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## A NEW WORK ON THE PARABLES<sup>1</sup>.

PROFESSOR ADOLF JÜLICHER of Marburg is a writer of some note among the younger German Professors. He is conspicuously able in the narrower sense of the word, i. e. he has a strong grasp of his own position, and he writes forcibly and logically. Judging by a German rather than an English standard, he might be described as belonging to the Left Centre or more Conservative Left. His robust judgement is intolerant of absurdity and exaggeration on either side; and he is not a slave to the tradition of any particular school. He exercises to the full German freedom in criticism, but he takes his own impressions freshly from the facts with much independence and honesty of purpose.

Jülicher is best known for his elaborate work on the Parables, of which the first volume appeared eleven years ago, and the second—quickly followed by a new edition (largely rewritten) of the first—in 1899. But he has also brought out an *Introduction to the New Testament* which holds a good place in the series of compact handbooks (*Grundrisse*) published by Mohr of Freiburg and Leipzig. It may help to define his standpoint to say that, while rejecting the Pastoral Epistles, he goes further than up to that time (1894) Liberal theologians generally had gone, in accepting not only Colossians, but even the more strongly opposed Ephesians as possibly (he will not say more) a genuine

<sup>1</sup> *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (2 vols., vol. i in second edition), Freiburg i. B., &c., 1899.

work of St. Paul. In this he marked a tendency which has since been still more clearly pronounced. He also accepts 2 Thessalonians. And it is characteristic that he is a more uncompromising critic of the Fourth Gospel than e. g. either Schürer or Harnack.

The following pages may perhaps throw some light on the mental physiognomy which finds its natural expression in these views. I do not know any of the younger Germans who reminds me so much of the 'vigour and rigour' which Matthew Arnold found in the Tübingen criticism. By no means all the Tübingen critics had really what we should call the attribute of 'vigour.' Jülicher has this in a higher degree than most of them; and if in his case the 'rigour' is not that of the school, or of any preconceived philosophy, it is, I believe, all the more an inborn quality of the man. Half measures, subtle distinctions, the finer shades of delineation do not come to him so naturally as clear, definite, trenchant statement which does not admit of exceptions.

In dealing with the Parables, Jülicher's great object is to get rid at all costs of allegory. He holds that to represent the Parables as elaborate compositions, in which a number of points on the one side correspond to a number of points on the other, is to import into them something to which they were originally foreign. He believes that in their origin they were quite simple. Their object being to illustrate and enforce, he regards it as a contradiction that they should themselves need lengthy interpretations. He will not allow any one parable to carry with it more than a single lesson or moral. And that lesson or moral is not to result from any single feature, but from the parable as a whole. There may be a *tertium comparationis*, but not *tertia* (i 70).

It will be obvious that these principles are not compatible either with the form in which the Parables have come down to us, or with what we are told about them in the Gospels. To a certain extent—not perhaps a very great, but yet an appreciable extent—they have to be rewritten. Where details are introduced which tend to complicate the issue, these are usually discarded as later interpolations. Perhaps this is done on the whole less often than might be expected.

But besides these minor changes there are two main points

on which Jülicher deliberately throws over the tradition of the Gospels. These are: (1) all the cases in which by the side of the parable there is also given what purports to be its explanation; and (2) the account that is given of the object which our Lord had in speaking in parables.

The two instances in which our Lord is described as Himself explaining a parable after it has been told, both occur in the great collection of Parables in Matthew xiii. They are, of course, the Sower, and the Wheat and the Tares. The explanation of the Parable of the Sower is found in all three Gospels. The Wheat and the Tares, with its explanation, is peculiar to St. Matthew. Besides this, there is the express statement in St. Mark that 'privately to His disciples' our Lord expounded all His parabolic sayings (Mark iv 34). All these statements are necessarily rejected. They are set down to the Evangelists rather than to Jesus, as the product of a mistaken idea which had grown up that the Parables were difficult and enigmatical, 'mysteries of the kingdom' which needed a solution, dark sayings that could not be understood without the key.

It will also be remembered that in all three Gospels our Lord is represented as giving His own reason for the use of these dark sayings by applying to His hearers the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed,' &c.; as though it were His deliberate intention to conceal His meaning from the great majority of His hearers, and to reveal it only to the select few. According to Jülicher there was no intention to conceal at all, and nothing to conceal if there had been. The Parables were meant to be a help only and not a stumbling-block; and, rightly regarded, they were so clear that he who ran might read.

