

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

greater frequency and freedom. But it is their presence in just that proportion, with exactly those characteristics, in just those departments, which have been observed which point precisely to that period assigned by Christian criticism to the appearance of the body of New Testament literature. No adroitness could have secured a second century forger from some blunder which would have been open to detection in this matter, most notably in the far larger number of Latin terms

which in a later age would have become part of settled vocabulary for common use.

To conclude, if the presence of these Latin words has this linguistic interest and historical significance, it has also a far higher value in its bearing upon the canon of the New Testament, and in its fragmentariness may yet be welcomed as a serviceable piece of evidence by those who, as jealous for the Scriptures, are jealous for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

The Sunday School.

The International Lessons for May.

I.

May 4.—Luke viii. 41, 42, 49-56.

The Ruler's Daughter.

1. "A ruler of the synagogue." Capernaum would contain more than one synagogue, though Nazareth had only one (Luke iv. 16). They were managed by elders (all laymen), with a Ruling Elder at their head. The "chief seats" mentioned in Mark xii. 39 were reserved for the elders.

2. "One only daughter." See also Luke vii. 12, and ix. 38.

3. "Trouble not the Master" (verse 49). Better, "worry not." See the Notes upon this word in Notes of Recent Exposition.

4. "He suffered no man to go in." There is some difficulty here. It is generally supposed that this means into the house itself, and that verse 54, "He put them all out," means out of the inner chamber where she lay. But more probably both refer to the chamber. He suffered no one to go into the inner chamber with Him except the three chosen disciples, and the father and mother; but the mourners, real and hired, were in already, and He put them all out before He raised her. He could do no mighty work in the presence of unbelief.

5. "Maid, arise." *Talitha, cumi!* were the very words spoken (Mark).

The only serious difficulty which this exquisite children's story presents is in the words of Christ in verse 52, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." They are fully discussed in the Notes of Recent Exposition this month. In them lies also the great lesson of the miracle, the death that is no death—

"There is no death. What seems so is transition.

This life of mortal breath

Is but a suburb of the life elysian,

Whose portal we call death"—

and the death that is death indeed. The teacher will find abundant material of the deepest interest and import in this great subject.

II.

May 11.—Luke ix. 10-17.

Feeding the Multitude.

1. "The Apostles, when they were returned." The Mission of the Twelve is described in the early verses of the chapter. It must be carefully kept distinct from the Mission of the Seventy told in the next chapter.

2. "Went aside privately." Several reasons are given. Herod had killed John, and now began to inquire about Jesus. He must keep out of that fox's way, for His time was not yet come. There were also incessant interruptions from the eager Galileans, so that, as Mark says, there was no leisure so much as to eat. And then, there was the need of rest, rest for body and mind, felt both by Jesus and the disciples.

3. "A desert place belonging to a (not *the*) city called Bethsaida." It is Bethsaida Julias, at the north of the lake, not the Bethsaida of the five leading apostles, which was a mere fishing suburb of Capernaum.

4. "By fifties in a company." Mark compares these companies to beds of flowers, "as they sat on the green grass in their bright Oriental robes of red and blue and yellow."

5. "Twelve baskets." Where did they get the baskets in "a desert place"? Every Jew carried a basket about with him to hold his food, in case it should get "polluted" in his intercourse with Gentiles.

An account of this great miracle is found in all the Gospels, and when we gather together the little touches, added by one or another to the main narrative, touches which prove the independence of each, and yet the accuracy of all, we get a full and very vivid picture. Jesus and the tired apostles cross the lake secretly to a desert place; but the eager crowds get word of it, and hurry along the shore. He receives them tenderly; forgets His own necessities in ministering to theirs; and now when the day is ending, and still they are listening to His gracious words or waiting for His healing hand, there is alarm among the disciples—what shall be done if night should come down? But already He has thought of this (see John vi. 5), and knows what He will do. Along the side of the hill they are ranged in plots of fifties, like bright spring flowers; the blessing is asked,

the five loaves are broken and they know not how, but there are more than enough for them all.

