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**THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES  
ACCORDING TO MARK 4:10-12**

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**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of New Testament  
in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity**

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by

**Martin E. Marty**

**June, 1952**

Approved by:

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**Mark 4:10-12, King James Version:**

And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

\*

'Mystery' should not be applied to something which ceases to be a mystery after it has been revealed.

Nothing which can be discovered by a methodical cognitive approach should be called a 'mystery.'

What is not known today, but which might possibly be known tomorrow, is not a mystery.

—Paul Tillich

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## THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLES ACCORDING TO MARK 4:10-12

### AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

According to the plan of this study, the question as to whether this Logion is an intercalation of later Church teaching within a catena of parabolic sayings is reserved for the final chapter. Yet it is fundamental to an understanding of the discussion as it progresses for the reader to be aware of the critical dismissal of this entire passage as a vaticinium post eventum, interpolated by the evangelist because of the frustration of the early Church as it propagated the message of the Christ.

In that instance the words of Mark 4:10-12 would provide an adequate rationalization for failure, in that they would put into the mouth of Jesus an expression which would imply that it was His intent that His words should fail to sway the masses.

This thesis does not propose to meet this position on critical grounds. Rather, by connecting this utterance with the larger concept of revelation in both Old and New Testaments, it will endeavor to demonstrate that there is no theological need for considering it a later Church teaching.

This will be attempted by outlining the division created between men by the proclamation of the Mystery of the Kingdom, and by pointing out a distinction between types of parables, the form in which this particular Mystery is revealed.

This can lend some light to the hermeneutical problem of under-

standing parables; it should open the way to relieving a certain measure of embarrassment to homileticians who, too often, treat this passage only in introductions to works on parables. Self-consciously they apply it to all parables, admitting a 'secondary' purpose in each, and then must neglect this 'secondary' purpose in each throughout their expositions because they realize that the 'primary' purpose of preaching in parables is to reveal the truth in a simple, graphic manner.

Only by connecting this saying about the purpose of the parables with the revelation of the Mystery of the Kingdom of God can we reach some conclusion compatible with other biblical revelation. That shall be the aim of this paper.

## CHAPTER I

### THE QUOTATION FROM ISAIAH

The Logion in Mark 4:10-12 includes a rather free but immediately recognizable reference to Isaiah 6:9,10. Since most of the discussion on the Markan passage revolves around the question of the design or intent of teaching through parables, it is fundamental to our exegesis to understand the design or intent of Isaiah's preaching. The New Testament would not have alluded to Isaiah's call if the speaker or writer there had not conceived of it as illustrating a point similar to the one he was making.

The mystery of rejection, faced by Jesus Christ and His early followers, is met also in these words in Isaiah 6. Though the New Testament quotation may not be exact, it would wish to preserve a similar spirit because it is used in reference to similar problems and situations.

Isaiah 6:9,10, regarded as one of the climactic evidences of Old Testament revelation, occurs in the call of the prophet, at the beginning of his ministry:

So he (Yahweh) said,  
"Go and say to this people:  
'Keep on hearing, but understand not;  
And keep on seeing, but know not!'  
Make the mind of this people gross,  
Dull their ears, and besmear their eyes;  
Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,  
And have a mind to understand, and turn, and be healed."

It is immediately obvious that the prophet regards this as a revelation from a transcendent God; despite the apocalyptic framework of the

chapter, it is undoubtedly a genuine and autobiographical reference. This is recognized even by the more recent critical school, which, though it may regard the saying as a 'brilliant intuition' or a prophetic summary, still relates it to a specific incident early in the career of the prophet.<sup>1</sup> That it takes this 'apocalyptic' form is attributable to the suggestion that whenever a human comes to an encounter with the mysterium tremendum of Divine Holiness, he must grope for words beyond those of ordinary human conveyance.

That it is truly Yahweh's word and not simply a prophetic reconstruction is further attested to by the suddenness, the shock of the utterance, and the naivete of its reporting. Isaiah's lips are now clean, his sins have been forgiven. He has responded to the Lord's question by volunteering in youthful eagerness, "Here am I! send me!" (Isaiah 6:8).

It is against that background that the prophet must record these sudden and certainly disappointing and dampening words. According to them, he was to find out before the inception of his ministry that the very earnestness of his preaching would but confirm the people in their unwillingness to obey; whatever it might accomplish secretly, his work would appear fruitless to him. According to them he was given to understand from the first that his preaching of repentance would repel and harden some; that it was intended to, just as Keller observes, the preaching of repentance always tends to harden even more the hearts of those

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<sup>1</sup>This is the position of Robert H. Pfeiffer in his Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harpers, 1941), p. 423.



who have rejected God.<sup>2</sup> It is in the very nature of revelation that this should happen, and thus, because it is related to the Will of Yahweh as He chooses to reveal Himself, it becomes part of the intent of revelation toward certain situations.

At this point it should be noticed that the same explanation is sometimes made for these hard words in Isaiah as was made (see page 1) for the reference to them in a new situation in Mark; namely, that they are simply an inserted reminiscence on the part of the writer to explain away failures. Some, with a measure of consistency, also go on then to call Isaiah 6:13 (which is, incidentally, absent from the Septuagint) a 'collector's addition'<sup>3</sup> by a later hand to soften the alarming harshness of these words.

This entire position is grounded in efforts to explain away the theological difficulties of Isaiah 6; that is, however, of secondary concern to the interpreter, and should not immediately sway his criticism. It is curious to find some warrant for the critical view as early as in the writings of Calvin,<sup>4</sup> though he was making the point that the prophet would have needed some years of experience with obstinacy to even understand such a commission. He was certainly not adducing it for theological reasons, for the passage is a locus classicus for his Verstockungstheorie!

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<sup>2</sup>J. Keller, Der Prophet Jesaja (Neumuenster: G. Ihloff, 1928), pp. 77-9.

<sup>3</sup>This is the category, for example, into which it is placed by W. Oesterley and Theodore H. Robinson in An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 243.

<sup>4</sup>The observation of George Adam Smith, The Book of the Twelve Prophets (New York: Harpers, 1928), I, 79.

The critics have taken into consideration the character of the Hebrew mind, with its awe for the transcendent and sovereign Yahweh. This awe connected all things with the Divine Plan; thus there was little distinction made between purpose and result, and the prophet could with honesty connect the result of his preaching with the design of Yahweh. But one would wonder in that case how Isaiah, with his own "awe for the transcendent and sovereign God" would summon the audacity to put rationalizations for his own failures into the mouth of Yahweh!

The critical 'prolepsis' view, finally, is that Isaiah 6:9,10 could be an expression 'in the irony of sorrow', a warning plea on the lips of Isaiah, as it would be then also in the New Testament references to it.<sup>5</sup>

If we continue to take our interpretation seriously, however, and do not project theological presuppositions, it becomes more evident that Yahweh, in this autobiographical reference of Isaiah's, is to be conceived of as giving a command and commission with purpose: to preach with the intent of hardening, dulling the people who have rejected Him.

It is important to notice the situation. The audience to whom Isaiah would preach was the called people of Yahweh, people with whom He had made a covenant. And it will be important to remember for our discussion of the 'Remnant' of Isaiah 6:13 that, even in these hard words, some ultimate plan was being served:

...doch ueber alledem waltet die goettliche Absicht, dass schliesslich doch dieses wundersame Volk als Gottes er-

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<sup>5</sup>This view is taken in many homiletical works, among them George Buttrick, The Parables of Jesus (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1931), p. xx, footnote 20.

washites Volk noch zur ganzen Hoehs des ihm bestimmten herrlichen Berufs gelangt.<sup>6</sup>

For the present, however, because of the continued obstinacy and ingratitude of Israel, the final plan could not be thought of for this generation or at least for its majority. Now Yahweh can speak only in denunciatory tones. He does not even call them now, as was His wont, "my people," but calls them "this people,"  $\text{זֶה עַמִּי}$ , as He does also in Isaiah 8:6; 11:12; 28:11,14; 29:13; 36:6. In Exodus 32:1; I Samuel 10:27; 22:15, similarly, "this" refers to individuals or incidents; in both cases the substitution of "this" for a more personal term brings with it overtones of intense scorn.<sup>7</sup> The alienation to the point of the abandonment of Israel is regarded as a necessary background for God's revelation at this time: "before God's world can come to be, man's world must come to an end."<sup>8</sup>

What had happened that the called people of God had so alienated themselves and become, according to this passage, the objects of preaching with such a purpose? Psychologically, it had to do with what Piper calls 'The Law of Partial Failure' in preaching to them in the past; because this people had neglected the prophets, had remained stubborn, had not willed to repent, their religious sensitivities had become atrophied, and

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<sup>6</sup>Keller, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>7</sup>The list is from G. W. Wade, "The Book of the Prophet Isaiah" in Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen & Company, 1929), p. 42.

<sup>8</sup>R. B. Y. Scott, The Relevance of the Prophets (New York: Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 127.

<sup>9</sup>Otto Piper, "The Mystery of the Kingdom of God," Interpretation, I (1947), 193. This article is of outstanding importance.

from now on preaching would produce total failure because they were no longer able to be moved. They could only be confirmed in their obstinate ways, having their persistent rejection set in high relief against Yahweh's will. "The impenitence of people may reach a height at which no intercession...is any longer possible."<sup>10</sup>

Thus in Jeremiah 15:1ff. the prophet realizes that his preaching will no longer elicit repentance, but rather it will mature the people's obduracy. Obduracy becomes the highest degree of sin. So Savonarola experienced:

Preach to those as one may, they have the habit of listening well and yet acting ill; the habit hath become a second nature and they continue to listen without obeying—thou wilt be as a rook on a steeple that at the first stroke of the church bell takes alarm and hath fear, but then, when accustomed to the sound, percheth quietly on the bell, however loudly it rings.<sup>11</sup>

Isaiah is going beyond such psychological explanations for God's wrath and future purpose; he is here revealing the theological basis. The people have cherished sin so long that they have lost the ability to withstand: "on such God can glorify Himself only by punishment...sin is punished by continued sinning."<sup>12</sup>

Then this commission is recorded as an overleaping of the intermediate stages of evangelization or threatening; it emphasizes what in truth can have been only an originally unintended effect: that of having actually

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<sup>10</sup>G. F. Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Fund & Wagnalls, 1883), pp. 492-3.