In Jülicher's view the paragraph on the object of teaching by parables was not an authentic record of words spoken by our Lord, but embodied the conclusions of the later Church drawn from the rejection of Christ by the Jews. The Jewish people had shown themselves blind and deaf. And this blindness and deafness had seemed to the disciples as in part penally inflicted. The nature of the teaching offered them was such as to leave them as they were. They *would* not hear, and therefore they

*should* not hear. The Evangelists saw in that the sum of the whole matter. But the verdict was theirs and not their Master's.

This therefore is Jülicher's general conclusion: the sections containing interpretations of parables and all allusions to such interpretations go; the section which purports to give the object of this particular method of teaching goes; and all those side-touces which, if they were allowed to stand, would convert parable into allegory, also go. As Jülicher does not accept the Fourth Gospel as apostolic, the confessed allegories in that Gospel do not trouble him.

With these deductions the rest of the Parables, very much as they stand, are genuine words of Jesus. And Jülicher devotes a chapter, or practically two chapters, of his introductory volume (I, *Die Echtheit der Gleichnisreden Jesu*, and V, *Die Aufzeichnung der Gleichnisreden Jesu*) to the proof of their genuineness.

It will be seen that there is a logical unity and completeness about the whole theory; and it is put forward as the one theory that is scientifically tenable. Jülicher writes throughout with the force of conviction, and is perhaps rather dogmatic in tone. He certainly shows neither fear nor favour in his treatment of other writers on the subject, but he is generous in the recognition of what seems to him merit, from whatever quarter it may come.

All this is calculated to impress opinion; and I should not be at all surprised if the theory found a more or less general acceptance with those who claim to treat the New Testament on strictly scientific principles.

And yet I shall not hesitate to express my dissent from it. Logic is one thing, science is another. A science of which the subject-matter is life cannot always be logical. To call it logical often means that it pursues some one train of thought too much to the exclusion of others. The play and subtlety of living thought is apt to escape in the process. So it seems to me to be with Jülicher. He rides his one idea too hard. He is not really a pedantic writer, because he comes to his subject with a great deal of freshness, and sets down honestly what he sees. But I believe that the way in which he has worked out his idea is what might be called, not unfairly, pedantic. It is too *a priori*, and excludes more than it ought to exclude. Much of this exclusion seems to me to rest upon insufficient grounds.

I shall try to make good this position presently. But before attempting to argue the case, it will be more just and more satisfactory if I first give a few concrete examples of Jülicher's treatment of the Parables. Perhaps we shall learn something by the way. For whatever we may think of its main thesis, and whatever objections we may have to details—and there is one rather sweeping objection that I may mention before I have done—however all this may be, the book as a whole has many good qualities. It is the most considerable work on the Parables since Trench<sup>1</sup>—not forgetting Dr. A. B. Bruce—and in penetrative grasp and strength I believe that it surpasses both our English works.

I ought to say that Jülicher divides the Parables into four classes: (1) Similitudes (*Gleichnisse*) or Undeveloped Parables, in which one thing is simply compared with another; (2) Fables (called in vol. ii *Parabeln*) or Narrative Parables, in which the comparison is worked out in the form of a story; (3) Typical Stories (*Beispielergählungen*), illustrating some principle or other by means of a concrete example; (4) Pure Allegories, which, as confined to the Fourth Gospel, are not further treated.

The number of the Parables may be very differently estimated, according as the dividing line is drawn between Parable and Similitude or Metaphor on the one hand and Allegory on the other. Steinmeyer put the number at 23 or 24, Göbel at 26 or 27, Trench at 30, Bruce at 33, with 8 'parable germs'; van Koetsveld, the Dutch pastor (*ob.* 1893), to whom Jülicher assigns the place of honour as a commentator on the Parables, would make the number 80 (or, more strictly, 79), though in his abridged *Hausbuch für die christliche Familie* this number is reduced to 35. One writer, von Wessenberg (Jülicher, i 28), rises to as many as 101. Jülicher himself fluctuates slightly in his estimate as well as in his classification; in his second volume he has treated in all 53, arranged thus:

<sup>1</sup> The English reader may be interested in Jülicher's estimate of our own leading writer. To his method, of course, he objects. In detail the work contains much that is excellent, in the way of grammatical and antiquarian notes, but too little sharp definition of ideas, too many dogmatical and edifying effusions, and no application of criticism (i 300).

