

(ויהפך יהוה רוח ים). The east wind had brought the locusts upon the land of Egypt, but Jahwe *brought back* a west wind (which had been, so to speak, blown away by the easterly gale), and the locusts were taken off in the direction from whence they came.

Thus the reference to the production of light out of darkness disappears from Amos v. 7 in a correct translation and the whole verse speaks of the God of the storm, the Maker of the rain constellations, Who darkens the morning with the blackness of night when He "calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth."

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JÜLICHER ON THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES.

(Concluded.)

(ii.) BUT the most important of the parables of Jesus do not fall within the above category, viz., the well-known parables in narrative form. Not that this form, in itself, would exclude them from the class of similitudes. Within the limits of our definition we might quite well have a similitude in narrative form, supposing that the object of the speaker were to illustrate some actual fact of the past. But evidently this is not the case with the parables to which we refer. The illustrative portion gives a narrative of some past occurrence, but the saying, in the interest of which the story is told, refers not to the past but to the present or the future. For instance, in Matthew xxv. 1 sqq. we have a story of ten virgins, whose different experience is related; but the parable concludes with a warning for the future: "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." The parallelism between "fact" and "illustration," which we noted in similitude, no longer

obtains. And there is another point of difference. In similitude the illustration is taken from the world of reality. It speaks of things which happen every day, appeals to facts familiar to everybody, marshals the evidence of a *τις*, a *μήτι*, an *οὐδεὶς*. But in these other parables we find Jesus drawing on His imagination, making up stories out of His head, basing His arguments, not on what every one does, but on what a particular man in particular circumstances did, without asking whether others would do the same. In what relation do these parables stand to the similitudes described above?

They are really merely higher forms of the same rhetorical figure, so that we might describe them as similitudes in narrative form. But rhetoric has long had a distinct name for the figure here before us. Alongside of *παραβολή* (similitude), Aristotle names FABLE as a species of rhetorical example (Rhet. ii. 20). He gives, as an instance, the celebrated fable of Stesichorus to the Himeræans, when they proposed to give a bodyguard to Phalaris. The horse, said the poet, in order to take revenge on the stag, became the slave of man. *Οὕτω δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς*, he concluded, *ὄρατε μὴ βουλόμενοι τοὺς πολεμίους τιμωρήσασθαι ταὐτὸ πάθητε τῷ ἵππῳ*. The *οὕτω καὶ ὑμεῖς* recalls the use of the same phrase in the similitudes of Jesus, *e.g.*, Mark xiii. 28 sq., and testifies to the close relation of similitude and fable. The purpose of the fable indeed is precisely that of similitude—to convince by illustration of a parallel case. That the illustration it adduces is taken not from the real world but from the imagination, only adds to its strength, for *ποίησις φιλοσοφώτερον ἱστορίας*. In the actual there are so many factors present, that it is difficult to find a clear illustration of the law one desires to enforce. To secure an unhesitating verdict, one must arrange the evidence so as to bring out clearly the point in question. And further, the narrative of a particular incident has the great

advantage of vividness. The interest is excited, the whole scene is played before the eye. In a similitude, *e.g.*, "no man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment," the understanding alone assents, but in a fable, the understanding and the eye. The similitude deals with such terms as *οὐδείς, μήτι, πᾶς ἄνθρωπος*, etc.; it would convince by the authority of the "in general." Fable is more modest in its aim. It says, "Hearer, let me give you a single case, and if that does not convince you, I will say no more." A *ὁ σπείρων* is an exception, and, at bottom, a mistake. Fable eschews all generalization. But, like the Sibyl, it becomes the richer for its sacrifice. The impression produced by the story of a particular case, well conceived, is much stronger than that which follows from any general illustration.

The majority of the parables of Jesus in narrative form, Jülicher regards as fables, similar to that of Stesichorus. Fable he defines thus: "Fable is that figure of speech in which the operation (Wirkung) of a proposition is secured by placing alongside of it a fictitious story, dealing with another sphere, whose framework of thought (Gedanken-gerippe) is similar to that of the proposition in question, but whose operation is assured."

If this definition of fable be accepted—and we have not space here to follow Jülicher in his discussion of the nature and origin of fable—then there should be little hesitation in assenting to the identification of the parable in narrative form, as we meet it in the preaching of Jesus, with fable. If any distinction between the two is to be made, it must be on the ground of the difference of tone. Phædrus claims for his book of fables the double qualification "quod risum movet et quod prudentis vitam consilio monet." The earnest religious tone, which pervades the parables of Jesus, disqualifies them for the one portion of such praise; and perhaps it were better, in view of the loftiness of the theme with which they deal, and the solemnity of their tone, to

distinguish the parables of Jesus by some special name from fable in the ordinary sense. Jülicher prefers to call them PARABLES in the narrower sense, reserving this name for the similitudes in narrative form, as distinguished from the similitudes mentioned before. But we must remember that while we may thus, for practical purposes, distinguish them from fable, they are essentially the same. Dignity or lack of dignity in content and tone, does not materially affect the rhetorical form.