<sup>11</sup>John Paterson, The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 66.

<sup>12</sup>Oehler, op. cit., p. 165.

been designed.

While "Verstockung ist also psychologisch und ethisch begründet," it cannot be understood except when related to the Will of the sovereign Yahweh"...aber dem ungläubigen Volk wird gerade die höchste Offenbarung Gottes zur Kρίσις."<sup>13</sup> Such a view is expressed in a sermon of Luther's when he says of this passage:

...darinnen der hohe Verstand von goettlicher Vorsehung geruehret wird, dasz er verbirget und offenbaret welchem er will, und von Ewigkeit bedacht hat.<sup>14</sup>

This Will of God becomes involved in present events, but, in the commission to the prophet it is still regarded as future. Thus he was the organ of the Word of God, the Word of God was the expression of the Will of God, and the Will of God was a 'divine act that has not yet become historical' (Delitzsch's phrase).

The same skandalon divides the hearers at that time as, in the New Testament, does the cross and the person of Christ, where, when they are preached, they become the  $\delta\sigma\mu\eta\ \ \epsilon\kappa\ \ \delta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\nu\ \ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \ \delta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\nu$  for some, but  $\delta\sigma\mu\eta\ \ \epsilon\kappa\ \ \beta\omega\eta\varsigma\ \ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \ \beta\omega\eta\varsigma$  for others, in II Corinthians 2:16.

The drastic character of this purpose of preaching is indicated by the words used in the commission: "make fat" (gross, fett,

$\chi\ \ \mu\acute{\iota}\ \ \sigma\tau\ \ \gamma\ \ \gamma\ \ \gamma\ \ \mu\ \ \gamma\ \ \sigma\tau\ \ \iota\ \ \gamma\ \ \mu\ \ \mu\ \ \sigma\tau\ \ ,\ \ \chi\ \ \mu\ \ \sigma\tau$  is the Imp. Hiph'il

<sup>13</sup>Bernhard Duhn, "Das Buch Jesaja" in Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, edited by W. Nowack (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902), III, Band I, 45.

<sup>14</sup>Martin Luther, "Am Sonntage Sexagesima" in Kirchenpostille (Erlangen Ausgabe), XI, 95.

of  $\text{לֵב יִשְׂרָאֵל}$ )—the Lord 'closes the heart.' George Stoeckhardt gravely summarizes, "Der Prophet soll das Herz des Volkes verstocken."<sup>15</sup>

The example of the preaching of Isaiah, often called 'the Evangelist of the Old Testament,' shows how this purpose was achieved: not by intentionally alienating the people, but simply by preaching the message, the true revelation of Yahweh, 'prophetically,' without fear of consequence.

Revelatory and prophetic preaching, while it certainly did not have 'hardening' as its original purpose, acquired that purpose as God abandoned His people. There are evidences of this type of Divine intervention toward others than 'His own' in the case of the king of Assyria, "I will put a spirit in him" (Isaiah 35:7); in John 9:39 Christ says, "I have come into this world to judge men, that those who cannot see may see, and that those who can see may become blind."

The more revelation of God, the more guilt of men: Matthew 13:12, "For people who have will have more given to them, and will be plentifully supplied, and from people who have nothing even what they have will be taken away."<sup>16</sup>

As presented in the record of the Book of Exodus, the account of the Verstockung of Pharaoh leaves no choice but to relate this to the Will of God. "I will make him obstinate," says the Lord (Exodus 4:21); again, "I will make Pharaoh obstinate," (7:3); later, "The LORD made Pharaoh obstinate." Still other examples involve Sihon, king of Heshbon:

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<sup>15</sup>Commentar ueber den Propheten Jessaia (Concordia Publishing House), p. 70. This work clearly outlines the traditional Lutheran view on Verstockung, as does the same author's Romans Commentary.

<sup>16</sup>It is interesting to note, to anticipate a later chapter, that this is spoken in connection with the Matthaean parallel to the Logion under study.

"the LORD your God made him stubborn and defiant" (Deuteronomy 2:30); the sons of Eli: "it was the pleasure of the LORD to destroy them," (I Samuel 2:25). God has a role in all the purposes of men: "The LORD hath ordained the good counsel of Ahithophel to be frustrated, in order that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom," (II Samuel 17:14). The 'spirit of insensibility' that comes about during Isaiah's preaching and in response to it is chronicled in Isaiah 29:10 where he says, "For the LORD has poured upon you a spirit of deep slumber, He has tightly closed your eyes, and has muffled your heads."

It should be noticed that the Old Testament, as well as the New, speaks of Verstockung only in connection with a divine witness or revelation, in reference to a specific historical situation, when a divine message had been offered to the sinner but has been rejected by him. In its own nature the Word is bright, affirms Calvin,<sup>17</sup> but the darkness of men chokes this. The Word is never hid from real seekers, but is wrapped from the unrighteous who have ultimately been given up, according to God's plan, to blindness.

Repentance and return at this point are blocked "from above," as it were, for God has had to abandon 'this people.' "The single act of returning to the Lord is extremely complex, for it marks a deep recognition of the demands of God, an admission of sin, an act of repentance, and a reorganization of life."<sup>18</sup> It is too late for that for "this

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<sup>17</sup>John Calvin, Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, translated by William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), p. 102, n. 1.

<sup>18</sup>Otto Baab, The Theology of the Old Testament (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), p. 146.

people."

The Old Testament line of revelation might be considered disrupted at this point were it not for the 'Remnant' already pictured in Isaiah 6:13, the end of the words of Yahweh's commission:

"Even if a tenth remain in it,  
This must pass through the fire again,  
Like a terebinth, or an oak,  
Whose stump remains when it is felled.  
(A holy race is the stump of it.)

It was mentioned before that some scholars also read this proleptically because of certain theological presuppositions. But this would hardly be justified in the light of the chronology of the prophet's own personal life, for, early in his career he had named a son, "A remnant shall return," (אִתְּךָ יָשָׁב רֵשֶׁת) (Isaiah 7:3), indicating that the Isaianic consciousness of the saved Remnant was indeed early. (See also 10:21). The hope of the future is only in this remnant; when the storm is passed salvation will come to the 'sprout from the stump.' It is through this Remnant, again, that, in II Isaiah, the only hope for 'the many' exists, for out of this remnant comes the Ebed Yahweh, the suffering servant of Yahweh. 'This people' has been ripened for judgment through preaching, but from the Remnant comes hope.

It has been necessary to give such a great amount of attention to Isaiah's words because of the importance they assume in our understanding of the New Testament references. In certain respects Isaiah 6:9,10, proves to be the only sure guide, particularly in reference to the uses of the possibilities of mistranslations from either Septuagint or Targum, and the differences between synoptic parallels. There is no mistaking the fact that in the old Testament usage the passage relates simply and



directly to the purpose, intent, and design of certain preaching. And when it is quoted in the New Testament, it is obvious that it is not there conceived of as reminiscence or reconstruction in later life on the part of Isaiah; the purposive force is assured.

Isaiah 6:9,10, is quoted in several instances in the New Testament for similar purposes:

Und dieses Gottes-Wort ist so wichtig, dass es noch dreimal im Neuen Testament wiederholt wird: Matthaeus 13:11-15 (and parallels), Johannes 12:40, Apg. 28:26,27--naemlich: als der Herr uebergehen muss zur Gleichnispredigt, als er vor seinem Leiden von seinem Volk Abschied nehmen muss, und als der gefangene Paulus in Rom mit der Heilsbotschaft bei den Juden keinen Eingang findet. Das Volk hat sich selbst so sehr verhaertet, dass es sozusagen naturgesetzesmaessig es immer schwerer finden muss, dem Worte Gottes nachzugeben.<sup>19</sup>

It is used in connection with advanced stages of the ministry of both Jesus and Paul; Yahveh's word to Isaiah reappears in the New Testament as a prophecy fulfilled in their hearers' (or readers) own case.

The title indicates that the concern in this paper is largely with the Markan use. We mention this because at first glance the picture seems somewhat complicated by the slightly different readings in the three Synoptic Gospels. Matthew, for example, replaces the Markan  $\epsilon\upsilon\delta$  with  $\delta\tau\epsilon$ , a significant difference. Mark seems to have taken over the Isaiah passage in the most direct form. Luke applies the quotation particularly to the Parable of the Four Soils, while Mark and Matthew at first glance apply it to "parables" in general.

Through it all there is a strong unity, for all three quote the passage to indicate Christ's awareness of the limitations of His success.

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<sup>19</sup>Keller, op. cit., p. 79.

indirectly preparing the way for His association with the Ebed Yahweh, and His responsibility to the Remnant. By relating this utterance concerning parables to Isaiah, Christ would be showing the place of His preaching in God's *οἰκονομία* in both Testaments. He would then be merely comparing Isaiah's day to His own to make a similar point.

Mark has taken over the Isaiah passage in more direct, although somewhat condensed form, than the other two. He introduces nothing that was not in Isaiah, observes Schniewind,<sup>20</sup> and his observation is correct if the reading as we have it is a correct translation into koine Greek. If that  $\zeta\upsilon\lambda$ -reading is correct, we may not assume that the quotation of Isaiah was not the view of Mark and Jesus. The burden of proof, in the light of the Old Testament, must be assumed by those who do not find purpose expressed in the condemnatory portion of the New Testament saying. The Markan reading underscores this burden more clearly than do its parallels.

