
A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

or Prologue, in which the Problem about to be discussed is stated: Chapters i. and ii. (2) The Curse pronounced by Job on his Day—the occasion from which the discussion springs up: Chapter iii. (3) The First Colloquy of the great Argument: Chapters iv.–xiv. (4) The Second Colloquy: Chapters xv.–xxi. (5) The Third Colloquy: Chapters xxii.–xxvi. (6) The Soliloquy of Job: Chapters xxvii.–xxxi. (7) The Intervention of Elihu: Chapters xxxii.–xxxvii. (8) The Theophany, or the Intervention of Jehovah: Chapters xxxviii.–xli. And, (9) The Epilogue, in which the issue of this great controversy is recorded: Chapter xlii.

S. COX.

ON THE USE OF CERTAIN SLANG WORDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

I AM afraid that the heading of this paper will sound startling, and even irreverent. But I know of no more elegant synonym to express what I mean by slang, although I feel that it is too strong a word, as generally used, for the application I wish to make of it. In all cultivated languages certain words come to be used in familiar conversation in a sense very different from the original and proper sense, although often forcible and expressive enough. Presently this derivative use of the word (founded probably on some striking, perhaps absurd, analogy) creeps into written documents, at first under protest, always with a more or less startling effect. To mention words thus used in English slang is clearly unnecessary. What I propose to do is to point out three Greek words thus used in the New Testament,

and to compare them with equivalent or similar words in our own common talk.

The first of the three, and the best as an example, is the word σκύλλω, which I venture to think very closely represented by our word "worry." If I am right in my understanding of it, its primary application is to sheep, or other tame animals, hunted and torn by dogs or other natural enemies. It is in this sense that it appears to be used by St. Matthew in Chap. ix. 36, recalling probably our Lord's own use of the word on this occasion. The true text reads thus: "And seeing the crowds, he was full of pity for them, because they were worried [ἐσκυλμένοι] and thrown down, as sheep which have no shepherd." How forcible and natural is the metaphor here, and how in keeping with so much in Ezekiel and elsewhere! Abandoned by their shepherds, what is the fate of the hapless sheep, but to be worried and chased by wolves or jackals, and at last to throw themselves down, exhausted and hopeless, to die? The priests and scribes and elders were the shepherds whom God had appointed over his flock; but they had fed themselves only,—or, at most, only stuffed with unwholesome food a small clique of their own at Jerusalem,—while the multitudes of populous Galilee had been left in their ignorance a prey to every impostor and every fanatic that came to make havoc of them. This seems to me the great sin of the "rulers" at the time of Christ's appearing: they confined their care and their sympathy to the few who belonged to their party, and made no effort to teach and guide aright the multitudes whom Christ found so ready to listen to his

(often unpalatable) doctrine. This people, they said, which knoweth not the law, is cursed. So "this people" were like sheep worried by wild animals, and if any one has seen a flock that has been thus worried, he will feel the tremendous force of the simile, simple as it is.

But it fared with "σκύλλω" exactly as it has fared with "worry:" it came to be used familiarly in the common talk of common life and lost more and more of its sharpness of meaning, until it signified no more than "tease" or "trouble." It is this "slang" use of the word—so absurdly different from the proper use—which we find in St. Mark v. 35, and in St. Luke viii. 49 and vii. 6; and we find it, just as we should have expected, in the homely unstudied sayings of common men as reported by the Evangelists. In the one case it is the servants or dependants of Jairus who hurry to meet him, and to prevent him from giving useless trouble to the great Teacher: "Thy daughter is dead [St. Mark]; why *worry* the master any more?" or, "Thy daughter is dead [St. Luke]; do not *worry* the Master." Is it not exactly what might be said now under similar circumstances? Still more curious perhaps is the use of the same word in the second case by the Centurion, a man who possibly had risen from the ranks: "The centurion sent friends to meet him, saying to him, Lord, do not worry thyself [μὴ σκύλλου], for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." Here the imperative middle is used, exactly as we should say in familiar talk, "Don't worry yourself;" or, absolutely, "Don't worry." To say that such a slang use of the word is unworthy

of the New Testament is only to say that the Evangelists were bound to polish up the diction of servants and soldiers, instead of reporting it in the most life-like way possible.

