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JESUS' INTERPRETATION
OF HIS OWN PERSONALITY AND MISSION
AS REVEALED IN HIS PARABLES

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**JESUS' INTERPRETATION
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**CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION**

A. The Subject.

I. Definition and Explanation.

This is a study in the self-consciousness of Jesus. It is not a treatise in theology, for no theological doctrines are to be defended; it is not an evaluation of Jesus, either of His teachings or His work; it is not an interpretation of His parables. It is rather an investigation to discover what Jesus thought of Himself. The objective is not so much to learn what Jesus was trying to tell others, nor the meaning He intended to convey to His hearers, as it is to detect the inferential disclosures He makes with reference to Himself. These self-revelations concern two things to which our attention will be confined - those related to Himself and to His mission among men.

2. Justification of This Study

The person and work of Jesus is a subject which has received a great deal of attention.

More books have been written on the life of Jesus than any other person in history. A new approach to this well-worked field was started in America when G. Stanley Hall wrote his monumental work, "Jesus, the Christ in the Light of Psychology." The psychological approach is a new one. Recent progress in this new science has opened new possibilities in the interpretation of literature. This study purports to be psychological in method; herein lies the justification of this study.

A further justification of a new treatment lies in the fact that the material consulted will be only the parables of Jesus, the form of literature which is generally accepted as the actual words of Jesus.

3. Limitation of the Field.

The material which will be worked with is limited to the parables as given in the Synoptics. Of course not all of these will be used; space permits dealing only with the most representative ones. The parables of the Fourth Gospel are very inviting in a study of this kind because they contain direct affirmations of Jesus with reference to His self-consciousness. These will not be used, however, because they are not, strictly speaking, parables but are classified as allegories. (1)

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(1) Trench, R. C.: The Parables of our Lord, p. 9

Furthermore, by this limitation, we hold common ground with those who maintain that the Fourth Gospel contains interpretive coloring and that the picture given in the Synoptics is most characteristic of the historical Jesus. (1)

B. The Problem of This Study

1. To Discover Jesus' Self-interpretation of His Personality.

As already intimated our problem concerns Jesus' own conception, not that of His contemporaries or His followers. His religious self-consciousness and His mission, whether He considered Himself unique and original in any sense of the word will be the objective in mind as the parables are studied.

2. To Discover Jesus' Self-interpretation of His Mission.

Of equal importance is what He thought of His mission on earth. How did He conceive of His function or contribution to the life of the race? What contribution was He to make to His nation, and to mankind, in His own thinking? Did He conceive of His mission as similar to that of the Old Testament prophets or was it to be of a different order? Was His ministry for His nation only, or to be universal? What did He foresee with reference to the future of

1. The author does not share this view but the apologetic value of eliminating debated material is apparent.

His influence in the world? These and other questions will concern us as we examine the material selected.

3. To Discover the Relationship between the Messenger and the Message.

Finally, we want either to integrate these two concepts or to know why they can not be integrated. Is there harmony between the character of Jesus and what He taught, or was He, like Balaam, to be remembered for what He said rather than for what He was? Did He, like the prophets, speak more wisely than He Himself realized? Are these sayings and the picture conveyed by them in harmony with the picture of the historical Jesus, or must we, as Harnack maintains, separate the Messenger from the message? This problem will be considered in Chapter Five.

C. The Method of Procedure

In order to get the full benefit of the psychological import of literature, it is necessary to abandon all presuppositions as far as possible. In examining the documents we will try to approach them, as for the first time; as a biographer or a literary critic. Our abandonment is to the records to get what they have to say to us.

1. Examination of the Literary Vehicle - The Parable

Jesus' thoughts were expressed in a definite

literary form - in this case the parable. The form has a definite meaning and significance. We will attempt to determine this meaning in a scientific manner, in accordance with the accepted principles of literary interpretation. The parables will be examined as we would examine any other literary document.

2. Examination of the Content

The content of each parable in its setting will be examined in the light of its context. In this examination only the statements and implications relating to Jesus' self-consciousness regarding His person and mission will be studied. Often the things which are merely implied are more valuable for this study than the more obvious.

3. Relation to the Rest of the Gospel

An attempt will be made to relate our findings to the rest of the Gospel narrative, to the discourses, miracles, and events. The question is whether the picture is harmonious; whether the parables fit into the rest of the gospel picture. The relation of the findings to the rest of the New Testament will be considered briefly and the implications with reference to Christ's claims noted.

4. Synthesis and Conclusion

The last chapter will be a summary of these

findings and a synthesis of them into one harmonious picture, or else a recognition that such a synthesis is impossible. The concluding chapter will summarize the results of the entire study and make a critical evaluation both of the findings and of the method of obtaining them. The conclusions will be with reference to Jesus' consciousness and to the psychological method of interpreting the New Testament literature.

"Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
from outward things, whate'r you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in us all.
Where truth abides in fulness; ... and to know
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without." - Browning, Paracelsus

"The strong man is far from being a mere echo;
but he, too, is none the less the product of his
time ... because he has gathered so much of the
age into himself that he speaks its deepest life
in ways that are new, strange, and original."
- Crawshaw, Literary Interpretation of Life, p.84

CHAPTER II

THE APPROACH TO THE PARABLES

A. The Literary Approach

1. The Literary Vehicle - The Parable.

a. Definition

The difficulty of defining the word parable is not confined to the English, it was present in the literature of the Hebrews and Greeks.(1) The question has never been settled as to what shall be classified as parables and what excluded.

(1) Meaning

Etymologically, the word is derived from the Greek word 'parabolē' which means to 'throw along side of', 'to set beside'; juxtaposition, as of ships in battle; "a comparison of one thing with another, likeness, similitude."(2)

As commonly viewed, it is

"A brief narrative or descriptive allegory founded on real scenes or events such as occur in nature and human life, and usually with a moral or religious application."(3)

"As a figure of speech it is the assertion of similarity (in some respect) between the object or conception and some concrete object, action, or scene."(4)

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1. Levison, N.: The Parables; Their Background and Local Setting, P.xxiii.
2. Thayer, J.H.: A Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament, P.479.
3. New Standard Dictionary - Funk and Wagnalls
4. Nourse, E.E.: Parable (Introductory and Biblical) Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, p. 628.

(2) Contrast to Similiar Figures of Speech.

Trench defines the parables negatively:-

"The parable differs from the fable, moving as it does in a spiritual world, and never transgressing the actual order of things natural - from the mythus, there being in the latter an unconscious blending of the deeper meaning with the outward symbol, while the two remain separate and separable in the parable - from the proverb, inasmuch as it is more fully carried out, and not accidentally and occasionally, but necessarily figurative - from the allegory, comparing as it does one thing with another, but, at the same time, preserving them apart as an inner and an outer, and not transferring, as does the allegory, the properties and qualities and relations of one to the other."(1)

The Parable is more akin to a metaphor or a simile. The distinction between these being that in the former, the identification of the two images is more complete than in the case of the simile, in which a comparison is distinctly stated. Even here the distinction is difficult to draw; the parable is longer but otherwise is constructed in the same way.

In His parables Jesus proceeded from the known to the less known. He depicted spiritual truth by the use of familiar, natural phenomena. The parable then, to use the familiar phraseology of a little girl, presents "'an earthly story with a heavenly meaning'"(2)

B. Characteristics of the Parable

(1) A Familiar Expression - O.T. and Rabbinic Usage

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1. Trench, R.C.: The Parables of Our Lord, p. 10.
2. Taylor, W.M.: Parables of Our Saviour, p. 2.

The parabolic method did not originate with Jesus. He found this method in current use and employed a familiar vehicle to convey new and richer meanings.

Parables are found in the Old Testament and in the writings of the Rabbis. There are only two in the Old Testament which are representative of the best classical type; Nathan's parable (2Sam.12:1-7), and Issiah's parable of the Vineyard (Isa.5:1-8). In both of these the lesson was presented to prejudiced minds and the hearer given opportunity to judge the case. The sympathy of the listener was enlisted before any application was drawn.

The Rabbis used the simile and parable very extensively. They employed them for the purpose of enlarging upon some passage Scripture; they amplified but did not create. Analogies were borrowed from all sorts of occupations, and from nature most of which were agricultural or pastoral. The following is a typical simile:-

"Commenting upon the text 'And the grinders cease'(Eecl.12:3), R. Samuel bar Mahman said: 'Israel is compared to the grinders (millstones); even as the millstones never cease their grinding, so does Israel never cease from the study of the law either by day or by night'".(1)

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1. Feldman, Rabbi Asher; The Parables and Similes of the Rabbis, p. 78.

A familiarity with Rabbinic use of this mode of teaching aids in an understanding of the New Testament parables. (1) While Jesus did not borrow from the Rabbis, as a comparison will indicate, He did not scorn the use of this method. Says a writer with a Jewish background:- "A comparison ... will leave no one in doubt as to these in method and content." (2) The Parable of the Rabbis, in contrast to those of Jesus were a "heavy professional type" propounded to students. They did not appeal to the masses. (3) Jesus popularized this mode of teaching, perfected the form and made it available to the masses. (4) One critical scholar finds that the Parables in the Synoptics:- "One so remarkable in the variety and richness of their thought that Jesus stood alone in history as the unrivaled Master of the form of address and instruction." (5)

(2) A Figurative Expression - Literary Usage

While it is necessary to know background and local setting of the parables, an appreciation of their psychological import is also important. They are figures of speech and are to be interpreted as such.

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1. See Trench, op. cit. p. 49ff.
Montefiore, Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings
Levison, N.: op. Cit. p. xx ff.
Feldman, op. cit. pp. 1-266
2. Levison, op. cit. p. xvi.
3. See Feldman, op. cit. p. 19.
4. Nourse, E.E.: Parables, E. of R. & E., IX, p. 628.
5. Bundy, W.E.: The Psychic Health of Jesus, p. 248.

"Rhetoricians have long rejoiced in minute study and classification of figures of speech - a process that seems productive of little.... Recently it has been realized that from the psychological point of view a study of such figures is most promising. Here lies field waiting cultivation."(1)

"It is a necessity imposed by its very nature upon the human spirit to illustrate with the greatest possible clearness the objects and processes belonging to the sphere of ideas. There are two leading paths which literary style pursues in order to satisfy this psychological want. The first of these is chosen when one expressly points to a parallel which the phenomenon in question has in another sphere. The second method is when two spheres of the phenomena are as it were looked at together, and when in the description of one sphere those expressions are directly employed which properly designate the motions and phenomena of the other sphere."(2)

The mental process which occurs when thinking in a simile or metaphor is that of a comparison of two images. In this process the second image may supplement the first, the two may occupy the consciousness alternately, or the two may be fused together and become identified. The substitution of one image for another is basic in these figurative expressions. The simile from Shelly is an illustration of this;

"The plumed insects swift and free
Like golden boats on a sunny sea."(3)

In the metaphor the fusion of the two images is more complete than is the loosely connected simile; because of this it is also more poetic; it indicates more creative genius or more emotion or both.

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1. Downey, June E.: Creative imagination, p. 135.
2. Konig, Ed.: Parables of the Old Testament, Hastings, Bible Dictionary, VIII, p. 663.
3. Downey, op. cit. p. 14.

The parables of Jesus are simply extended similes and metaphors. Some of the parables begin with, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto"; in others the comparison is not mentioned - "Behold a sower went forth to sow."

"Always, of course, a simile or metaphor must be estimated psychologically, not logically. Its value lies just in the union of things apparently heterogeneous. Unity arises out of the consciousness of difference, hence the creation of new mental content. It is a turning from the straight and narrow path of logical rectitude; it is meant to be. Its peculiar tang is the outcome of its arousal of a double meaning, with the quivering tension of an unsolved problem." (1)

c. The Purpose of the Parable.

If the above is true is not the parable admirably suited to Jesus' purpose? He wished the truth to win its way to unwilling hearts by lingering in the consciousness until it produced the desired effect as was the case with David (II Sam. 12:7).

There has been much discussion as to Jesus' objective in using the parable, whether it was to reveal or to conceal. The latter idea was suggested by the evangelist's explanation (Mk.4:11,12; Matt.13:10-16). Liberal critics following Julicher think these are only the reasons given by the evangelists, who were mistaken; that Jesus' real purpose was to reveal truth. (2)

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1. Downey, op. cit.: p. 147.
2. Julicher, Adolph,: Parables, Encyclopaedia Biblica, VIII p. 3563; Purinton, C.E.: The Re-interpretation of Jesus in the New Test., p. 97.
Bultmann, Rudolph, The Study of the Synoptic Gospels, pp.,46-63.
Loisy, A.: L'evangile selon Marc, pp.128-133.
McFadyen, J.F.: The Message of the Parables, pp.27-81.

Other passages lead to this idea (Mk.4:33,34). The Hardening of the hearers may have been the natural consequence of resisting truth rather than the object of the parabolic method.

The use in the Old Testament, as we have seen, was to mediate truth to unwilling minds. Likewise, "The classical parable was not used to obscure the issues, but, on the contrary, to assist discernment and judgment."(1) Also Buddha^d gives the same reason for his use of the parable, "Aparable, O Monks, I here give unto you that you may understand the meaning of the matter."(2)

"It is the essence of the parable that to the essentially ethic and religious they come as teachings, that the characteristics of the hearer determines their value to him."(3)

To the "unwilling Pharisees and Scribes.... the parable gave entrance for the moral lesson to a prejudiced mind."(4) To inquiring but perplexed minds the parable led to reflection and to a realization of the spiritual message involved. To all His hearers this device invited a closer examination of the abstract idea He was seeking to convey.

The purpose of the parable determines the principle of which it is to be interpreted. The

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1. Levison, op. cit. p.xix.
2. Burlingame, E.W.: Buddhist Parables, a Translation, (frontspiece)
3. Melintock and Strong, (ed.) Cyclopaedia of Biblical Liter. VIII, p.649.
4. Levison, op. cit. p.xix.

Patristic writers liked to examine the details and to draw out their allegorical interpretations. Modern scholars are agreed that the parables have only one central idea; to discover which is the correct principle of interpretation. This is not always true as in the case of the Sower, where Jesus Himself gives an allegorical interpretation. (Matt.13:18-23)

2. The Significance of the Parabolic Method.

The general characteristics of the parable have already been outlined. We now inquire what is there that is distinctive about this type of literature which makes it valuable for our study.

a. Reveals the Author More Accurately.

The parable is a type of literature which is creative to a high degree. Vernon Lee, writing on literary construction, distinguishes between two types of literary creation. The characters of a novelist may be borne in upon his intimate sense or built up by intelligent calculation; the former "seem always to have been born of some strong feeling on the part of the author." (1) Whether Jesus' parables were "built up" or "born" we may expect them to reveal their Creator, whether they are subjective and emotional, or objective and rational in origin.

The poet or artist uses symbolism or imagery which is familiar to his readers but it must spring out

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1. Lee, Vernon, Handling of Words, p. 27.

of his inmost soul, it must express his peculiar genius if it is true literature. In the work of creative art we see not only the product but the artist himself.(1) The same is true of literature. We may also affirm that in literature the creation of a plot, a character, an extended figure of speech, reveals more of the personality of the creator than the narration of a story or the exposition of some process. This is true because the former is the work of creative imagination, while the latter admits of more objective treatment. Since the parables of Jesus are the product of creative art we may expect to find the author revealed more accurately than in His discourses.

b. Presents a Carefully Constructed Vehicle of Expression.

The parable is well thought out, pre-meditated, and deliberate. It is true that many of Jesus' parables seem to have been extemporaneous as was much of His teaching.(Lu.7:36-50;14:7-24) Even so the parables are a piece of literary art, they cannot be spun out of nothing; there must be a definite objective or there could be no creation. It is far harder to construct a definite literary entity than to deliver a discourse which may be

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1. Downey, June E.: op. cit. p.147.
See also, Crawshaw, W.H.: The Interpretation of Literature, pp.25-78.
Crawshaw, W.H.: Literary Interpretation of Life, pp.1-82.
Moulton, R.G.: The Modern Study of Literature, pp.325-327.

only the free association of ideas. Because of this objective the author takes more responsibility upon himself for what he says, than in poetry, for instance, or even in a discourse. Therefore any light we can get on Jesus' self-consciousness from the parables, while harder to get, is the more valuable because stated more deliberately.

3. The Value of the Parable as Source Material.

a. Gives Jesus' Actual Words.

We have no record that Jesus ever wrote anything. We are dependent entirely upon the records of others to tell us what He actually taught. There are several factors which indicate that these parables were not invented and put in the mouth of Jesus.

In addition to the fact that no non-Biblical writer has approached the parables of Jesus in beauty and power is the fact that there are no parables in the Epistles. The Apocryphal gospels which abound in "miracles" contain no parables. Parables are difficult to create. It is interesting that Mohammed composed very few parables.

"He either did not realize the power there is in well-told parables for the enforcement of truth, or he was unable to compose them. I am inclined to think the latter was the case."(1)

The absence of any other parables in the New Testament indicates that the writers had a certain reverence

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1. Pool, J.J.: Studies in Mohammadanism, p.65.

for this element in His teaching, similiar to the title "Son of Man" which they themselves never applied to Jesus. This reverence makes the "hypothesis that some of Christ's parables have been altered by those who recorded them all the less probable." (1)

b. Common Ground with the Critics.

Liberal scholars recognize that it is practically impossible for the parables to be the outgrowth of Christian tradition or an invention of the Evangelists. The recorders may have been mistaken in their interpretation of the parables but in the germ or core of the parable we have the authentic words of the historical Jesus. This they do not hold with reference to the incidents and discourses mentioned in the gospels. (2)

Even if we have to yield this ground, which we do not think we are justified in doing, the material accepted by the critics themselves is sufficient standing ground for this type of approach.

"The very fact however, that the parables as given by the evangelists, have retained so much that is absolutely incompatible with their theory about them, proves conclusively how conservative has been the evangelist's treatment of materials lying to their hand; the same thing is evidenced by the admirable clearness, the lively and vivid naturalness, which distinguishes the gospel parables as soon as they are correctly apprehended....most of them unmistakably declare themselves to be creations of a unique originality, and what makes them of especial

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1. Plummer, A. Parables, Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, VIII, p.664.
2. Bultmann, op. cit. p. 47ff.

importance to us is that almost throughout they bear unmistakable evidence of genuineness, and thus tell us with no uncertain voice that which lay nearest to the very heart of Jesus."(1)

c. Involves a Definite Teaching Objective.

