

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

Jewish Church. Others have done likewise. But now the work needs neither explanation nor commendation. It is known to most. It is out of print, and there is no prospect that it is to be reprinted again.

We come then, last of all, to two Histories of the Jewish People. There may be, there certainly is, great difference of opinion as to the essential value of both. But no one will question the right of either to an important place in a survey of recent literature on the Prophets of Israel. For their attitude towards the prophets, whatever its worth, is original; and the men are scholars; and they have won a place in the republic of letters.

Graetz has a large field to cover, and so his first volume includes our whole period, and even goes down to near the Christian era. His treatment of the prophets is therefore brief, and one need not go to his pages for this subject alone. But if one does so, immediately will appear the independence of the author and his historical imagination, the undoubted success with which he places himself alongside the prophet, till we see him as he was,

not as the long perspective of time would make him. Thus there is often a sense of loss. Perhaps in the end the gain is greater.

Renan's method is different. It is just the opposite. There is imagination enough, but it is not the historical imagination. Or if it is, and Renan claims that it is, then the historical imagination is not historical at all, but quite individual and subjective. Nevertheless, there is all around the Prophets of Israel, as Renan tells us of them, an atmosphere of these latter days, and even of these latter days in France, so unmistakable, that we must restore the historical imagination to its rights and not to Renan. Are the books any the worse for that? As history, Yes. But then Renan's first object is not to write history, there being but little history to write. As studies in the history of religion (not forgetting the religion of our own day), they are of the highest value. If the student of the history of Israel may neglect these most piquant and tantalising volumes, the student of modern French literature and life must know them in his very heart.

The International Lessons.

I.

October 4.—John xi. 21-44.

CHRIST RAISING LAZARUS.

FOR the most part the narrative is clear and intelligible, and the difficulties will be felt rather by the teacher than by the scholar. But the following points may be explained as the children read:—

1. "Though he were dead" (ver. 25). A more exact translation is, "though he have died." As Lazarus has died, for example.

2. "The Christ" (ver. 27). "Christ" is Greek, and "Messiah" Hebrew for *Anointed*. When Jesus was acknowledged to be the promised Messiah, He began to be called "Jesus the Christ," then simply "Jesus Christ"; and so by and by the single word "Christ" was used, as if it were His name. But Martha knows Him by the name of Jesus, and so it is nothing short of a great creed or confession of faith she utters, when she says, "I believe that

thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, which should come (literally, *who cometh*, that is, *who was prophesied to come*) into the world."

3. "He groaned in the spirit" (ver. 33). The right translation is, "He was very angry in spirit." Of that much there is no doubt. But what was Jesus angry at? Readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES may turn to vol. i. p. 172, where they will find reasons given for the belief that Jesus was angry that temporal death should be made so much of (whether by Mary's weeping, which was real enough, or by the howling of the Jews, which was mostly only professional); while spiritual death, the only true death, was quite covered over and forgotten.

THE DIFFICULTY in teaching St. John's Gospel is to know how far to go. It seems so simple that the youngest child thinks he understands it all; it is so profound, that the ripest saint can touch but the fringe of it. And the question is, how far we may lead the little ones

without carrying them out of their depth. But for this, as for so much else, the teacher is his own best guide.

The great subject of the lesson is in the 25th verse. Martha says: I know that he shall be alive again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus says: The resurrection is *now*. He that believeth in me, even if he have died, as Lazarus, yet shall he be alive; and whosoever is alive now, like yourself, Martha, and believeth in me, shall never die. The resurrection is *now*; or rather, there is no resurrection to him that believeth in me, for there is no death. Jesus passes by all thoughts of a bodily resurrection, for He will have Martha think of the spirit. He even ignores death—the death of the body—that He may teach her that the real death is not the death of the body, but the death of the spirit. She that liveth in *sin* is dead—is dead while she liveth. That is death indeed, the only true death. And so, when He found them all making their great lamentation over the temporal death of Lazarus, He was very angry; and again, when they more than hinted that He had shown but little love for Lazarus in letting him die, He was deeply hurt in spirit, and very angry. For He had come to tell them that death meant separation from God, and the dead were those who seemed to be alive; and true life was the knowledge of God and the love of Him, and the conscious enjoyment of His presence.