A. Similitudes (*Gleichnisse*).

1. The Fig-tree as harbinger.  
Matt. xxiv 32 f.; Mark xiii 28 f.; Luke xxi 29-31.
2. The Slave bound to labour.  
Luke xvii 7-10.
3. The Children at play.  
Matt. xi 16-19; Luke vii 31-35.
4. The Son's Request.  
Matt. vii 9-11; Luke xi 11-13.
5. Disciple and Master.  
Matt. x 24 f.; Luke vi 40.
6. The Blind leading the Blind.  
Matt. xv 14; Luke vi 39.
7. Real Defilement.  
Mark vii 14-23; Matt. xv 10-20.
8. Salt.  
Matt. v 13; Mark ix 49 f.; Luke xiv 34 f.
9. The Lamp on the Stand.  
Mark iv 21; Matt. v 14<sup>a</sup>, 15 f.; Luke viii 16, xi 33.
10. The City set on a Hill.  
Matt. v 14<sup>b</sup>.
11. Revealing what is hidden.  
Mark iv 22; Matt. x 26 f.; Luke viii 17, xii 2 f.
12. The Eye as the Light of the Body.  
Matt. vi 22 f.; Luke xi 34-36.
13. Divided Service.  
Matt. vi 24; Luke xvi 13.
14. The Tree and its Fruits.  
Matt. vii 16-20, xii 33-37; Luke vi 43-46.
15. The instructed Scribe.  
Matt. xiii 52.
16. The Eagles and the Carcase.  
Matt. xxiv 28; Luke xvii 37.
17. The Thief.  
Matt. xxiv 43 f.; Luke xii 39 f.
18. The faithful and the unfaithful Steward.  
Matt. xxiv 45-51; Luke xii 42-48.
19. The Master's delayed Return.  
Luke xii 35-38; Mark xiii 33-37.
20. 'Physician, heal thyself.'  
Luke iv 23.
21. The Physician and the Sick.  
Mark ii 17; Matt. ix 12 f.; Luke v 31 f.
22. The Bridegroom.  
Mark ii 18-20; Matt. ix 14 f.; Luke v 33-35.

23. The old Garment, the old Bottles, the old Wine.  
Mark ii 21 f.; Matt. ix 16 f.; Luke v 36-39.
24. Tower-building and War-waging.  
Luke xiv 28 (25)-33.
25. The Beelzebub Similitudes.  
Mark iii 22-27; Matt. xii 22-30, 43-45; Luke xi 14-26.
26. On the Way to Judgement.  
Matt. v 25 f.; Luke xii 57-59.
27. Precedence at Feasts, and the right Kind of Guests.  
Luke xiv 7-11, 12-14.
28. Children and Dogs.  
Mark vii 27 f.; Matt. xv 26 f.

### B. Parables (or Fables).

29. Building on the Rock and on Sand.  
Matt. vii 24-27; Luke vi 47-49.
30. The importunate Friend.  
Luke xi 5-8.
31. The Widow and the unjust Judge.  
Luke xviii 1-8.
32. The Creditor and the Two Debtors.  
Luke vii 36-50.
33. The unmerciful Servant.  
Matt. xviii 21-35.
34. The lost Sheep and the lost Piece of Silver.  
Matt. xviii 10-14; Luke xv 1-10.
35. The lost Son.  
Luke xv 11-32.
36. The Two Brothers.  
Matt. xxi 28-32; (Luke vii 29 f.).
37. The wicked Husbandmen.  
Mark xii 1-12; Matt. xxi 33-46; Luke xx 9-19.
38. The unwilling Guests.  
Matt. xxii 1-14; Luke xiv 15-24.
39. The barren Fig-tree.  
Luke xiii 6-9.
40. The Ten Virgins.  
Matt. xxv 1-13; (Luke xiii 23-30).
41. Like Pay for different Work.  
Matt. xx 1-16.
42. The lent Money.  
Matt. xxv 14-30; Luke xix 11-27.
43. The unrighteous Steward.  
Luke xvi 1-12.

44. The Four Kinds of Soil.  
Mark iv 3-9, 14-20; Matt. xiii 3-9, 18-23; Luke viii 5-8, 11-15.
45. The Seed growing of itself.  
Mark iv 26-29.
46. The Tares among the Wheat.  
Matt. xiii 24-30, 36-43.
47. The Draw-net.  
Matt. xiii 47-50.
48. The Mustard-seed and the Leaven.  
Mark iv 30-32; Matt. xiii 31-33; Luke xiii 18-21.
49. The Treasure and the Pearl.  
Matt. xiii 44-46.