In the use of the parable we find Jesus in the role most characteristic of Him. The parable is a word picture. It is more quickly grasped than a discourse simply because it is pictorial. Its appeal is to the imagination. It arouses interest as with an unsolved puzzle. Scientific tests with children have proven that

"Contrary to what might have been anticipated, the precepts prove more difficult of understanding at all mental ages than do the parables."(2)

Because the parables are given in picture language their meaning is preserved intact. Ideas stated in abstract terms admit more readily of various interpretations. This has been a great advantage to some religious teachers whose teachings were of a nature that subsequent generations had to re-edit and re-interpret them. The sacred writings of the Hindus were abstract enough for later teachers to put their own interpretations on them and to cover up elements that would not appeal to the present generation. The character of Mrs. Eddy's writings, being couched in abstract terms, admits various interpretations which make it easy for editors to cover undesirable features. The same is true of the writings

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1. Julicher, op. cit. III, p.3563.
2. Franklin, Samuel P.: "Measurement of the Comprehension Difficulty of the Precepts and Parables of Jesus," University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, 1925.

of the Theosophists, Russelites, Mormons, etc. Because the parable is expressed in concrete, tangible symbolism we have only to get the setting of them and we may be sure of their meaning. It gives no chance for the meaning of words to change with time and thus to obscure the teaching as in the case of the change of meaning of "realism" and "idealism" in the history of Epistemology. The teaching is preserved in such a form that it "cannot be tampered with."⁽¹⁾ Thus we find in the parables of Jesus a literary form which is not susceptible to editorial coloring of later writers. It does not lend itself to interpretation, mutilation, or interpolation.

These facts make the parables admirably adapted to lead us to an understanding of the personality who created them. In our study of them we shall apply the laws of literary interpretation as to any other literary creation; noting, first the form, then the content, to get the message of the documents themselves.

B. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

1. The Psychological Method of Interpretation.

Combined with the literary approach we shall apply the principles of literary psychology to this study.

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1. White, W.W.: Lecture on "The Language of Canaan,"
The Biblical Seminary in N. Y., Dec. 14, 1935.

Very little has been done in this field. G. S. Hall pioneered this method in this country. His work, "Jesus, The Christ in the Light of Psychology" marks the first attempt in English to apply these principles to the life of Jesus. Emil Ludwig has employed this method in the study of Jesus. Bundy has made an investigation of the "Psychic Health of Jesus" (1922). A. S. Stokes uses these laws in his "What Jesus Christ Thought of Himself" (1916) including in his study all the recorded sayings of Jesus.

This psychological method has been only recently developed, but its principles are not new, although not classified as such. This science has only recently become self-conscious. Sainte-Beuve was familiar with its principles, and his matchless literary analyses are a monument to this. Gamaliel Bradford was skilled in character portrayal, but he called it "psychography."⁽¹⁾ The fact that he coined a new word to describe his method indicates his self-consciousness with reference to the originality of his method.

Our objective is to employ this approach which is just becoming distinct, and has had an inarticulate but a definite existence, to the parables of Jesus.

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1. Bradford, Gamaliel: Naturalist of Souls, p.6.

2. An Adaptation of This Method to the Present Study.

In this study we shall attempt to apply this method to the literature before us. There are certain "submerged facts" which a careful study will disclose, inferential truths, something perhaps incidental to the main object of the speaker, yet all the more valuable because more spontaneous. The omissions will be noted and underlying causes investigated. It will be necessary to acquire a sensitiveness to the psychological import of the literature, to the less obvious emotional psychic forces. It is nothing more than applying well-known and constantly used principles in a scientific and systematic way to a comparatively new field.

C. THE APPROACH UNDERTAKEN IN THIS STUDY.

1. A Combination of the Literary and Psychological Methods.

From the foregoing it is evident that our proposed approach is two-fold; employing the principles known and used by literary critics as well as the psychologist to the material before us.

2. Application of This two-fold Approach to the Parables.

In general the following procedure will be used in the examination of each of the selected parables.

a. The natural setting of the parable

b. Examination of the form - literary approach

- (1) Word studies
- (2) Structural features
- (3) Relation of the parable to its context
- (4) Relation of the parable to other parables

c. Examination of the content - psychological approach

- (1) Associated images - similarity or contrast
- (2) Associated ideas arising from the images
- (3) The central message of the parable
- (4) The implications with reference to Jesus' consciousness

d. Summary and conclusions

Since no two parables are alike the treatment of each must be varied accordingly. The procedure outlined above cannot be slavishly followed; to do so would defeat the very purpose of this study. In a psychological study the emotional forces, resident in the literature, make themselves felt only when the mind allows itself to be completely under the influences of the subject-matter, instead of bringing to the study a pre-determined course of analysis. Therefore the steps outlined above may not be conspicuous, yet it need not be assumed, because the systematization is not apparent, that the study has been superficial. We are interested, not in the mechanics but in the dynamics; not in logical propositions but in the psychological forces.

"The parables were neither deliberate mystifications, nor idle intellectual conceits, nor mere literary products of aesthetic taste: they were the utterances of a sorrowful heart. And herein lies their chief charms: not in the doctrine they teach, though that is both interesting and important; not in their literary beauty, though that is great; but in the sweet delicate odour of human pathos that breathes from them as from Alpine wild flowers."

- A. B. Bruce

III. PARABLES WHICH FIND THEIR ANALOGY IN NATURE

A. Introduction

B. The Parable of the Sower

1. The Setting of the Parable
 - a. Geographical
 - b. Moral - Condition of the People
2. Structural Features of the Parable
 - a. Words
 - b. Style
3. The Content of the Parable
4. The Self-consciousness of Jesus Indicated in this Parable
 - a. Is it Prophetic?
 - b. Is it Apostolic?
 - c. Is it Unique?
5. Conclusion

C. The Parable of the Seed Growing

1. Its Central Message
2. Comparison to the Parable of the Sower
3. The Bearing of this Parable on Jesus' Self-consciousness
 - a. The Sower Compared to the Reaper
 - b. Comparison to Other Sowers
4. Conclusion

D. The Parable of the Mustard Seed

1. The Setting of the Parable
2. The Central Thought of the Parable
3. Jesus' Self-portrait in this Parable
4. Conclusion
 - a. Significance of the Phrase "Kingdom of Heaven."
 - b. Creative Imagination at Work

E. The Parable of the Tares

1. Introduction
2. Structural Features of this Parable
3. The Implications of the Parable with Reference to Jesus' Self-consciousness
4. Conclusion

F. Conclusions

CHAPTER III
PARABLES WHICH FIND THEIR
ANALOGY IN NATURE

A. Introduction

In classifying and selecting the parables three factors have been considered; time, place, and content. It is noteworthy that all three of these factors coincide, so that three classifications are possible, all of which would arrange the parables in essentially the same order. On the basis of time we find that there are three periods in the ministry of Jesus in which parables are "clustered"; namely, the early, middle and later period. On the basis of geography there is the Galilean period, the Perean period, and the Jadaean or Jerusalem period. The classification according to content is not so simple. In general however, the outlines are clearly discernable. In the Galilean parables we see the subject matter concerned with setting forth the principles of the kingdom; the next group is concerned with getting into the kingdom, and the last with judgment to those who refuse the kingdom.

In this chapter we will consider some of the first group. The great parable chapter of Matthew's Gospel (13) contains seven of the eight parables which Jesus spoke near the close of His Galilean ministry. In all of these except the first we notice the phrase "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt.) or the "kingdom of God" (Mark).

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Mark 4:1-9,13-20

And again he began to teach by the sea side. And there is gathered unto him a very great multitude, so that he entered into a boat, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude were by the sea on the land. 2 And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching, 3 Hearken: Behold, the sower went forth to sow: 4 and it came to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it. 5 And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth; and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth: 6 and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7 And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8 And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. 9 And he said, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

13 And he saith unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how shall ye know all the parables? 14 The sower soweth the word. 15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; and when they have heard, straightway cometh Satan; and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them. 16 And these in like manner are they that are sown upon the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, straightway receive it with joy; 17 and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway they stumble. 18 And others are they that are sown among the thorns; these are they that have heard the word, 19 and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And those are they that were sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

Closer examination reveals that they all deal with certain characteristics of the kingdom.

B. The Parable of the Sower

1. The Setting of the Parable

a. Geographical

This parable was probably spoken on the north-east side of the Sea of Galilee.(1) The soil on this shore was of volcanic origin. It was very fertile in the spots where the lava had settled on the limestone sub-soil. In other spots the bed-rock was bare. In the same field could be found "a deep rich soil, a gravel soil, and bare rocky patches."(2) Josephus gives us a glowing account of the fertility of the plain of Gennesaret.(3) The land was about six hundred feet below sea level so that the seed germinated very quickly; but in shallow soils the burning sun soon scorched the growth.

b. Moral - Condition of the People

Jesus had done "many wonderful works" among these people of Galilee. His popularity was so great that Mark describes His hearers as "a very great multitude."(Mk.4:1) They were looking to Him as the Messiah who would deliver them from the hated Romans and take the throne of David. They were not followers of Jesus

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1. Levison, op. cit. p.15.

2. Loc. Cit.

3. Thomson, W.H.: The Parables By The Lake, p.16.

in spirit. The crowds had a "moral deafness" to reference to the spiritual message of Jesus.⁽¹⁾ He was already encountering opposition in some quarters. The time had come for the people not only to follow in the flesh, but to follow in the spirit; not only to hear, to do.

2. Structural Features of the Parable

It is rather surprising that Mark, who doesn't give much space to the teachings of Jesus, gives this parable at greater length than either Matthew or Luke.

a. Words Used.

Jesus paints a graphic picture thoroughly familiar to all of His hearers. Perhaps He sees someone sowing grain as He speaks. The first word of introduction is "Hearken" (Mk.4:3). He feels that He has something to say that the people should hear. With the word "Behold" He appeals to the imagination of the multitude. Perhaps He is directing their attention to a sower in a distant field. The dramatic quality of the event still impresses us - we can almost feel the movement of the multitude with the motion of the Speaker.

The parable itself is phrased in simple, picturesque words that all could understand. The "sower", "soil", "birds", "thorns", "stones", the "sun", conveyed a concrete image to the hearers.

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1. Ibid., p.3ff.

The wayside	the word taken away
The sun	persecutions
The birds	Satan
The rocky ground.	those who stumble
The thorny ground	those with "other things"
The good ground	those who bear fruit

Jesus does not refer to Himself as the sower but there can be no doubt as to whom He meant. The center of interest is not the sower, nor the seed, but the soil. The parable might better be named the Parable of the Soils. Why is it that it is so uniformly called the Parable of the Sower? Because the picture of the sower best recalls it to our minds. He is mentioned before the seed or soil is and is not mentioned again, yet one is left with the realization that the sower is watching the crop and awaiting the harvest.

The sower is represented as distinct from the seed and from the soil. As the soil refers to men and the sower to Jesus it follows that Jesus is a unique relationship to mankind. Is He as different from mankind as the sower is from the seed?

4. The Self-consciousness of Jesus Herein Indicated.

Jesus opens His discourse with the word "Hearken" and closes with "Who hath ears to hear let him hear." (Mk.4:9). Between these two exclamations there is nothing but a simple story familiar to all. If Jesus had been the ordinary type of agitator He would have taken this opportunity to present His claims and capture the imagination of the enthusiastic crowd. Instead He only stated a simple truth and left the

matter. He must have known "what was in man", must have been thoroughly acquainted with human nature to trust this picture to linger in their minds and produce the desired effect.

It was important that they receive this word. It was not spoken for their entertainment. He is concerned for His hearers with reference to their response to the word, hence the solemn warning, of Mk.:9. His concern is not whether He has spoken the right thing but whether what He has said will be responded to.

It indicates His confidence in the message itself: confident that it carried its own credentials; that it would vindicate itself. His desire for its reception is equalled by His knowledge of its worth.

a. Is it Prophetic?

Wherein lies His conviction of the importance of His words? These are not sayings which were written by the inspired prophets of old. All the people recognized the novel character of His teaching.(1) He has drawn freely upon the Old Testament, the traditions of the elders, and current "apothegms."(2) Yet He has caught and moulded them into a system all His own. "Ye have heard it said by them of old time ... but I say unto you."(3)

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1. Matt. 7:28,29.

2. Bultmann, op. cit. p.145.

3. Matt. 5:33,34.

If Jesus puts so much importance upon His own words in what light must He regard Himself? The effect cannot be greater than its cause; the fountain cannot rise higher than its source. Is not this the consciousness of a prophet who is conscious of a mission; of a mandate from the Most High to give the people what they must have? Compare Deut. 32:1,3 -

"Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.... For I will proclaim the name of Jehovah."

Moses directs attention, not to himself, but to Jehovah.

Likewise, Isaiah cries out, "Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth; for Jehovah hath spoken." (1)

In both of these O.T. utterances the prophet's mind is occupied with the consciousness of Jehovah's immanence and in Isaiah's case he says it is Jehovah that is speaking. This is the customary prefix to all O.T. prophecy. Even if not expressed it is clearly implied.

In Jesus' words we find no mention that He is relaying the words of Jehovah. (2) He does not even mention Jehovah as does Moses but takes the full responsibility for what He says as if it came from Himself only. (3)

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1. Isaiah, 1:2.

2. Compare Jn. 8:28.

3. Jesus elsewhere stated that He spoke "as the Father taught" Him; that His words were from God. Yet His religious consciousness was such that He felt no impropriety in not always prefacing His assertions with that claim, indicating a relationship to the Father more intimate than that found in the ordinary prophetic consciousness. Cf. Matt. 5:27,28 with Jn. 5:19,24; 8:26,28,38.

We cannot affirm, then, that Jesus' consciousness is prophetic only; we must inquire further as to just what it embraces.

b. Is it Apostolic?

How does Jesus' religious consciousness compare with that of the apostles? Did not the apostles speak with as much authority and originality? Some have affirmed this and have gone so far as to say that Paul, not Jesus, is the real founder of Christianity.

St. Paul is the best representative of the apostolic consciousness and his own conviction is most clearly mirrored in his vindication of "his Gospel" to the Galatians. Could language state it any more clearly than Gal.1:6-9? "... If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema." Yet Paul goes on to prove that his revelation was from Jesus Christ.(1) His authority, like that of the prophets, did not belong to him. It was from God: it was through him not out of him.(2)

We have no record in the Synoptics that Jesus claimed to be speaking as the mouthpiece of God. On the contrary, He speaks as though His words originated within Himself and makes no apology for so doing as did the prophets and apostles. His consciousness, then must be more than either prophetic or apostolic consciousness.

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1. Gal. 1:11,12.

2. See I Thess.4:1; IITim.4:1; ICor.15:1;cf. ICor.8:25.

Not only does He take full responsibility for His statements but He does it with no apparent effort. He indicates no mental processes to bolster up His self-assurance nor does He seek to assure others of His credentials. Paul, in contrast, never ceased to marvel that he was the vessel of God's revelation.(1)

Jesus' self-assurance led Him to place upon His hearers the full responsibility for responding to what He said.

"Take heed what ye hear, with what measure ye meet it shall be measured unto you."(2)

He felt that the message He gave was all right, the only question was, how would they receive it?

Jesus, although He makes statements which His hearers were under the moral necessity of following, never quotes His authority. He doesn't labor to make clear His credentials or the basis of His authority, yet expects the people to take His words at face value and respond to them. This is the force of "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."(Lu.8:8)

c. Is it Unique?

In view of the above we are led to believe that the self-consciousness of Jesus as He uttered the Parable of the Sower was different from that of a prophet; nor was it the same as that of an apostle.

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1. ITim.1:12-17.
2. Matt.13:11.

Jesus' reply to question of the disciples also gives us a clue regarding how He thought of Himself.

"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus does not say "I will show you the mystery of the kingdom of heaven." By stating it in the passive mood He avoids the mention of Himself, an attitude which is in harmony with His omission of Himself as the sower in the interpretation. However, it is Jesus who is explaining the mysteries of the kingdom to them; they are discovering them by themselves only so far as He informs them. Therefore, since it is Jesus who is their only source of this knowledge it is evident that He has access to something foreign to their own experience, something outside of their knowledge. He, alone, is "on the inside of this thing"; "Those without" do not know this mystery, neither do the disciples know it, no one does except Jesus.(1)

Paul often used this word (μυστήριον)- "Behold, I tell you a mystery."(2) A study of Paul's use of this word in the Epistle to the Ephesians shows that Paul uses it in the sense of a revelation, a type of knowledge hitherto hidden but now made known to all. Paul had no monopoly upon it; it was available to everyone. He says:-

"...By revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read,

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1. Bell, Chas. C.: The Sower, p.3ff.
2. I Cor. 15:51.

ye can perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit."(1)

To Paul this was the "mystery of Christ": to Jesus it was the "mystery of the Kingdom." A.B. Bruce quotes with approval Reuss' definition of "a mystery" as used by Jesus.

"A mystery is a truth revealed for the first time by Jesus only, and by the spirit of God who continued His work, and unknown to previous generations: we see, then, by that very term, that the idea which presents itself to our study will contain characters absolutely new, and which it will require special instruction to enable us to seize and comprehend."(2)

It certainly required "special instruction" for the disciples to comprehend; it was something novel to them. Jesus was indeed, "to an inestimable extent, original in every way."(3) He states it Himself:-

"For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not."(4)

It seems apparent, therefore, that Jesus indicates a realization that He not only knows more than His hearers, which no one would deny, but that He also is telling something which even the sages of antiquity searched for in vain. Yet His is not the apostolic consciousness such as Paul represents. His consciousness must be unique.

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1. Eph. 3:3-5.
2. Bruce, A.B.: The Kingdom of God, p.49.
3. Loc. Cit. cf. Glomer, T.R.: The Jesus of History, p.167,168.
4. Matt. 13:17.

5. Conclusion.

If there were nothing in the New Testament except the parable of the sower the psychologist's estimate of the person who originated it would be somewhat as follows.

a. He was a man thoroughly at home in his environment. He was not visionary; not an ascetic; not a scholastic who never let the beauties of nature illuminate his theology. His was an aesthetic nature. Not only did He delight in nature and human activity but all that passed upon His senses was uplifted and translated into symbols of transcendent and eternal realities.

b. He was morally in earnest. There was a certain spiritual and moral urgency in His soul. He saw men, not merely as interesting, but as valuable, as potential citizens of the kingdom of God.

c. He was familiar with the mysteries of the kingdom. So familiar was He with this truth that His thoughts found expression in metaphorical language. He was capable of paralleling this world with the kingdom of heaven.