It must be evident, from what has been said, that there can be no question of *interpreting* the parables. The purpose of a parable is to make clear; and if it be not clear itself, it fails of its object. Every word is to be understood in its literal sense. The parables of Jesus are not allegorical representations of spiritual things, but appeals to a familiar sphere, in order to establish conclusions with regard to the sphere of religion. Any attempt to interpret them point for point must, then, be futile. If the story is true to life, it cannot be true in the spiritual interpretation; and if it be true in the spiritual interpretation, it cannot be true to life. Such interpretations as are given in Matthew xiii. 19 sqq., 37 sqq., cannot be genuine. Such a pressing of the details betokens a radical misconception of the nature of the figure.

But it may be objected, If the object of a parable is to enforce one central thought only, does not that reduce all the details of the parables to mere poetical ornament? Yet we can hardly imagine our Lord wasting His time over the embellishment of the stories He told. But does it follow, that because the details of the parables are not to be invested with a deeper meaning, they are therefore mere useless ornaments? If they serve to bring into clearer prominence the central idea of the parable, have they not their necessary place? A careful study of the parables will prove that the details of the stories are far from being the

superfluous embellishments the opponents of our theory imagine. Every little touch in the picture helps to bring out the main idea, and adds to the effectiveness of the illustration. The detailed examination of the parables in the second volume justifies the claim Jülicher makes, that the theory of parables he advocates is able to do full justice to every genuine word in the parables of Jesus.

(iii.) But there are some parables which belong to neither of the above classes, viz. : Luke xviii. 9-14, the Pharisee and the Publican ; Luke xvi. 19-31, the Rich Man and Lazarus ; Luke xii. 16-20, the Rich Fool ; and Luke x. 30-37, the Good Samaritan. These are narratives freely invented like the parables above, but distinct from them in this respect, that the stories told are taken from the religious sphere. According to our definition of fable (parable in the narrower sense), the illustration is borrowed from *another* sphere. This is the case with all the similitudes and parables described above. But here it is different. We never leave the religious sphere. In a word, the story is an *instance* of the truth asserted. Jülicher would call them "EXAMPLES IN NARRATIVE FORM." They lack the convincing power of similitude and parable. There is no "so also" to confute the doubter by proof from another sphere. They appeal not to the unbeliever but to the believer. One must admit the authority of the narrator before one submits to the authority of the narrative. The Lord says that the Publican went down to his house justified ; but would the Pharisee be willing to assent ? Or what could the Sadducees think of the story of Lazarus ? We can imagine these parables being received with a shake of the head, or a shrug of the shoulders, a thing inconceivable with the true "parable," where the battle is fought on neutral ground, and the opponent is led on unsuspectingly to give his verdict on a case submitted to him, without realizing the consequence, until the "so also" of application opens his eyes.

(iv.) Still another kind of figurative speech is ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament. In John x. 1-16, we have a discourse in which the imagery of the sheepfold is plentifully employed. We read of sheep in the fold; of the shepherd entering by the door and the robber climbing up some other way; of a porter opening the door to the shepherd and the sheep recognising his voice. The parable (so it is called in our version) is followed by a somewhat confused interpretation, according to which Jesus is now the door, now the shepherd who enters by it. The character of the figure is not difficult to determine. It belongs to none of the classes described above, but is plainly an allegory. In order to do justice to the imagery, we must translate it into its spiritual equivalent. And even as an allegory, it is imperfect, for it is a defect that *θύρα* and *ποιμὴν* should both denote the same thing, while the *θυρωρός* appears to have nothing to correspond to it. We meet another such allegory in John xv. 1 sqq.—the Vine and the Branches. The discourse is a series of metaphors, far from artistically constructed, for the symbol and its counterpart, figure and interpretation, are mixed up together, and run into one another. Jülicher is of opinion that these *παροιμίας* are not genuine. If there be any authentic reminiscence underlying them, we can no longer conjecture its original form.

So far of the NATURE of parables. It remains now to consider the PURPOSE with which Jesus employed them. A question, we feel, which calls for but few words, for we have virtually decided it already. Once we realize the nature of the parables, there can no longer be any doubt as to their purpose. That purpose is inherent in them. One does not light a lamp save for the purpose of giving light. Neither did Jesus use illustrations, whose very nature, as we have seen, is to make clear, save with the purpose of aiding His hearers to a knowledge of the truth He sought to reveal.