C. Typical Stories (*Beispielersählungen*).

50. The good Samaritan.  
Luke x 29-37.
51. The Pharisee and the Publican.  
Luke xviii 9-14.
52. The rich Fool.  
Luke xii 16-21.
53. Dives and Lazarus.  
Luke xvi 19-31.

The first question that we naturally ask of one who gives up the interpretations in the Gospels is what he will say of the Parable of the Sower. This is Jülicher's account of it:

'The Parable of the Sower was certainly meant by a concrete case from rural life to illustrate the law, that no labour and no expenditure of strength or means can everywhere count on the same success, the same blessing, the same acceptance; that while much is always done in vain, there is also much that has its fruit and its reward. This law also holds good for the Kingdom of Heaven: the Gospel need take no shame to itself that it constantly falls on deaf ears, and meets with but partial assent, uncertain love; enough if one way or another by the side of this some hearts surrender themselves to it for full fruition, for fulness of faith. Unreasonable pessimism and unreasonable optimism among the evangelists, the missionaries of the Kingdom, was what the Lord desired to check by the very telling effect of this story. . . . [As in the case of Jotham's parable] so also in this of the Sower, not too much is said about the Sower's failures: as they—as all failures, especially those of the missionaries of the Kingdom—are to be explained by very different causes, Jesus was obliged to seek some striking expression of this difference; and it is for that purpose, and



not for the sake of poetic adornment, that He speaks of the three kinds of soil in which the seed will not grow, although He will not have supposed Himself to enumerate exactly in this way the various classes of human hearts that do not attain to fruit-bearing; these are indeed many more than three' (i 110 f.).

We will reserve our criticisms, and proceed to give a few more specimens of Jülicher's method.

The other parable with an interpretation is that of the Wheat and the Tares. This, as we have it, stands alone in the series. It is pure allegory. Only as such does it become intelligible, which as an incident it would not be. Not until we see that the householder is Christ, the servants His disciples, the enemy the Devil, and the reapers angels, the treatment of the wheat and tares that of the righteous and the wicked at the Last Judgment, does the story assume coherence and plausibility. These features are added by the Evangelist himself, who shows by the elaboration of his picture the pride that he took in his own composition. For the rest we cannot tell what was the form of the original parable, except so far as we can guess at this by comparing the Parable of the Draw-net, which in the document used at this point probably formed a pair with it, like the Mustard-seed and the Leaven, the Treasure and the Pearl. The Draw-net is thrown to the end for the sake of the impressive warning with which it concludes. As in that parable, so also in the genuine version of the Wheat and the Tares, there would be no place for an 'enemy'; it would be just a simple story of the two growths appearing side by side, the one at harvest-time collected for burning, the other gathered into the barn.

We are glad that Jülicher does not think it necessary to interfere with the figure of the Elder Brother in the Parable of the Lost Son. Here it is only a question of the stress that is laid on the salient point of the parable. This, as in the case of the other two parables in the same chapter, is really the rejoicing over the return of the penitent.

'So the Father does not dispute any of the contentions of his Elder Son, nor yet does he complain of misrepresentation or of his self-praise, or of his ungrateful suppression of kindnesses received; he does not even blame him expressly for feeling no joy at his brother's return.

Only himself, his own seemingly paradoxical and unfair behaviour, will he defend; and that by the telling juxtaposition of vv. 31 and 32: "While thou hast never been dead and lost to me, hast caused me no break in the even tenor of our domestic life, thy brother, by the surprise at his return to life and at his recovery after his clouded past, has indeed given me cause for unwonted joy; and so it is, the loudest jubilations are called forth, not by the happiness of uninterrupted possession, but by the restoration of that which has been lost."

'So the story ends: whether the Elder Son followed his Father into the banquet-hall, we are not told, any more than whether or for how long the friends and neighbours of vv. 6 and 9 complied with the invitation to join in the rejoicing (compare also xiii 9). The interest of the parable does not turn upon deciding how the Elder Son ended by behaving to the Younger, or whether the Younger was finally cured of his evil courses' (ii 358).

That seems to me to be fine and true criticism, which singles out a right note, and sustains it as it ought to be sustained.