"Jesus saw analogies, comparisons, resemblances everywhere between the realm of matter and the realm of spirit. Thus there were two worlds, but they were related to each other."(1)

This indicates a marvelously integrated personality.(2) An intelligent person is always correlating

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1. Horne, H.H.: Jesus - The Master Teacher, p.90.
2. Scheff, Philip.: The Person of Christ, pp.61-64.

fragments of his own experience. If he travels he makes comparisons between various countries or parts of a country. He is interested in the commonplace and relates it to other things he has seen or known about.

Jesus easily and naturally interpreted the phenomenal world in terms of the spiritual world. He related the things of earth to the kingdom of heaven.

"The parables show how to his mind the facts of nature and the events of human life were not merely what they seem but were transfigured, transparent, translucent, supercharged by meanings behind and above them."(1)

d. He was conscious of originality. He possessed a knowledge which the multitudes and disciples did not. He was cognizant of some facts, some realm of knowledge which man has never known before. Not even the prophets and saints had access to the knowledge which He is mediating to His unlettered followers. He was an originator; "an impregnator."(2)

B. The Parable of the Seed Growing

"And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; 27 and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. 28 The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then then the full corn in the ear. 29 But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come." Mark 4:26-29

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1. Hall, G.S.: Jesus, the Christ In The Light of Psychology, p.520.
2. Hall, G.S.: op. cit. p.5.

Mark is the only one of the Evangelists who records this parable. It has much in common with the Sower. In this one the figure is carried further - there is included the picture of the harvest. In addition to the sower, the seed, the soil, and the fruit which were parts of the parable of the Sower, there is the gradually developed seed apart from the direct agency of the sower. It is interesting that the seed grows by itself; it possesses inherent power to germinate. Then, by utilizing the resources of the soil and the sun and rain from above, it gradually develops into its full fruitage. That is its function.

1. Its Central Message.

While it is not desirable to allegorize yet it may be permissible, in view of Jesus' interpretation of the Sower, to observe the aptness of certain details of this comparison. How appropriate the analogy of the germinating seed to words of Jesus' which were "spirit and life" (Jn.6:63) How much like the soil yielding its elements to the plant is the human nature with its faculties of intelligence, emotion and will, all of which must contribute to the growth of grace. How similar is the action of the rain and sun, forces outside of both soil and seed, to the operations of divine grace - the activity of a God who is both transcendent and immanent.

But the parable is a prism which focuses the rays upon one spot. What is it? Is it not the fact of gradual growth of the seed due to unseen forces, "he knoweth not how."? (Mk.4:27)

Jesus, when a boy had doubtless watched with interest the growth of grain after ~~it~~ had sown the seed and left it. Perhaps it caused Him wonder that it could have produced what it did without the interference of human agency - even the farmer himself didn't know how the growth took place. Later Jesus realized how much this phenomenon resembled the kingdom of God.

2. Comparison With The Parable Of The Sower.

The disciples were wondering how the kingdom of God was to come; if it was not to be catastophic and if only one forth of the seed was to be fruitful what was there to hope for? This parable is an answer to the first parable. If that was pessimistic this one is buoyant with optimism.(1) The seed is good, the soil is good also for it brings forth fruit "of herself" automatically (*αὐτόπαθ*). The eventual harvest is sure. Faith and patience will be rewarded as surely as in the case of the farmer. Jesus was confident of the inherent vitality of His teaching and of man's ability to receive and act upon it - He expected a harvest.

3. The Bearing of This Parable on Jesus' Self-Consciousness.

Jesus introduces the parable with the words "So is the kingdom like." He uses the simile in a deliberate attempt to convey an idea to His hearers.

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1. Levison, op. cit. p.27.

"In this confessional revelation we get nearest to the heart of the Great Teacher and can realize how deeply he must have pondered the ways and means of impressing his doctrine."(1)

a. The Sower Compared to the Reaper.

The man who sows the seed is the same as the man who reaps. If Jesus is the Sower He must also be the reaper. The harvest He will reap is the consequence of His teachings; it is human beings. This is not mentioned in the parable of the sower but clearly implied. It is the natural consequence of the action of the sower. If we admit that Jesus is the sower in either parable we must also admit that He is the reaper.

What does the reaper do? He receives the fruit of his labor. He judges between the good fruit and the bad; he sorts it into different grades according to its quality. To him belongs the final disposition and fate of the harvest. It was undisturbed during the months of growth but now the period of growth is over, there is no more change it is completely in the hands of the harvester. Did Jesus conceive this to be His relation to human souls?

b. Other Sowers.

Jesus was not the only sower. Ezekiel and other prophets were conscious of being sowers.(2) Paul was a sower as well as the other apostles.(3) But neither the prophets

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1. Hall, op. cit. p.575.

2. Eze. 3:4,11,16-21;33:1-16; Isa. 6; Jer. 1:7.

3. I Cor. 3:6.

nor Paul ever speak of reaping, their responsibility ends with the sowing, as an examination of the passages cited will indicate. We said that the parable of the sower does not mention the harvest but that such is implied. Is not this true also of the Pauline passages? Let us see. Paul mentions his sowing in I Cor.3:6 and follows this by saying that the sowers "each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." His reward is not the harvest itself but rather his own labor. The harvest belongs only to God who is the final Judge as the following context brings out.(1)

4. Conclusion.

Jesus, the sower, is also the harvester who "putteth forth the sickle." By the figure which He used Jesus could not avoid the implications with reference to His relationship to men at the last day. The very fact that it was not expressed, only implied, indicates that it was deeply seated in Jesus self-consciousness.

"Regular reserve and reticence such as Jesus practiced regarding his identity is thoroughly uncharacteristic of the paranoiac. In fact he has exactly the opposite inclination.... In all the features of his self-consciousness Jesus forms the clearest sort of contrast to all those types of insanity in which self-estimation is most extremely exalted and falsely exaggerated."(2)

Whether He kept His own person purposely in the background or whether it was simply not focal in His consciousness, the conclusion that His consciousness was unique is inescapable.

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1. I Cor. 3:7ff.;4:3-5.
2. Bundy, W.E.: The Psychic Health of Jesus, 223.

D. The Parable of the Mustard Seed

This parable occurs in all three of the Synoptics. Mark gives it at greatest length.

"And he said, How shall we liken the kingdom of God? or in what parable shall we set it forth? 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown upon the earth, though it be less than all the seeds that are upon the earth, 32 yet when it is sown, groweth up, and becometh greater than all the herbs, and putteth out great branches; so that the birds of the heaven can lodge under the shadow thereof." (Mk.4:30-32)

1. The Setting of the Parable.

The mustard seed is very common in the Orient. Thomson tells us that the mustard-bushes sometimes are as high as horse and rider and are alive with "flocks of merry bullfinches or of rock-pigeons feeding upon the seeds." (1) It was often used as a figure of speech.

"The mustard as a symbol, occurs in the Midrash, but it is used as a symbol of something small, not of something that grows very quickly. So in Ber. 31a, a microscopic drop of blood is said to have been no bigger than a mustard seed". (2)

2. The Central Thought of the Parable.

In Jesus' usage the seed represents the phenomena of a large end originating from a small beginning. This parable illustrates the external growth of the kingdom as the companion parable of the leaven illustrates the internal growth. Jesus is seeking from a different angle to impress

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1. Thomson, W.H.: The Parables by the Lake, p.91.
2. Montefiore, op. cit. p.253. See also, Feldman, op. cit. p.179.

His hearers with the fact that His kingdom is not that of the popular conception. It is not political, but spiritual; not outward but inward, not sudden but gradual. In this parable He shows it to be something which cannot be judged of small consequence because of its small beginning. This conception was directly opposed to the popular notion.(1) Whether the parable is to be interpreted as illustrating the principle of natural growth or that of abnormal enlargement (2), it is evident that Jesus is predicting the future growth and triumph of His cause from a small beginning.

3. Jesus' Self-consciousness in the Light of This Parable.

a. The Significance of the Phrase "Kingdom of Heaven".

The opening words of the parable are interesting to the psychologist. "How shall we liken the kingdom of God? or in what parable shall we set it forth?". This parallelism is an oriental expression and was familiar to the hearers, yet in it we see the urge of the soul to impart knowledge. Jesus asks a question which, by the very fact that it was asked, indicates a longing to convey truth. He yearns to clarify thinking, to instruct.

Underlying this is the fact that He was conscious of His ability to communicate this knowledge. Furthermore, He realized that His knowledge was of a

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1. Bruce, A.B.: The Kingdom of God, p.43ff.
2. Morgen, G.C.: The Parables of the Kingdom, p.107.

different realm from that of their common experience. By the definition of a parable itself we discover that Jesus undertook to make known in familiar terms the unknown. How did He come to possess this knowledge not known to men?

The prophets of the Old Testament represented Jehovah as speaking to His people, they do not claim their statements as their own conceptions, in fact they disclaim any originality. But here we see a Man who considers Himself qualified to describe the kingdom of God. He not only says the kingdom is at hand, as did John, but calmly describes what it is like. He makes no attempt to explain how He happens to know about it. He offers no credentials yet indicates no sense of incongruity in His speaking thus. In contrast, the Rabbins thought it irreverent to explain the kingdom (1) and the Apostles took great pains to account for their knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom.(2) Jesus seems to take for granted that He is qualified for the task. The people to whom He spoke also seemed to think it not strange that He should thus speak. This was not always the experience of the prophets.(3)

b. Creative Imagination at Work.

The human mind thinks in pictures only when the subject matter has been thoroughly mastered. When a subject

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1. Montefiore, op. cit. p.253.
2. Gal. 1 and 2; I Jn. 1:1-3; II Pet.1:16-19.
3. Amos. 7:10-16; Jer.43:2; I Cor.1:10ff.

is clearly grasped and is powerfully sensed in the emotions it leaps over prosaic and abstract definitions and finds expression in figurative language. Poetic or artistic utterance is not possible unless the creator "has it in his system".(1) Literature claims a higher value than psychology "as a revealer of the soul. Here man has himself given utterance to the deepest things of his own heart."(2)

"'As imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.'"(3)

Jesus artistry in the composition of His parables is unquestioned.(4) According to the laws of the literary world He must therefore have been literally "possessed" with His conception of the kingdom until it broke out into poetic, artistic imagery.(5)

4. Conclusion.

We note that although He was saddened at the thought of those who would fail to respond to His message yet He was optimistic concerning the future of the kingdom. Schweitzer is so impressed with the eschatological character of Jesus' thought that he interprets all of these parables in this light.(6) This too sheds light on the inner life of Jesus, as Garvie says, He had "the moral and religious

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1. Downey, June: op. cit. p.163.
2. Crawshaw, W.H.: The Literary Interpretation of Life, p.28.
3. Shakespeare, Midsummer Night's Dream, V.1:14-17, quoted by Macaulay, op. cit. p.13.
4. Horne, op. cit. p.88.
5. Macaulay, T.B.: Essay on Milton, p.18.
6. Schweitzer, Albert: The Mystery of the Kingdom of God, p.106ff.

insight which gave Him historic foresight."(1)

Jesus is possessed of an idea of the kingdom which is original; He expects it to come gradually; He predicts that eventually it will be far greater than one would guess from its humble beginning. Lastly, He is consciousness of being the originator of that kingdom, the Sower. Therefore, He stands in a unique relation to mankind and to the Father.

D. The Parable of the Tares.

1. Introduction.

In the parable of the tares among the wheat the idea of the kingdom is carried still further.(2) This parable, with the twin parable of the drag-net, forms a conclusion to this series of parables. It was probably spoken of the same occasion as the others. Matthew records it following that of the sower. It does supplement the sower and explain a question which was probably on the minds of the disciples; How is it that good and bad seed are in the world together? Why does not God destroy the bad so that the good can grow unmolested. It may have been also an answer to those who wanted immediate deliverance from the Romans.

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1. Garvie, A.E.: Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus, p.218.
2. Lisco, F.G.: The Parables of Jesus, (Trans. by P. Fairbairn), p.62.

This parable raises question also; it fairly "bristles with difficulties". Endless controversies have been waged over it. It has always been considered as a guide to the way the Church should deal with heretics.(1) It is well to remember that Jesus spoke, "not to establish dogma but to establish life".(2) The disciples themselves were mystified as to its meaning for after Jesus had spoken several they asked Him to go back and explain the parable of the tares of the field.(3) So grave have been the difficulties that many, even as conservative a scholar as James Denny, have doubted its genuineness.(4) But doubt is not caused by lack of documentary evidence. It is solely on the ground of the difficulties involved. Some accept the parable but not the explanation. If difficulty is to be the only criteria of authenticity where shall one draw the line? There are other parables no less difficult such as that of the Unjust Steward (Lu. 16). Moreover if this parable is cast out what are we to do with that of the drag-net and others which so closely resemble it?

2. Structural Features of this Parable.

The elements of the parable are similiar to the three just studied. The figure is that of seed growing in a field. The sower is still prominent. This time the hindrance to the seed is due to the malicious intent of an enemy.

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1. Trench, R.C.: op. cit. p.88ff.
2. Buttrick, G.A.: The Parables of Jesus, p.65.
3. Matt. 13:36.
4. Buttrick, op. cit. p.61.

The tare or darnal is in the Greek (ζιζάνια) which is:-

"After-wheat, a sort of inferior or secondary wheat, in appearance very like to genuine wheat, but yielding either no fruit at all, or only bad fruit."(1)

Thomson says it has no relation to wheat but is a distinct species which cannot be distinguished from the wheat until the heads begin to form. The tares are black and poisonous to eat; if they are not picked out carefully from wheat to be ground they will cause headache to those who eat the bread.(2)

The servants (δοῦλοι) of the householder are commonly interpreted as disciples or rulers in the church. But this can hardly be true if the church is the wheat itself. In the first parable the growing seed is in the heart of man; likewise with the parable of gradual growth. It is natural to interpret man as the wheat in this parable. This we have attempted to prove without using the direct statement in v. 38, "the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom".

While we must not become involved in "minutae" so as to lose the foci, yet we should avoid a distortion of the details especially if an interpretation is possible without. If the servants are not rulers, then the explanation that they are angels (v.39) is very fitting.

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1. Schleusner, quoted by Fairbairn in footnote on Lisco's exposition, Lisco,: op. cit. p.68.
2. Thomson, op. cit. pp.52-54.

The enemy is Satan, so the interpretation reads. (v.39) This need not surprise one for it does not appear incongruous in the light of Matt. 13:19.

These details have been given to indicate that on the basis of literary study alone these four elements, the sower and its interpretation and the tares and its interpretation, are inextricably interwoven. If we discard the interpretation of the tares we must on the same grounds do likewise with that of the sower. If both interpretations are discarded we have to discredit also such passages as Mark 4:34, "but privately to his own disciples he expounded all things".(1) It also invalidates the latter part of the parable of the drag-net.

"So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the righteous."

In this parable the eschatological element is a part of the parable itself.

The accompanying chart shows the elements which these parables have in common.

Thus we see that the parables and their interpretations are together a literary unit; if we destroy one element the whole picture is marred. In particular, the parable of the tares and its explanation are so

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1. Matt. 13:49.

closely interwoven into the entire fabric of this section that it cannot be lifted without loosening many other threads.(1)

3. The Implications of the Parable with Reference to Jesus' Self-consciousness.

The man who sowed the good seed, according to the parable of the sower and also the interpretation (v. 37) is Jesus Himself. His enemy is Satan.(2) The tares are caused by his agency. Jesus is thus in the same domain as Satan but opposed to him. The servants (not men but angels) are also in the same class or category with the sower and his enemy. This places Jesus with the angels as opposed to Satan and men in a different kingdom or domain as wheat is distinct from the sower and the servants. This cannot be pushed too far but it is interesting at least.

Jesus pictures the Son of Man as the same as the sower and as the householder. The Son of Man usage is characteristic of Jesus.(3) He designates Himself thus about seventy times in the Gospels.

"This expression, while it places him in one view on common ground with us as flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, already indicates at the same time that he is more than an ordinary individual, - not merely a son of man like all other descendants of Adam, but the Son of man; the Man in the highest sense; the ideal, the universal, the absolute Man; ... the Head of a new and superior order of the race, the King of Israel, and the Messiah for Jews and Gentiles."(4)

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1 The figure is borrowed from L.M. Sweet, See Lit. Dig. 7/4/25.

2. Cf. Matt. 12:26ff.

3. Stalker, James: The Christology of Jesus, p.45ff.

4. Schaff, Philip, op. cit. pp.79,80.

The title is used only once in the New Testament outside of Jesus - Stephen applied it to the Person he saw at his martyrdom.(1) Its appearance here serves to authenticate this passage as a genuine utterance of Jesus.(2)

The Son of man "shall send forth his (αὐτοῦ) angels and they shall gather out of his (αὐτοῦ) kingdom all things that cause stumbling."(3) Here is a King with a universal, timeless, kingdom of cosmic significance. It is also a moral kingdom, in which the righteous shall shine. His kingdom is equivalent to or at least directly precedes the kingdom "of their Father" ie. the kingdom of God. The two kingdoms, if not identical, are closely related.(4) For the text seems to speak of the two kingdoms as synonymous:-

"... They shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, ... 41 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (vv.41-43)

At the close come the familiar words, "He that hath ears, let him hear". This expression is commonly used at the end of apocalyptic sayings, as Schweitzer points out.(5) It also "ties up" this explanation with the whole section.(6)

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1. Acts. 7:56
2. These apocalyptic sayings are difficult for our western minds to appreciate and therefore, we unjustly discredit them. But even if Jesus did speak in the phraseology of His day the significant thing is that He identifies Himself with this convent conception.
3. Matt. 13:41.
4. I Cor. 15:24.
5. Note Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22.
6. See Matt. 13:9,43; Mk.4:9,24; Lu.8:8,18.

4. Conclusion.

The conclusion that forces itself upon one is that Jesus differentiated Himself from all men, (1) classed Himself above the angels, pictured Himself as finally triumphant over Satan, and saw Himself as a Judge (2) in His kingdom (v.41), a kingdom which is synonymous with the kingdom of heaven (v.24) and the kingdom of the Father (v.43).