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<sup>20</sup>Julius Schniewind, "Das Evangelium nach Markus," Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), II, 76.

## CHAPTER II

### PURPOSE EXPRESSED BY $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha$ IN MARK 4:10-12

The Isaiah reference is introduced in the Markan passage on the parables with  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha$ . It is the crucial word in the three verses, as on it depends the question as to whether it was Christ's purpose as portrayed in Mark to conceal 'the Mystery of the Kingdom of God' in parables, or whether He considered it an inevitable result of the proclamation of the Kingdom; whether Isaiah was quoted with reference to the Will of God or with simply ethical or judicial connotations.

The meaning of  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha$  as it stands in the Gospel is our concern in this chapter; is it telic, expressing purpose, design, intent; is it ecbatic, expressing result; does it have causal connotations; or is it only a mistranslation of an Aramaic particle? Does Matthew, perhaps, better preserve the original meaning by the translation  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha$ ?

There were those once upon a time who, like Olshausen, excluded even the possibility of an ecbatic rendering of  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha$  in the New Testament. This type of grammatical insistence on consistency thought of any rendering other than the telic as a late koine weakening of the classical sense that could not have appeared in Mark.<sup>1</sup>

Today, however, most grammarians, while upholding the final sense in the great majority of cases, have allowed for the possibility

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<sup>1</sup>Herman Olshausen, on Matthew 1:22, Biblical Commentary on the New Testament, translated by A. C. Kendrick (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, and Company, 1856), I, 178.

of other translations in many instances, particularly in John. Thus Moulton reports:

The long debated question of ἵνα ἐκβατικῶς may be regarded as settled by the new light which has come in since H. A. W. Meyer waged heroic warfare against the idea that ἵνα could ever denote anything but purpose. All motive for straining the obvious meaning of words is taken away when we see that in the latest stage of Greek language-history the infinitive has yielded all its functions to the locution thus jealously kept apart from it.<sup>2</sup>

The variations of meaning between purpose, purport, and result, are extremely difficult to determine in many instances. When Green faces the problem as to whether ἵνα ever means 'so that,' expressing event without any reference to purpose, he concludes: "Most, however, now agree that the final significance is generally discernible."<sup>3</sup> Here was another instance where, once the field was opened for the possibility of alternatives, a whole host of passages were read in the non-traditional sense. Thus it was necessary for grammarians, like Green, to 'fight their way back' to the position that the extra-Johannine uses of ecclastic ἵνα are extremely rare if existent at all.

Yet, since the possibility does exist, we must take note of it. The Hebraic mind linked the role of the people and the plan of God in such a way that 'Absicht und Folge' were difficult to distinguish, as Bauer points out.<sup>4</sup> This serves to complicate the matter. It may well

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<sup>2</sup>James Hope Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1919), I, 206.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel G. Green, Handbook to the Greek of the New Testament (New York: Revell, 1912), p. 321.

<sup>4</sup>Walter Bauer, Griechisch-Deutsches Woerterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments, 2 Auflage (Giessen: Verlag von Alfred Toepelmann, 1928), p. 589.

be that John 9:2 is the best New Testament example of a clear ecclastic, "Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, so that he was born blind?" I Thessalonians 5:4, Revelation 3:9, I John 1:9, and Luke 9:45 are other reasonable examples of  $\epsilon\gamma\alpha$  introducing clauses which point out the result of the action of the main verb. Our best guide in ruling out the Markan passage is the theological, noted throughout this paper. It came under suspicion originally only for theological reasons, not grammatical.

A more probable 'escape' for those who would avoid the telic rendering, though, is the possibility that the  $\epsilon\gamma\alpha$  is a replacement or mis-translation for an earlier  $\epsilon\gamma\iota$  which reappears in the later Matthean parallel. The sense of the translation in that case would read, "those outside lack spiritual insight, therefore I have to use parabolic language."<sup>5</sup>

This, however, minimizes the degree to which the sacred writers were imbued with the Hebrew spirit, for:

they follow the dictate of piety, which bids us trace all events back to God as to their author and refer them to God's purpose; so that, if we are ever in doubt whether  $\epsilon\gamma\alpha$  is used of design or of result, we can easily settle the question when we can interpret the passage, "that, by God's decree," or, "that, according to the divine purpose," etc.<sup>6</sup>

Most grammarians have realized that they are on slight foundation when they prefer the causal here to match theological a priori, rather than to base their conclusions on linguistic occurrence. Thus they

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<sup>5</sup>This paraphrase is from Archibald Hunter, The Words and Works of Jesus (Philadelphia; Westminster Press, 1951), p. 45, note 1, part 3. He suggests a causal  $\epsilon\gamma\alpha$  in Revelation 14:13 (which, incidentally, is more likely equivalent to an imperative). Pernot, in an article in the Expository Times, December, 1926, defends the causal.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Company, 1889), p. 304.

have turned to these several alternatives. The one, for instance, which would think of the Matthaean  $\delta' \tau \epsilon$  as being the prior reading, presents difficulties crucial to the Synoptic problem, in that Luke joins Mark (usually thought of as the earliest) with  $\epsilon' \nu \alpha$ .

Suffice it here to say that those who prefer the causal, Matthaean emphasis, also prefer what they consider to be "Matthew's theology," a 'softening' of the telic interpretation that would misinterpret Christ. In the light of the Old Testament's clear purposive force, and the way it is taken over by Mark 4:10-12, exactly the contrary remains true, and the 'softening' in Matthew completely disappears (leaving no discrepancy in force between Mark and Matthew) when one considers the implications of the phrase  $\epsilon' \kappa \epsilon \iota' \nu \omicron \lambda \iota \varsigma \delta \epsilon \iota' \omicron \nu \delta \epsilon \delta \omicron \tau \omega \iota$  (11b)....  $\delta' \epsilon' \chi \epsilon \iota$   $\alpha' \rho \theta' \eta' \sigma \epsilon \tau \alpha \iota$  (12b), which expresses divine judgment stronger even than the  $\epsilon' \nu \alpha$  in Mark.

May we underscore once more that all these grammatical alternatives were adduced not for reasons of grammatical necessity but for theological reasons which do not take seriously the 'telic' note following God's revelation throughout the Scriptures. When Isaiah's commission is adduced in the Gospels, the commission to him to preach in order to harden, all weight in advance has gone to the purposive force. (See again page 14, the end of the first chapter). Goguel has shown that the causal reading defeats its own purpose,<sup>7</sup> for if Matthew intentionally changed what would have appeared to him too drastic a reading, it was because he had been shocked (according to this line of thought) by the

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<sup>7</sup>Maurice Goguel, The Life of Jesus, translated by Olive Wyon (New York: Macmillan, 1944), p. 292.

ܘܘܐ in Mark. (Goguel continues, therefore, to find the entire Logia an expression of the frustration of the early Church, written to prove the necessity of 'defeat' as background for the Passion-drama. This position we discuss in the final chapter.)

In addition to these grammatical possibilities, there is one textual alternative, popular among scholars who contend for Aramaic originals for the Synoptics. While that school of thought is not so popular today, strength can be added to their argument by the fact that Jesus did speak in Aramaic, that the Synoptic writers, editing His Logia into somewhat consistent narratives, may have translated (or mistranslated) from "collections" of the Logia. Now, that is possible, since the Aramaic particle ܘܘܐ is ambiguous and could equally as well have been set down as a relative pronoun ܘܘܐ in Greek as the purposive ܘܘܐ. This is the position accepted by Torrey and Hunter, based on Manson's proposal.<sup>8</sup> Hunter thus paraphrases:

To you, my disciples, is revealed the secret (literally, mystery) of God's Reign, but the parabolic method must be used with the multitude who, as Isaiah also found, are lacking in spiritual insight.<sup>9</sup>

We must revert once more to the same argument, that this whole effort again is based on the theological presupposition that Jesus cannot have intended with His parabolic method to conceal. This Black notes as he calls such a purpose for parables an absurdity and the ܘܘܐ a 'stumbling-

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<sup>8</sup>T. W. Manson, Christ's View of the Kingdom of God (New York: George H. Doran, n.d.), pp. 74-80.

<sup>9</sup>Archibald Hunter, The Gospel According to St. Mark (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 55

block.<sup>10</sup> But Black, from within this Aramaic viewpoint, shows how the thesis defeats itself since the  $\mu\eta\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon$  which balances  $\epsilon\iota\alpha$  in Mark's reading (verse 12) is the only textually possible reading. Mark cannot have meant, right or wrong, anything other than that Jesus told parables to prevent understanding and the consequences of understanding, forgiveness. The  $\mu\eta\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon$  rules out the  $\omicron\iota$  reading. If the stumbling-block of  $\epsilon\iota\alpha$  is removed, the  $\mu\eta\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon$  is meaningless. Black, finally, must also return to the critical position that Jesus cannot have said all this, that it is part of a rationalizing early Church's expression, quoting Wendling:

Der Verfasser (Redaktor) geht von der sekundaeren Theorie aus, die Gleichnisrede sei mystisch-allegorisch gemeint, ihr Verstaendnis deshalb dem Volke...verschlossen;...das Volk...solle nur die Worte hoeren, ohne den Sinn zu erfassen, damit ihm seine Suede nicht vergeben wuerden.<sup>11</sup>

It is quite clear that neither those who bring out the  $\omicron\iota\tau\epsilon$  translation or the  $\omicron\iota$  have squarely faced the Old Testament reference. That reference, in all three Synoptics, clearly divides  $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$   $\partial\omega\partial\epsilon\kappa\alpha$  from  $\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$   $\epsilon\iota\gamma\omega$ , and makes quite clear that the writers thought of  $\omicron\iota$   $\epsilon\iota\gamma\omega$  as being excluded from the meaning of the parables there narrated.

