

as the other; and so far from thinking that its presence weakens my case I have laid stress upon it. But I think that he is wrong in trying, despite Lightfoot's warning, to base its origin in this particular on the Apocryphal Gospels and to think that he has the authority of Origen for so doing.

It has been no pleasure to me to say hard things of one to whose age I owe reverence and to whose learning and industry I am indebted for help in the happiest of all study, the knowledge of the Divine Word. But I believe he is defending what is false, and that when he has found himself in a tight place he has been willing to extricate himself at the cost of fairness to myself and my cause.

Yet I am not sorry to have had to go over the ground once more. I said that the more this theory of Helvidius is studied the harder does it become of acceptance; and the shifts to which my critic is driven illustrate this. An explanation which needs such help from so able a defender stands self-condemned: and with myself it is no more a question—as it once was—whether loyalty to truth requires me to adopt it, but how much longer it can hold its place among thoughtful scholars as a reasonable explanation of what Döllinger described as one of the most difficult problems of the New Testament. “X.”

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FORERUNNER AND THE STORMING OF THE KINGDOM.

MATTHEW XI. 7-15.

THE famous verse regarding the storming of the kingdom (Matt. xi. 12) has long been a *crux interpretum*. Wernle (*Die Synoptische Frage*, p. 66) considers that Matthew has not preserved the passage in its genuine form. Harnack (*Sprüche und Reden Jesu*, p. 14) holds that the material which Matthew (faithfully representing the Logia-Source=

Q) presents in verses 12, 13, "was as difficult for Luke to understand as for us," and thus accounts for the secondary elements in the Lucan parallel, chap. vii. 29, 30. W. C. Allen (*Comm. on St. Matthew*, p. 113) thinks that "verses 12-15 are probably inserted here by him (i.e. Matthew) from another context." To us it appears that these controverted words are extraordinarily significant as they stand, because of the actual light they shed on John's work as Forerunner, and because of their indirect testimony to the Messianic claims of Jesus. But obviously they can only be interpreted in their intimate connexion with their context as well as with related passages, and the context itself is highly suggestive for the early progress of the kingdom of God.

The answer which Jesus had just given to the perplexed inquiry of His Forerunner, brooding in melancholy mood in the dungeon of Machaerus, was an appeal to the phenomena of His own activity. There was no direct assertion of Messiahship. He would only point to the tokens of the kingdom's presence, which could not be mistaken. The last of these tokens which He mentions has an immediate bearing on the statements which follow: "The poor have the good news preached to them." And He closes His message to the Baptist with a note of gentle chiding: "Blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me."

Then Jesus proceeds very delicately to guard against an impression of disappointment in John which might easily arise in the minds of His disciples and of the listening multitude. It seems as if this scene must have occurred very early in His ministry, for He can still take for granted the vividness of the impression which the Baptist has made upon his hearers. The preacher to whom they had flocked was no wavering, reed-like nature, although for the moment his

question might hint at vacillation (ver. 7). There was nothing soft or nerveless about him, although for the moment hardship and apparent failure were telling upon his spirits (ver. 8). Rightly had they discovered that in him they were listening to a prophet, nay, to one "far greater (*περισσότερον*) than a prophet." This was extraordinary praise when we remember the estimate of the great prophets current among their fellow-countrymen. But Jesus justifies it by applying to John the words spoken by Malachi of him who should prepare the way of the Lord. He implies that the prophets, in pointing forward to the coming kingdom and the coming King, included the Forerunner in their prospect. So He is able, without exaggeration, to affirm: "There hath not been raised up among those born of women a greater than John the Baptist" (ver. 11). There need be no quarrel as to the meaning of "greater." To have this momentous function of preparing the way for the Coming One invests the Baptist with a unique dignity. But he has the function because he is fitted for it. And so his pre-eminent greatness really consists in his qualifications for this incomparable office. At the same time, the preparation for the kingdom does not necessarily involve a complete understanding of the kingdom, a convinced sympathy with its methods and temper. The kingdom really means an advance upon the standpoint of the Forerunner. It is not enough to follow the Baptist. One mightier than he has come. Jesus takes up the most generous attitude towards His Forerunner. But it is needful, however indirectly and unassertively, to emphasize the new order which He has introduced. The actual presence of the kingdom may now be recognized, that kingdom which makes its appeal in Jesus Himself to all the spiritually sensitive. Hence, "he that is least" within its sphere is greater than John (ver. 11). We shall see how this self-consciousness of Jesus, which is the tacit

undertone of the whole passage, reaches its culmination in the closing verses.

At this point (ver. 12 ff.) the close parallelism between Matthew and Luke is interrupted. Matthew xi. 16-19, which is exactly parallel to Luke vii. 31-35, is connected with verses 4-11 preceding (which agree with verses 22-28 in Luke), by an entirely different link from that which Luke supplies. Allen, who seems inclined to believe that Luke may have seen Matthew, holds that "he may well have taken objection to verses 12-15 as obscure, and substituted for them a comment which prepared an anticipatory explanation of Mt. 19b" (op. cit. p. 114). This explanation would still hold good if, with Harnack (loc. cit.), we substituted for Matthew the Logia-Source. But it is scarcely necessary to go so far afield as to find in Luke's comment "an anticipatory explanation of Mt. 19b." The comment is really close enough to the sense of the Matthew-passage, which, in all likelihood, Luke found at this point in his Logia-Source, but, because of its difficulty perhaps, preferred to group together with some isolated sayings of Jesus in chap. xvi. We shall return to Luke xvi. 16. Meanwhile, let us examine Matthew xi. 12, along with the comment in Luke (vii. 29, 30).

Ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ ἕως ἄρτι ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται, καὶ βιασταὶ ἀρπάξουσιν αὐτήν.
 The verb *βιάζεται* has been the subject of keen discussion. Is it middle or passive? It occurs in both voices in classical literature, although the middle is more common. In the LXX there seems to be only one instance of the passive, while the middle appears again and again. In Luke xvi. 16 *βιάζεται* is middle, and must be rendered, "presses forward eagerly." Deissmann (*Neue Bibelstudien*, p. 86) cites a good instance of this meaning from a Greek inscription of the Imperial period. It really makes little difference which

view be adopted. If the verb is passive, we must translate : " But, from the days of John the Baptist until the present, the kingdom of heaven is stormed, and stormers (or, storming-parties) seize it." The alternative rendering (construing as middle) will be : " The kingdom of heaven presses forward with energy, etc." An instructive parallel may be found in Exodus xix. 24 (LXX). Obviously the sense is, in either case, the same. What Jesus emphasizes is the stir which this new movement of the kingdom is making, and the eagerness of certain people to enter it. Allen's translation, " The kingdom of the heavens is violently treated, that is, in the persons of its messengers and heralds " (op. cit. p. 116), as if the writer had before his mind the death of the Baptist and the subsequent persecutions of Christian missionaries, is surely out of the question, both from the standpoint of the passage itself, its position in the context, and its relation to its parallels.

Why is the idea of the stir and commotion which the kingdom is making, introduced at this point by Jesus ? Is not the $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$, which ushers in the new statement, meant to modify the thought of John's inferior position, a thought which, nevertheless, Jesus intends to remain ? John, the Forerunner, had an altogether unique function. And yet those who have actually entered the kingdom have a clearer perception of things than he. Still, John is largely responsible for the origination of the movement and the rising tide upon which it has advanced. It was in his days that it began. Luke also emphasizes this fact in that word which is evidently the parallel of our verse, but which he has grouped among various isolated sayings of Jesus in a context to which it does not belong : " From that time (i.e., the time of John) the kingdom of God is preached,¹ and every

¹ Harnack notes (op. cit. p. 15) that *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* is " a pet word of Luke's." Obviously Luke's version of the saying is a paraphrase.

one (*πᾶς*, perhaps = "every kind of person") presses into it" (xvi. 16). The new movement is creating a ferment in society. Why? Because of its remarkable characteristics, notably because of the kind of adherents which it attracts. Here Luke's comment, which, as we saw, interrupted the parallelism, is most suggestive: "And all the common people who heard it and the publicans justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, not having been baptized by him" (vii. 29, 30). This is a striking glimpse of the actual situation. John's preaching has peculiarly impressed the despised classes of the land. In his account of the Baptist's ministry, Luke has a noteworthy report of interviews between the preacher and various groups of inquirers (iii. 10-14), whom he calls "the multitudes" (*οἱ ὄχλοι*), "publicans" (*τελῶναι*), and "men on military service" (*στρατευόμενοι*). The Pharisees and scribes, while joining the throng which flocked to the Jordan, held aloof from participation in the movement. Probably the drastic language used in Matthew xi. 12 (*βιάζεται, βιασταί, ἀρπάζουσιν*) is expressly chosen to emphasize the strenuous enthusiasm shown by those belonging to the lowest strata of the population, as contrasted with the coldness and aloofness of the "religious" parties in Judaism. And yet this was really the kingdom, taking definite shape: this was the realization of the highest Old Testament Hope. Surely there is nothing forced or unnatural in the connexion between verse 12 and verse 13. "For all the prophets and the law prophesied up to John." John is the culmination of the old order: a factor of transcending importance in the fulfilment of the Divine purpose; set in his place deliberately to indicate the near approach of the kingdom of God. Hence, men's attitude towards John is a searching test of their spiritual sensibility and discernment.

This aspect of the situation illuminates and is, in turn, illumined by the discussion and parable in Matthew xxi. 23-32. When the chief priests and elders of the people arrogantly question Jesus concerning His right or authority to act and teach as He was doing, Jesus replies: "I also will ask you one thing, and if ye answer me I too will tell you by what authority I do these things. Whence was the baptism of John? Was it from heaven or of men?" (Matt. xxi. 24, 25). The casual reader is apt to gain the impression that this was simply a desire to evade a difficulty. But it is never safe to attribute mere dialectical skill to any answer of Jesus. Even His apparently evasive replies are meant to provoke deep thought and questioning. The religious authorities, after consultation, refuse to commit themselves: "We do not know." And then Jesus answers: "I too refuse to tell you by what authority I do these things." This is not, as it might appear on the surface, a simple case of retaliation. John's ministry is a criterion of men's power of discerning the signs of the times. If these religious leaders have failed to understand, or refuse to acknowledge, John's true character, then they are blind to the tokens of the kingdom of God, and it is useless for Jesus, in the face of such blindness, to make any further explanations as to His own position and claims.