It would be another thing to say that the figure of the Elder Brother was introduced only in order to give an opening for the Father's explanation. Jülicher does not in so many words give this as his opinion, but I imagine that he would imply it. I shall return to this point.

Another parable that is, on the whole, well treated is that of the Labourers in the Vineyard. The name that is given to this parable shows at once what is considered to be its main significance. It is headed 'Like Pay for different Work.' Jülicher here, as we might perhaps expect, cuts away the parable from the connexion which it has in the Gospel of St. Matthew, as an example of the 'last' becoming 'first', and the 'first' 'last.'

The equal payment is the one reward of the Christian—his final admission to the kingdom of heaven. It does not exclude the existence of different ranks and degrees in that kingdom, which is elsewhere taught quite clearly. What it does insist upon is the fact that in this reward there is an element of grace, something that has not been earned. As an act of grace it rests wholly with the goodwill of Him by whom it is given. The questions to which it might give rise are sufficiently answered by calling attention to this: 'Is thine eye evil because I am good?' On the one hand there is grace and goodness, but on the other

hand there is also strict performance of what is promised. As Jülicher well puts it :

'The God who has but one common salvation for all the children of men, for chief priests and elders as well as for publicans and harlots, ought not to be blamed, as only a pitiful jealousy would dare to blame Him, but rather deserves thankful recognition, whether it be for the righteousness with which He keeps His promises to those who have kept His commandments, or for the goodness with which He rewards, far beyond merit or desert, those in whom the idleness of hours, of years, even of a whole life, called for censure or for punishment' (ii 467).

It is true that the text gives no hint as to any compensating difference in the quality of the work that is spread over a longer or a shorter time—either in the spirit in which it is done, or in the positive result attained. It is true also that we are intended to keep such considerations steadily out of sight. The main point of the parable in no way turns upon them. But I think that Jülicher goes a step too far when he lays down that the same common average of value is to be assumed throughout (p. 461 f.). I should prefer to put it that the question of value is not raised, that it does not enter into the parable. If the question were raised, then I think we may be sure that the difference of value would really come in. The teaching of the Gospels elsewhere certainly recognizes such compensating differences of value. The time that a man has been at work is only one part, and it may be a small part, of that which determines the estimate of his labour—

'In small proportions we just beauties see ;  
And in short measures life may perfect be.'

And over and above the amount done, and its quality when laid in the scales, there must always be the spirit in which it is done. The woman who was a sinner received a warmer meed of praise than the self-satisfied Pharisee, and her love and gratitude were warmer. She who loved much was also greatly forgiven ; but in the case of the Pharisee there was neither much love nor much forgiveness. There is a whole cycle of teaching to this effect to which this parable might also have been attached, if that had been its object.

I have said that Jülicher treats this parable without regard to the context in which it is found in the First Gospel. There it is

placed between two repetitions of the saying that 'the last shall be first and the first last,' and the parable is clearly intended to illustrate that saying. And there is indeed an inversion of order in the way in which the labourers are called up to receive their pay. That however is, as Jülicher says, a very subordinate point in the parable. It is necessary to the parable because the murmurers who receive no more than their due must have had the opportunity of seeing the generous measure accorded to their predecessors. But the order of payment is a minor detail; and it might be thought, as Jülicher thinks, that it would be more likely to suggest the place assigned to the parable by the Evangelist than to establish an integral connexion with the saying about 'the first and the last.'

And yet, if we do not limit ourselves as Jülicher does, but take in the whole significance of the parable, including the reference, which is really after all not very remote, to the Pharisees as representing the first called, and the outcasts as representing those who are called last, then we shall allow that there is at least a more substantial reason for associating the parable with the saying.

A rather similar point arises in regard to another parable—that of the Unrighteous Steward. There, in the text as we have it, two lessons are drawn from the parable. One is the commendation of the steward 'because he had done wisely: for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.' The other is, 'Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.' Jülicher accepts the first of these, but rejects the second. He would make the lesson of the parable, to take betimes the appropriate means for attaining an end; he sees in it the case of one 'who rescues himself from a position to all appearance desperate by taking thought and acting while both thought and action can still be of use, while he has the means still in his hands' (ii 510 f.). For Jülicher the emphasis falls 'not on the right application of wealth, but on the resolute utilizing of the present as the condition of a happy future.'

