only after humiliation. Sermon 69.2.

You Will Find Rest.

Cyril of Alexandria: Stand apart from the inclination to love sin and to love the flesh. Turn to deeds worthy of praise. Draw near to me, so that you may become sharers of the divine nature and partakers of the Holy Spirit. Jesus called everyone, not only the people of Israel. As the Maker and Lord of all, he spoke to the weary Jews who did not have the strength to bear the yoke of the law. He spoke to idolaters heavy laden and oppressed by the devil and weighed down by the multitude of their sins. To Jews he said, “Obtain the profit of my coming to you. Bow down to the truth. Acknowledge your Advocate and Lord. I set you free from bondage under the law, bondage in which you endured a great deal of toil and hardship, unable to accomplish it easily and accumulating for yourselves a very great burden of sins.” Fragment 149.

11:30 An Easy Yoke, a Light Burden