Since on purely grammatical grounds the telic meaning has priority and the  $\omicron\iota\tau\epsilon$  and  $\omicron\iota$  readings have insufficient support, we may well conclude that the Markan reading clearly preserves the Old Testament force, as it intended to do, which makes of the effect of parables a

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<sup>10</sup>Matthew Black, An Aramaic Approach to the Gospel and Acts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 153-5.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 156.



poenalis cascitas (Augusti e) because of the attitude of the people and the plan of God for such. Only by relating the  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha$  thus to the Heilsoekonomie are we able to eliminate subjectivities.

Note the similarities between the situations of Isaiah and Christ: they were already at stages of Israel's history where the judgment of God had come to the fore and where that judgment took the form of a planned concealment of revelation itself, "because of hardening, to harden." Weiss<sup>12</sup> says that the question is simply as to the Divine judgment which produces obduracy, necessitating the distinction between disciples and 'those outside' on which the main thesis of this paper is based.

In this light the rendering of Jeremias<sup>13</sup> and others will add coloring as a final attempt to evade the telic  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha$ ; according to it the  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha$  is reduced to the idiomatic formula:  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha$  πληρωθῆναι. That means, "in order that might be fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah." Winer interprets it that way in his study of the relation of Mark 4 to Isaiah 6:

Nur werde freilich damit nicht gemeint, Gott habe eine Thatsache eintreten lassen oder gar Menschen zum so und so Handeln unausweichlich angetrieben in der Absicht, damit die Verheissungen erfuehlt wuerden; die Formel ist weit davon entfernt, etwas Fatalistisches auszudruecken. Auf jene Formel ist uebrigens auch Mark 4:12 zu reducieren: 'es kommt ihnen alles in Parabeln zu, damit sie sehen und doch nicht erkennen, usw. fuer: "damit erfuehlt werde der Ausspruch (Jer. 6, 'sie werden sehen und doch nicht' usw.)...Die allgemeine Unmoeglichkeit, solche Parabeln zu verstehen, kann Jes. nicht behaupten wollen (da waere es freilich seltsam gewesen, in Parabeln zu sprechen); wer aber die so anschaulichen Parabeln nicht verstand, von dem galt des Propheten Wort:

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<sup>12</sup>Bernhard Weiss, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, translated by James Duguid and David Eaton (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), p. 133.

<sup>13</sup>Joachim Jeremias, Die Gleichnisse Jesu (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1947).

'er sieht und versteht nicht' und dass es solche Menschen geben wuerde, war eben vorausgesagt...<sup>14</sup>

This quotation illustrates the danger of reading Mark 4:12 according to that formula; the element of true purpose can be lost, absorbed by the πληρωθῆ.

As an appendix to complete the account of the various colorings of our study on final ἵνα, there are appended here the expert summaries of Windisch and Stauffer.

a) Windisch:

Es gehoert zu den interessanten Varianten, die die Synoptiker in der Perikope vom Zweck der Gleichnisrede...aufweisen, dass diesen Anlehnung an Jes. 6 erfolgende Beschreibung des Verstockungsprozesses in Mc und Lc mit ἵνα, in Mt dagegen mit ὅτι eingefuehrt wird...nach Mc (und Lc) Jesus mit seinen Gleichnissen die Verstockung wirken will, waehrend nach Mt die bereits erfolgte Verstockung der Grund ist, weshalb er die Form der Gleichnisrede waehlt...Pernot hat hingewiesen,...dass in der spaeteren Koine ἵνα kausale Bedeutung erhaelt, also mit ὅτι zusammenfaellt... (p. 203).

Da zur Koine auch das NT gehoert, wird man bei etwaigen schwierigen ἵνα-Stellen in der Tat wohl fragen muessen, ob etwa auch da die kausale Bedeutung vorliegt...(204) (Then follows an investigation of alleged 'causal' readings in Romans 5:20, Romans 6:1, Revelation 14:13, 16:15, 22:14. Windisch finds one only in Revelation 22:14, and even that, with πλὴν ἑνὸς ἑνὸς may be construed consecutively.)

Wie steht es mit der Mc-Stelle, von der wir ausgingen? Da schon in LXX der hebraische Text von Jes. 6 abgeschwaecht erscheint (Feststellung der geschehenen Verhaertung statt Auftrages an den Propheten) sei es unwahrscheinlich 1) dass Mc und Mt hier einander widersprechen sollten, dass der eine die Geheimhaltung, der andere, die Verdeutlichung der Lehre im Auge haben sollte. Sie weisen weiter 2) auf die Saemannsparabel, die mit der Verstockungsabsicht unvertraeglich sei, da kein Saemann wuenschen koenne, dass nicht alle Saat aufgehe, endlich 3) noch auf Mc

<sup>14</sup>George Benedict Winer, Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms, 7 Auflage, edited by Gottlieb Luenemann, 1867.

4:33f., wo die Idee der Geheimhaltung gleichfalls abgelehnt seit. Diese Argumente wiegen, duenkt mich, alle nicht schwer. Die abschwaechende Uebersetzung der LXX 1) brauchte keinen NT-lichen Schriftsteller zu hindern, auf die strengere Idee des Urtextes zurueckzugreifen. In der Wiedergabe in Joh. 12:40 wird sogar Gott direkt zum Urheber der Verstockung gemacht. Es ist also auch kein Bedenken, dass Mt das Zitat anders angewendet haben sollte als Mc.

2)...Jesus...ist ein Saemann, der Zweierlei Samen hat, einen, der aufgehen kann, und einen, der nicht aufgehen kann. Die Schlussbemerkung Mc 4:33f 3) ist nur zu einem Teil (v. 33) ein Beweis gegen die Geheimhaltungstheorie...(in the light of Matthew 7:6) "gebt das Kostbare ja nicht den Hunden und Schweinen!" Dann kann der angehaengte  $\epsilon\gamma\alpha$ -Satz nur final gemeint sein. (207-8)<sup>15</sup>

b) Stauffer, on  $\epsilon\gamma\alpha$ :

Die finale Bedeutung ist nicht immer streng festgehalten... Die Hauptstellen, die man gern fuer konsekutivischen, oder kausalen Gebrauch von  $\epsilon\gamma\alpha$  anfuehrt; Mark 4:11f, verlieren durch diese erweichende Interpretation ihr  $\epsilon\kappa\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha\lambda\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , aber eben darum ihre  $\tau\omicron\phi\iota\alpha$ . Sie enthuelen ihren letzten theologischen Ernst erst dann, wenn sie final verstanden werden im strengsten Sinne. (p. 324)

Diese Haefung hat ihren Grund...in dem teleologischen Verstaendnis der Wege Gottes und der Bestimmung des Menschen, das im NT zur Durchsetzung gekommen ist...(324)

(The two aspects of God's purpose are brought out)...Das ist von vornherein das Doppelsiel seines Auftrags, Glaubensweckung und Verstockung nach Gottes praedestinativer Bestimmung. Darum muessen die  $\epsilon\gamma\alpha$ -Saetze von der Verstockung ebenso final verstanden werden wie die von der Glaubensweckung:  $\epsilon\upsilon\ \pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  etc. Mk 4:12. Auch hier hat Joh. die Gedanken Jesus auf durchgepraegte theologische Formeln gebracht:  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \kappa\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\mu\alpha\ \epsilon\gamma\omega\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \kappa\omicron\varsigma\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , sagt Jesus nach der Heilung des Blindgeborenen,  $\epsilon\gamma\alpha\ \sigma\epsilon\ \mu\eta\ \beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma\ \beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\upsilon\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \omicron\epsilon\ \beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma\ \tau\upsilon\phi\lambda\omicron\iota\ \gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\omega\tau\alpha\iota$  Jn. 9:39; 12:40....(328)<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Hans Windisch, "Die Verstockungsidee in Mc 4:12 und das kausale der spaeteren Koine," in Zeitschrift fuer Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XXVI, 203-10.

<sup>16</sup>Ethelbert Stauffer, on " $\epsilon\gamma\alpha$ ," in Kittel's Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament. (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1938), pp. 324-334.

Stauffer finds the aim of the paradoxical theology of the way of God to be 'die Verherrlichung Gottes.' This must be examined later in its relation to the Mystery of the Kingdom of God.

The skandalon of the telic  $\xi\upsilon\lambda$  may stand. What bearing has that on its Logion? Those who oppose the telic rendering, it was pointed out, do so on the ground that Christ cannot ever have intended to veil truth in His teaching, claiming that 'those outside'—even Pharisees, enemies—understood the point clearly, that no parables could have anything approaching an esoteric element. At its strongest, this results in a simply judicial expression and a severely weakened  $\xi\upsilon\lambda$ .

On the other hand, those who accept the telic force must be ready to deal with the Verstockungstheorie applied to parables and proceed from there to a division of the types of parables and audiences. That becomes the plan of the succeeding pages.

As preliminary for working out parables, as to whether they refer only to the single parable, or to all parables, or to a certain type of parable. (See Introductory Note.)

Despite the singular number in  $\xi\upsilon\lambda$ , there are few objections of the view that only one parable comes under this  $\xi\upsilon\lambda$ . The many parables are similar in character to the first one presented here; if told one is told to yourself, while five more, then or are others.

Es würde nicht 'den Gleichnisern' zugehört; der Christ selbst wird nur die Art der Gleichnisse, damit man nicht so, dass man alle die Gleichnisse sehen verstanden kann; dass auch Jesus selbst geht manchmal nur auf die Dinge der Parabeln aufmerksam ist.

These words place us squarely into the critical realm of the

### CHAPTER III

#### THE PARABLES OF THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

There follows, in Mark 4, after the narration of the Parable of the Four Soils, a question of followers of Jesus. Mark reads: "Those who were about him with the twelve asked him concerning τὰς παραβολάς," (v. 10). Matthew likewise has the plural: "Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do you speak to them ἐν παραβολαῖς?" (13:10). But Luke presents this saying in connection only with the one parable there recorded: "And when his disciples asked him what ἡ παραβολὴ ἦν meant, etc." (Luke 8:4).

