

for envy's sake that Jesus had been brought before him'. The alternative reading supplies a nominative to *παραδεδώκεισαν*: but it would be awkward even for Mark to end one sentence with *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς* and begin the next sentence with *οἱ δὲ ἀρχιερεῖς*, and I incline to think that the first *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς* is just an early scribal insertion, or more probably gloss, intended to make the sense of *παραδεδώκεισαν* clear to the reader.

I should like it to be understood that, while the idea and for the most part the material of this and the following papers are my own, the final form owes much to the help and criticism of the members of my Seminar.

(*To be continued.*)

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### THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

HAVING read with great interest Dr Caldecott's article on Dr Robert Eisler's views about the Cleansing of the Temple (*J. T.S.* xxiv, p. 382), together with Mr Cheetham's paper on 'Destroy this temple' (*J. T.S.* xxiv, p. 315), I feel impelled to make some remarks of my own.

#### I.

First of all, Dr Caldecott did very well in calling attention to Eisler's view. Dr Eisler is an astonishingly learned man, as his *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt* proves, not to speak of his many other works. And further, the Cleansing of the Temple is an incident of extraordinary interest to Christians—or it should be. As a rule it is taken as a matter of course, a thing that needs no explanation. I feel that too often this is the case only because no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming.

The particular interest and importance to us of the Cleansing of the Temple, so it seems to me, is that it is almost the only spontaneous action of our Lord. If He healed the lepers it was because He had met them, if He fed the multitudes it was because they had followed Him. He was crucified, because the authorities arrested and condemned Him. But He went out of His way, so to speak, to 'cleanse' the Temple—He need not have done it if He had not thought proper. Therefore it ought to be for us a very significant index of His mind and purpose: we Christians ought to have very clear ideas about it.

Let us first take Dr Eisler's point about the 'den of robbers'. Dr Eisler is certainly right in saying that the words of Jesus are a quotation or allusion to the Old Testament. It is certain that 'a House of Prayer for all the nations' is a reference to Isa. lvi 7, and that 'den of robbers' is a reference to Jer. vii 11, and that the meaning of these phrases in our Lord's mouth is what they mean in the original, not what they happen to sound like in the Greek of the Gospels or the English

of the Authorized Version. It may be taken as a real historical fact that Jesus when He did what He did explained and justified His action by these two passages from Isaiah and Jeremiah.

We will come to 'House of Prayer' later. Dr Eisler has a new explanation for 'den of robbers' (*me'arath pārišim*). Having said, not unfairly, that 'cave of murderers' would be a better rendering, he goes on to suggest 'den of slaughterers', as if the word *pārišim*, without further explanation, could be used of butchers' work. This, I venture to say, is quite unjustified. It is not a question of grammatical roots. If we cannot quite gather from the context in Jeremiah what the word means we may see from Ezek. xviii 10 ff what was the character of a *bēn pāriš*, i. e. an individual of the class of *pārišim*. Ezekiel takes three verses to describe this person: we can do it in English in seven letters—he is what we call 'a bad lot'. I notice, however, that besides his inferior morals Ezekiel makes him an idolater and one who 'eats upon the mountains', which whatever it may mean in detail is a ritual or ecclesiastical offence.<sup>1</sup> He is a law-breaker, one who makes breaches (*pereš*) in the laws of God and man. But he is not a dilaniator. I cannot think that the word could be applied without further explanation to the profession of a butcher or a sacrificial priest.

Nor is this in the context of Jer. vii 8-11: 'What do you trust in?' says Jeremiah (v. 8). 'You break the Ten Commandments and your sworn word, and you commit idolatry (v. 9), and then you come to Church and say "Now it's all right" (v. 10). Has God's House become a resort of bad characters? Take care: it doesn't escape His notice!' And Jeremiah goes on to say that as the worshippers have become so wicked perhaps God will destroy the Temple at Jerusalem as He did the Temple at Shiloh. The prophet is not here finding fault with the method of worship, but only with the morals of the worshippers.

To return to our Lord and His actions. Here, as elsewhere, I am sure we ought to take Mark as our guide and to beware of making an eclectic use of John; but it must be pointed out in any case that not even in John is there any hint that Jesus interfered, or attempted to interfere, with the work of the *priests*. We do not read that He stopped any one carrying doves, or leading oxen, to *sacrifice*. What He interfered with was a market inside the Temple courts, in the Court of the Gentiles. 'A House of Prayer for all the Gentiles' said Isaiah, and Jesus quoted him. Call it if you will, with Dr Eisler, a Synagogue, but if it be for the Gentiles, for the nations, it will not extend to the inner courts where real sacrifices are performed, for thither the Gentiles do not penetrate.

<sup>1</sup> Probably in all cases Ezekiel means 'one who eats "on" the blood', i. e. without pouring it out (Ezek. xxxiii 25).

Dr Caldecott speaks on p. 385 of 'a protest against business in the sacred precincts, and that on its least objectionable side, the changing of money'. I doubt if that was the least objectionable side to Jesus and those who sympathized with Him in this whole affair. In theory the sacrifice was the offering of an animal belonging to the family: to buy an equivalent at the last minute with money was a worldly trick. No doubt it was inevitable, just as 'usury' has become inevitable, but it is hardly contemplated in the Pentateuch. 'Make not My Father's House a House of *merchandise*'—the words may not be authentic, but I venture to think that they give the general intention of Jesus better than Dr Eisler's theory does.

Moreover this view, i.e. the objection to chaffering and business, is in harmony with Mk. xi 16: Jesus would not allow the Temple area to be used as a short cut for business purposes.