F. Conclusions

When these parables were first looked at as possible material from which to get view of Jesus' self-consciousness, we were strongly inclined to agree with such scholars as G. S. Hall, and W. E. Bundy, that it is impossible to get any idea of what Jesus thought of Himself by a study of the parables. It was found true that Jesus' own consciousness is not prominent here, nevertheless, it is nothing less than surprising to discover what a well-rounded picture of Jesus' inner life a psychological study of the parables reveals.

His self-consciousness, as we have seen, is not that of a prophet, nor that of an apostle, but is something unique in Biblical literature.

In view of this can we agree with Bundy that Jesus does not think of Himself as figuring prominently in the

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1. He is also identified with man as the "Son of Man" usage implies.
2. Cf. Jn.5:27.

bring^{ing} in of the kingdom? "It is the work of God in its coming and in its culmination. God himself is the aggressor".(1) Our study has led us to the conclusion that Jesus is presented as the sower, the initiator, and as the harvester or final Judge. Thus He is prominent at the beginning of the kingdom and at its culmination but not in the middle - it is then that the seed grows by itself - "he knoweth not how". Our conclusion is directly opposite to that of Bundy, yet it seems the only one possible if we accept the fundamental proposition that Jesus is the sower. And if we cannot accept His recorded statement what part of the picture shall we accept? Shall we arrange Scripture to accord with our theories? Such an interpretation raises more problems than it solves.

Is not the suggestion of Vos more in accordance with the sources?

"The record joins together the strongest conceivable Messianic consciousness and the least possible effort for asserting and enforcing it."(2)

With the latter part of the statement Bundy himself agrees.

"Jesus, in clear contradiction to the paranoiac character, was not concerned with the claims of his own consciousness but with the chief cause which he championed, the kingdom of God.... It was only the

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1. Bundy, W.E.: The Religion of Jesus, p.150.
2. Vos, Geerhardus,: The Self-disclosure of Jesus, p.92.

most rarely, reluctantly, and reservedly that he spoke of himself. Even the highest pretensions regarding the personal role that was destined for him in the future were subjected and subordinated to the divine will."(1)

Here Bundy himself, in the last sentence, indicates that Jesus had premonitions of the place which He was to play in the coming kingdom.(2) The fact that the claims of Jesus are not prominent adds rather^{To} than detracts from His personality.

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1. Bundy, W.E.: The Psychic Health of Jesus, p.224.
2. Hall, G.S.: "His self-feeling in the parables to be sure gives him a place in the kingdom. He evolved laws of the kingdom, one after another from his own self-consciousness, and while he felt himself stronger than Satan and conceived himself as the Messiah, his concern is almost entirely with his work and not with himself." op. cit. II p.524.

"Others can impress us with God; in Christ God creates us anew. Others by their very purity may make us doubt whether we have any right to approach a holy God; but in Christ such misgivings are submerged in the discovery that He has taken the matter out of our hands into His own, and Himself has come to us and made us His forever ... God did not send, but came." - P. T. Forsyth, The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, pp.57,58.

CHAPTER IV

PARABLES WHICH FIND THEIR ANALOGY IN HUMAN LIFE

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CHAPTER IV.
PARABLES THAT FIND THEIR ANALOGY
IN HUMAN LIFE

A. Introduction

1. Time and Place

There is another group of parables given near the middle or during the second half of Jesus' ministry which are distinctive in their teaching. Most of them are found only in Luke's gospel. It is impossible to say just when Jesus spoke them but it is generally thought that they were uttered during His last journey to Jerusalem or what is called the Perean ministry of Jesus.(1) Much labor has been spent in a effort to get a satisfactory "harmony" but this need not concern us here.(2) It is sufficient to know that Jesus, after Peter's confession at Caesarea-Philippi(Mk.8:27-30), "Steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."(Lu.9:51) According to Luke these parables were spoken between that time and His arrival at the "Holy City".

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1. See Savage, G. C.: Time and Place Harmony of the Gospels.
2. Ludwig remarks, interestingly enough, "Almost all contradictions arise out of the disorderly nature of the reports. As soon as we arrange them psychologically, everything is seen to be logical. Not till then do the two great periods of Jesus' life become comprehensible: the period of the humble-minded but cheerful teaching; and the period when he was filled with the consciousness of a Messianic mission."
- Ludwig, Emil,: The Son Of Man, p.xii.

2. Comparison With the Parables of Nature

Whereas the parables just studied speak of the principles of the kingdom, those of this section give the conditions of entrance into the kingdom and describe its citizens. The former deal with natural phenomena; these deal with human beings. The parables by the seashore are metaphorical illustrations; these are lessons from life. Those are given in response to the multitudes and disciples who desire to know the nature of the kingdom; these often are uttered spontaneously in reply to the accusations of Jesus' enemies. They have been appropriately called the parables of grace.(1)

2. The Parables Selected

Four parables have been chosen from this section. The primary object in selection has been to include those which are the best loved and are the most representative, rather than those with the greatest Christological possibilities. Accordingly, the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son have been included with the Great Supper and the Importunate Widow. Jesus did not intend these parables to be self-disclosures but if, in spite of this, something of His self-consciousness can be detected here it will be all the more valuable.

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1. Bruce, A. B.: The Parabolic Teaching of Christ.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25-37

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbor? 30 Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. 36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? 37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

B. The Good Samaritan

This has been classed as an illustrative narrative rather than a true parable by Julicher and Hall,(1) since it is not a comparison but only a story. Nevertheless we are justified in using it here since it so closely resembles a "true parable" that no classification has ever excluded it. This parable bears a universal appeal and has struck a responsive chord in the hearts of millions.

1. The Setting of the Parable

Like most of the parables of this section this was spoken in response to an immediate situation. Luke tells us that, "A certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"(2) Jesus, in return, asked him what the law said.(3) His approval of the lawyer's reply "took the wind out of his sails", if the expression is permissible. His trouble was not a lack of knowledge but an unwillingness to act in accordance with what he did have. In order to "save his face" he still professed ignorance. As Luke so cogently puts it, "But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and

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1. Hall, G. S: op., cit. II, p.583.
2. Lu. 11:25
3. The lawyer's correct reply shows that he was not "unworthy of the name" for he gives the essence of the law by quoting Deut. 6:5 & Lev. 19:18.

who is my neighbor?"(11:29)

Jesus' reply was evidently spontaneous. Julicher thinks that Luke has the wrong setting, but if the gem harmonizes with the setting the burden of proof lies with the critics. If the key fits the lock, if the stone fits into the matrix it is probable that they belong together.(1) If Jesus' reply was spontaneous it indicates a mind that was thoroughly at home in the situation as well as an intelligence amazingly penetrating to discern the questioner's trouble and weave as artistic tapestry on the moment. Jesus' apt reply was due-

"To the cast and habit of his own mind. It is when truth has been long and thoroughly pondered that it embodies itself in brief and memorable language, as it is the ore thoroughly smelted which flows out in an uninterrupted stream and crystallizes in perfect shapes; and such intense and convinced thought was so habitual to Jesus that the most striking sayings were often coined by Him on the spur of the moment."(2)

2. The Substance of the Parable

The central truth of this story is not difficult to find if the context is consulted. Since the lawyer asked who his neighbor was then Jesus' reply was intended to answer that question. His question to the lawyer afterwards and the lawyer's reply indicates that the latter "got the point" and that Jesus confirmed it. The truth is that the

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1. Figure borrowed from Marston, Archaeology & The Bible.
2. Stalker, James, The Christology of Jesus, p.38,39.

neighbor, who is to be loved as oneself, is anyone in need, regardless of race or religion. Jesus thus lifted the Mosaic commandment out of the bounds of Judaism and gave it a universal, timeless application. The religious leaders who, because of religious exclusiveness, "passed by on the other side", were condemned in favor of a foreigner who showed mercy. "Love is the fulfilling of the law".(1)

3. Implications Regarding Jesus' Self-consciousness.

Trench, whose treatment of the parables is generally considered to be the most scholarly in the English language,(2) notes the "facility with which all the circumstances of the parable yield themselves" to the tracing in parable of a deeper meaning, "the work of the merciful Son Man Himself", Who embodied in Himself the principle of love which He was illustrating.(3) It cannot be denied that Jesus did exemplify this truth in His life. Yet the more "critical" scholars will not accept this interpretation and even Bruce has "has no taste for it".(4) Therefore we only mention this and lay it aside in order to find common ground with all scholars.

Approaching the problem of Jesus' self-consciousness from the viewpoint of literary science we take, as a

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1. Rom. 13:10; James 2:8.

2. Hall, op. cit. p.520,521. Buttrick, op, cit. p.vii.

3. Trench, op. cit. p.318

4. Bruce, op. cit. p.353,354.

proposition acceptable to all, that Jesus has given us a story of neighborliness and of God's love which is unparalleled in literature, the story of the Prodigal Son accepted.

Literature, especially that in which the imagination plays a prominent part, expresses the inner life of the author.

"Bacon represents the highest point to which the literature of the essay has ever attained. And this is because of the greatness of the personality that is revealed."(1)

In "Samson Agonistes", who is the "blind Samson but Milton himself?"(2)

Tennyson has gathered up his whole heart in -

"'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all'".(3)

The writings of the great essayists such as Macaulay, Emerson, and Sainte-Beuve, are enjoyed "as revelations of the supremely interesting personalities they reflect".(4)

The greatest students of human nature and of literature realize that -

"'The foam-flakes that dance in life's shallows
Are wrung from life's deep'".(5)

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1. Moulton, R. G.: World Literature, p.386.
2. Crawshaw, W. H.: Literary Interpretation of Life, p.52.
3. Ibid, p.45.
4. Moulton op. cit. p.386.
5. Crawshaw, op. cit. p.44.

If this is true in literature it must be true also that this beautiful story reflects Jesus' own heart and thought. Is He contrasting Himself to the religious leaders of His day who had forgotten that God "Will have mercy and not sacrifice"?(1) If we admit the greatness of the parable we should pay equal tribute to its Creator and thus avoid the accusation that was made against the critics of Milton,

"There are many critics, and some of great name, who contrive in the same breath to extol the poems and to decry the poet."(2)

Is not Buttrick's conviction more true to the psychology of literature?

"Let no man say 'Kindness is enough'. Let him remember rather that Jesus fashioned the parable from the fibre of His own spirit; that Jesus died as a Good Samaritan at the world's dark roadside; and that the fountain-head of the motive of Jesus is found only in the mystic depth from which He said; 'I and My Father are one'".(3)

The parable thus shows Jesus's heart of human compassion and also a breadth of love that is more than human.

D. The Parable of the Great Supper

1. The Setting of the Parable

Bruce has admirably epitomized the setting of this parable.

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1. Mt. 9:13; Hos. 6:6.
2. Macaulay, op. cit. p.9.
3. Buttrick, op. cit. p.156.

THE GREAT SUPPER

Luke 14:15-24

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: 17 and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five ~~yoke~~ of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the ~~streets~~ and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. 22 And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

"On hearing the table-talk of Jesus at the Sabbath-day feast in the Pharisee's house, one of the guests took occasion, from the reference to the resurrection of the just, to make the pious reflection: 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God': Whereupon Jesus proceeded to speak ... for the benefit of His fellow-guest, and all the rest who were present."(1)

Jesus could have little patience with such a sentimental observation coming from the mouth of one who represented a class which had remained indifferent and even hostile to His earnest efforts to reach the lost. Likewise, Jeremiah could not bear to hear his ungodly contemporaries speak glibly of the "burden of the Lord", which to him was actually a burden.(2)

Jesus, in reply, struck at the heart of this easy-going piety by a parable which showed how little his companion really valued the privilege of which he spoke so suavely.(3)

1. The Central Truth of the Parable

This entire parable seems to be gathered into the concluding sentence; "none of those who are bidden shall taste of my supper".(v.24) Although they were invited, their failure to appreciate it and their self-interests brought judgment against themselves. On the other hand those who were hungry and needy did get in to the feast.

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1. Bruce, op. cit. p.326.
2. Jer. 23:33-40.
3. The Greek adversative (Se) emphasizes this.

Not pious reflection but earnest response insures one of participation in this feast.

3. Indications of Jesus' Self-consciousness.

Again the thought of Jesus is not of Himself primarily, not is it of the kingdom. He is thinking of His hearers.

The fact that He speaks in the same tenor of mind when a guest of the Pharisee as when accused by the Pharisees indicates His self-possession. His personality is integrated around a dominating conviction which has such a stabilizing influence upon Him that no outward circumstances - neither fear nor favor - can change His central conviction. His thought life is centered about the kingdom of God. Here, as elsewhere, He speaks to correct a misconception, to awaken the conscience. His optimism is again in evidence. The kingdom is going to be filled even if those who were invited at first do not accept. The fact that Jesus replied thus indicates that His feeling on the subject was different from that of His fellows at the table.(1) His quick and direct reply indicates that He felt and thought deeply on the subject. He was at home in the field and consequently spoke with familiarity and positiveness about the kingdom.

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1. Fletcher, M. S.: The Psychology of the New Testament, p.156.

A prophetic insight is also resident in the parable.(1) History later proved that the Pharisees indeed were left out of the kingdom but the hungry men of all classes and races were gathered in.(2)

The total impression of Jesus' inner life which this parable affords in that of a personality integrated around the conception of the kingdom of God which is all his own.(2) It is both authoritative and prophetic. His part in this kingdom He does not disclose here and it is unnecessary to conjecture regarding it.

D. The Prodigal Son

All that has been said regarding the merit of the Good Samaritan parable applies in even greater measure to this parable which, "By the canons of literary criticism,... is the world's greatest short story".(3)

"Max Muller finds ... a striking coincidence between a pre-Christian Indic tale and that of the Prodigal Son."(4)

Students of Greek Papyri find remarkable parallels to this story in the ancient Egyptian documents. In one case the parents of a runaway son make a proclamation that

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1. Cf. Matt. 21:31.
2. Dalman, Gustaf,: The Words of Jesus, p.135ff.
3. Horne, op. cit. p.87.
4. Hall, op. cit. p.526.

THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11-32

Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him. 2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: 19 I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry. 25

Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and heard music and dancing. 26 And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. 27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. 28 But he was angry, and would not go in: and his father came out, and entreated him. 29 But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30 but when this thy son came, ... thou killedst for him the fatted calf.

no one should lend money to "... our son Castor", along with others, by riotous living, has squandered all his own property..."(1)

Even more interesting is the letter written by a prodigal himself to his mother about 27 A.D. He pleads her forgiveness with a great deal of emotion.

"I know what I have brought upon myself... I know that I have sinned."(2)

Jesus' story, 'though not borrowed', does show a familiarity with contemporary life.(3)

1. The Setting of the Parable

Again Jesus is encountering opposition from the Pharisees and scribes who "murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them".(4) Jesus utters the three parables of the lost found in Luke 15; the lost sheep(vv.3-7), the lost coin(vv.8-10), and the lost son, in order to justify His association with "the publicans and sinners".

2. The Message of the Parable

Jesus answers His accusers by showing that God Himself not only receives sinners but anxiously searches them out. The repentance of one sinner causes more joy

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1. P. Flor. 99 i/ii A.D., Milligan, Geo.: Selections from the Papyrii, pp.71,72.
2. B. G. U. 846 ii/A.D. Milligan, op. cit. p.94ff.
3. Hall, op. cit. p.576.
4. Luke 15:2.

in heaven than ninety nine "righteous persons who need no repentance".(v.7) Perhaps there was a bit of irony in this allusion to the Pharisees. In the story of the Prodigal Son, otherwise called, the Two Sons, or the Father's Love,(1) the chief lesson is the joy of the father at his younger son's return. The secondary lesson is the jealousy of the older brother. This matchless story not only has a timeless and universal appeal but was admirably fitted to the immediate situation. It must have been the work of a creative genius.

3. The Author's Self-revelation

If Jesus intended this parable to be a reply to the Pharisees then either He sees Himself as following the example of the forgiving Father or else He Himself is the One who seeks the sheep and the coin and rejoices over the prodigals return. If we were to judge this as we would any other literary work we would say that the story reflects the Author's own experience. Furthermore, this interpretation is exactly in harmony with a declaration which Jesus makes with reference to Himself. After accepting the invitation of Zachaeus, the publican, He says, to justify His action by saying, "For the Son of Man came to seek and ^{to} save that which was lost."(2)

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1. Hall, op. cit. p.561.
2. Luke 19:9.

While the natural interpretation seems to be that Jesus considers Himself to be the one who welcomes the lost we waive that assumption in order to avoid the accusation of making an unsubstantiated assertion. Let us get back to the setting.

The Pharisees had not called in question any of Jesus' teaching about God. They directed their attack against Jesus personally - "This man receiveth sinners". It is natural to suppose that Jesus, in answering their accusation, is thinking of Himself and seeking to justify His action. If, then, we accept this story as being a picture of Jesus' own heart, the following idea is presented.

The Son of Man is seeking the outcastes; the lost. He delights in finding them and embraces them at their return. This arouses the jealousy of the "righteous persons" - the Pharisees and scribes. They, like the elder brother, resent the attention shown to the returning prodigal. They are not chided for their jealousy- the joy of the parent is so full that he only speaks soothingly and continues to rejoice over the "found", implying that the elder should join the merriment.

It would have been psychologically impossible for Jesus to speak thus unless He deeply felt it. If He was joyful it was because He could feel and appreciate the joy of the Heavenly Father.(1) "It takes a genius to appreciate

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1. Pfleiderer, Otto, Philosophy and Development of Religion, pp.76,77.

a genius." Jesus, in order to understand the Father must have been like Him or close to Him, i.e. "on the inside of things". The fact that this was a reply to His critic's accusations against Himself leads one to believe that Jesus was conscious of His affinity with the Father and was seeking to make His opponents see it. The consciousness of being the seeker and finder, though not explicit as in Luke 19:10, is certainly implicit in each of the "lost and found" parables.

"God's many there have been in earth's theologies and mythologies, but where, outside of the Holy Scriptures, shall we find such a God as this? No Persian, Hindu, Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, Roman or Norse deity has been thought of as saviour of lost men."(1)

Where did Jesus get this idea? Is it possible that "Jesus' coming was a part of God's seeking"? (2) By what other interpretation can we do justice to parable itself?