When the Israelites were passing through "that great and terrible wilderness" of their wanderings, God supplied their necessities by the miraculous gift of manna. Why was it given? To teach them, says their great leader, that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Deut. viii. 3). Why does Jesus feed these hungry crowds of Galileans? To satisfy bodily necessities? No; for that might be done by ordinary means. It is to teach them that He who can supply their bodily wants can satisfy the deeper needs of the spirit; and that the noblest life is not to be rich in this world, but to be rich toward God, to be faithful, true, and good. When there occurred a famine in Germany, some of Luther's followers excused themselves for doing certain acts that seemed like dishonesty, by saying, Well, we must live. "I do not know that you must live," said the Reformer, "but I know that you must be honest."

Jesus Christ is Himself the true bread of God (John vi. 49-51) for whom we should hunger. To feed upon Him, to be united to Him by faith, to love Him and live for Him—that is life indeed, that is to be rich toward God.

III.

May 18.—Luke ix. 28-36.

The Transfiguration.

A short lesson, but inexhaustible in meaning. How shall we make the children comprehend it?

1. "Into a mountain." It was Hermon, as all agree, 15,000 feet high, its summit clothed in perpetual snow, lonely and terrible.

2. "The fashion of His countenance was altered;" explained by Matthew's "His face did shine as the sun" (Matt. xvii. 2).

3. "His raiment was white and glistening." Matthew compares the whiteness of His clothing to light, Mark to snow, Luke to lightning.

4. "Spake of His decease." The word is *exodus*, "departure." (The Book of Exodus is so called because of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt.) It includes here, says Bengel, His agony, cross, death, resurrection, and ascension.

5. "At Jerusalem." For it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!

6. "Tabernacles," *i.e.* tents, or rather booths of wattles or tree branches, such as they lodged in at the Feast of Tabernacles.

To understand the Transfiguration, we must ask: For whom was it intended? The answer is, first for Christ Himself, but also for the disciples. That it was for our Lord Himself the whole narrative shows, but the fact that the disciples were in deep sleep during part of the time conclusively proves it. To what extent or in what ways Christ was benefited by this interview with Moses and Elijah we do not know, and it is not our concern, at least not yet. We may say, however, with safety, that Moses and Elijah did not come down to inform Him of His death, for He knew of it already, and had told the disciples; nor to

tell Him how to meet it; for in all this He was more fitted to enlighten them, more fitted by far. Says Godet: In view of that cross which is about to be erected, Elijah learns to know a glory superior to that of being taken up to heaven (as he himself had been),—the glory of renouncing, through love, such an ascension, and choosing rather a painful and ignominious death. Moses comprehends that there is a sublimer end than that of dying, according to the fine expression which the Jewish doctors apply to his death, "from the kiss of the Eternal;" and this is to deliver up one's soul to the fire of divine wrath.

And this is the very lesson that is meant for the disciples. There seems to be good reason for the opinion that, since Christ's announcement of His coming death, they had been in deep dejection. Peter's eager proposal that they should all stay there in happy isolation from the rest of the world, shows that he does not understand what that death means. How important, then, that they should hear it made the subject of conversation with Moses and Elijah; but much more that they should hear the divine sanction and approbation given to it out of the great Shekinah, the cloud of glory, the manifested presence of the living God! It was this that impressed them, this that they remembered in the after days. "For," says Peter, "we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard come out of heaven, when we were with Him in the Holy Mount" (2 Pet. i. 16-18).

IV.

May 25.—Luke x. 1-16.

The Mission of the Seventy.

1. "Other seventy also." Better, "Others also (besides the Twelve) seventy in number." See Lesson for May 11.

2. "Salute no man by the way." The Eastern salutations are elaborate and tedious. The Seventy must make haste, their message is urgent.

3. "Peace be to this house." In literal obedience to this command, Edward Irving pronounced these words when he entered a house, and the people felt that they had received an apostolic blessing.

4. "If a (not 'the') son of peace be there," that is, if a man of a peaceful receptive mind be there.

5. "It shall turn to you again." "My prayer returned into mine own bosom," Ps. xxxv. 13.

6. "Chorazin" is not mentioned elsewhere. It was two miles inland from Capernaum.

7. "More tolerable." Read Luke xii. 47, 48.

Jesus had now commenced His last journey towards Jerusalem, of which so many incidents are recorded. He passes through Perea, the country on the eastern side of Jordan, which He had visited but little hitherto. There was the greater need, therefore, for such a mission. The men were sent as lambs among wolves, but two by two, for

mutual support. Whatever their treatment may have been, they returned with joy at the end of the mission, saying, "Even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name." They had gone out, then, in the name of Jesus, and that had been their strength, and the secret of their success.