## II.

An objection to the action of Jesus, which might well be made both now and at the time, is that with a vast centralized system of animal sacrifices, concentrated at a single Sanctuary, it was inevitable that there should be a market on the spot, or at least a pen for live-stock. It was part of the mechanism of the system, which could not be carried on without it. Dr Eisler and his followers would, I suppose, agree to this and say that it proves their point, viz. that Jesus was opposed to the sacrificial method as such. Perhaps the deduction is true, if the thought involved be carried to its logical conclusion. But I see no sign that a logical conclusion is at all indicated. We really do not know from how large a part of the vast Temple area Jesus wished to exclude the market. All that our evidence really indicates is that He wished a sufficient part of the area open to the Gentiles to be set apart as a place of 'prayer'. What a sufficient part might be is, no doubt, a thorny question, but we have very little evidence to bear upon it.

What is certain is that the grandeur and magnificence of the Herodian Temple made no impression, no favourable impression, on His mind. 'What stones! What buildings!' said the disciples, but He said they would all be reduced to ruins. And He said something else, with which enemies reproached Him as He was hanging on the cross. The saying is extant in various forms, as Mr Cheetham points out. Some of these are said to be the false witness of opponents; but in any case the Saying must have been something like 'If this Temple were destroyed I would build it in three days'. The enemies of Jesus interpreted this as a threat to destroy the Temple; one school of Christian thought understood it not of the Temple of stone, but of His own body—neither, I should think, correctly. I venture to suggest that it means that the

requirements of true worship involve little material expenditure; if the Temple were to perish, the necessary arrangements for the sacrifices, for the services, for fencing off the Holy Place, for the organization of prayer and praise, could be made in three days' time. Does not this interpretation throw some light on the Cleansing of the Temple? Simplicity, earnestness, better intention, these were what Jesus wanted, not the abolition of animal or vegetable sacrifices at the bidding either of Stoic philosophy or of modern sentiment.

### III.

One accompaniment of the Cleansing of the Temple needs some notice here. The tale of what is generally called the Cursing of the Barren Fig-Tree belongs to the same day. I cannot accept the fashionable modern belief that this tale, as told in Mark, can have arisen out of a Parable recorded in Luke xiii, or indeed out of anything else but real historical reminiscence. I am not satisfied about the details of the 'miracle', and indeed in the most favourable case we only have Mark's account of what Peter remembered. But if we compare the tale in Mark with what it becomes in Matthew it is difficult not to believe that something like the two scenes reported in Mk. xi 12-14, 20-25, actually occurred. I do not think we can discover exactly what happened to the tree, except by guessing; but I do think we are called upon to give an account of the difference between the tone and spirit of the words of Jesus on the two occasions. On the Monday He goes into Jerusalem to set the Temple right, relying on the power of God to carry His programme through. Nothing shall be impossible to Him, and woe to anything that disappoints His expectations! The next day, when Peter is inclined to gloat, his Master tells him to trust in God—and to forgive if he have any grievance! Was Jesus beginning to repent of His violent action of yesterday? Did He think *He* had been too hasty?

In any case, the action of Jesus that day is quite different from that of the day before. He parries the question about His authority, He does *not* give countenance to rebellion against the Roman taxes. We hear no more of any attempted changes in the arrangements of the Temple, and the Parable of the Husbandmen leaves the coming change of government to God.

I think that from that Tuesday morning, perhaps as early as the evening before, Jesus despaired of Jerusalem. His action on the Monday morning, the Cleansing of the Temple itself, shews hope displayed in vigorous, if rather impracticable, action. But He, Jesus, is the first to see that it is no good. It did not touch the disease, and those who

were most active in backing Him up were probably least in sympathy with His aims and ideals. The first sight of the chaffers and marketers while He was surrounded with a crowd of Galilean followers, who were at least enthusiastic if not very intelligent, had moved Him to attempt a change, something which should at least indicate the worship which God desires, but it is not long before He is convinced that the whole spirit of Jerusalem is against Him. He feels it to be a doomed city.

But in all this there is no word of objection to sacrifices as such, to a rejection of the method of worship by sacrificing beasts, or of any modern or Buddhistic dislike of taking life. There were plenty of passages in Amos and Jeremiah for Jesus to have quoted if He had wished to lead a crusade against sacrifices, but He never does so, He never quotes the Fiftieth Psalm. We do not read that He offered a sacrifice Himself, but then He had neither lands to tithe nor herds to devote. He gave His disciples no prohibition against offering sacrifices themselves: following out His second thoughts, His thoughts of Tuesday morning in Holy Week, He left such practices to be disposed of by the course of events.

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### 'PLEONASTIC' ἀρχομαι IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

IN the eighteenth century Palaiet, Loesner, Kuinoel, and other scholars called attention to the fact that in a number of contexts in the Synoptic Gospels ἀρχομαι seems to lose much of its distinctive force. In such cases, they maintained, the verb becomes 'supervacaneum', pleonastic. This opinion was challenged in the early part of the succeeding century by A. F. Fritzsche,<sup>1</sup> who sought to prove that, with hardly any exception, whenever the word occurs the author has some definite point in mentioning the beginning of an action rather than the action itself.

Fritzsche was followed with little or no modification by Winer and Moulton,<sup>2</sup> and by Grimm and Thayer.<sup>3</sup>

Dalman, however, in his examination of the use of the word as it occurs in the recorded utterances of our Lord,<sup>4</sup> strongly inclined towards the older view and traced what he called 'the meaningless *he began*' to Aramaic sources.

Of subsequent discussions of the question, all of which have been

<sup>1</sup> *Commentary on St Matthew* (1826) pp. 539 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Grammar of N.T. Greek* (ed. 1877) p. 767.

<sup>3</sup> *Lexicon* (ed. 1893) pp. 78, 79.

<sup>4</sup> *The Words of Jesus* (Eng. tr. 1909) pp. 26-28.