E. The Widow and Judge

1. The Setting of the Parable

Luke himself gives us the setting and it is safe to assume that His knowledge of the situation was equal to that of any commentator ancient or modern. He was well qualified, both by natural endowment and proximity to the

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1. Albertson, C.C.: The Distinctive Ideas of Jesus, p.27.
2. Ibid, p.25.

THE WIDOW AND THE JUDGE

Luke 17:20-22,24-26,30; 18:1-8

20 And being asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.

22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire one of the days of the SON OF MAN, and ye shall not see it. ... 24 for as the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven;... so shall the SON OF MAN Be in his day. 25 But first must he suffer many things and be rejected of this generation. 26 And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the SON OF MAN. ... 30 after the same manner shall it be in the day that the SON OF MAN is revealed. ...

And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 saying, there was in a city a judge, who feared not God, and regarded not man: 3 and there was widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is longsuffering over them? 8 I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the SON OF MAN cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

situation, to express a sound judgment. He tells us that the parable was spoken for the purpose of encouraging prayer and patience. (Lu. 18:1) This suggests the parable of the Tares. It also associates this parable with the parable of the Friend at Midnight. The setting which Luke gives in the verses immediately preceeding is the that of the coming of the kingdom of God. (1)

2. The Message of the Parable

Augustine expresses it very lucidly and effectively:-

"'If a a bad man will yield to the mere force of importunity which he hates, how much more certainly will a righteous God be prevailed on by the faithful prayer which He loves'". (2)

God certainly not do less than this judge. It is an unforgettable lesson to disciples of all time to exercise patience and believing prayer in spite of a long delayed answer. (3) Like the parable of the Great Supper it teaches that "our prayers must be freed of insincerity and the trivial spirit before heaven's bounty is unlocked." (4)

3. Jesus' Self-revelation in This Parable

In this parable, as in that of the Drag-net, the interpretation is part of the parable. We discover here

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1. Luke 17:20-37.

2. Augustine (Sermon cxv.1) quoted by Trench, op. cit., p.482.

3. The Greek (το δεῖν) has the force of "men must pray".

4. Buttrick, op. cit. p.175.

the expression "Son of Man" which links this with the preceding chapter. Chapter 1 and 7 associates the coming of the Son of Man with the kingdom of God.(v.20-21) The expression "Son of Man" occurs five times in these two chapters, each time in an apocalyptic setting.(1) The kingdom of God is mentioned seven times, also in the future aspects.(2) Jesus plainly mentions His coming in cosmic splendor (v.24) as a Judge of Men.(v.30) Until then He bids His disciples watch. This conception is not incongruous with previous parables for in the Parables by the Lake He is pictured both as the Sower and the Reaper or Judge. In this parable this idea while not new comes out more clearly than formerly.

Jesus' conception His person here has this apocalyptic aspect associated with the idea of a second advent. Thus His self-estimate is the "most pretentious" yet observed. It is the more significant because it is calmly, simply stated.(3) It was not His primary objective to teach this in the parable. It was taken as a matter of course by Him and by His disciples. He labored, not to teach them that He was coming, but rather, to patiently wait for that event.

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1. Lu.11:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8.
2. Lu.17:20, 21; 18:17, 24, 25, 29.
3. He was not "visionary and ecstatic", Bacon, B. W.: The Son of God, p.43.

F. Summary

In this section the subject matter of the parables is moved from the realm of nature into that of human beings; from things to persons. In this section Jesus pictures God as loving the needy and seeking the sinners. He pictures the kingdom of God as open to sinners and as rejoicing over the lost who have been found. He teaches that persistent prayer for the coming of the kingdom will be answered.

Deep in His own consciousness is the realization that He Himself is the One who seeks and saves the needy. He implies, though He does not directly teach, that He will finally be revealed as the Judge of "this generation" and as the Avenger of God's elect. This role He assumes calmly with no indication of an effort to persuade Himself or others that this is His rightful role - that is taken for granted. He senses no incongruity between His glorious future and His present earthly position. He never labors to convince others of His "unsuspected dignity". The paranoiac is exactly the opposite.

"He must make it clear to all that he is really not the one he seems or is commonly supposed to be; he is another, someone really great."(1)

In contrast:

"Jesus' self-consciousness appears less in the form of a claim and more in the form of concession to the divine will..."(2)

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1. Bundy, W. E. : The Psychic Health of Jesus, p.223.
2. Loc. Cit.

"It is no distemper but only a conscience inflamed with true zeal", says Hall.(1)

Mirrored in each parable of this group is the same, self-consistent Personality who expresses His deepest feelings in them with matchless art and power. It is this same Person pictured in different aspects who gives these parables the breath of life.

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1. Hall, G. S.: op. cit. II, p.579.

"The popular conception of the Kingdom of God was the alloy with which Jesus had to mix His teaching, in order to make it fit to mingle with the actual life of the world of His day. Without it His thought would have been too ethereal and too remote from the living hopes of men. He had to take them where He found them and lead them step by step to the full appreciation of His sublime purpose for the world. He was not to be the king of the Jews, but King of an infinitely diviner realm, yet it was by aiming at the throne which He missed that He reached the throne which He now occupies."

- James Stalker, The Christology of Jesus, p. 163.

CHAPTER V.

V. PARABLES THAT FIND THEIR ANALOGY IN EVENTS

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CHAPTER V

PARABLES THAT FIND THEIR ANALOGY IN EVENTS

A. Introduction

The last group of parables have been classified as parables of the Passion Week, (1) Apocalyptic parables (2), and parables of Judgment (3). They are all parables of warning, whether to the Pharisees or to the disciples. We are chiefly indebted to Matthew for these parables, as to Luke for the parables of grace.

The gradual movement from the beginning is unmistakable. In the first group of parables the keynote is instruction of the multitudes regarding the nature of the kingdom; those of the second period deal with conditions of entrance into the kingdom; those of the last group speak of impending judgment upon those who refuse the kingdom. The note of optimism is discernable in all three groups but here a more serious note is sounded; the kingdom is coming, but with dire consequences for some.

Four parables have been selected from this group for especial study but all will receive some notice inasmuch as they are all closely related.

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1. This is Buttrick's classification, op. cit.
2. Hall, T. C.: The Message of Jesus according to the Synoptists.
3. Bruce, op. cit.

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

Matt. 21:23-27

23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26 But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

THE TWO SONS

Matt. 21:28-32

28 But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in the vineyard. 29 And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went. 30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. 31 Whether of the twain did the will of his father? They say, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him: not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him.

B. The Two Sons

1. The Setting of the Parable

a. Time

This parable and those which follow was spoken on Tuesday of the Passion Week.(1)

b. Place

Jesus and His disciples had come to Jerusalem from Bethany that morning passing the barren fig tree en-route.

c. Occasion

Jesus was in the Temple teaching the people when He was confronted by "the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders" who came to challenge His authority.(2) They were probably thinking of His cleansing the Temple on the previous day when they challenged His authority as the question refers to conduct rather than to teaching.(3) In response to their question Jesus asked them whether John's baptism was "from heaven or of men". This was not, as it might seem, an attempt to evade the issue. It was a fair question, "if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things".(4) Jesus was calling upon them to think. He wanted to draw them out and to teach them but He did not

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1. Savage, G. C.: Time and Place Harmony of the Gospels, p. xvii.
2. Mark.11:27,28.
3. "By what authority doest thou these things?" Matt.21:23.
4. Matt. 21:24.

wish to "cast pearls before swine", or make a statement which would harden them still more, not yet to forge a weapon which they could use against Him.

Jesus' simple question confounded His interrogators. If they approved of John they would be playing into Jesus' hands for John bore witness of Him; if they said John was not sent from God they would get into trouble with the people; if they refused to reply they would be forfeiting their claim to be the spiritual leaders of the people. They chose the latter alternative; "We know not". In accordance with His original proposition Jesus declined to state His authority. Instead He took the offensive and propounded three parables in an attempt to make them answer the question themselves.(1)

2. The Message of the Parable

The opening question, "what think ye?", indicates Jesus' concern for them. He is inviting their careful consideration by holding a mirror before them, by which they can see their own hearts. Even as Jesus faces those who are to kill Him the element of entreaty is not absent. Says Trench:-

"These ... are not words of defiance, but of earnest tenderest love, spoken with the intention of turning them, ... from their purpose, of winning them also for the kingdom of God."(2)

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1. Levison gives a lucid analysis of the situation from the viewpoint of a converted Jew. op. cit. p.221 ff.
2. Trench: op. cit. p.191.

There is a critical question as to the order of verses 29 and 30. In Nestle's text the son who said, "I go" is mentioned first. (1) Such questions need not delay us. For convenience we will follow the reading of the Revised Version. (2)

The word (τέκνον) translated "son" means a child. Its use here "suggests the father's love". (3) It also connotes a relationship on the basis of which the father has a right to make this command.

The first son refused to go, then went. The second said, "I go, sir; and went not." (v.30) The emphatic "I", (ἐγώ), forms a contrast to the answer of the first son. It is an elliptical expression of devoted willingness. (4)

Jesus asked His hearers, point blank, "which of the two did the will of his father?" (v.31) They could only answer, "the first". Whereupon Jesus proceeded to make the application. The first son was like the publicans and harlots for they repented at John's preaching. The Pharisees, who rendered lip service, not only refused the message of John but persisted in their disbelief in spite of further evidence.

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1. This points to an interpretation which makes the two sons represent Jews and Gentiles.
2. Also Huck, D. A.: Synipse Der Drei Ersten Evangelien, p.163
3. Meyer, H. A. Wl: Critical and Exegetical Handbook, p.368
4. Lange, J. P.: Commentary on Matthew, (Tr. by P. Schaff) 386
5. Meyer; op. cit. p.368

They did not allow the testimony of their senses to convict them. "Ye, when ye saw it, did not ... believe him." (v.32) If they accepted Jesus' comparison they were self-condemned. "The lesson is clear. Actions speak louder than words ... True service is in deeds."(1)

This is Jesus' first reply to their question of authority.(2)

B. Evidences of Jesus' Self-consciousness in the Parable

What has been said regarding Jesus' quick and apt responses applies here in even a greater degree.(3)

a. His Relation to John.

In asking this question, Jesus, by implication, identified Himself as the one of whom John bore witness. In so doing He virtually accepted all that John said about Him. By this question also there is implied a sense of mission. There is the sharp antithesis in Jesus mind, "from heaven or of men".(v.25) If He thought of John in those terms He must also have thought of Himself likewise.

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1. Hall, G. S.: op. cit. II, p.562.
2. "Jesus had already, by His counter-question, obliged His enemies to lay bare their ignorance, or their unbelief. He now constrains them, in the first parable, to declare their own guilt; and, in the second, to declare their own punishment; and, as they had now decided to put him to death, He describes to them, in the third parable, the consequences of their great violation of the covenant and ungratitued- . . . the establishment of His new kingdom of Heaven among the Gentiles."
- Lange, op. cit. p.386.
3. Ante, p.56

There was no middle ground. Such men as Erasmus never worry about a sense of mission or a basis of authority. Erasmus, on the contrary, actually disclaimed any, rather he spoke only as moved by his own caprice.(1) He assumed an attitude of irresponsibility, Jesus betrays a concern as to whether He is acting on the Father's behest or simply on His own initiative.(2) The force of His question to the Pharisees indicates that He was conscious of receiving His own authority from the Father as did John.

b. His self-possession.

Jesus had no inferiority complex; no cowering disposition. He made no fawning effort to please or even to lessen the affront of His adversaries. Neither is there a hint of the opposite trait - that of assuming an insolent, belligerent spirit. The average person would go to one of the two extremes in his reaction. Jesus' response is as sweet tempered and gentle as it is clever and firm.(3) There is no trace of His being disconcerted or flustered. His spirit retained its calm and equilibrium like a giant ship which rides in a storm more smoothly than a small one. His enemies, in contrast, were greatly confused by His counter-question.

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1. Cf. Böhmer, Heinrich,: Luther in the Light of Recent Research, Trans. by Carl F. Huth Jr., p.270-272.
2. Cf. J.8:42.
3. Cf. Acts.4:8-11,19,20.

c. His Authoritative Boldness.

In v.3. Jesus makes a categorical affirmation which is significant in several respects. Few people have the audacity to say who will enter the kingdom of heaven and who will not. Jesus doesn't cautiously express an opinion. His voice rings out in a tone of authority - "Verily I say unto you ..." He stands there in full possession of every faculty exclaiming "I say unto you". He is very conscious of His "ego", He stands on His own feet and speaks "straight from the shoulder", this amazing declaration. Not only is this statement surprising in its bold affirmation but also in the unique character of it. In direct contravention of prevalent ideas He declares the "(οἱ τελῶναι) and (οἱ πόρνοι) go into the kingdom of God before you,"- Pharisees. Who is He that can make such dogmatic, affirmations which cut across the grain of commonly accepted standards? What right has He to say who shall enter the kingdom of God? Who can say who shall enter the kingdom but the King Himself?

C. The Wicked Husbandmen and the

Murdered Son

1. Background of the Parable

This parable recalls the Parables of the Old Testament,(1) and the many pastoral similes of the Rabbis.(2)

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1. See Macartney, C.F.: The Parables of The Old Testament.
2. Cf. Feldman, A.: op. cit. Dr. Montifiore, scarcely notices this chapter of Matt. See op. cit. p.309.

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN
AND THE MURDERED SON

Matt. 21:33-45

~~33~~ Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, which planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country. 34 And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive his fruits. 35 And the husbandmen took his servants and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them in like manner. 37 But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. (He had yet one, a beloved son: he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.-Mk. 12:6) 38 But the husbandmen when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance. 39 And they took him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40 When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. 42

THE REJECTED CORNER-STONE

42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected,
the same was made the head of the corner:
This was from the Lord,
And it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust. 45 And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

The Parable of the Vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7 resembles it most closely both in setting and didactic purpose.(1) It bears a more remote relationship to the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.(2) The figure was thoroughly familiar to the hearers. It was remarkably apt in that it would naturally recall to the hearers the parallel in Isaiah and this itself would go a long way toward convincing them - if anything could. This parable and the mention of the stone is found in all three Synoptics.

2. Content of the Parable

The opening words, "Hear another parable" is as much as to say - "'I have not done with you yet; I have still a word of warning and rebuke'".(3) The confession of the Levites in Neh. 9:5;38 is, as Trench suggests, an excellent commentary in the parable:-

"Yet many years didst thou bear with them and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit through the prophets: yet they would not give ear."(4)

It is sometimes asked in what respect the "servants" differ from the "husbandmen" since both are subjects of the landlord. The prophets were sent in times of crisis to recall the people to righteousness; to cause them to render

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1. Other allusions to Israel as the vineyard are: deut. 32:23; Ps.80:8-16; Isa.37:1-7; Jer.2:21; Eze.15:1-6;19:10.
2. Matt. 20:1-16.
3. Trench, op. cit. p.197.
4. Neh. 9:30 Cf. II Kings 17 Trench, op. cit. p.207.

the spiritual "fruits". The priests, however, were a part of the theocratic institution and owed their position directly to birth in the Aaronic line. The prophets were special ambassadors direct from God. The history of Israel shows the clashes of these two classes due to the self-interests of the priests.(1)

The conduct of the husbandmen in each successive instance gradually becomes worse. In Mark's account the first servant was beaten, the second "wounded in the head". He had "yet on, a beloved son: he sent him last unto them saying, They will reverence my son".(2) Him also they cast out of the vineyard.(3)

Liberal critics have said that this parable is that Jesus, by asking another question, gave them opportunity to express themselves.(cf.v.31)(4) In their reply they un-

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1. Mk.12:3-5.
2. Mk.12:6.
3. Cf. Gen.37:19,20; IKings 21:13; Jn.11:47-53; Heb.13:12.
4. Liberal critics have said that this parable is not the words of Jesus and that the son referred to is not Himself because the husbandmen said "This is the son" whereas the Pharisees did not acknowledge Jesus to be the son of God. It is noteworthy, however, that such literalism would compel us to say also that it either is not Jehovah that is "lord of the vineyard" or that He is not omniscient for He says "it may be they will reverence my son", as if He did not know beforehand what would befall him. The critics thus question the authenticity by a violation of their own fundamental position i.e. details are unimportant. Cf. Hall, G. S.: op. cit. II, p.563.

wittingly expressed their own condemnation.(1) Luke includes the people's expression of remonstrance and horror - (πῶς γένοιτο) "be it not so".(2) The words "But He looked upon them, and said, what then is this that is written...?" (v.17) suggest that Jesus felt that His appearance was in connection with the past - with their scriptures.(3) Was He marveling at their unbelief? The quotation comes from the 118th. Psalm (v.22) which He evidently associates with the parable because of the introductory words, "Did ye never read", (4) "have ye not read".(5)

This quotation is followed by the significant words, "Therefore, say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."(6) This is the second point which connects this parable with the one preceeding. The third connection is found in the concluding verse. "When the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."(7) They evidently referred to the two parables just uttered. To disassociate the parable of the rejected corner stone from the parable of the rejected son violates all rules of exegesis.

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1. Cf. I Kings 20:41.
2. Trench thinks the Pharisees had too much self-command to express this. Cf. Trench, op. cit. p.213.
3. Cf. Jn.5:39; Lu.24:25,26.
4. Matt.21:42 Cf. Isa. 28:16; IPet.2:6-8.
5. Mk. 12:10.
6. Matt.21:43.
7. Matt.21:45.

It would seem that the Jewish leaders, in spite of all their former hostility, would not hold out against the force of such a message. This seems the master stroke of Jesus in an effort to make them see themselves. That it did profoundly effect them is evident, to be sure, but it did not move them to think and to repent - rather the opposite. "And the scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands upon him in that very hour." (1) "They perceived that he spake of them." Nowhere else is the evidence so clear that the leaders recieved the light yet turned against it. Their self-interest made them unwilling to recognize that the theocratic hierarchy was only a scaffolding which must now be removed from the new edifice of the spiritual kingdom of God.

3. Jesus' Self-revelation

Is not this Jesus' answer to their question as to His authority? Did He not have a right to accept the fruits of the vineyard? It is certain that at least He thought Himself to be the son. (2) Jesus' witness of Himself in this parable is strong enough to build an entire system of Christology upon it alone. Taken at the end of many similiar self-intimations its force is overwhelming.

a. His Relation to the Prophets

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1. Lu.20:19.