Because of this difference, and because of the composition of the entire parable-chapter the problem faces homileticians who are setting up principles for preaching the parables, as to whether these words apply only to the single Four Soils parable, or to all parables, or to a certain type of parable. (See Introductory Note.)

Despite the singular number in Luke, there are few champions of the view that only one parable comes under this saying. Too many parables are similar in character to the first one narrated here; if this one is told to conceal truth from some, then so are others.

Er wurde nach 'den Gleichnissen' gefragt; der Plural meint wohl nur die Art der Gleichnisrede, deutet aber nicht an, dass mehr als Ein Gleichnis schon berichtet waere; denn auch Jesu Antwort geht zunaechst nur auf die Frage der Parabeln ueberhaupt ein.<sup>1</sup>

These words place us squarely into the critical problem of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ernst Lohmeyer, Das Evangelium des Markus (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951), p. 83.

composition of the chapter; why tell one parable and speak of all? The more immediate problem is the traditional view that Jesus told all to find esoteric significances in the most obvious similitudes, to find mysteries in the eternally and immediately graphic Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son parables, whose lessons have become proverbial even to those who do not accept Christian revelation. This hermeneutical principle of parabolic interpretation would have us find, we noted earlier, a 'primary' and a 'secondary' meaning in each, or to find one meaning for follower and one for pagan in each.

It should be obvious without further investigation that such a literal reading of 'parables' and an automatic application to all of them on that basis is untenable because of the simple fact that pagans have grasped the meaning of many of them, that the point comes through quite clearly to all. The totality is already broken within the Gospel of Mark by Christ Himself. In Chapter 12:1-10 He tells a parable of a man who planted a vineyard. There is no explanation at all, no allegorization of details, no application to the present scene; yet His enemies tried to arrest Him, v. 12: *ἐγνώσαν γὰρ ὅτι πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὴν παραβολὴν εἶπεν*. Yet the parable told there is not significantly different in form from many another; if that was understood by contemporaries who would not be included in esoteric secrets, would not also others?

We know that some parables did wrap up truth. The concern is to find out which ones, to draw some line to explain this. That is no easy matter. The student of Westcott, Drummond, Godet, Calderwood, Lange, Plumptre, Blaikie, Bruce, Goebel, and all others who set about

to do it, is inclined to conclude that no scientific classification may be possible, that each scholar forces his classifications, basing them on preconceptions.

Nor will this paper attempt an elaborate division among parables. However, one thing is certain, and that is, that from the composition of the chapter we can tell that those parables can be included among those that conceal from 'those outside,' and, by reference to τὸ μυστήριον τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ it can be determined that the Mystery of the Kingdom is the clue to this classification.

Later some speculation as to the nature of this Mystery will be in order; it has to do with the meaning of Jesus, and to remain unsettled on the ultimate question of that meaning, as negative scholars often do, and yet claim that the parables' meanings are perfectly clear, amounts to 'atomistic exegesis.'<sup>2</sup> There must be a unity to this type of expression; it thus becomes necessary to demonstrate further that this Logion applies to select parables.

It occurs at a time in the ministry when the temptation to retain disciples at any cost could have been near to Jesus' mind. The very fact that Jesus would limit His appeal indicates, however, His high conception of the purpose of His life and teaching, His unwillingness to make concessions. In that respect there is less surprise, less skandalon in this saying; thus it is not surprising that Otto Piper, in examining the Mystery, contends that these words apply in a sense

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<sup>2</sup>Ned Bernard Stonehouse, The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Guardian, 1944), p. 75.

not only to parables but to all revelation of Christ<sup>3</sup> (and in a sense he may be right; the sense of II Corinthians 2:6).

And Joachim Jeremias can write:

Das Logion redet, das ist unser Ergebnis, also gar nicht von den Gleichnissen Jesu, sondern von seiner Predigt ueberhaupt. Den Juengern ist das Geheimnis der gegenwaertigen Basileia enthueilt, den Draussenstehenden bleiben Jesu Worte dunkel.<sup>4</sup>

He, however, goes so far as to claim that this word did not apply to parables at all!

Erst Markus hat, durch das Stichwort παροιμία veranlasst, das er zu Unrecht als "Gleichnis" verstand, unser Logion dem Gleichniskapitel eingefuegt. Ist aber Mark 4:11f. von Hause aus kein Wort ueber die Gleichnisse Jesu, dann ist die Stelle kein Kanon fuer die Auslegung der Gleichnisse...

While we cannot agree with that last paragraph, it does seem to be quite clear that the Logion has more to say about the Mystery than about the nature of parables and their purpose. Parables come in, in that Pharisees and others realized certain 'externals' about the Kingdom of God, whereas the 'internals' are enshrouded in parables for the sake of the disciples. Mark 2:17-19; Luke 7:41ff; 15:8ff, 11ff., illustrate the former point; that the 'internals' were not to be the common property of all hearers is evident from Jesus' private explanations which usually follow them. What better form could these take than, as in Mark 4, the parabolic, since parables in the Hebraic sense are at the very least capable of concealing, though that may well not

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<sup>3</sup>Otto Piper, "The Mystery of the Kingdom of God," Interpretation, I, Number 2, 183-200.

<sup>4</sup>Joachim Jeremias, Die Gleichnisse Jesu (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1947), p. 10.



be their ordinary function.

Dehn summarizes the case:

...gewiss nicht aller Gleichnisse, aber doch jedenfalls solcher, die vom Geheimnis des Reiches handeln (emphasis ours), also aller derer, die in unserm Kapitel erzahlt werden...<sup>5</sup>

Otherwise, says he, how are we to reconcile the words of comfort to the crowd that is excluded in contexts so immediate? It is because of the nature of the Mystery that Jesus wraps up truth, hiding it from the obstinate.

Since they speak of the Kingdom of God, these parables are purely revelatory (as opposed to illustrative), and of the first order, "die der Herr allein sagen kann." If that is true, the graphic character of parables plays a decisive role in impressing disciples as the Mystery further unfolds:

Denn dazu pflegt man Gleichnis und Bilde zu fuehren, dass man die Lehre deste bass fasse, und stets im Herzen trage, als die taeglich fuer Augen stehen, und uns derselben erinnern muessen.<sup>6</sup>

Having established the selective character of the parables of Vermuellung as well as Offenbarung, as opposed to the view that this Legion refers only to one parable, or, more disastrous for parabolic hermeneutics, to all, it becomes necessary to attempt to determine why these particular parables (in Chapter 4) were equipped to do that. Thus the study is two-fold: the form of the parables of the Mystery of the Kingdom of God, and their content, which invlves the meaning

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<sup>5</sup>Gunther Dehn, Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn (Berlin: Furchs-Verlag, 1940), pp. 93-4.

<sup>6</sup>Quotation from a sermon by Martin Luther (Erlangen Ausgabe), LI, p. 225.

of the Mystery.

First, the form. In most respect there is little difference between this type of parable and that type whose tertium comparationis is known to all.

Little has come, for instance, of the effort to prove that the difference originates in that these are allegories while others are simple or 'pure' parables. We are referring particularly to the explanation given in Mark 4:13-20 for this first parable, in which a somewhat 'allegorical' interpretation is provided.<sup>7</sup> If the conclusion is later Church teaching, as many contend, then it would be pure allegory, an interpretation by disciples who lost the original key to the meaning of the parable and thus allegorized it. If this is not the case, then Jesus would seem to be allegorizing, something rare in His parables. From what appears to be allegorizing in these verses, many interpreters (even Luther, says Bultmann<sup>8</sup>) have fallen into the temptation to match all aspects of parables with all features of their interpretation.

It seems clear, however, that Luther did not customarily allegorize; his sermon on Matthew 20:1-16 most clearly indicates his own principle of interpreting all of them:

Man muss diese Gleichniss nicht in allen Stuecken ansehen, sondern auf das Hauptstueck merken, was er damit wolle...Denn solche

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<sup>7</sup>Maurice Goguel, The Life of Jesus, translated by Olive Wyon (New York: Macmillan, 1944), p. 293.

<sup>8</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, "Gleichnis und Parabel" in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (Tuebingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1928), II, 124.

Gleichnisse sind nicht darum gesagt, dass alle Stueck darum zu halten seyn...<sup>9</sup>

This latter principles of Luther is correct even on the Parable of the Four Soils. The explanation by Jesus, if it was spoken at the time of the telling of the parable, is not truly an allegorization, as there is indeed only one tertium comparationis and all details are presented solely to enforce that one. Even Dibelius, though it seems to this writer that his choice of tertium comparationis (consolation in spite of failure) is incorrect, contends that this is not allegory since 'those outside' were expected to get the point of the parable, and were judged for not doing so, while the interpretation went only to the disciples; therefore the scientific historian has the right to examine without the interpretation provided by Mark.<sup>10</sup>

Because of the emphasis on the one point in the Parable of the Four Soils (necessarily amplified because of the 'four') it is evident that this is a 'pure' parable, weakened in allegorization neither by Jesus nor the Evangelist.

A most vexing question presented by the form of parables is this: are the parables truly, as we assumed above, capable of concealing the truth? It has been our assumption, yet some defense may be expected, as that assumption has not gone unchallenged. The defense comes on the ground that the term 'parable' is a good deal broader than the one into which many interpreters straitjacket their examples.

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<sup>9</sup>Luther, op cit., p. 80.

<sup>10</sup>Martin Dibelius, The Message of Jesus Christ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), p. 148.

The Greek word παραβολή<sup>1</sup> is a New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament פָּרָבָה; a term that refers to utterances varying from proverb to prophecy to poem, from wisdom to enigma to similitude and allegory. Though this elastic term has been applied specifically by the Synoptics to twenty different utterances, the actual number of New Testament parables runs up to nearly 53, Juelicher's figure. There is, of course, great variation within these, but we dare not exclude from that variation the meaning of פָּרָבָה illustrated in Psalm 78:2: "I will open my mouth in a parable פָּרָבָה אֲדַבֵּר, I will utter riddles מִן יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ from of old." The New Testament gives this attention in connection with Christ in Matthew 13:35.