On his principles a choice between the two lessons is necessary; and it is natural, and no doubt right, that he should choose

the one that covers best the parable as a whole. But if we suppose that the Parables did admit more than a single lesson, and if we believe that our Lord did from time to time explain His own figurative language to His disciples, then it cannot be denied that the other lesson—to make such a use of wealth as to win for ourselves friends who will welcome us into the world to come—is in itself perfectly good and legitimate, a lesson which has a very distinct point, and is worth teaching.

Why should we be precluded from accepting it on grounds that seem to be so *a priori* as Prof. Jülicher's? The gist of the whole matter lies in a single sentence :

'To understand a parable,' we are told, 'we must not look for points of resemblance in the single constituent ideas of the parable, but we must note the resemblance between the *relation of the ideas* on the one side and that of those on the other. As the similitude is meant to illustrate a single word, *so is the parable meant to illustrate a single thought by means of an ὁμοιον, so that here too we can speak only of a tertium comparationis, not of several tertia*' (i 70).

Indeed a strange restriction! May we never group ideas, and compare not only the whole of a conception but the parts that make up the whole? Why should we not do this, if the parts really invite comparison? Why should we so cramp the free play of the human mind? Jülicher does not really observe his own rule. He says that the Parable of the Sower is meant to teach that no labour always succeeds, and that much of it is sure to be expended in vain, and yet he calls the parable *Vom viererlei Acker*, 'The Four Kinds of Soil.' What difference does it make that these four kinds do not exhaust all the possible kinds of soil? It would be sheer pedantry to expect that they should. Here, as elsewhere, we may well be content to have put before us a few striking and picturesque examples as specimens of the rest.

It would be a curious mind which permitted itself no side-glances. And such side-glances as we find in the Parables come in so easily, so simply, and so naturally, that it is doubly wrong to ignore them.

Again, to go back for a moment to the Elder Brother. The character and attitude of this Brother corresponds exactly to

a permanent type, often hinted at in the Gospels and specially common at the time to which they belong. Are we to suppose that there is no allusion whatever to this type, and that he is only introduced as a lay figure to which to attach the Father's apology for his conduct?

I praised Jülicher's treatment of this incident, but I cannot be debarred from reading into it more significance than he does. The incident may help us to form our estimate of Jülicher's book as a whole. It brings out at once its strong and its weak side. I believe that on the whole its effect will be salutary. It is so important that the central ideas of the Parables should be treated as really central, and that the other subordinate ideas should be duly graduated in relation to them, that it is well, even at some cost, to have this side of the matter emphasized. But Jülicher, I feel sure, goes further than he need. He lays down a rule which is too rigid, and which violates the many-sidedness and varied interest of life.

Let us try to throw ourselves into the position of those Galilean peasants and fishermen, with a sprinkling of the more educated classes, who formed the audience of Jesus. Is it so incredible that the Parables needed explanation to them? It is hard for us to judge now that they have been so many centuries before the world, and we ourselves have been brought up from childhood upon them. We assume the Gospel of Jesus as a known quantity. We are familiar with the thoughts which He wished to elicit, the type of character which He wished to create. Strike away these conditions; suppose them non-existent; and put in their place the mental equipment of an ordinary Galilean crowd of the time. Where would the intelligence come in? What would it find to take hold of? The disciples themselves, even the chosen Twelve, are represented in the Gospels as very dull of apprehension—some would say preternaturally dull. But at least this representation seemed to have verisimilitude at the time. It was passed on from document to document, and became practically the accepted view of the second generation of Christians.

I am unable to see any adequate reason for doubting the tradition that has come down to us on any one of the three connected points to which Jülicher takes exception: that the

hearers of Jesus did need some explanation of the teaching set before them, that as a matter of fact Jesus gave such explanation, and that the explanations were, generally speaking, of the kind of which specimens are given in the case of the Parables of the Sower, and of the Wheat and the Tares. The second of these two specimens is not quite so well attested as the first, and is perhaps open to a little more question; but if we accept the first, and accept also the statement of Mark iv 34, there can be no objection to it in principle.