2. Gray, Arthur, Discusses this in the Hibbert Journal vol. xix, No. 3 Oct. 1920 pp.42-52.

In a brief sweep Jesus pictures the entire of history of the kingdom of Judah. He is last of the prophets yet He differs from the prophets as the son differs from the servants.(1)

"Another major movement, in this new world symphony, based on an old world song is the witness of Jesus to Himself. ... 'He had yet one, a beloved son: He sent him last unto them. The claim is the more impressive because it is unforced, being woven, into the texture of the story without explanation or discussion. The unique self-consciousness of Jesus is even more significant when revealed by indirection than when it is explicit: .. This self-witness seems to be woven into the fabric of His teaching...Elijah, Isaiah, John the Baptist were 'servants'. 'Last of all He sent His Son.' Jesus thus refuses...to be catalogued with the greatest of mankind."(2)

b. His Relation to the Father

Jesus also conceives of Himself in a unique relation to the Father. He, in contrast to the servants, is the Son and the Heir of Jehovah-God. The Jews were familiar with the other parts of the parable. Did they grasp this new feature? The evidence is that they did from their violent reaction and their later accusations.(3) This novel feature is as truly an integral part of the parable as this parable is of the many parables which resemble it, especially Isaiah's.(4)

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1. Cf. Heb.1:1,2.
2. Buttrick, op. cit. p.217.
3. Lu.22:67,70,
4. Briggs C. A.: The Messiah of the Gospels, p.117.

c. His relation to the Nation

In the metaphor of the corner-stone Jesus predicts His death at the hands of His hearers and sees in it God's overrule "This was from the Lord". He sees also the triumph of His cause - He will be the "head of the corner."

"This rejection of the Messiah Brings the kingdom of God under the Old Testament to an end. It is to die with its Messiah. But a new kingdom is to rise up in its place in the resurrection of the Messiah. He is to be the corner-stone of the new kingdom of God."(1)

d. His Role as Judge

Future punishment is hereby declared negatively. It is declared positively in v.44, "'on whomsoever it shall fall,' it shall winnow him ie. throw him off like chaff from the winnowing fan".(2) Here is a corroboration of John the Baptist.(3) Jesus sees Himself as the Judge who was to come as the last of the prophets predicted.

He was pictured as Judge in the parables of the Tares and of the Importunate Widow yet here the idea comes out even more forcefully. No wonder the Pharisees felt convicted and "perceived that He spake of them."(4)

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1. See Dalman, G. H.: The Words of Jesus, p.281.

2. Meyer, op. cit. p.372.

3. Matt.3:12.

4. Jesus may have been thinking of Isa. 53 "It is thus plain that the suffering Servant conception was organic to the consciousness of Jesus and that He often regarded His vocation in the light of this supremely suggestive prophecy. ... Surely it was not less (than genius) when Jesus recognized in His own character and career the union of the Isaianic Servant of Yahveh and the messianic royal son of second Psalm? Such combinations are not the cool and clever result of a scribe poring over Old Testament texts. They witness to a depth of religious insight and experience which is creative. They interpret not texts but a life."

- Moffat, James, Theology of the Gospels, p.149. Cf. Matt.11:11

4. Summary

In this parable and its associated parable of the rejected corner-stone, Jesus reveals in an unmistakable way His own conception of His person and office.

a. He is superior in rank and dignity to the greatest "servants" of all time.

b. He is Son and Heir of God.

c. He is the Head of the new divine-human kingdom of God. The chief corner-stone.

d. He is to be the Judge who will bring destruction to those who refuse His reign.

D. The Wedding-feast of the King's Son

1. Introduction

This parable so closely resembles that of the Great Supper in Luke 14 that some think they are two versions of the same parable.(1) Yet the setting is different, several items in the story are different, and the figure of feasts was so common that Jesus probably used the same figure on several different occasions.(2)

This parable is Jesus' final answer to the question of authority. In the first parable Jesus spoke of paternal authority; in the second of Divine authority "which made

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1. These views are summarized by Buttrick, op. cit. p.224.
2. See Feldman, op. cit. p.201ff.

THE WEDDING-FEAST

OF THE KING'S SON

Matt. 22:1-14

And Jesus answered and spake again in the parables unto them, saying, 2 The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son, 3 and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come. 4 Again he sent forth other servants to call them that were bidden (to the marriage feast): Behold, I have made ready my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast. 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise: 6 and the rest laid hold on his servants, and entreated them spitefully (shamefully), and killed them. 7 But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. 10 And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests. 11 But when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: 12 and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few chosen.

Israel a nation possessing a revealed religion"; in this parable He "passes to the authority of the King in the Kingdom." (1) The idea of feasting in connection with the Messianic era was an old one and very familiar to Jesus' hearers. (2) Again Jesus employed a familiar picture.

2. The Message of the parable

In this parable those who received the invitations were less respectful than those in Luke 14. They not only respectfully declined but actually "made light of it". (3) Some even killed the messengers who brought the invitation. The others were so interested in material gain that they were not enough concerned to even resent the invitation. The King sent His armies, destroyed the murderers and burned their city. (4) As in Luke 14 the servants were sent the second time to get anyone who would come, in other words, the hungry. These could not come in without first being arrayed in the wedding-garment. Much conjecture has arisen with reference to the significance of this garment. (5) At least it indicates that a condition had to be met in entering and that its use transformed the appearance of the guests and made them presentable. They were not garments which were bought or earned by labor: they were not

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1. Levison, op. cit. p. 226, 230
2. See Isaiah, Chapters 25 and 26.
3. (οὐκ ἤθελον), -"refused" - "the imperfect expressed the successive refusals". Carr, A.: Cambridge Greek Testament, The Gospel by Matthew, p. 251
4. Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in 70 A. D.
5. See Trench, op, cit. p. 239

bought but accepted freely as a gift of the host.(1)

The guest who thought it unnecessary was sorely disappointed. His conduct aroused the wrath of the King and he was cast into outer darkness. It is another judgment scene which recalls the parables of the Tares and Drag-net.

Let us review Jesus' answers to the question of authority.

"First, authority is inherent in the human family relationship. Second, there is the Divine authority which each prophet receives from God. Third, there is the special authority of God as King of the Kingdom the Messiah is to inaugurate. Thus is completed a whole cycle of thought on the question. A greater vindication of authority as such is not found in the world's literature."(2)

3. Jesus' Self-consciousness in This Parable

Before we can answer this question we must find out who the King's son is.(3) The more familiar we become with the current Messianic concepts the more convincing is the evidence that Jesus conceived of Himself in a Messianic role. Thus Levison, with a Jewish background, has no doubts regarding the matter.

"There can be no doubt about the belief of Jesus, that He was fulfilling the role of Messiah. Even by the wildest imaginings the parable which follows could not be applied to John."(4)

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1. Cf. Zech.3:1-5; Isa.64:6; 54:1; 61:10; Rev.7:14; 19:7-9
"By grace are ye saved ... it is a gift of God" Eph.2:4-8
2. The word "Son" is in Gr. (υἱός) not (τεκνόν) of Matt. 21:28 and properly means a son as in Matt.10:37; Lu.1; 13
3. Levison, op. cit. p.233.
4. Ibid., p.230.

Further corroboration of this view lies in the fact that this parable is in harmony with those immediately preceding both in purpose and teaching. It harmonizes with its setting.

This does not answer the question however. Many scholars think that this is only the parable of the Great Supper in Luke with the reference to the Son added and a few details changed. Dalman, sees this feast as a Messianic supper, but thinks the reference to the King's Son may be a later addition since "the son does not enter into the supper." (1) Yet the idea of a marriage supper and of a wedding, (hence the wedding-garment) is carried throughout the parable; ie. in verses 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. This implies, of course the presence of the King's son. Remove this element and what do we have left?

Therefore, in view of current Messianic idea, the setting of the parable - its harmony with other elements in the context, and the literary structure of the parable itself, the evidence seems conclusive that the parable is distinct from the Great Supper of Luke and the idea of the Son is an integral part of the entire parable.

Jesus thus indicates His awareness of a unique relationship between Himself and God. The Son is not a guest at the feast, neither is he a servant who invites

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1. Cf. Dalman, op. cit. p.282.

the guests. He is the Son and the whole affair is in His honor.(1) His regal position as the King's Son whose marriage-feast they have declined to attend, is a further vindication of His authority.(2)

This parable could leave no doubt in the minds Jesus' hearers as to who He thought Himself to be. Because they saw what He thought of Himself and in what light He saw them, and because they wanted to keep the inheritance they "took counsel how they might ensnare him in talk", "so as to deliver him up to the rule and to the authority of the governor."(3)

E. The Talents

1. The Setting of the Parable

This parable was spoken on the same day as the others, probably in the evening of that busy Tuesday.(4) The setting is entirely different. After answering the question about authority, replying to catch-questions, teaching the multitudes and his disciples, and pronouncing woes upon the Pharisees and the city, Jesus withdrew from the Temple to the Mount of Olives.(5) In response to a question

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1. Cf. Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9; Col.1:13,18,22,24.
2. Cf. Matt. 8:12.
3. Matt. 22:15; Lu. 20:21.
4. Cf. Cadman, J.F.: Christ in the Gospels, p.283,
5. Matt.24:3.

Matt.24:42-44

Watch therefore; for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. ... 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.

THE FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SERVANT
Matt.24:45-51

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. 48 But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; 49 and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with drunken; 50 the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, 51 and shall cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

THE TALENTS
Mt.25:13-30

13 ~~Watch~~ therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour. 14 For it is as when a man, going into another country called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey. 16 Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. 17 In like manner he also that received the two gained other two. 18 But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. 20 And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, ... 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord.... 24 And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee ... 25 and I was afraid and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: ... 26 But his lord answered and said unto him, ~~thou~~ thou knewest ... 27 thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, ... 28 Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it him that hath the ten talents. ... 30 And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

of the disciples Jesus began a long discourse about the destruction of the temple and city and of the apocalypse of the Son of man. (1)

In chapter 25 two parables are recorded which amplify the foregoing exhortation to watch. The parable of the Virgins teaches the importance of preparedness and watchfulness: the parable of the talents emphasizes working.

The latter parable is based upon a familiar Oriental institution - that of a landlord with his (δούλοι), slaves. (2) However Dr. Montefiore finds no teaching of "precisely similar character in Rabbinic literature." (3)

2. The Message of the Parable

This parable bears such close resemblance to the parable of the Pounds in Luke 19:11-27 that the two are often identified. It is paralleled by a shorter recension in Mark 13:33-37. In Mark's account the figure of the Virgins is suggested in the closing admonition "watch". It also bears some resemblance to the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard in Matthew 20:1-16. The unequal distribution of talents was due, not to a limitation of justice but to the breadth of mercy.

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1. Matt. 24:30 (cf. v. 15)
2. Hall, G. S.: Thinks that this was based upon a dream of Jesus' youth., op, cit. p. 588
3. Montefiore, op, cit. p. 331
Cf. Bruce thinks there is nothing in Rabbinic literature worthy of comparison; "such senilities do not deserve to be rescued from the dust of oblivion." op, cit. p. 215

Those receiving five and two talents each received equal reward. The reward was in proportion to the use made of the talents rather than the amount of the original endowment, therefore the man with the one talent had as good a chance as the others. But the one talent man was "afraid" to venture and failed to use his gift. The landlord meted out swift punishment upon his return and justified his judgment on the principle that

"unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away."(1)

The one talent was as important as the five in the total work of the Lord.(2)

Bruce summarized the teaching of the parable under three heads.

"1. The consummation of the kingdom will be long enough deferred to leave ample time for work.

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1. Matt.25:29; cf. Matt.13:12; Mk.4:25; Lu.8:18
Cf. Shakespeare (Measure for Measure, Act.1; Sc.1)
"Heaven does with us as we with torches do;
Not light them for ourselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not ... Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But like a thrifty goddess she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use!"
Quoted by Trench, op. cit. p.274.
2. Cf. Edwin Markham, (The Day and the Work)
"There is waiting a work which only your hands can avail
And so if you falter, a chord in the music will fail".
(quoted by Buttrick, op. cit. p. 201)

2. The kingdom imperatively demands work from all its citizens.
3. The work done will be valued and rewarded according to the principle above enunciated: equal diligence in the use of unequal endowment receiving an equal reward." (1)

In a word the message of the parable is, work diligently during the absence of your Lord regardless of the amount of your talent.

3. Jesus' Self-consciousness.

In order to discern Jesus' self-disclosure here it will be necessary to review what has led up to this parable to discover His motive in telling it. In the preceding discourses (Matt. 24) He had been speaking of the coming of the Son of man and the attendant circumstances. He followed with an exhortation to His disciples to watch and to be ready for His coming. (2) To illustrate the point He likened the situation to a servant in charge of his absent lord's household. If the servant was faithful he would be promoted at the return of his lord; if he was not faithful punishment would follow. (3) This is followed by the parables of the Virgins and the Talents which emphasize the idea of waiting and working respectively.

In Matthew 24 it is evident that Jesus pictures

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1. Bruce; op. cit. p.201
2. Matt. 25;43,44 Cf. the parable of the Virgins.
3. "The lord of that servant ... shall ... appoint his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (v.50,51) Cf. The Talents.

Himself in the role of the Son of man who will come to judge,(1) and the Lord who has entrusted His goods, during His absence to the care of the disciples.(2) Either this was Jesus' own saying or it was put into His mouth by later redactors influenced by Jewish Christian apocalyptic ideas. The latter view raises more questions than it answers. The disciples themselves betray Jesus' estimate of Himself by their question, "what shall be the sign of Thy coming (ἡ παρουσία), "presence", and of the end of the world?"(3) This picture agrees also with Luke 17:22-37 which was cited in connection with the parable of the Importunate Widow. Thus the apocalyptic picture here is not something novel but has appeared before in the Gospel records.

In the light of this setting the clear implication of Jesus' self-consciousness in the parable of Talents in that He Himself is the Lord who delivers His goods unto His own servants, the disciples. The picture of Himself as returning to reward and to punish is in accordance with the context and other parables.(4)

F. The Climax to the Apocalyptic Parables
of Warning

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1. Matt. 24:15, 27, 30, 37, 36, 39, 44.
2. Matt. 24:42 "Yourth Lord Cometh"
Cf. Briggs, op. cit. pp. 132-165.
3. Matt. 24:3.
4. The Seed Growing, The Tares, The Importunate Widow. etc.

Following the parable of the Talents is a parabolic discourse on the last judgment which serves as a climax to this entire section.(1) There is no good reason for connecting this immediately with Matt.24:31 or 51 as Meyer points out.(2) It fits better into its present setting. The continuative (δέ), "but", associates it with the preceeding parable and with the general ideas embodied in each, ie. reward, judgment, and the emphasis upon good works.

"This is a grand and closing scene in which the eschatological predictions are all to be realized and depicted too with a simplicity and beauty so original that there is but the less reason for imagining that this discourse about the judgment is the product of the apostolic period.(3)

"If the authors of Gospels were capable of clothing a single statement of the Master's with such eternal truths and such propound wisdom, we are as safe in taking their interpretation of the mind of the Master as we are that of anyone else who has invested his talents in the search after truth."(4)

Is it possible that Jesus could have sat over-

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1. "'We have here a description of the process of the last judgment in the great day. There are some passages in it that are parabolical as the separation between the sheep and the goats, and the dialogues between the judge and the persons judged; but there is no thread of similitude carried through the discourse and therefore, it is rather to be called a draught or delination of the final judgment than a parable; it is as it were, the explanation of the former parables.'" Matthew Henry, quoted by P. Schaff in footnote to Lange's Commentary, op. cit. p.450.
2. Mever, op. cit. p.443.
3. Loc. Cit. Cf. Buttrick, op. cit. p.254,255.
4. Levison, op. cit. p.253.

looking the city which soon was to crucify Him and paint such a picture? Note the contrasts of the Messianic^{idea} with Jesus' present position and status.

"The Son of man shall come in his glory and all the angels with him.

Then shall he sit on the throne of his glory:...

Before Him shall be gathered all the nations ...

Then shall the King say ... come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom ...

The King ... shall say also unto them, on the left hand,(1)

Depart from me, ye cursed..."

Must we believe that Jesus made this amazing assumption in the face of the fact that He was an artizan of lowly birth and was then a wanderer with only a few humble followers?(2) We cannot do otherwise. Jesus was not ecstatic but calm, sober, self-possessed, and fully aware of the situation.(3)

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1. Same figure as in v.32,33 - a "composite" passage?
2. Schweitzer advances the idea of a "duality of consciousness" shared by Jesus, His disciples, and others of the day, by which they found no difficulty in reconciling the Messianic Son of man of the future with Jesus' humble life in the present.
Cf. Schweitzer, A.: The Mystery of the Kingdom of God, p.187 ff. Cf. Dalman, op. cit. p.250ff.
3. Note the verses following, "and it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these words, he said unto His disciples, ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified."-Matt. 26:1,2.

Surprising as these statements are there is nothing essentially new, all the elements of this apocalyptic we have come into contact before in the parables. Therefore we may be permitted to use this passage not as a proof-text but as an illustration. He has implied before that He is the Judge, the returning Messiah, the king of the Kingdom, and the Lord who shall give rewards and punishments.

Even here the emphasis is not upon Himself or His role in the new era. Here, as in the other parables, the emphasis is upon the conduct of individuals. It is a supplement to the parable of the Talents, showing what kind of service the King requires, namely, kindness to ones neighbor.(1)

There is also suggested the idea of the Messiah as identified with His people.(2) "Inasmuch as ye did it unto me."(3) This suggests also the suffering Servant of Jehovah who, as we have seen, was associated in Jesus' mind with the Messiah. It gives a clue to the reason for His death (21:2) and adds illumination to the role of the (λύτρον), "ransom", sacrifice.(4)

Jesus, in one breath, pictures Himself as the

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1. Cf. The Parable of the Good Samaritan.
2. Cf. Hort, F.J.A.: Commentary of IPet.1-2:17, p.53ff.
3. Matt.25:40,45 Cf. Heb.2:11-18.
4. Matt.20:28; Mk.10:45.

Messiah, King, and Judge, and identifies Himself with His "brethren". In contradiction of this is Hall's statement that Jesus, in the parables, gives no clue to an idea of a vicarious death.(1) Indeed it is not stated here in so many words but is not the concept latent here?