But it is our duty to examine the sources, and consider their evidence. In Mark iv. and the Synoptic parallels, the question as to the purpose of the parables is raised. We shall confine ourselves here to the Mark account, which Jülicher regards as the primary source, and follow him in his examination of the relevant passages.

In Mark iv. 33 occurs a remark which, at first sight, appears to bear out the conclusion we have reached as to the purpose of our Lord's use of parables: "And with many such parables spake He the word unto them *as they were able to hear it.*" These last words are usually taken as meaning, that Jesus graciously adapted His teaching to the capacity of His hearers. The parables were the milk with which He fed the babes who were unequal to the strong meat of naked truth. On this view, we have here a thought parallel to the word of Christ to His disciples in John xvi. 12: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." This were certainly the most natural interpretation of the verse, did it stand by itself. But the verse which follows, does not bear out this interpretation: "But without a parable spake He not unto them; and when they were alone, He expounded all things unto His disciples." Observe the significance of the latter half of this verse. The disciples alone get an explanation from the Master of the parables He has spoken. The multitude receive everything in parables, the disciples everything expounded. Of what the disciples learn by that private *ἐπίλυσις*, the multitude learn nothing, unless indeed we are to believe that they were more enlightened than the Twelve, and understood, without *ἐπίλυσις*, what the disciples required to have explained to them. If we cannot suppose that, then the only conclusion is that the *ἀκούειν* of the multitude was a hearing without comprehension, in which case the *καθὼς ἠδύναντο ἀκούειν* serves to describe the parables as a form of doctrine which in-

duced a hearing, but nothing further, a hearing without effect on the understanding and heart.

Jülicher confesses that this interpretation of the words *καθὼς ἠδύναντο ἀκούειν* seems strained, if we take *v. 33* by itself. But it is forced upon us by *v. 34*. And not by it alone. If our reading of these verses is correct, then we should expect something more than this incidental allusion to the effect of the parables. The verses point to deliberate intention. If Jesus spake in parables to the multitude and reserved the interpretation for His disciples in private, if He left the crowds who listened to Him to their worthless *ἀκούειν*, when He might so easily have converted that hearing into understanding by the *ἐπίλυσις* which He gave to the Twelve, then it must have been with a deep and deliberate purpose, of which we naturally expect to hear more. And we are not disappointed. The fact borne witness to in *v. 33*, of the mere *ἀκούειν* of the multitudes, is only the realization of the purpose which Jesus Himself, in an earlier part of the chapter, declares has led Him to the adoption of this form of doctrine. In *vv. 10-13* we have a conversation between Jesus and the disciples, at the close of the parable of the sower. They ask Him regarding the parables (*ἡρώτων αὐτὸν . . . τὰς παραβολάς*). The expression is vague. To ask regarding the parables, might mean to ask why He uses parables, as Matthew takes it (*xiii. 10*), or to ask the meaning of the parables, as Luke interprets the question (*viii. 9*). But as we find Jesus (*Mark iv. 13*) referring to the disciples' ignorance of the meaning of this parable, we infer that He has learned that fact from the present question, and accept Luke's interpretation of the words. The plural in *v. 10*, *τὰς παραβολάς*, is striking, as Jesus has only spoken one as yet. Possibly Mark is already thinking of our Lord's answer, and anticipates the plural which follows. For Jesus, before giving His disciples the desired *ἐπίλυσις*,

first of all emphasizes the contrast which determines Him in His adoption of parable—on the one side *ὑμεῖς*, *i.e.*, His adherents (*v.* 10); on the other, *ἐκείνοι οἱ ἔξω*, *i.e.*, those without. To the former the mystery of the kingdom is given, to the latter all things are done in parables. Exactly the contrast of *v.* 33, but here with the purpose explained (*v.* 12), “in order that seeing they may see and not perceive, . . . lest perchance they may turn and it be forgiven them.” Here, then, is the purpose of the parables clearly set forth. The multitude receive the parables that they may have something for the eye and ear, something that they *ἀκούειν δύνανται*, but nothing that may penetrate to head and heart. They are to remain as they are, without turning to receive forgiveness.