And if we see our way to sustain the tradition as far as this, I believe that we shall also be prepared to sustain it further—to sustain it at least in the same general sense without absolutely pledging ourselves in detail. Jülicher, as we have seen, sets down to the account of the Evangelists the whole of the paragraph which professes to give the reason assigned by our Lord for speaking in parables. I have already referred to the fact, and it is important to remember, that this paragraph belongs to the fundamental document; so that in no case does the responsibility for it rest with the authors of our present Gospels. They simply copied what they found in the place where they found it. We will not say that the words were necessarily spoken on the occasion of the delivery of the first parable. Neither will I undertake to say that our Lord used exactly the form of words ascribed to Him and no other. Two out of the three Gospels make it the express object of the teaching by parables to confirm the hearers in their obstinacy and to hide the mysteries of the kingdom from them (*ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσω καὶ μὴ ἴδωσω* κ. τ. λ. Mark; *ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσω* κ. τ. λ. Luke); Matthew puts this rather differently (*διὰ τοῦτο ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λαλῶ, ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν*). It would seem as though *ἵνα βλέπωσω* had been the form in the original document; it would not follow with stringency, that it was the form in which the words were actually spoken by Jesus. I should not like to say that they were not so spoken merely in order to ease the historical or dogmatic inference; but I also should not like to build too confidently upon the assumption that they were. All that I should have some confidence in extracting from the passage would be that our Lord probably did, at some time in the course of His ministry, apply or adapt, in reference to His own teaching,

the words that were given as a special revelation describing the effect of his teaching to the prophet Isaiah.

Nor does there seem to be sufficient ground to reject the application to teaching by parables, though it is possible that the original reference may have been to the teaching of our Lord, or even to His ministry, as a whole. But the main point is that there is solid foundation for ascribing the words, or something like them, to our Lord. The Synoptical passage, Mark iv 10-12, does not stand alone. In the Fourth Gospel where the ministry of our Lord is drawing to a close, and the Evangelist is looking back over its course, he too applies the prophecy of Isaiah as fulfilled in the unbelief of the Jews: 'For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart, &c. These things said Isaiah, because he saw His glory; and he spake of Him' (John xii 39-41).

Then again when St. Paul arrives at Rome and receives a deputation from the Jewish colony there, he is represented as closing the debate by an appeal to the same prophecy: 'Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, Go thou unto this people, and say, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand,' &c. (Acts xxviii 25-27).

These indications go to show that the passage was one of the standing quotations current in the apostolic age as a summary verdict upon the refusal of the Jews to listen to the Gospel. We cannot of course infer for certain that its use was suggested by a similar use of the passage by our Lord Himself, but the probabilities seem to point that way. The facts would hang together very naturally and intelligibly if the first impulse came from Him.

And there is yet another observation that seems to me to point in the same direction. I refer to the places more particularly in St. John's Gospel, where our Lord speaks of His own preaching as of itself, by a sort of automatic process, dividing between believers and unbelievers, 'If any man hear My sayings and keep them not . . . the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day' (John xii 47, 48), and again, 'For judgement came I into this world, that they which see not may see, and that they which see may become blind' (John ix 39). It was but a



working out of the prophecy of Simeon, 'Behold, this Child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel' (Luke ii 34). The whole ministry of Jesus had this effect; but we might regard it as culminating in the Parables. This simple and yet profound teaching left men either better or worse, according as it was apprehended and taken to heart. If it was not so taken at all, it did leave them worse—and that in proportion to the opportunities they had of really understanding it. That it should do so was not an act of special severity on the part of the Teacher. It was simply due to a law of Divine providence, which applies to all men and to all times, but to that generation in supreme degree, because its opportunities were the greatest.

This effect of His teaching our Lord foresaw, and I believe that it was in view of it that He appropriated words originally spoken of the life-work of a prophet in some degree like Himself.

My readers must judge how far Jülicher is justified in his final antithesis:

'One thing or the other (*Entweder-Oder*): either the aim to produce hardening levelled at the masses—that and nothing else—and with it the trustworthiness of the Synoptics in this matter too, or an erroneous inference on their part due to error in their premises and the same object that, as every one feels, parables elsewhere serve, including those of our Lord. This "one thing or the other" goes deep: either the Evangelists or Jesus' (i 148).

Perhaps it will now be understood what I meant when I began by taking Jülicher as a rather specially apt example of 'vigour and rigour.' The sentences just quoted are a good specimen of his style. The phrase *Entweder-Oder* is one that has attractions for him: he elsewhere speaks of Jesus Himself as 'the Man of the *Entweder-Oder*' (ii 456). For that there may be some ground: but, at least in the passage just quoted, it seems to me that the antithesis presented is too sharp, and the method too peremptory.