Ezekiel 17:2 again equates the two terms: "O mortal man, put a riddle and propound an allegory to the house of Israel"; in Proverbs 1:6 פָּרָבָה is set into a series which enforces the same points: "That they may understand proverb and parable, the words of the wise and their epigrams." So the Old Testament, and, through the LXX, the New Testament, conceived of this word as capable of expressing a riddle, something hidden.

Juelicher said, "A parable is of the nature of a riddle spoken so that it may not be too easily understood; it is intended to hinder conversion."<sup>11</sup> Thus the root-meaning of פָּרָבָה, "to be like" is intensified into an oracular likeness; "with that background of Old Testament example it is possible to maintain that Jesus intended in His parables

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<sup>11</sup>Adolph Juelicher on "Parables," Encyclopedia Biblica, edited by T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902), III, 3563.

to give a message that only the initiated could grasp, while to the crowd it would be no more than a bewilderment and rebuff."<sup>12</sup>

Thus it is an oversimplification to say that "truth embodied in a tale" via parables must always and only make meanings more clear. Branscomb is certainly unrealistic in dealing with biblical revelation when he says, "a parable, no matter in what form it be, is to illustrate and make clear the thought."<sup>13</sup> He shows that He does not understand the nature of Jesus' self-disclosure when he continues:

Had Jesus not wished outsiders to understand certain teachings, the most obvious method would have been not to have dealt with those particular topics in public discourses.

The  $\frac{1}{7}$   $\frac{16}{17}$  was "eine Redeform die zum Nachdenken, zum Nachsinnen aufordert." But this was only the formal aspect: "in jedem Mashal liegt etwas, das zum Nachdenken herausfordert"<sup>14</sup>—as an instrument of the Mystery.

There remains an examination of the content of the parables which revealed and concealed. The Logion under study identifies this with the Mystery of the Kingdom of God, but does not explain the term:

Die Frage, was das Geheimnis (bzw. die Geheimnisse) der Gottesherrschaft ist, beantwortet das Logion nicht. Doch fuhrt die Beachtung des Zusammenhanges zu ihrer Loesung. Der Gegensatz, von dem der Text handelt, besagt sunaechst, dass die Parabeln

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<sup>12</sup>Walter Bowie, "Parables," Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), VII, 168.

<sup>13</sup>B. Harvie Branscomb, "The Gospel of Mark," Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper, n.d.), II, 78.

<sup>14</sup>Julius Schniewind, "Das Evangelium nach Markus," Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), II, 77.

das Geheimnis wohl in sich bergen, aber so verhüllt, dass es nur auf Grund besonderer Offenbarung gefunden werden kann.<sup>15</sup>

The word  $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\lambda\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  here is unique in the Gospels; throughout the New Testament epistles and apocalyptic literature it does occur with more frequency.

The use of the word here has led to much misunderstanding, particularly in the frequent allegation that here is an evidence of interrelation between Synoptic-writers and mystery-cults. Redlich, for instance, believes

The word was undoubtedly suggested to early Christian communities by the mystery-religions which were flourishing in the Empire. The Christian religion has its mysteries too.<sup>16</sup>

There is little real evidence of such 'suggestion'; the concept rather goes back well into the prophetic era of Judaism, where it was allied to Divine purpose. It appears frequently in apocryphal writings, and in Old Testament dream-interpretations, as in Daniel 2. Piper<sup>17</sup> connects it with Romans 11:25: "the preaching about Jesus Christ, through the disclosure of the secret kept back for long ages, but now revealed..." and I Corinthians 2:6-9..."It is a mysterious divine wisdom that we impart, hitherto kept secret, and destined by God before the world began for our glory." Both are thoroughly Christological passages, connected with God's revelation in Christ. Were we to consider it esoteric in

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<sup>15</sup>Heinrich Bornkamm, "Mysterion," in Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1938), IV, 824.

<sup>16</sup>E. Basil Redlich, St. Mark's Gospel (London: Colet Press, 1950), p. 94.

<sup>17</sup>Piper, op. cit., p. 196.

the mystery-cultic sense, the writer of Ephesians would not say, "so that I may boldly make known the secret of the good news..." (Ephesians 6:19) The cults kept their secrets for initiates and never thought of proclaiming them boldly.

The situation in which this unique phrase occurs is of importance. In the Gospel of Mark we can distinguish four stages in the preaching of Jesus with relative clarity: the popular, the parabolic, the pastoral, and the Passion-teaching.<sup>18</sup> The first stage was clearly over now; the early popularity according to Mark was not here any more. There was now opposition; every step which Jesus took had to be taken in the light of that opposition. His revelation of Himself could not be separated from that; that is why it took parabolic and somewhat esoteric form—it was, in any case, a 'temporary safeguard.' Within this very chapter come the seeds for future revelation, for in vv. 21-23 (the words about the lamp and the light which "people keep secret only to reveal some day") we see that Christ knew that the secret would have to be revealed soon.<sup>19</sup>

But that was not for now; now, to those outside, all had to be accomplished in parables. After the death and Resurrection, when Christ was no longer near, a new skandalon could replace this Mystery, while the Mystery was being made more public. But now the Kingdom had its

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<sup>18</sup>The classification is H. D. A. Major's in The Mission and Message of Jesus, written with T. W. Manson and C. J. Wright (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1938), p. 66.

<sup>19</sup>The insight is from Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, translated by Herbert Danby (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 265.

secret and a secret 'ist eben nicht fuer Jedermanns Ohr!' (Werner)

Die Parabeln vermitteln also wohl ein bestimmtes allgemeines Verstaendnis vom Wesen des Gottesreiches, ohne doch schon sein Geheimnis zu enthuelen. Offenbar bringt auch die einfach sich anfuegende, ohne kuenstlich Allegoristik durchgefuehrte Deutung nicht seine Enthuellung. Das Mysterium des Gottesherrschaft muss darum etwas bezeichnen, was in den Parabeln noch nicht oder hoechstens indirekt ausgesprochen ist.<sup>20</sup>

We can determine much about this secret from the context of Scripture. Thus it is easy to determine what the Mystery was not: it was not a revelation of the nature of life in the next aeon, for that, being future, would not have needed secret presentation, as it would not shock hearers. Nor was it an apocalyptic utterance of the coming Kingdom of God; from Mark 1:15 through the Gospel the Evangelist makes it clear that the Kingdom is here, or at hand. And in that is the key to the shock, the great truth that must at this stage find parabolic presentation. It had to do with the relation of the present results of Christ's work to the new era which God was to bring in on earth.

That revelation dealt with the relation of the ways of God to man. It involved the Gospel, the whole teaching of Christ. It speaks also of another aeon, but that aeon has begun to break through, serving the glory of God, revealing:

wie es zugehe im Himmelreich, das ist, in der Christenheit auf Erden; dass Gott da selbst wunderbarlich richtet und wirkt.<sup>21</sup>

So long as one understands  $\mu\epsilon\tau\sigma\tau\upsilon\lambda\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$  simply as teaching and doctrine enshrouded in parables, the true meaning cannot be brought

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<sup>20</sup>Bornkamm, op. cit., p. 824.

<sup>21</sup>Luther, loc. cit.



out: a person is involved, the Person of Christ, and the events surrounding His work; "the mystery of Christ in you" (Colossians 1:27; Ephesians 3:4 and I Timothy 3:16). Piper<sup>22</sup> points out the words of Peter in John 6: 68,69, "you have a message of eternal life" in order to underscore his "to whom should we go?" as he illustrates the fact that Christ's person was the Mystery that brought a message and was thought of as a gift.

That this 'gift' came from Nazareth in the form of an obscure carpenter's son, that He chose for His company the poor of the earth (James 2:5) and the sinner, that He adopted those who were once 'no people' (I Peter 2:10)—note the similarity to <sup>2. Mosca?</sup> Isaiah—and made of them God's people, all this was certainly a  $\mu\nu\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\nu$  that had to be enshrouded in secret to prevent understanding among those whose understanding God had by now chosen to darken.

The secret is thus not only the "Kingdom of God." Heinrich Bornkamm elaborates:

Kennen die Juenger die Reichsgeheimnisse, so heisst das: ihnen sind die Augen geoeffnet fuer den Anbruch der messianischen Zeit (Mt. 13:16); sie werden befahigt, auch die Parabeln Jesu anders zu verstehen, als das Volk, da sie ihnen mehr als nur ein allgemeines Verstaendnis vom Wesen der βασιλεία vermitteln, naemlich das im Wort und in der Tat Jesus sich ereignende Hereinbrechen des Gottesherrschaft anzeigen. Diese Erkenntnis ist nicht das Ergebnis ihres eigenen Scharfsinns oder der Lohn ihrer eigenen Leistung, sondern das Geschenk der frei waltenden Gnade Gottes. Das  $\mu\nu\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\nu$  τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ, das den Juengern offenbart ist, ist also Jesus selbst als Messias. Dies Geheimnis wird in der Tat durch die Gleichnisse vermuellt,

not because of difficulty, but, says he, because of simplicity,

denn ein Saemann geht aus zu saen—weiter nichts; und das bedeutet

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<sup>22</sup>piper, op. cit., p. 190.

die neue 'Welt Gottes'.<sup>23</sup>

Knowing that, vv.10-12 apply well also to the Parable of the Four Soils, though (Mark 4:13) it is possible to have the secret and yet need help in the interpretation of parables. The key was not yet complete to the disciples either. As Piper points out, the parables don't exactly disclose the secret, they describe the process<sup>24</sup>—a process not yet completed, not revealed in its entirety to the disciples at that time.