G. Summary and Conclusion

In this group of apocalyptic parables of warning, spoken on the Tuesday of the Passion Week, there are two settings and two different types of hearers. The first three were addressed to enemies, the last to disciples. The first parable looks back, the second deals with the past and present, the third, with the future. The fourth parable also is future-istic and refers to the disciples - the fifth and last picture is cosmic in scope and timeless in duration.

In none of these parables does Jesus put Himself in the foreground. As in the earlier parables His purpose is not self-revelation but the salvation of His hearers.(2) In the the last group, however, His self-disclosure is less reserved. He makes this disclosure as a means to an end. He reveals Himself to His enemies for the purpose of deterring them from their deadly intent. He does this so skillfully that they have opportunity to clearly see the situation yet there is no utterance

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1. Hall, G.S.:op. cit. p.553.

2. With this Hall agrees. Cf. Hall, op. cit. p.524.

which they can sieze upon and use against Him on the charge of blasphemy. Only in the last picture does Jesus make an unreserved self-disclosure, yet even here His purpose is to teach the direction of their good works.

Not only did Jesus think that He was fulfilling the Messianic role, (1) but His enemies knew that He believed it and His disciples shared that belief with Him. The total picture in these apocalyptic parables, amazing as it is, harmonises with the conception of the earlier parables, with the rest of the Gospel record, and with the facts of subsequent history.

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1. Jesus' conception of the Messiah was based on current ideas but was unique and original to Him. It was easier for Him to convince His disciples, that He ~~was~~ the Messiah, than to make them see that He, the Messiah, must die. Cf. Schweitzer, op. cit. pp. 180-218; Briggs, op. cit. pp. 1-40, 132-165.

"'We modern theologians,' says Schœitzer, 'are too proud of our historical method...There was a danger of our thrusting ourselves between men and the gospels, and refusing to leave the individual man alone with the sayings of Jesus. There was a danger that we should offer them a Jesus who was too small, because we forced Him into conformity with our human standards and human psychology.' What the sayings of Jesus indicate about His own person is primarily its epoch-making, its absolute significance for men."

- James Moffat, The Theology of the Gospels.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SYNTHESIS

- A. Jesus' Self-portrait in the Parables
 - 1. His Personality
 - a. His Relation to His Environment
 - b. His Relation to Men
 - c. His Relation to the Prophets
 - d. His Relation to the Father
 - e. His Relation to the Kingdom of God
 - (1) As Messiah
 - (2) As King
 - 2. His Mission
- B. The Relation of Jesus' Self-portrait to the Rest of the Gospel Message
- C. The Relation Between the Messenger and the Message

CHAPTER VI

THE SYNTHESIS

A. Jesus' Self-portrait In The Parables

1. His Personality

a. His Relation to His Environment

Jesus' active response to all that took place around Him is nowhere better portrayed than in His parables. He was intensely aware of the situation. He could see a sower in the field and draw from it imperishable truths relating equally well to the kingdom of God in His day and to modern pedagogy in our day.(1)

He translated the highest, most abstruse metaphysics into stories so simple a child could understand. He took the most commonplace incident of routine life and clothed it with the sublimest truths.

His aesthetic appreciation was keen. He saw beauty, truth, and meaning in every thing. His buoyant optimism has been noted in all of His parables. However Gamaliel Bradford complains that,

"Although Jesus' reported words suggest a delicate sense of beauty, ... I miss the golden grace of laughter.... Now I am not aware that in the New Testament there is a smile."(2)

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1. Hall, an educator, finds greatest delight in the "Sower". op. cit. II, p.534.
2. Bradford, Gamaliel, : Life and I, p.173,174.

In contrast to this is Jesus' picture of joy in heaven over a sinner who repents. Someone has said that in the parable of the Prodigal Son we have the most joyous picture of God ever painted.

b. His Relation to Men

Most of the parables deal with persons rather than things, indicating that He is supremely interested in human personalities.(1) He identifies Himself with man by the use of His favorite title "son of Man" and in the parable of the Last Judgment.

He conceives of Himself as above and different from men in the parables of the Soils, the Seed, the Tares, the Importunate Widow, the Wicked Husbandmen, and others.

He pictures Himself as the Judge of men in each of the above parables as well as in the parables of the Two Builders(2), the Pharisee and Publican(3), and the Talents.

c. His Relation to the Prophets

Jesus' religious consciousness differs from both the prophetic and the apostolic consciousness. Unlike them He refers to His own words as the Word of God.(4) His

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1. Horne gives the following percentages:-

Things	Number	Percent
Things	16	26
Plants	7	11.5
Animals	4	7
Humans	<u>34</u>	<u>55.5</u>
	61	100

Cf. Horne, H.H.: op. cit. p. 86.

2. Matt.7:24-27;Lu.6:46-49.

3. Lu. 18:9-14.

4. "The Seed is the Word of God." - Lu.8:.

expressly claims His authority in the parable of the Two Builders. In that of the Wicked Husbandmen He clearly indicates that He is superior in both rank and authority to the Prophets.(1)

d. His Relation To the Father

By the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen Jesus indicates His relation to the Father in unmistakable terms. He is a Son in a unique sense:

"Yet one he had, a beloved son. He sent him last of to them, saying, They will respect my son. But the husbandmen said among themselves, This is the Heir:..."(2)

In the parables of the Marriage Supper He is the Son of the King. In the parable of the Tares He is the Judge or the executive whose action in disposing of the tares caused the righteous to "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Jesus felt also a sense of personal relationship to God. He lived a life of faith and prayer.(4)

e. His Relation to the Kingdom of God

As has already been recognized the kingdom of God was uppermost in the mind of Jesus, especially in the earlier parables. His constant effort to make the king intelligible

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1. Cf. Matt. 23:34-"Behold I (ἐγώ) send unto you prophets."

2. Mk. 12:6-7 (Torrey)

3. Cf. Case, S.J.: Jesus, A New Biography, p.384ff.

Cf. Bundy, W.E.: The Religion of Jesus, p.1-210.

4. Cf. Deissmann, A.: The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul, p.48ff.

to His hearers is proof that His conception of the kingdom was different from theirs and that He alone knew the "secret of the kingdom." (1)

a. (1) As Messiah

Jesus' filial and prophetic consciousness found fullest expression in His Messianic consciousness. (2) The evidence from the parables is that, while Jesus was familiar with the popular ideas of the Messiah and considered Himself to be the Messiah, yet His conception of the Messianic role was different from that of His contemporaries. He was isolated in this - even His disciples failed to comprehend to the last. Bruce finds that this accounts for Jesus' reticence regarding His Messianic career. His reticence was not due, as Baur and others supposed, to a lack of certainty. Rather "it betrayed a consciousness that His thoughts were not those of the Jewish people." (3) He did not reject the current concept but transformed it.

Jesus' Messianic consciousness is especially indicated in the parables of the Sower, the Tares, the Importunate Widow, the Marriage Feast, and the Talents. While His Messianic role is most clearly revealed in the apocalyptic parables it is equally present in the early ones,

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1. Cf. Schweitzer, op. cit. pp. 106-127.
2. Cf. Willians, C.: The Evolution of Christology, p. 53ff.
3. Bruce, A. B.: The Kingdom of God, pp. 148-149.

such as the Sower and the Tares. The degree of Jesus' self-disclosure seems to be governed by His immediate teaching purpose rather than by His own development. Hence we find the Messianic element more evident in his first parables of the kingdom than in the later parables of grace. There is no indication of an evolving self-consciousness such as Ludwig, and many liberals, assume. There is, however, a gradually increasing degree of self-disclosure.(1)

Jesus' own humble, unassuming manner of life was in contrast both to the popular conception of the Messiah and with His own picture of His future regal splendor when He was to return as Judge and King.(2) This fact indicates His originality and accounts for His reticence.

c. (1) As King

Did Jesus conceive of Himself as King in the kingdom? In the parable of the Tares and its interpretation we find how close the connection was between the action of the Harvester in gathering out of his kingdom "all things that offend and them that do iniquity" and the result that the righteous shall then shine "forth as the sun the kingdom of their father". Not only does the Son of man have a kingdom but it is almost if not entirely identified with the kingdom of His Father.(3)

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1. Cf. Vos, G.: op. cit. pp.88-95.
2. "Here was a consciousness grounded in two natures, yet expressed through an indivisible personality.
Du Bose, H.M.: The Consciousness of Jesus, p.28.
3. See Matt.13;36-44 and appendix.

In the parable of the Last Judgment the transition from the Son of man who appears and the King who judges is made naturally as if the two names are applied to the same person.. A word study reveals that the entire passage is a literary unity not a "composite".(1)

2. His Mission

The relation between Jesus' person and His mission naturally is very intimate. No distinct line of cleavage exists. If this statement is not acceptable the reader is asked to "lay the matter on the table" until this chapter is finished. In spite of the difficulty of analyzing these two elements of His consciousness it is well to treat them separately.

In the parables by the Seaside Jesus pictures Himself as the Originator of the kingdom in the figure of the sower.(2) The Sower, after sowing the seed, waits until the harvest when He appears as Judge. There are three periods; the sowing time, the period of growth, and harvest. It is indeed remarkable that each of the parables studied in this section have these three elements in common and that the three periods depicted correspond exactly with the external facts. Jesus came "to minister and to give His life as ransom for many." He is still away; meanwhile

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1. Cf. Ante, p.93

2. Is the Messiah Himself the seed who must die to bring forth "much fruit?" Cf. Jn.12:24-26.

the seed grows, the mustard-bush enlarges, the leaven permeates, and the tares and wheat grow together. He is yet to be revealed as the Harvester and as Judge.

This movement is discernable in the parables themselves. The first group emphasizes the seed sowing, the second group - the parables of grace -emphasize entering the kingdom ie. seeking the lost and praying for the return of the king. The last group are futuristic parables of judgment, most of which look forward to the Parousia of the Son of man and the Judgment.(1)

This comparison, if fanciful, is at least interesting. Yet, if in other respects the parables so remarkably parallel actual life, and if, like other great literature, they have germ truths that admit of more than one application it is not only possible but extremely probable that Jesus had in mind the total view of His own career. If this is so Jesus embodied in each of these parables a picture of His whole career from the time of His earthly ministry to the last judgment when "the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom". If He was conscious of His mission when He uttered the parables the form which they assumed is not surprising; if He did not conceive of Himself as filling the Messianic

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1. The Parable of the Two Sons is an exception to this.

role the artistic form and substance of the parables is unaccountable since creative art does not "happen" but comes out of the soul of the artist. (1)

Hall tells us that no trace of a vicarious death is found in the parables. (2) True this is not explicit nor is it prominent. But neither is it prominent in Jesus' other discourses. He had more to say about His mission than how He was to accomplish it. The disciples failed to comprehend the significance of His coming death at Jerusalem. (3) It was not His purpose to teach this. Even in the famous ransom passage of Mk.10:45 the central teaching was that the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister." (4) The ransom was only in the periphery of Jesus' consciousness and came in incidentally. It is appended to Jesus' main statement. Yet the very fact that Jesus could not speak of His mission without including it bears strongest witness to the fact that it was prominent in His self-consciousness. (5) His immediate purpose was to teach humility but the idea of vicarious sacrifice forced itself out also.

Likewise, in the parables, the idea of a vicarious sacrifice is submerged but not absent. (6) This is most evi-

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1. Ante, p. 14
2. Hall, op. cit. p. 524
3. Mk.8:31-33
4. The context makes this plain. Mk.10:35-45
5. Cf. I Pet.2:21ff.
6. Trench suggests that in the parable of the Good Samaritan the self-sacrifice of the Samaritan in behalf of the "neighbor" pre-figures Jesus' substitutionary work. Cf. op. cit. p. 322.

dent for the love for the lost leads to solicitude and searching. His incarnation is hinted at in the parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin. As the shepherd leaves home, searches for and brings home the sheep, causing rejoicing among the neighbors, so there is rejoicing in heaven among the angels over the trophies of Jesus' quest.

In the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen the Son is to die, as did the prophets, but the rejected Cornerstone becomes the foundation of the new edifice--the Church.

"Jesus knows Himself as the Son but He also knows Himself as the Suffering Servant ... out of these two basic elements in His religious consciousness are unfolded His sublime ethico-spiritual teachings about God and the Kingdom and Man's relation to both."(1)

Jesus is unmistakably revealed as an Initiator.(2)

As the Sower He starts the Kingdom, as the Seeker He gathers inhabitants, as the Son He comes to demand the fruits of the Vineyard, as the Judge He forgives the woman at His feet,(3) and pronounces the Publican Justified. As Judge He will separate the tares from the wheat, avenge the elect, reward His servants, and judge the nations. He does not boast of His Messianic mission yet He assumes it throughout as a matter of course.

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1. Williams, C.: op. cit. p.52.
2. Hall, op. cit. p.
Deissmann, op. cit. p.137 Matt.11:11-13.
3. Lu.7:50.

B. The Relation of Jesus' Self-portrait
to the Rest of the Gospel Message.

At various times throughout this study citations have been made in the footnotes which show the harmony of contrast between the Jesus revealed in the parables and the Jesus pictured in the rest of the Gospel. This has a most important bearing upon the critical question. We are told that the evangelists cannot always be trusted to give a correct interpretation of Jesus' parables and that His own point of view differed from theirs. If the parables bring us close to the historical Jesus,(1) and if germ ideas found in them correspond to the rest of the gospel material, then we must yield a greater credibility to the trustworthiness of the gospel records.

We have noted in the parables of the Lost and that of the Wicked Husbandmen how closely related the parables are to the immediate settings. This is true, to a greater or less degree, with them all.

Jesus self-designation "Son of Man", found in the explanation of the Tares, in the parables of the importunate Widow, the Talents and the Last Judgment is in connection with His apocalypse. We noted this connection in Luke 17. In Matthew 23 the same ideas occur. The idea of the Son of Man in His present state of humility is also present.(2) But

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1. Bultmann, op. cit. p.36ff.
2. Lu.9:58.

this is a contrast within the gospel matter itself instead of between this material and the parables and need not be discussed here.(1) We conclude therefore that the Son of man in the parables and in the rest of the gospel tradition is the same Person.

Jesus' estimate of Himself as indicated in the parables is in harmony with what the disciples thought of Him,(2) and with what the demons realized Him to be.(3) It explains the effect which he had upon the people of His day.(4) It is in harmony with His self-declaration before the High Priest at His trial which both priest and people considered equivalent to self-deification or blasphemy.(5)

There is also harmony between Jesus' parables and His miracles. Some one has said that the latter are "acted parables".

In summary Jesus' self-interpretation in the parables harmonizes with the rest of the gospel in the following particulars.

He is the Sower, the Founder of a new kingdom.(6)

He is the Seeker of the lost and a Saviour.(7)

He is the Harvester - the Judge.(8)

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1. See Briggs, op. cit. p.215ff.

2. Williams, op. cit. p.53ff.

3. Mk.1:24.

4. Cf. Glover, T.R.: Jesus in the Experience of Men, p.105.

5. Lu.22:69; Matt.26:64; Mk.14:62 Cf. Schaff, op. cit. p.84.

6. Matt. 18:19; 27:11; Lu.22:33; Jn.18:36; Dan.7:13; Lu.1:33.

7. Matt. 18:11; Lu.9:56; 19:10; 1:47; 2:11

8 Jn. 5:22;25-27.

He is the Messiah and King.(1)

Not only is there harmony between the parables and the rest of the gospels, but with the Acts and Epistles as well.(2)

C. The Relation Between the Messenger
and the Message

Harnack says, "The Gospel as Jesus proclaimed has to do with the Father only and not with the Son."(3) Bundy is impressed with the difference between "the religion of Jesus and Christianity."(4)

The parables indicate that Jesus did speak of the good news of the kingdom and that He was very reticent in speaking about Himself. What we are interested in is not so much what He said about Himself but what He thought about Himself. While the emphasis was upon the seed - He thought of Himself as the Sower. He emphasized God's love for the lost but He was conscious that He was embodying and demonstrating that love. He spoke much of impending judgment but in the background is the figure of Himself as the Judge.

There is no disparity between the Messenger and the Message but on the contrary, the closest identity.(5)

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1. Matt. 5:22-24; 14:33; 16:16; 26:63; 28:18-20.
2. Habershon, Ada R.: The Study of the Parables; pp.222-269.
3. Harnack, A.: What is Christianity?, p.154.
4. Bundy, W.E: op. cit. p.139.
5. "His words and works are self-revealing"
Deissmann, A.:op. cit. p.44.

Not only is this evident from the psychological fact, that the products of a creative imagination express the life of the creator, but such is often directly stated or implied by Jesus, as in The Parable of the sower.

"Jesus is greater than the tradition about Him. The tradition is only the last echo of His words. It is only the mirror of Himself." - Deissmann, The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul, p.29.

"In the very human life and person of Jesus we find not only a human life and person that direct us to a higher source of power; we find already there the presence and power of what declares itself to be not less than God Himself."
- P.C. Simpson, The Fact of Christ, pp.130,131.

CHAPTER VII.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

A. Analysis of Results

1. The Possibilities of the Psychological Method
2. Practical Values of This Study
3. Bearing of the Study Upon Critical Questions

B. Criticism of Method

1. Dangers Accompanying This Method
2. Modern Scholars and Their Relation to This Method
 - a. The "Back to Jesus" School
 - b. The Psychologists
 - c. The Form Critics
 - d. "A More Excellent Way"

c. Conclusion

CHAPTER VII

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

A. Analysis of Results

This study was undertaken as an experiment in method as well as an investigation of material. The latter has been summarized in the last chapter. The question which now arises is whether or not this psychological-literary method holds possibilities as a new approach to a better understanding of the Scriptures. Has the purpose of the study as outlined in the first chapter been accomplished?

1. The Possibilities of the Psychological Method.

The task of obtaining results by this^{method} has not proved as impossible as it seemed at first. Yet we are told that the psychologist has never been able to do much with Jesus. In accordance with this judgment is that of Gamaliel Bradford who, though neither psychologist nor a theologian, was keen at detecting the psychological forces on literature and delineating personality. He studied the Gospels and wanted to make a "psychograph" of Jesus but found the task impossible.