The most important aspect of Jülicher's book is no doubt his general view of the Parables, and of the principles of interpretation to be applied to them. But the book offers much more than this: the second volume is nothing less than a close critical

and exegetical study of so much of the text of the Synoptic Gospels as comes under the head of Parable.

The author himself is aware that there may be two opinions as to the policy of this elaborate treatment. I do not doubt that the book would be more effective if it had been not more than a third of the length—just a broad summarizing treatment of each parable, with salient points brought into relief, but otherwise not going much into detail. This is the kind of book which an English writer would have aimed at; and I believe that Herr Jülicher might do well to consider whether he would not even now find it worth while to sit down and rewrite the whole on this much condensed scale. Being a German, he is not likely to be weary of his self-imposed task; and after his laborious study of the details of his subject, he would now have it so thoroughly in hand that the book would be sure to come out a far more rounded and artistic whole. An artistic whole it cannot be called at present; and some self-repression would be needed to make it one. But in rewriting from the full mind the process of sifting, grouping, and shaping would come naturally of itself.

It is not only that by taking this course I believe that the author would be doing the best for his own reputation in years to come—he might produce a classic in its way for which a long life was assured—but besides this he would, I imagine, reap a far more substantial harvest than the present two volumes are likely to bring him. A good translation of such a work as I have suggested would, I believe, have a large and steady sale in Great Britain and America.

It is an instance of German thoroughness that the author has made his book what it is; and it would be ungracious not to acknowledge the abundant material that he has laid before us. The mere fact of collecting and setting down all this material must needs be of great value to the author; and for the student and scholar no abridgement can supersede it. It is one commentary the more on a large section of that part of the New Testament which at the present moment most needs commentaries, the Synoptic Gospels.

What exactly are we to say as to the objective value of this commentary as it stands? Herr Jülicher is, as I have said

more than once, an undoubtedly able man; and a commentary by such a man, which represents many years of study, cannot fail to deserve attention. But I have my doubts as to whether it is quite the work of a heaven-sent exegete.

Here again I should take exception to the form. As compared with the old-fashioned *Scholia*, a sort of running commentary is at the present time far more fashionable. But I much suspect that the fashion is a mistake. It is rare indeed for the running commentary to be really readable; and if it is not readable, what is gained? It is apt to be far more prolix than the *Scholion*, and it is far more difficult to find one's way about in it. Terse-ness and clear printing, with the reference figures well thrown out, are essential to the *Scholion*. And the pressure that is thus put upon writer and printer is all to their own advantage. Bengel's *Gnomon* still remains the best model of style <sup>1</sup>.

In Jülicher's commentary, as in all commentaries, there is much with which one agrees, and much from which one dissents; and he would be a conceited critic who took the measure of his own agreement or dissent as a sufficient index of value. But I have expressed my doubts as to the extent to which Herr Jülicher will carry his readers irresistibly with him. As to one whole class of annotations these doubts rise to a considerable degree of scepticism. I refer especially to the treatment of the text.

It may seem strange to say it of one who (in his *Einleitung*) has written in such a generally competent manner about the text, and who has applied to that part of his subject so much thought as Professor Jülicher; but I cannot dismiss from my mind the impression that in spite of these qualifications he handles questions of text like an *amateur*. I mean by this that he takes each reading as if it stood alone, and needed little for its determination besides the relation which the reading bears to the context. Jülicher speaks of 'better MSS' and 'inferior MSS,' and of this or that family of witnesses, but these distinctions appear to have a *minimum* of significance for him. He is prepared to throw them over without compunction at the bidding of internal

<sup>1</sup> Blass on the Acts is also a good recent example; and the Cambridge commentaries (Lightfoot, Hort, Westcott, Swete) are essentially of the same type; they are still 'notes' though very full 'notes.'

indications, and especially in deference to what he thinks is required by the context. He seems to forget how very double-edged such indications constantly are. The decisive considerations for Herr Jülicher are often just what we might conceive to have been at work in the mind of the scribe who had the best attested reading before him, but felt bound to alter and 'improve' it. Herr Jülicher's, I imagine, is often just an 'emended text'—a text emended, not as usually happens by an ancient scribe, but by a modern editor.

I therefore, upon the whole, do not regard Herr Jülicher's commentary as by any means ideal. Still it is, as I once more repeat, an able piece of work, and one that the exegete cannot afford to neglect. Even when it does not command his assent, it will constantly suggest interesting points of view.

W. SANDAY.