He was very angry with them for making so much of temporal death, because it hid from them the awful reality of which this temporal death was but the shadow. And yet in the midst of it all, His tender human heart went out to the sorrowing sisters. "Jesus wept." It was not the loud insincere lamentations of the hired mourners. The word expresses simply the silent falling of tears. And as His heart is touched with keen sympathy for them in their grief, so will He stay it by giving their brother back to them. He brought forth Lazarus because of those who stood by, that they might believe; but also, we may be sure, because of the love He bore to Mary and Martha.

II.

October 11.—John xii. 20–36.

CHRIST FORETELLING HIS DEATH.

The first thing being always the catching of the children's interest, it may be well, before they begin

to read, to set before them, in a sentence or two, the place and the circumstances of this striking scene.

It is Jerusalem, and the time of the Passover, so that the city is crowded with people. There are not only Jews from every part of the world, but Gentiles also—men and women of other nations, who have learned, like the Ethiopian Eunuch, to love the God of Israel. Jesus has come up to Jerusalem. It is His last Passover. It is the great Passover for us; for at this Passover the true Passover Lamb will be slain. The last week of His life has begun. He goes out every night to Bethany, returning to Jerusalem in the morning, and spending most of the day about the Temple, where, of course, the greatest crowds of people are always to be found. And so, one day, while He is speaking to the people in the inner court, some Gentiles approach Philip, whom they find somehow in the outer court—the court of the Gentiles as it was called—and startle him with the abrupt and pressing entreaty, "Sir, we want to see Jesus." Philip finds Andrew and tells him, and then the two together go and tell Jesus. And if Philip was startled at the request when first made to him, he is much more startled when he sees the effect it has upon Jesus.

Now, let us read and explain:—

1. "Certain Greeks." The word is usually translated "Gentiles"; and the point of the whole story lies in that—they were Gentiles and not Jews. They may have been from Greece, however.

2. "What shall I say?" (ver. 27). His human soul, shrinking from the agony that lay between Him and the glory, would say, "Father, save me from this hour." But it was to go through with the agony that He came to this hour. And so, submitting His own will to the Father's, what He does say is, "Father, glorify thy name." The verse should, therefore, be read thus: "What shall I say? (Shall I say) Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. (What I *shall* say is) Father, glorify thy name."

3. "The prince of this world" (ver. 32). That is, the devil. For it was true what the devil said at the Temptation, that the kingdoms of the world were his own.

4. "We have heard out of the law." Not merely the "books of Moses"; they used this word to include the Psalms and even the Prophets. See Ps. cx. 4; Isa. ix. 7, and other passages.

Now, why did this simple request of the few Gentiles make such an impression upon Jesus? The Apostle Paul has much to say about a "mystery" which was hidden through the ages of the world, but had just been revealed in his day. This mystery was the offer of the gospel to Gentiles. It seems a very simple thing to us, but Paul was a greater man than any of us, and he always looked upon it as the most wonderful thing he ever knew. But the manner of it was no less wonderful than the thing itself. It could only be accomplished by the death of Christ. While He was on earth He was Himself a Jew, and had to do only with Jews. He came in contact with one here and one there, like a grain of corn lying in a heap of corn in the barn. But when He died, He died for the whole world. He opened the door of salvation to every one who came from Adam. And this was what He came into the world to do.

So when these Gentiles wished to see Him, He was suddenly overwhelmed with the thought that the hour was at hand when He must die. He knew that without His death these Gentiles would seek Him in vain. But He shrank from what it involved—the agony and the shameful Cross. He shrank from it, but in the thought of the Father's will, and the great power which His cross would have in drawing perishing men towards Him, He overcame the repugnance. And the strange scene ends, not merely in peace, but even in triumph; for the will is surrendered, and the glory already won.

III.

October 18.—John xiii. 1-17.

WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

There are some niceties of interpretation in this passage, of which the following should be pointed out in the course of the reading:—

1. "He loved them unto the end" (ver. 1). The words translated "unto the end" may also be rendered "to the uttermost," *i.e.* completely, utterly, as in 1 Thess. ii. 16, "The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." And that is the best meaning here. He had always loved them, for were they not His own? But now that He was about to leave them alone in the world, He loved them to the uttermost. And the first mark of this full love was the washing of their feet. So that it was not done for the sake of example only;

it was His utter love for them finding a marvellous way of expressing itself.

2. "And supper being ended" (ver. 2). The best translation is, "Supper going on," or "during supper." The words cannot be rendered "supper being ended;" and clearly it was not ended, for it was after this, when they were at supper, that Jesus dipped the sop and gave it to Judas Iscariot.

3. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet" (ver. 10). The words are different in the Greek, and the first should be translated "bathed." He that is bathed needs nothing more than to have the dust washed off that has gathered on his feet during the walk to the supper room. He that has once surrendered himself to the Lord, and been reconciled to God, needs nothing henceforth but the daily pardon for daily transgressions, a pardon so freely given for the Redeemer's sake.

"I HAVE given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." What had He done? He had washed their feet. And so some simple Christian people have thought that they were bound to keep up this custom of feet-washing. A great Church Council, held at Toledo in 694, made it a law throughout Spain and France, the day appointed being Thursday in Holy Week. "In 1530 Wolsey washed, wiped, and kissed the feet of fifty-nine poor men at Peterborough." The English kings kept up the custom till James II.; and as late as 1731, little more than 150 years ago, the Lord High Almoner washed the feet of the poor people who received the royal charities at Whitehall on Maundy Thursday.

It is a fine instance of how the letter of a command may be kept, and the spirit of it lost. Often the letter must be disregarded just that the spirit may be kept.

Jesus washed the disciples' feet for an example. But of what? Of feet-washing? No; of self-denial and self-surrender. At that time, and especially in that particular company that evening, nothing would show the spirit of humility, and the love that loses self in thoughts of others, so well as the washing and the wiping of the feet. Somebody certainly should have done it; but apparently each of the disciples was too proud to do it for the rest. And therefore Jesus did it as a great example of love and self-surrender. And now He will have us follow His example. "As I have done to you." Not by feet-washing, but how

numerous are the opportunities love finds of expressing itself in the ordinary ways of life. Every child will be able to suggest an instance. And they will know that the only thing needed is that the love itself be there.

IV.

October 25.—John xiv. 2-3, and 15-27.

CHRIST COMFORTING HIS DISCIPLES.

1. "Many mansions" (ver. 2). The word means dwelling-places, and our Lord simply assures the disciples that there is room for them all. Nothing is said of the kind of the abode; but then it is "in my Father's house"!

2. "Comfortless" (ver. 18). *Fatherless* is the meaning, as the same word is translated in James i. 27, or *orphans* as the margin has it. "Comfortless" is an unfortunate rendering, since it suggests a connection with the "Comforter," which is itself a mistaken translation.

3. "Judas, not Iscariot" (ver. 22). Thus there were two of this name among the twelve. This Judas we call Jude sometimes, but he is not the Jude who wrote the epistle.

THERE is no denying it that, simple as it seems, this is for children a very puzzling lesson. The separate sentences, with their "almost child-like language," they may partly understand. But this is not a chapter of proverbs; and the difficulty is to find a thought that binds the sentences together and makes a continued story.

Jesus was like a father to the disciples while He was upon the earth. Now He must go away. But He will not leave them fatherless. He will come to them again. He will come not at some distant time, but immediately. He will come in the person of the Holy Spirit.

He will come to them again, but not in bodily form of flesh and blood. He will not be visible to the outward eye, but He will be recognised by the loving heart. Therefore the world will not see Him again when once He has departed. How is it, said Jude, that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? And He answered

by a little parable: "If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto *him*, and make our abode with *him*." Not with the world, but with him who has the heart to love. It is love that sees.

This is the comfort. Because He had said He must go away sorrow filled their hearts. But He will scarcely be gone when He will be back again. Back, not in bodily presence, but in the person and presence of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes He says He will send, and sometimes He says He will come. But it is just the same. He comes in Him whom He sends.

He comes in the person of the "Comforter." But that is not His proper name, nor His proper office. The word which Jesus used was Paraclete (*παράκλητος*). It is found only five times in the New Testament, and all in the writings of St. John. Four times St. John uses it in the Gospel, and once in his First Epistle. In the First Epistle (1 John ii. 1) it is applied to Christ Himself, and is translated "Advocate." In the Gospel it is applied to the Holy Spirit, and in our versions is always translated "Comforter." It should have been rendered "Advocate" everywhere. For the Greek word Paraclete means one called to your side, and that is exactly the meaning of the Latin *advocatus*, and English *advocate*.

It was an Advocate not a Comforter the disciples would need when Jesus went away. For they would have two great adversaries to oppose, the world and their own hearts. No doubt they would have Satan also. But Jesus undertook to plead their cause with the Father in heaven against *him*. And that is why Christ is called a Paraclete or Advocate. The Paraclete on earth is the Holy Spirit. And He pleads our cause, first against the world, and then against our own unbelieving hearts. He defends our cause against the world, as He convinces it of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. He pleads for Christ within ourselves, as He calls to our remembrance His loving words and deeds, and makes us know the truth and power of them.