As to Jesus' inner life and personal experience it is vain to attempt to see one's way with any clearness, the material is too utterly lacking."(1)

If such was the verdict of the "naturalist of souls" what can the ordinary student accomplish? Furthermore, if the materials in the Gospels are inadequate how may we ex-

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1. Bradford, Gamaliel, Life and I, p.169,170.

pect to find anything in the parables alone? Hall answers
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that in the parables we have, (1),

"the best transmitted of all the teachings of Jesus,
... . In them many think we have his personality and
his higher theanthropic consciousness, but we must
not go too far in this direction, for in the parables
Jesus speaks more of his Father than of himself ... "
There is "no allusion to a vicarious atonement. The
salvation that he teaches is entirely independent of
his death Jesus is here teaching not a saviour
but a salvation ... his concern is with his work and
not with himself." (2)

Our study has corroborated most of these state-
ments but not Hall's point of view. Does it necessarily
follow, because Jesus did not expressly mention His own
Person, that it was not in His consciousness? (3) Because
He make no assertions regarding Himself, must we assume
that He had no convictions regarding His relation to what He
was teaching? The very fact, that to Jesus it was self-
evident and therefore did not need to be stressed, makes
His personality the more impressive. (4)

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1. Hall, G. S.: op. cit. II, p. 523, 524
2. Contrast the following
"Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ gives us a very
complete picture of His own character and work in the
parables ... We see what a wonderful revelation they
give of Himself". Habershon, op. cit. p.22
Is Lu.10:21,22 still true in this connection?
3. Let an unbeliever answer the psychologist:
"Jesus being himself the Deity, naturally dwells little
upon the feelings of mystical adoration with which deity
inspires him, and in dealing with mankind his view is
turned rather from God, whom he represents, and toward
those for whom he is laboring."
Cf. Bradford, op. cit. p.179, 88
4. Cf. Schaff, op. cit. p. 87, 88

In spite of the conviction of the psychologists our results have been as gratifying as surprising. They have corresponded more closely with the popular expositors. Has our study therefore been superficial? Have we trusted too much to intuition and tradition instead of letting the records themselves speak to us? Have we obtained our results legitimately in view of the principles laid down at the start? The answer is found in the foregoing pages.

2. Practical Values of This Study

Incidental to the main purpose of this thesis there have come several values as "by products".

One of these lies simply in contact with the teaching which was "most characteristic of Jesus".(1)

The parables of Jesus are valuable as they represent this type of literature at its best. They bring one into contact with parables of other literature which by comparison and contrast increases one's appreciation of Jesus' parables.

The parables are rich in teaching and homiletical values. A great preacher, at the close of his life, was asked how he would improve his ministry if he were to live his life over again. He replied that he would make greater use of the parables in his preaching. A study of the

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1. Cf. Purinton, op. cit. p.97.

Master Teacher's resort to simile, metaphor and story to embody His ideas in concrete images is of value to everyone who seeks to impart his thoughts to others whether in speech or in writing. Jesus thought in pictures.

2. Bearing of the Study Upon Critical Questions

The study has had an important bearing on questions of criticism as has already been pointed out. When liberal scholars tell us that in the parables we have the most genuine utterances of Jesus it affords a point of contact which is invaluable. In several instances parables, parts of parables, or their interpretation which some critics think are later additions were found to be so linked up with other parables which are unquestionably authentic that it is impossible to discard one element without expunging the others also.

Those scholars themselves are by no means free from arbitrary and unscientific affirmations which are caused by subjective influences. When they accept the parable of the sower and reject that of the Tares which so closely resembles it, or when they reject the interpretation given the Tares yet accept the parable of the Drag-net, we cannot but feel that the basis of their judgment is not exegesis but prejudice.

Another case in point is the close relation of the parable of the Importunate Widow and the Wicked Husbandmen to their respective setting. The integrity of the parable of the Last Judgment is another illustration of the answer of the

exegete to the theologian.

In each case the evidence is that the evangelists were better interpreters of the parables and of the mind of the Master than are most modern scholars.

B. Criticism of Method

1. Dangers Accompanying This Method

This method is open to the danger on the one hand of being simply an exposition of the meaning of the parables like the average treatment intended for the purpose of edification. On the other hand, this is the danger of coming into bondage to the methods of the historico-critical school. It is not easy to avoid the dogmatism of orthodoxy on the one hand and the dogmatism of the critic on the other.

The psychological approach, however, is more than a middle position between the above views: it is a new approach. It frees one from bondage to forms and words and enables the careful student to detect the emotional tone of the literature and thus gain access to the unexpressed truths embodied in the form. While based upon words it penetrates beneath them to the factors which made them find utterance.

2. Modern Scholars and Their Relation to This Method

This approach is new only in that it has not been recognized as a distinct method. It has been used by writers in many ways but not crystallized into a special technique. It has not become "self-conscious" as yet.

a. The "Back to Jesus" School

Knight Dunlap has been interested in the dramatic elements in Jesus' career.(1)

Ludwig has brought his imagination and his keen knowlege of human nature to bear upon the problem with the result that his "Jesus" is an intensely real and human Person.(2)

Merrifield also has succeeded in rescuing Jesus from the theologians and presenting Him to us as living Personality.(3)

Case has made an effort to find the "historical Jesus" and distinguish Him from "Christ of dogma".(4)

Each of them reflect the humanizing spirit of the age. The Jesus which they present is very human and real but lacks the "wholly other" adequate to call forth the love, loyalty, and worship which the Chruch wishes to render to Him . Their Jesus of history is not the Christ of faith. They do not seem to do justice to all the material found in the Gospel records.

b. The Psychologists

With these should be mentioned Bundy, who, after an exhaustive research, finds that Jesus was psychically

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1. Dunlap, Knight,: The Dramatic Personality of Jesus.
2. Ludwig, Emil,: Jesus, (trans. by E. & C. Paul)
3. Merrifield, Fred,: The Re-discovery of Jesus
4. Case, S.J.: Jesus, a New Biography.

sound.(1) In his later book his position seems more liberal.
His Jesus is more humanized.(2)

G. Stanley Hall's study has led him to translate
the historical Jesus into a psychological Christ.(3)

c. The Form Critics

A third branch of modern approaches is represented
by Rudolph Bultmann in his book "Form Criticism" or Form-
history. Like most German theologians, he has succeeded in
finding various levels of tradition; the first strata, he
assures us, gives us a picture of the historical Jesus.(4)
Frederick Grant hails this method as one of great promise
for the interpretation of the New Testament.(5)

Case is one of this school who is seeking a new
return to Jesus. To him the tradition is a series of beads
on a string which it is the duty of the scholar to reassemble
in order.

Matthew and Luke are...

"Characterized by abrupt transitions that indicates the
presence of numerous blocks of tradition Even
though the units of the mosaic are often carefully ce-
mented together, the outlines of the several pieces in
the composition are still clearly discernible."(6)

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1. Bundy, W.E.: The Psychic Health of Jesus
2. Bundy, W.E.: The Religion of Jesus.
3. Hall, G.S.: Jesus, the Christ in the Light of Psychology,
Cf. Horne, op. cit. p.xi.
4. Bultmann, Rudolph,: Form Criticism, (trans by F.C.Grant)
5. Grant, F.C.: Preface to Bultmann's Form Criticism.
6. Case, op. cit. p.97.

Each of these men in his respective field has been trying to reconstruct the story of Jesus in the hope of affording a better view of him. Yet each of these efforts, well-meaning as they may be, seems hardly adequate. The methods of each of these men, however, finds expression in the method here adopted.

d. "A More Excellent Way"

In contrast to the view of Case is that of Deissmann^{whose} devotion to the historical background is unquestioned and who also emphasizes the reality of Jesus' humanity. He combines these two emphases into a third- the "psychological, historical".

"We cannot reconstruct the whole, the original Jesus, by mechanically putting together the fragments of tradition ... The dogmatic method ... arranges the single pieces of tradition like pearls on a string, the historical, psychological method, on the other hand, sees in all the separate words, the same single diamond ever sparkling, with ever new blaze ... The single word of Jesus is not a separate gem, but one of the flashes from the one stone. Behind every word there stands for a moment Jesus Himself. Herein lies the true art of interpreting... the words of Jesus. We have to learn to see the detail as characteristic detail, and thus behind and through the word to see His personality It is therefore our task to attempt to conceive the traditional sayings of Jesus as reflections of an inward life of intense vitality... We must not only try to understand the words themselves, but we must try to look through the words of Jesus into the depths of His soul ...

In my opinion this method of indirect observation is ... the only one which makes it possible to understand Jesus, historically and psychologically; ... it is the method which many genuinely inspired preachers of the Gospel have used sometimes unconsciously

Therefore it is not sufficient to ascertain the exact word order and possible literal meaning of any passage; one must examine whether or not the passage can be used as a mirror in which the personality

of Jesus becomes visible even for a moment." (1)

Liberty had been taken to quote at this length in order to give with greatest possible accuracy and fullness a view which more than any other studied coincides with the method which has been attempted throughout this survey of the parables. It seems to combine and to crystalize distinct trends in modern scholarship, employing the methods of the exxgete, literary critic and psychologist to detect the Personality behind the words of Jesus.

Two points in this excerpt demand special notice. One is the statement that, "the traditional sayings of Jesus reflect an inward life of intense vitality". The other is that in each saying of Jesus His personality is mirrored. Our study of the parables as expressions of Jesus' creative imagination has abundantly verified these statements. Behind the varying similitudes and figures we see Jesus Himself. Each parable expresses indirectly some phase of His wonderfully complex and unified personality. The wealth which the parables yield regarding the personality. The wealth which the parables yield regarding the personality of their Creator when thus approached is nothing less than

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1. Deissmann, A.: The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul. pp. 30-33, 41, 45

astonishing.

Deissmann's statement that this method is often used unconsciously by "genuinely inspired preachers of the Gospel" gives a clue to the cause of the similarity between our results and those of commentators on the parables whose chief aim was "edification".

C. Conclusion

In spite of the fact that the Fourth Gospel with its rich Christological material has not been touched and much of the material in the Synoptics passed over, the figure of Jesus which is found in the parables alone is remarkably complete. By this method of study material which alone held little or no promise of Christological data has been found exceedingly rich. Whether or not the subjective element has unduly intruded and colored interpretation and whether the principles projected have been adhered to in a scholarly manner the reader must decide.

The Jesus we have discovered in and behind the parables is truly human. He is, moreover, an Originator, an Initiator. He is greater than the prophets, being the only Son and sole Heir of the Father. He is the Seeker and Saviour of men. He is the Messianic Son of man, the Judge of all men, and the King in the Kingdom of God.

This majestic Figure harmonizes with the picture in the remainder of the Gospel records, with the

"Pauline Christ", and with the Alpha and Omega of the Apocalypse. He is real enough to command the reverence of the scholar and great enough to receive the worship of the saint. He is both the Jesus of History and the Christ of human experience.

Like the leaven in a mass of meal He continues to act and react upon men's thinking and to transform individuals and society.

Out of the multiform flashes of His personality the single ray that remains and predominates is that of His sovereignty. Notwithstanding this, He remains the Son of man - He still belongs to humanity - to us.

"O man's best man, O love's best love,
O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
O all men's Comrade, Servant, King or Priest." (1)

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1. Anon., quoted by C. C. Albertson, op. cit. p. 133

APPENDICES

I

THE LITERARY UNITY OF THE KINGDOM PARABLES

II

A COMPARISON OF THE TWO PARABLES OF THE SUPPERS

III

LITERARY UNITY OF THE PARABLE OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

IV

GENERAL SURVEY OF THE PARABLES

V

DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING PURPOSE AND THE
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS OF PARABLES

VI

THREE WAYS OF VIEWING THE WORDS OF JESUS

APPENDIX I
THE LITERARY UNITY
OF THE "KINGDOM" PARABLES

Matthew

Mark

Luke

The Soils (13:1-23)

The Soils (4:1-20)

The Soils (8:4-15)

3... Behold, the sower
went forth to sow;
4 ... the birds came
and devoured them:

3 Hearken: Behold a
sower went forth to sow;
4 ... and the birds came
and devoured it.

5 The sower went
forth to sow his
seed: ... and the
birds of the
heaven devoured it.

The Interpretation

The Interpretation

The Interpretation

19 When anyone heareth
the word of the kingdom,
... (then) cometh the
evil (one)

14 The sower soweth the
word. 15 ... straightway
cometh Satan

11 ... The seed
is the word of God.
12 ... then cometh
the devil

The Tares (13:24-30)

24. Take heed what ye
hear: with what measure
ye mete it shall be
measured to you again

[... 18 Take heed
therefore how ye
hear;

24 ... a man sowed good
seed in his field: 25 but
while men slept, his enemy
came and sowed tares also
among the wheat ...

The Seed (4:26-29)

... 28 ... a man (that is)
an enemy hath done this.

26 So is the kingdom of God,
as if a man should cast seed
upon the earth ... 29 But
when the fruit is ripe,
straightway he putteth forth
the sickle because the
harvest is come.

... 30 reapers, Gather up
first the tares, and bind
them in bundles to burn
them:

[36 Explain ... the parable
of the tares of the field

[... 34 ... to his disciples
he expounded all things.

Matthew (13:37-43, 49-50)

37 ... He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 and the field
is the world ... 39 and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the
harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels...

... 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather
out of his kingdom ... them that do iniquity 42 and shall cast them into
the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their
Father. He that hath ears let him hear.

The Drag-net (47-50)

49 So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth,
and sever the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and shall cast them
into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of
teeth. 51 Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him Yea.

APPENDIX II

A COMPARISON OF THE TWO PARABLES OF THE SUPPERS (Are they two editions of the same parable?)

A. The Great Supper Luke 14:15-24

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: 17 and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. 22 And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, that none of those which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

B. The Wedding-feast Matt. 22:1-14

(Is the "son" an interpolation
and unrelated to the context)

1. And Jesus answered and spake again in parables unto them, saying, 2 The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son. 3 and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come. 4 Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ready my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast. 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise: 6 and the rest laid hold on his servants, and entreated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 But the king was wroth; and he sent his armise, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. 10 And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests. 11 But when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: 12 and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. ...

APPENDIX III

LITERARY UNITY OF THE

PARABLE OF THE LAST JUDGMENT
(Matt. 25:31-46)

31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: 32 and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; 33 and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. *

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; 36 naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? 38 And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me. 41 Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and angels: 42 for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not: 44 Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. 46 And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

.....

* The break indicates where some critics suppose the two sayings of Jesus were joined together forming a "composite". A word study indicates, however, that the figure of sheep, goats, and shepherd is carried throughout the passage. Therefore the change from "shepherd" to "King" does not justify the assumption that these are to separate bits of tradition which were joined together by an editor. This is but one sample of the ways in which Scripture fares at the hand of unscholarly scholars.

APPENDIX IV
General Survey

PARABLES

OF NATURE

Galilean

Similitudes

Law (of growth)

Instruction

OF PERSONS

Perean

Stories

Grace

Invitation

OF COMING EVENTS

Judaeen

Predictions

Judgment

Warning

As the Sower

As Harvester

As King

JESUS SHOWN

As the Seeker

As Messiah

As Lord

As the Son

As Judge

As King

FACING

Indifference

Hostility

Hatred

TEACHING

Multitudes

Pharisees

Pharisees

The Sower

Good Samaritan

Two Sons

The Seed

Great Supper

Vineyard

The Mustart-seed

Prodigal Son

Wedding-feast

Disciples

Disciples

Disciples

The Tares

The Widow

Talents

APPENDIX V

DEVELOPEMENT IN TEACHING PURPOSE
AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS

	NATURE	HUMAN LIFE	COMING EVENTS
Action	<u>The Soils</u>	<u>The Good Samaritan</u>	<u>The Two Sons</u>
Advent	<u>The Seed Growing</u>	<u>The Great Supper</u>	<u>The Husbandmen</u>
Increase	<u>The Mustard-seed</u>	<u>The Prodigal Son</u>	<u>Wedding-feast</u>
Judgment	<u>The Tares</u>	<u>The Judge & the Widow</u>	<u>The Talents</u>

DEEDS COUNT IN THE KINGDOM

The Soils (not hearing)	The Good Samaritan (not position)	The Two Sons (not words)
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THE KINGDOM IS COMING EVENTUALLY

The Seed growing (harvest certain)	The Great Supper (appreciate it)	The Wicked Husbandmen (prepare for it)
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THE GROWTH AND POPULATION OF THE KINGDOM

The Mustard-seed (extensive growth)	The Prodigal Son (God seeks citizens)	The Wedding-feast (response required)
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WAITING AND WORKING FOR THE KINGDOM

The Tares (patience)	The Importunate Widow (prayer)	The Talents (work)
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It was a surprise to discover that these parables, selected with no thought of relationships, fall naturally into distinct groups, and that within each group there is the same direction in developement. Equally remarkable is the similarity between corresponding parables. Red indicates similarity of imagery; blue, similarity of teaching purpose.

APPENDIX VI

THREE WAYS OF VIEWING THE WORDS OF JESUS

A. FORM CRITICISM

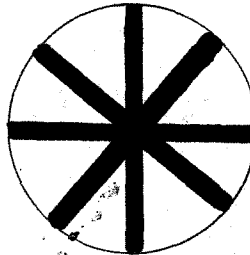
Different Strata of Tradition (1)

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| 5. | { | Narratives, Miracle Stories |
| 4. . Christian Tradition | | Discourses |
| 3. | | Parable Settings |
| 2. | { | Parables |
| Words of Jesus | | Prophetic Sayings, Apothegms, Parable Germs |
| 1. | | |

B. THE DOCTRINAIRE METHOD (2)

Circumference represents Jesus' Personality

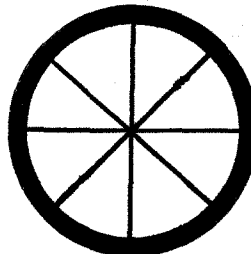
Radii represent Jesus' ideas and expressions (parables)



Emphasis is upon the diversity of Jesus' thought and expression

C. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL METHOD (2)

Circumference and Radii represent same as above.



Emphasis is upon the unity of Jesus' Personality under variety in expression.

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1. Cf. Bultmann, op, cit. p. 40 ff.
2. Cf. Deissmann, Op. cit. p. 161

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2. Harmonies of the Gospels

B. Secondary Sources

1. Commentaries
2. Literary Works
3. Psychological Works
4. Books on Parables
5. Miscellaneous Works Consulted
6. Encyclopaedia Articles

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