In order to do justice to *v.* 11, we must beware of weakening the contrast of its two clauses by any additions of our own. To those who are without, the word of Christ (*ὁ λόγος*, *v.* 33) is given only *ἐν παραβολαῖς*: that does not mean “in parables without interpretation,” but simply “in parables.” To the *ὑμεῖς* it is not given in this manner. What to the others is a mystery is already given to them. It is altogether to destroy the force of *δέδοται*, to insert “by means of the interpretation of the parables.” Were that the meaning, then Jesus has omitted the most important point in the sentence. There is nothing said here about the disciples receiving interpretation of the parables. *Δέδοται* is not equivalent to *δέδοται γινῶναι* (the false reading of the Received Text). The disciples have already received (observe the perfect *δέδοται*, as contrasted with the present *γίνεται* which follows); they have already recognised Jesus as the Messiah; they are already *ἔχοντες* and *βλέποντες*. What *v.* 11 does explain is why Jesus speaks to the multitude in parables, to the disciples not in parables.

Only on this supposition is *v.* 13 intelligible. “Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all the

parables?" Just because the disciples are so privileged that the mystery of the kingdom has already been given to them, Jesus is disappointed to find that they are unable to understand the parable they have heard. The two things are not incompatible. In Mark viii. 17, 18, the quotation from Isaiah, here introduced in reference to the multitude, is applied to the Twelve. The fact that the disciples did not understand the parable, does not affect the state of things described in v. 11. The parables were not meant for them, but for the multitude. Jesus might, if He chose, give them an interpretation in private. But it was for the multitude that they were intended, and their object was solely that described in v. 12, to give the people the word in a form which should conceal the truth, that their heart might be hardened and judgment overtake them.

Such is Mark's theory of the purpose of the parables. We cannot follow Jülicher in his trenchant criticism of the various shifts which the commentators have made to evade the conclusions which an examination of the above passages forces upon us. We have only to ask, in conclusion, whether we can accept this Synoptic theory of the purpose of the parables. There can be little hesitation on the question. Ask any ingenuous person to say candidly, apart from all Synoptic theory on the matter, whether he thinks that the parables serve to obscure, or to make plain, the truth; whether he believes that they were spoken with the former, or the latter, object; and there will be no doubt as to his answer. Consider whether it is possible that the Christ, who felt it to be His life work κηρύσσειν and διδάσκειν, ζητεῖν and εὐρίσκειν, can have spoken in parables with the object of *not* being understood. The nature of the figure in question, the character of the Preacher who used it, protest against such a theory. It is strange, surely, that the instrument, selected for this purpose, should have been the

one which, in the hands of any other, is the most effective for the very opposite end ; strange that the man who perverted it to such an extraordinary use, should have been He whose object in life was the very opposite of that with which He is here credited. If there is one teacher, of whom we can affirm with certainty that his aim was NOT to conceal the truth from his hearers, lest they should be converted and receive forgiveness, that teacher is Jesus Christ. And if there is one form of instruction, of which we can affirm with certainty that its tendency is NOT to obscure, but to make clear so that even a child may understand, that form is parable. Had the purpose of Jesus been that which the Synoptists impute to Him, He would have selected some other instrument than parable ; and had the tendency of parable been that which the Synoptists allege, it would never have been employed by the Saviour.

How this Synoptic theory of the purpose of the parables arose, we can only conjecture. Jesus Himself, Jülicher thinks, is not likely to have entered into discussion with His disciples on the subject. The theory is the product of a later date. After His death, when men began to collect all that could be obtained of the sayings and doings of the Master, it must have struck the pious collector, how large a part the parables played in the recorded utterances of Jesus. The sayings of Jesus arranged themselves in two groups, the parabolic and the non-parabolic. The contrast, once perceived, was emphasized until it deepened into opposition ; and the two groups were characterized as veiled, and open, speech. But this opposition had to be accounted for. Why did Jesus employ these opposite kinds of speech ? The answer readily suggested itself—It must have been the difference in the hearers that led to this difference in the method of doctrine. The mass of the people to whom He preached, rejected Him. If He did not gain them, He could not seriously have sought to. What was the result

of all His preaching—viz. the hardening of their hearts,—this and none other must have been His purpose all along. According to tradition, it was His practice ever to use parable in His address to the multitude. Was not the reason clear? If the parables were, as was believed, a kind of veiled, mysterious speech, then Jesus's only purpose, in using this form consistently in His teaching to the multitude, must have been to bring about that which actually came to pass, the hardening of their hearts so that they should not repent.

In some such way, we might account for the origin of the Synoptic theory as to the purpose of the parables. We cannot accept it in its entirety; and it seems wiser to admit candidly what that theory involves, and reject it altogether as unhistorical, than to make any attempt at partial acceptance or defence. "Either—Or: Either the one purpose of hardening the hearts of the hearers, and the reliability of the Synoptists on this question also;—Or: an erroneous conclusion on their part, in consequence of an error in the premises, and the same purpose in the parables of our Lord as in all others. This Either—Or goes deep. EITHER the Evangelists, OR Jesus."

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