That is the comfort with which Jesus comforted the disciples.

Point and Illustration.

A Pharisee Still.

By the Rev. T. T. Lynch.

THE Pharisee informed the Lord
How good a life he led ;
The Publican shrank back in shame,
And smote his breast instead :
But when the Lord, in tender love,
The penitent commended,
The hypocrite, with heart unchanged,
Straightway his prayer amended.

Said he : " The man who says he's worst
Is by the Lord thought best ;"
So next when he to worship went,
As Publican he drest,
And smote upon his hollow heart,
And bowed him down and groaned,
And, proud of his humility,
His unfelt sins he owned.

The Publican, an altered man,
Came, too, with lifted head,
And joyfully gave thanks to God
For the new life he led ;
The Lord again his offering took,
Still spurned the Pharisee's,
For sometimes tears, and sometimes thanks,
But only Truth can please.

Peter.

By Mary Harrison.

The Sunday Magazine.

NEXT to the rank of a child Peter ranked, and the fact gave him his place in the esteem of Jesus. With Him greatness was the child, and the greater greatness was still more of the child. In any other light than this the name Cephas, a rock, was no name for Simon Bar-jona, impulsive, headstrong Simon, who blundered, did wrong, and whose tears of sorrow for wrong fell hot and fast. But his humble, homely, childly heart was precious and beloved through all. As the world counts rock, rock was no character-name for this favourite of Jesus, with whom He chose to live as His daily and nightly friend. Immovableness, solidity of character to the outward eye, Peter had none. But the outward eye judges falsely. Peter was clearly neither a great pioneer, nor a great theologian, nor a great scholar ; but he was a great child, and for his fitness to express this one permanent power of the life of faith he was the foremost of the Twelve.

"Mithering."

The Leisure Hour.

THE late Mrs. Frederick Hill took great personal interest in prisoners, her husband having been H.M. Inspector of Prisons in Scotland previous to his appointment as Assistant-Secretary to the General Post Office. She often quoted the saying of one man, who attributed his changed

life to the prison matron, for, said he, " She so *mithered* me that I could not go wrong."

"Positivism."

By the late Canon Liddon.

Sermons on the Old Testament.

THE first condition of a deep religious influence is a clear, positive creed,—clear and positive, whether its area be large or small. A man must know what he does believe. Elijah would have been powerless had he only insisted on the falsehood of the superstitions of Jezebel and her prophets. He would have been powerless had he merely surrounded the revelation of Sinai with a garniture of sentiment and poetry, leaving it doubtful whether he believed it to be God's very truth or not. He was powerful, because men knew that he had no doubt about his creed,—about its exact frontier, about its absolute certainty. When he cast his mantle upon Elisha, Elisha felt the passage, not of a mere man, but of a mighty cause or truth represented in the man, and he obeyed it.

"He went Everywhere."

BISHOP X— had officiated in the college chapel one Sunday morning, and though his discourse was most excellent in itself, it had no obvious connection with the text with which he introduced it. At dinner, Professor Y— was asked her opinion of the Bishop's sermon. " Dear old man !" she exclaimed. " It was truly apostolic. He took a text, and then he went everywhere preaching the gospel."

"Being let Go."

By the Rev. B. J. Greenwood.

Sword and Trowel.

WHEN the Apostles Peter and John were set free by the Council, " being let go, they went to their own company," which was the company of " them that believed." When the carrier-pigeon is " let go," it flies to its home. When the needle is " let go," it flies to the magnet. When you are " let go " (that is, when you are free from your work, or business engagements, or other duties), where do you go to? What company do you naturally seek? Some have asked the question, " Where shall I go when I die?" Where do you go now you are alive? The answer to the first question may depend very much upon the answer to the second.

"Seeing" the Gospel.

The Day of Days.

A POOR Chinaman came to a missionary to ask for baptism. When asked where he had heard the gospel, he answered he had never heard the gospel, but he had *seen* it. He then told of a poor man at Ningpo who had once been a confirmed opium-smoker, and a man of violent temper. This man had learned about the Christian religion, and his whole life was altered ; he gave up the opium, and became loving and aimable. " Oh," said the candidate for baptism, " I have not heard the gospel, but I have *seen* it."