

that the analogy of formless works like the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, or of a clumsy compilation like the history of Diodorus Siculus, furnishes no helpful parallel to this abruptness.

These two difficulties, both of them real and pressing, seem to me to be completely removed, for those who hold that the author of Luke and Acts was a companion of St Paul, by the observation that the Preface of St Luke is on every account to be taken as the preface to the whole work in two *logoi*, not to the Gospel alone. The writer of the we-sections had a perfect right to claim that for a long time back (*ἄνωθεν*) he had been a participator in these great events. That he writes *πίσιν* is no more than to say that he has stood near the centre of things, and is at the most a pardonable exaggeration. No one would suppose that he meant it with absolute literalness. 'A close relation to everything' he certainly had had in the considerable and intensely important period which his own knowledge covered, and this period he justly describes as 'for a long time back'—for, as Professor Cadbury shews in his second article, that is the meaning of *ἄνωθεν*, not 'from the first' (as if he had said *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*).

It thus appears that this well-attested meaning for *παρακολουθεῖν*, together with the meaning proper to *ἄνωθεν*, give exactly what is needed to explain an otherwise inexplicable fact in the literary procedure of the accomplished writer of the first Christian history.

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MARK XI 27 AND PARALLELS.

IN the April number of the JOURNAL (vol. xxiv p. 317) Mr Cheetham says: 'For this method of countering an unreasonable demand by requiring a condition unlikely to be fulfilled by the opponent, we may compare our Lord's reply to the question in St Mark xi 27 and parallels: "By what authority doest thou these things and who gave thee this authority?" He answers by putting another question: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men?" which they cannot answer. Both these cases are instances of "answering a fool according to his folly".'

I have nothing to say as to Mr Cheetham's other instance (John ii 19). But to my mind this view of Mark xi 27 (which I suppose represents the ordinary belief) is very repulsive, and I fancy that it has scandalized many. I certainly remember one highly intelligent woman of my acquaintance, who put it to me as the one thing in the Gospel narrative which made her question our Lord's perfection of character. This method of dealing with a reasonable, or even an unreasonable, question seemed

to her altogether unworthy of Him. To me the words when rightly considered have always seemed to be one of the most pregnant utterances in the Gospels.

Jesus, having certainly assumed a rôle, which could only be justified by possession of high authority, is asked for His credentials by the presumptive Heads of the Church—a perfectly proper request. But who are these Heads? What is the test of Headship? Surely Headship in spiritual matters is shewn by pronouncing boldly, to the best of one's judgement, on any great question which arises in the Church. Jesus calls on these titular leaders to prove their leadership by giving judgement on the greatest question which before His own appearance had confronted the Jewish Church of His times. The question therefore is not a 'poser', but a statement of the conditions under which ecclesiastical authority may be regarded as having spiritual authority. And the statement seems to me absolutely just.

It is, of course, the case also that the question which He calls on the priests to decide, if they claim to be the true Heads of the Church, is one especially appropriate. The two missions are closely bound together, and there is a special fitness in John's successor demanding that, before He acknowledges their right to question Him, they must face, as they had never done, the position of His predecessor.

The idea that the question is just an awkward poser may perhaps have been held by Mark. At any rate the reasons for hesitation which he puts into the mouth of the priests is the one thing which gives colour to such an idea. But these reasons are, of course, his conjectures and are no necessary part of the story. The answer and counter-question of Jesus stand by themselves as a proclamation of the true test of spiritual authority. If you claim to be judges you must judge. If you claim to be leaders you must lead.

My belief that this is the real meaning of the story is the chief of many reasons why I reject the theory of Mr Arthur Gray (published in the *Hibbert Journal* vol. xix p. 42) that John is the Son and Heir of the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. Our Lord does not accuse the priests, as that theory implies, of being accomplices in the murder of John (a charge for which, so far as I know, there is no historical foundation). He accuses them of evading and ignoring him. Whatever may be the case in other matters, they do not in their dealings with John correspond to the pope of Dante, who made 'St Peter's burying-place a sewer of blood': they correspond rather to the one who made *il gran rifiuto*.

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