"'Mystery' should not be applied to something which ceases to be a mystery after it has been revealed. Nothing which can be discovered by a methodical cognitive approach should be called a 'mystery.' What is not known today, but which might possibly be known tomorrow, is not a mystery." (Tillich)<sup>25</sup>

Discipleship at this point includes initiation into the Mystery. The nature of discipleship, the division created between men by the revelation of God in Christ, is our next concern.

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<sup>23</sup>Bornkamm, op. cit., p. 824.

<sup>24</sup>Piper, op. cit., p. 200.

<sup>25</sup>Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 109.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TWO TYPES OF HEARERS OF PARABLES

Jesus said, "To you is given ( ) the Mystery," implying to His disciples that to them revelation came in a special manner. For the revelation of God causes a division between men. "Gottes Wort macht lebendig, aber es toetet auch, es kann erretten, aber auch verstocken."<sup>1</sup> There is a double aspect to the same Word. "So he has mercy on anyone he pleases, and hardens the heart of anyone he pleases" (Romans 9:18). The Word makes life and death. In the Old Testament this is clear from Isaiah 28:13 where the 'death' aspect shows itself:

So the word of the Lord will be to them  
Rule by rule, rule by rule,  
Line by line, line by line,  
A little here, a little there--  
That when they go on their way, they may stumble backward,  
And be broken, and snared, and taken.

And Jeremiah 9:29:

"Is not my word like fire,  
Is the oracle of the Lord,  
"Or like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"

A classic expression in the New Testament is Hebrews 4:12:

For the message of God is a living and active force, sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing through soul and spirit and joints and marrow, and keen in judging the thought and purposes of the mind.

We are concerned with the positive aspect, the Gift in revelation, for the chosen ones. The word used is *δέδοται* : "Das Passiv um-

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<sup>1</sup>Gunther Dehn, Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn (Berlin: Furchs-Verlag, 1940), p. 95.

schreibt den Gottesnamen"<sup>2</sup>—the idiom implies God; the Secret of the Kingdom is to be thought of as given, revealed, not earned or acquired. Chrysostom thinks of this given-ness as 'a grace bestowed from above'<sup>3</sup> and Luther says, "The Spirit gives it to you, that you not only see and hear, but know with your heart and believe."<sup>4</sup>

This 'giving in parables' is consistent with Luther's view of revelation. It begins in God:

Nach der Schoepfung ist Gott 'nackt' wie es Adam war. Nach der Suende zeigt sich Gott in der Verhuellung durch seine Werke und Einrichtungen, die er so gewollt hat...In Christus sehen wir das Herz Gottes, aber lebendig in einem Menschen und verhuellt in seinem Fleisch.<sup>5</sup>

These words in Mark 4 were directed to contemporaries who saw the man, but were blinded by His flesh. Teaching in parables excluded such:

Marcus aber spricht Marc. 4:33 "Christus habe darum durch Gleichnis zum Volk geredet, auf dass sie es moechten vernahmen, ein jeglicher nach seinem Vermoegen: wie reimet sich das mit diesem, das Matth. 13:13,14: "Er redet darum durch Gleichniss, dass sie es nicht vernahmen: "Das muss freilich so zugehen, dass Marcus will sagen: die Gleichnisse dienen dazu, dass sie grobe Leute ausserlich fassen, ob sie wohl diesselbigen nicht vernahmen..."<sup>6</sup>

The greatness of the gift brings itself into bold relief in the exclusion of the blinded: various pictures have been presented for this.

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<sup>2</sup>Joachim Jeremias, Die Gleichnisse Jesu (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1947), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>John A. W. Haas, "Annotations in the Gospel According to St. Mark," The Lutheran Commentary (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1895), III, 71.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 71-2.

<sup>5</sup>Erich Seeberg, Christus: Wirklichkeit und Urbild (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1937), p. 427.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Luther, Saemmtliche Werke (Erlangen Ausgabe, 1827), XI, 95.

The most familiar is the pillar in the wilderness that guides some and blinds others, or the shell with the kernel that, though the shell is obvious to all, reveals the worth of the kernel only for those to whom it is opened. The same word removed 'those outside' further from understanding.

This parabolic form for revealing the gift was consistent with the goodness of God: "When persons with weak sight come out into sunshine, their eyes become dimmer than before, and that defect is in no way attributed to the sun, but to their eyes";<sup>7</sup> the blinding effect is gone from parables, for now disciples can see.

The light that were else too bright  
For the feebleness of a sinner's sight.<sup>8</sup>

Taylor uses an illustration for the kind of revelation in obvious or explained parable, the image of Truth as Sais, which, according to legend, had to be veiled, because naked perception of its brightness meant sudden death.<sup>9</sup>

This concept of the double-aspect of revelation rules out the familiar suggestion by Dodd:

That He desired not to be understood by the people in general, and therefore clothes His teaching in unintelligible forms cannot be made credible on any reasonable reading of the Gospels.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>John Calvin, Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, translated by William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 1949), II, 108.

<sup>8</sup>Campbell Morgan, The Parables and Metaphors of our Lord (New York: Revell, 1943), p. 17.

<sup>9</sup>William Taylor, The Parables of Jesus (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1886), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1935), p. 15.

To contend thus is the same as claiming that Jesus was hardly more than a 'humanitarian rabbi' (Stonehouse), and this is vastly different from the evangelists' views. He was rather the living Revelation of God, the Word that divides, sharper than any double-edged sword. He by His life, His death, and before it, His teaching, divided men into two groups, the groups having representatives in Mark 4: *οὗ περιῆν αὐτὸν οὐτὶ τοῖς δώδεκα* and *οὐτὶ τῶν ἄλλων*. What were the requisites for inclusion in each group? What constituted membership, and what were the qualifications?

First, the intimates, the disciples, "those who were with Him with the twelve." The antithesis is sharp: Christ was selecting that group who would later dispense the secret:

The right way for a man to think of us is as Christ's servants, and managers authorized to distribute the secret truths of God. (I Corinthians 4:1)

while the others were not even to know the secret, much less dispense it.

The New Testament sharpens this antithesis in many places. "Every-one who listens to this teaching of mine and acts upon it" (the men who build on rock) Christ contrasted with "anyone who listens to this teaching of mine and does not act upon it" (the men who build on sand, Matthew 7:24-27).

"Anyone who is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30)—there is no middle ground, it is an either/or; Peter implies this distinction in his question: "Master, do you mean this figure for us or for everybody?" (Luke 12:41). Paul, in his passage on speaking in tongues writes (I Corinthians 14:21,22), "This ecstatic speaking is meant as a sign not to those who believe but to unbelievers, but inspired preaching is a sign not to unbelievers but to those who believe."

The Matthaean parallel to the Mark 4 Logion sharpens this division

even more severely: "For people who have will have more given to them, and will be plentifully supplied, and from people who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away." (Matthew 13:12)

We are not to limit these words only to representatives of humanity as they are described immediately in Mark 4:10-12. They do not, for instance, apply only to representatives of the 'Remnant' and to excluded Jews. These are universal distinctions between men according to God's purpose, which involves man's responsibility. Calvin forgets this responsibility when he says, "no other reason will be found for this distinction except that God calls to Himself those whom He has gratuitously elected."<sup>11</sup>

The twelve here are a 'Vorzug der Erwählten'—all those to whom Christ gives the Mystery. They are, as in Revelation 17:14, "faithful followers," the elect of the Lamb, who, with Him, "will conquer."

Their antithesis, οἱ ἕξω, appear in great contrast, as far as revelation is concerned. Instead of being given a secret, now the whole thing is transacted (τὰ πάντα γίνεται) in parable in order that they may not understand. Christ draws the curtain against their understanding, "leaving them in darkness, which they have chosen for themselves." (Irenaeus)

γίνεσθαι ἐν involves 'hingeraten, verweilen, sich befinden';<sup>12</sup> there is no light, because of their lack of responsibility in hearing. It is part of the plan of God to exclude them. They are, in a graphic

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<sup>11</sup>Calvin, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>12</sup>G. Heinrici, "Gleichnisse Jesu," Realencyclopädie fuer protestantische Theologie und Kirche (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1899), VI, 288.

phrase of Piper's, like spectators watching a football game, seeing all that is happening, but not aware of the significance because they do not understand the game or its rules.<sup>13</sup>

Joachim Jeremias' opposing grammatical view arrives at a similar interpretation:

γίνεσθαι ἐν kann an unserer Stelle nicht 'geschehen in' heissen, sondern γίνεσθαι ist hier, wie so oft, Ersatz fuer εἶναι (speziell zu γίνεσθαι ἐν vgl. 2 Kor. 3:7 γίνεσθαι ἐν δόξῃ mit v. 8 εἶναι ἐν δόξῃ). εἶναι ἐν aber ist geläufig zur Beschreibung von Zustände, die wir im Deutschen meist adjektivisch umschreiben. Entsprechendes gilt von γίνεσθαι ἐν. Demnach heisst γίνεσθαι ἐν παραβολαῖς : rätselvoll sein. Mark 4:11b ist also zu übersetzen: 'Denen aber, die draussen sind, ist alles rätselvoll.'<sup>14</sup>

That is equally as exclusive. Some cannot understand the use of any type of teaching if the intention is to conceal truth. Branscomb, we noted earlier, says, "Had Jesus not wished outsiders to understand certain teachings, the most obvious method would have been not to have dealt with those particular topics in public discourse."<sup>15</sup> That is not true to the nature of biblical revelation; for those outside there was not to be simply absence of revelation, but, because of their hardening, revelation was to take judicial form, "et hoc iudicium est in cruce Christi nobis ostensum."<sup>16</sup>

Such is the nature of revelation to τὰς ἐξω ; now, exactly, who are they? Some have tried to make this simply geographical; they

<sup>13</sup>Otto A. Piper, "The Mystery of the Kingdom of God," Interpretation, I, number 2, 192.