The parable of the Two Sons which follows, expands Jesus' view of the relation of the Pharisees to John and to the kingdom, and sheds valuable light on the passage which is the main subject of our discussion. I agree with Westcott and Hort, Weiss, Bruce, and others, in transposing the order of the answers in the parable (following B, a very important group of minuscules, and several versions). The first son, in reply to his father's request that he should go and work in the vineyard, answers, "I go, sir, and went not." The second, of whom he makes the same request, replies, "I

will not : but afterwards, having repented, went." Jesus asks, " Which of the two did the will of his father ? " They reply (so B, D, various versions and fathers), " The last." Whereupon Jesus declares : " Verily I say unto you, the publicans and harlots go before you into the kingdom of God. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not. But the publicans and harlots believed him : and when ye saw it, ye did not afterwards repent so as to believe him." The reverse of what might have been expected had happened. " The prophets and the law prophesied up to John " (Matt. xi. 13). The Pharisees and scribes professed zealous obedience to the teaching of law and prophets. They are represented in the parable by the first son, who says, " I go, sir." John came in the way of righteousness, true to their own Old Testament tradition, yet, when he proclaimed the coming of the kingdom, they did not believe him. " They went not." The publicans and harlots had a poor record of legal obedience. Their moral standard was lax. The reply which their lives gave to the Divine appeal was, " I will not." But, at the preaching of John, even they repented, and believed his great message. They pressed into the kingdom with eagerness and enthusiasm. Yet not even with this remarkable transformation before their eyes, did the Pharisees change their attitude. Hence, these outcasts step before them into the Divine heritage of the kingdom.

By this time it is plain that the full significance of our passage has been brought out into bolder relief by this section of Matthew xxi., and in its light, verses 16-19, which we have left outside the scope of the discussion, are seen in their vivid suggestiveness, as they picture the Pharisees as a group of peevish, sulky children, refusing to play at weddings or at funerals. The austere and the joyous view of life is alike distasteful to them. They are impervious to the

sterner and also to the gentler appeal of the kingdom of God.

The closing verses of the passage (14, 15) do little more than emphasize the tremendous importance of John's preparatory function, explained in terms of Jewish belief. But the emphasis is not otiose. It is unnecessary to discuss the Jewish expectation of Elijah's return as the precursor of the Messianic age. The words of Malachi iv. 5, 6, are familiar: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse." The same tradition appears in Sirach xlvi. 10: (Elijah) "who was recorded for reproofs in their seasons, to pacify anger, before it brake forth into wrath; to turn the heart of the father unto the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob" (cf. Luke i. 17). Volz (*Jüdische Eschatologie*, pp. 192, 193) shows that there was a difference of opinion among the learned as to the precise aim of Elijah's mission, but his coming was universally regarded in Rabbinic theology as coincident with the beginning of the era of salvation. The form of expression used by Jesus gives a solemn emphasis to the identification of John's function with that regularly assigned to Elijah. "If ye choose to receive the saying, he is Elijah who was destined to come." And then he adds the familiar phrase, which is perhaps almost equivalent to our N.B., "He that hath ears, let him hear."

Jesus has now fully vindicated John's unique office in the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom. But the kingdom is more important than its herald. The most remarkable feature of John's work is that it points beyond himself. Yet the outlook is in no sense vague. John has given impetus to a movement which circles round Jesus. He is

known already as "the friend of publicans and sinners." But this is not a slur upon the movement. Rather is it the justification of the Divine Wisdom, in which "these things," the truth of the kingdom, have been hidden from "the wise and understanding," and revealed unto "babes." John's stern preaching of repentance has turned the hearts of publicans and harlots towards Jesus, so that they recognize and respond to the new, saving, Divine order. The Pharisees have virtually ignored John, and utterly failed to discern the meaning of the movement which he inaugurated, regarding its very tokens as a reason for viewing it with scorn and reprobation.

Surely it is a fitting climax to those utterances which assign to John his true position and declare the presence and efficacy of the kingdom in spite of bitter censure and contempt, that Jesus should go on to assert His complete oneness with His Father's purpose, His unique fellowship with the living God, and in virtue of His solitary authority, proclaim that in Himself alone the weary and the burdened shall find rest unto their souls. H. A. A. KENNEDY.

ANALECTA.

II. A LAODICEAN BISHOP.

IN the remarkable epitaph of the Lycaonian fourth-century bishop Engenius, Roman soldier and dignitary of the Christian Church, the phrase, "the life of men," τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίον, in lines 17-18, attracts more careful attention. Mr. Calder takes it as "the life of this world," in distinction from the future life; and at first I entertained the same opinion; but hardly had the final proofs of our articles on the subject reached the printer's hands, when I felt that this was not the point which touched the mind of Eugenius. He was not thinking merely of