The second instance to which I shall draw attention is comparatively well known, but it is remarkable as being used by our Lord Himself as well as by St. Paul. It occurs in the parable of the Importunate Widow (St. Luke xviii. 5), and is lost to sight in the tame translation of our Authorized Version, "lest by her continual coming she *weary* me." The word ὑπωπιάζω is well known to have been a pugilistic term, corresponding to the word "punish" in the slang of the "ring," but having special reference to the eyes of an antagonist. St. Paul uses the word in a sense less removed from the primary in 1 Cor. ix. 27, "I punish my body." One might almost translate (if the vulgarism were not intolerable), "I *give it to* my body;" but pugilism was so much more respectable among the Greeks that the Apostle could use a pugilistic term which can find no admissible equivalent in decent English. In our Lord's parable, however, the word has departed still further from its primary sense, and in the mouth of the unjust judge is clearly "slang." It is the poor widow who is to "bruise" the lazy judge, not by blows, nor by unsparing treatment, but simply by importunity. I know of no English equivalent which at all preserves the metaphor except the slang word "bore," and that is founded, apparently, on a different though not very dissimilar analogy. I suppose that a man is "bored" when the sharp pertinacity of another threatens, as it were, to drill a hole into him, as the

ceaseless turning of a metal point will bore the hardest rock. Certainly the metaphor is far-fetched enough, and one must admit that the Greek equivalent is the more expressive of the two; it is well known that the constant repetition of a very light stroke upon the body will produce a painful bruise at last. I do not know, however, how the sentence can be better rendered in English than, "lest by her continual coming she bore me."

The last instance I shall take is far more obscure, and therefore I can only suggest what seems to me the probable force of the word in question. I refer to the use of *καταναρκάω* in 2 Cor. xii. 13, 14. It is translated in the Authorized Version, "to be burdensome to"—a rendering obviously too tame and too little specific to suit either word or context. What the word signifies is evident, for it was what the Apostle had steadily declined to do—viz., live at the expense of the Corinthians. Now there are in all languages many ways of expressing this idea, mostly more or less uncomplimentary. It is likely, I think, that the Apostle would in this place have used one of the more disparaging expressions, for evidently there is a good deal of restrained sarcasm and scorn of mercenary motives in this part of his letter. Yet the word does not at first sight appear to have much point, for it is generally translated, "render numb," or, "make torpid" (cf. Gen. xxxii. 25, LXX.), and is a verb formed from *νάρκη*, the name of a kind of torpedo which has a reputation for numbing the hand that touches it. But I venture to go back to the fish itself, and to suggest that the popular use of the word was a somewhat different

one. Was not the torpedo supposed to attach itself by suction to some creature of larger growth, and to make use of it for its own support? Whether it really does so is of comparatively small concern, for neither then nor now has popular language had much regard for the facts of natural history. I strongly suspect that the idea really embodied in the word *καταναρκάω* (as borrowed by St. Paul from the Corinthians) is *not* the idea of "numbing" or "making torpid," but the idea vulgarly expressed by our own phrase, "to sponge upon." I can only guess that this latter phrase borrows its meaning from the (real or supposed) parasitic habits of the sponge as a living creature. If it be so, then there would be a singular resemblance in history and meaning between the two expressions—each borrowed by a seafaring people from the apparent habits of a marine animal, and applied with some contempt to the conduct of unworthy men. At any rate, it does not seem to me at all unlikely that the Apostle would have used such an expression as "sponging upon" in this particular passage. He was never careful of the elegance of his language when he wished it to be forcible, and in this Epistle especially he makes no attempt to be dignified. Evidently he had in his mind the very words and phrases which his vulgar detractors at Corinth had used concerning him. They had reached him in no mild dilutions, but in their original vulgar insolence, and he made no pretence of not feeling their point. They had accused him, as I think, of having "sponged upon" *other* Churches, while, with a truly natural inconsistency, they did not conceal their vexation at his refusal to put himself under any

obligation to *them*. Wonderful is the lofty earnestness with which he deals with these vulgar topics, gilding the muddy levels with the glow and sparkle of his own ardent charity. But I think he did not hesitate to repeat their own slang; he had *not* "sponged upon" them, it was true, and, moreover, he did not *intend* to "sponge upon" them, however often he came to them. RAYNER WINTERBOTHAM.

IV. *THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS AFTER THE TIME OF SAMUEL.*

BEFORE quitting the subject of the Schools of the Prophets there are one or two points connected with the gradual declension of the order which seem to merit a careful consideration.

We pass by the case of Balaam, because, though he seems to have been a true prophet, yet he did not belong to the Israelite race and had no connection with the prophetic schools. Nor shall we say much of the old prophet of Bethel who acted the part of the tempter to the man of God who came from Judah. (1 Kings xiii.) We may very well believe that he had been educated in the schools founded by Samuel; for Bethel was one of their headquarters, and we find numerous scholars there in the time of Elijah. But, doubtless, he was one of those who had acquiesced in the worship of the golden calves set up by Jeroboam, arguing, perhaps, that they were but symbols of the true Deity, and to be regarded in the same light as the cherubs in the Temple of Solomon. The very reason, therefore, why he was so anxious that a prophet of higher character and more uncom-