But much is made here of the visible means they were told to employ. Three things are named. First, their message was urgent—"The kingdom of God *is come nigh unto you.*" Secondly, their manner of life was the simplest—"Remain, eating and drinking such things as they give." Thirdly, their commission was authoritative—"Into whatsoever city ye enter and they receive you not . . . it shall be more tolerable in that day (the day of judgment) for Sodom than for that city."

This last point is most impressive, and it should not be difficult to make the children feel something of the force of it. To hear the gospel preached, or explained in school, or even to read it in the Bible, is not only a privilege, but a great responsibility. They who have been carefully brought up and yet go wrong, it will be worse for them. They who have been taught—but surely especially they who teach—it will be more tolerable for most than for them.

The International Lessons.

PAPERS AND PRIZES.

REPORT FOR APRIL.

Age under eighteen.

1. MAGGIE MILNE, Harbour of Refuge Cottage, Stirling Hill, Peterhead.

Order of Merit.—J. K. C. (Aberdeen), J. M. S. (Perth).

Age under thirteen.

1. ANNIE MURPHY, The Manse, East Budleigh, Devon.

Order of Merit.—G. G. O. (Glasgow), E. J. P. (Edinburgh), C. C. G. (Elgin), F. M. (Budleigh), T. H. H. (South Ronaldshay).

EXAMINATION ON THE LESSONS FOR APRIL.

(Answers must be received by the Editor, Kinneff, Bervie, N.B., not later than May 12.)

Age under eighteen.

1. Explain: "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

2. Name any incidents in Christ's life which illustrate the words: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

3. Give the Parable of the Sower and its interpretation in your own words.

Age under thirteen.

1. How did Jesus prove that God is kind even to bad people?

2. Tell the story of the Raising of the Widow's Son in your own words.

3. What does "Gospel" mean?

Anecdotes for the Sunday School.

Getting out of Temptation.

Little Henry had been very sick. When he was slowly recovering, and just able to be up, he was left alone a short time, when his sister came in eating a piece of cake. Henry's mother had told him he must eat nothing but what she gave him, and that it would not be safe to have what the other children had till he was stronger. His appetite was coming back; he wanted very much to take a bite of the cake, and his kind sister would gladly have given it to him. What did he do?

"Jennie," said he, "you must run right out of the room away from me with that cake, and I'll keep my eyes shut while you go, so that I shan't want it."

And when I heard of this, I thought that there are a great many times when children, and grown-up people too, if they would remember little Henry's way, would escape from sin and trouble.

The Best Gift.

In the old schools of philosophy it was usual for the pupils to bring a present to their teacher at the commencement of each term. On one of the occasions when the disciples of Socrates, one by one, were going up with their gifts, a poor youth hung back. But when all the others had presented their gifts, he flung himself at the feet of the sage, and cried, "O Socrates, I give thee myself." And this is the gift which the Lord Jesus asks of you. Give Him your heart, yourself.

The Ideal Christ.

The sculptor Dannecker worked for two years at a statue of Christ. After he had done his best—as he thought—he asked a little girl into his studio, and when the child was in front of the statue, he said to her, "Who is that?" The child looked, and said, "A great man." The German artist went away mournful: he had failed. He set to work again. He worked for six years more, and then he sent for that same child again. The child looked, tears came into her eyes, and she said, "It is, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" Dannecker was delighted; he had chiselled out his conception of Christ.

Following Christ.

It is related in the annals of the Ottoman Empire that when Amurah II. died, which was very suddenly, his son and destined successor, Mohammed, was about a day's journey distant in Asia Minor. Every day of interregnum in that fierce and turbulent monarchy is attended with peril. The death of the deceased Sultan was therefore concealed, and a secret message sent to the prince to hasten at once to the capital. On receiving the message, he leaped on a powerful Arab charger, and, turning to his attendants, said, "Let him who loves me follow!" This prince became one of the most powerful sovereigns of the Ottoman line. Those who proved their courage and loyalty by following him in this critical moment of his fortunes were magnificently rewarded.

There is another Prince—the Prince of Peace—who says to those around Him, "Let him who loves Me follow."