<sup>14</sup>Jeremias, op. cit., p. 9

<sup>15</sup>B. Harvie Branscomb, "The Gospel of Mark," The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper, n.d.), II, 77.

<sup>16</sup>Seeberg, op. cit., p. 25.



put Jesus and His intimates in the house or in a boat apart, and then 'those outside' are quite simply excluded physically. That explanation is as unsatisfying as the one which would exclude the common people who heard Him, for this latter would not be true to the fact that the "common people heard him gladly," would not be true to His compassion toward sheep without a shepherd.

Furthermore, the common people had representatives in *οἱ περὶ αὐτῶν οὐκ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν*, for this is no word to an ecclesiola in ecclesia but a word to the Church, die Erwaehlten. The whole New Testament opposes exclusiveness within the new 'Church'; Branscomb is wrong in saying that Mark "totally misrepresents Jesus' attitude to common publicans, sinners, multitudes, babes."<sup>17</sup>

Those outside are the "zufaelligen und beilaeufigen Zuhoeerer," but they are not the victims of cultic exclusion.

Den zuerst Mark 4:11 vorkommenden Ausdruck *οἱ ἐξω* fuhrte Doelger auf den Mysteriensgebrauch zurueck, in dem darunter die nicht Eingeweihten verstanden werden. Und gewiss haette der Ausdruck so entstehen koennen, aber verstaendlich ist er ohne jenes Vorbild.<sup>18</sup>

These listeners, like those in Isaiah, are best represented by their obstinate and obdurate leaders. This is the point of Martin Werner's excellent study disassociating the Pauline and Markan terms of exclusion. He concludes that "Markus angenscheinlich bewusst unterscheidet zwischen dem Volk als solchen und seinen religiösen Fuhrern!"<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Branscomb, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>18</sup>Carl Clemen, Religionsgeschichtliche Erklarung des Neuen Testaments (Giessen: Toepelmann, 1924), p. 235.

<sup>19</sup>Martin Werner, Der Einfluss Paulinischer Theologie im Markus-evangelium (Giessen: Toepelmann, 1923), p. 184.

The people themselves, "like sheep without a Shepherd," have been adopted by Christ, who Himself wishes to be the Shepherd. The distinction is clear in the narrative of the man with the withered hand (Mark 3:1-6).

Calvin calls these "aux reprouvez" because they did not recognize Christ's coming. That way they cannot be equated with the Jewish folk as such (though Paul has a right to do so in a different context in Romans 9-11).

For there is within the Jewish people a Remnant as remarkable as there was in Isaiah 6:13 after the prophet's commission to harden the hearts of the people.

Why are some excluded? Again, as in the Old Testament, they have lost the power to see because they have refused to want to see. God judges them; He does not simply abandon them. They had culpably excluded themselves.

That is why Jesus could pray, according to Matthew 11:25: "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth for hiding all this from the learned and intelligent and revealing it to children."

That is why he could mourn for them, in Luke 13:34: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! murdering the prophets and stoning those who are sent to her, how often I have longed to gather your children around me, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you refused! Now I leave you to yourselves." (Goodspeed) "This people," just as their forefathers at the time of the commission of Isaiah, had failed to see the inner significance of the purpose of God in His revelation.

The "Anti-Semitism" alleged by some to be found in Mark disappears in this light. He did view the people as almost "supernaturally blind,"

but the degree of their blindness was greater only because more was expected of them. That is consistent with the entire attitude of Mark, so that a critic like Montefiore, noticing this consistency, embarrassedly does a virtual about-face on the general critical position and 'paradoxically and whimsically' defends the real Markan origin of 4:11,12.

Indeed, there had come upon these people a judgment as complete as the one which had fallen at the time of Isaiah. Preaching, also in parables, had become a 'deathly, deadly odor' to some, and to others a 'vital, life-giving one.'

(II Corinthians 2:15,16)

## CHAPTER V

### THE WORD TO THE CHURCH IN THE GOSPELS AND TO THE CHURCH TODAY

We now resume the critical problem postponed in the Introductory Note (page 1). While there is little doubt concerning this Logion as far as the text is concerned, there has been a great deal of criticism of the genuineness of the utterance itself. In fact, since the work on parables by Juslicher, a work which almost became normative for modern interpretation,<sup>1</sup> it has nearly become a critical a priori to regard the passage as later Church expression, accurately reproducing the thought of the Church but not the thought of Christ.

There was a distinct reason for postponing till the end this problem which might have been expected to form part of the preliminary discussion. That is this: this paper is treating the matter of the purpose of the parables of the Mystery of the Kingdom of God theologically, not critically; it has set up for itself a different problem. It has actually set out to show that the critical position (arrived at for theological reasons more than any other) is not theologically necessary.

Strauss had foreshadowed Juslicher's view earlier when he wrote:

That Jesus...chose this form in order to conceal the Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven, and so to bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah 6:9ff is only the view, to a certain extent morbid, taken by the Evangelist, who had learned by experience

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<sup>1</sup>Published in 1910 under the title Die Gleichnißreden Jesu.

that the Israelite people on the whole were incapable of appreciating the doctrine of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

This view became so common till recently that one scholar admitted that "a critic who defends this passage takes his reputation in his hands."<sup>3</sup> Then came a complete and sudden change in the picture; the dialectical theology and the movement called neo-orthodoxy, with their frequently Calvinistic emphases on the Majesty, Will, Glory, and Demand of God, opened the way for "theological acceptance" of the passage once more.

Today, instead, the Formgeschichtlicher has received more attention as a school and a method. This method is at least more consistent with itself by providing a simply critical basis. This basis is best outlined by Bultmann:

...ist Mk 4:10-12 eine redaktionelle Bildung des Mk, in der die Ueberleitung steckt, die schon in der Quelle des Mk vom Saemannsgleichnis zu seiner Deutung gefuehrt hatte. In v. 10 wird nach dem Sinn der Parabelrede ueberhaupt gefragt, und darauf antwortet v. 11f. Aber v. 13 setzt voraus, dass nach dem Sinn der eben erzählten Parabel gefragt worden ist. Die Frage in v. 10 muss also in der Quelle etwa gelautet haben wie Lk 8:9. In v. 10 ist auch das urspruengliche Subjekt des Fragens,  $\sigma\epsilon\ \pi\alpha\sigma\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ , erhalten, zu dem Mk das  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\ \rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\kappa\alpha$  gefuegt hat; natuerlich stammt von ihm auch das  $\sigma\tau\iota\ \epsilon\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \kappa\alpha\tau\iota\ \mu\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\varsigma$  s.u.<sup>4</sup>

He terms this a "sekundären Juengerfrage." As was stated above, this paper does not propose to enter into the criticism of "Forms." Admittedly, it is not difficult to see how the Form-criticism scholars reached their conclusion. The chapter has all the earmarks of being a composi-

<sup>2</sup>David Strauss, A New Life of Jesus, authorized translation (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865), II, 348, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Vincent Taylor, The Formation of the Gospel Tradition (London: Macmillan & Co., 1933), p. 80.

<sup>4</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931), p. 351, n. 1.

tion, interrupting, as does the 'little Apocalypse' in Mark 13, the free flow of narrative. The editorial devices common to the 16 chapters of Mark all point to composition here. Rather than to enter into an elaborate discussion of this, we reprint a condensed picture of the structure of the chapter from Die Gleichnisse Jesu by Jeremias:

Wie ist die Stelle zu verstehen? Auszugehen ist von der Erkenntnis, dass der Gleichnisszusammenhang Mark 4:1-34 Komposition ist. Das ergibt sich 1. schon aus den uneinheitlichen Angaben ueber die Situation: nach v. 1. lehrt Jesus die Menge im Boot, und v. 36 nimmt diese Angabe auf: "wie er ist, im Fahrzeug," rudern ihn die Juenger ueber den See. Aber in v. 10 wird diese Situation verlassen, hier ist Jesus auf einmal allein mit seinen Begleitern und den Zwölfen. Wir haben also in v. 10 eine Naht vor uns. 2. Sodann faellt auf, dass die Frage, die in v. 10 an Jesus gestellt wird ("sie fragten ihm nach den Gleichnissen") eine doppelte Antwort erhaelt v. 11f. sagt Jesus, warum er in Gleichnissen redet, v. 13ff. deutet er das Saemannsgleichnis. Nichts deutet in v. 10 darauf hin, dass nach dem Grund gefragt wird, weshalb Jesus in Gleichnissen rede, auch nicht der Plural τὰς παραβολὰς der wahrscheinlich einer der haeufigen generalisierenden Plurale der Evangelien ist (deutsch: "das Gleichnis"). Vielmehr zeigt der Vorwurf in v. 13, darin ist sich die Exegese mit Recht einig, dass die Frage von v. 10 urspruenglich dem Sinn des Saemannsgleichnisses galt. v. 11f zerreisst also den Zusammenhang zwischen v. 10 and v. 13ff. Dass in der Tat v. 11f. ein Einschub in einen älteren Zusammenhang ist, wird durch das einleitende καὶ ἔδειξεν αὐτοῖς (v. 11) bestaetigt, das eine fuer Mark. typische Anreihungsformel ist (2:27; 4:21,24; 6:10; 7:9; 8:21; 9:1). v. 11f ist also von Hause aus ein selbstaendig ueberliefertes Logion und muss zu-naechst ohne Ruecksicht auf den jetzigen Zusammenhang exegetiert werden.<sup>5</sup>

Much of that ground has been covered in the preceding pages; with some of it we agreed, particularly with the fact that Mark 4 is undoubtedly a composition.

It is for different reasons that certain critics had taken their

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<sup>5</sup> Joachim Jeremias, Die Gleichnisse Jesu (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1947), pp. 7-8.

stand. One called this a "theological explanation which the early Church created,"<sup>6</sup> another, "an intercalation of Church teaching,"<sup>7</sup> because the original meaning of the Parable of the sower was lost. Still another explains, "Mark's theory of parables, a theory derived partly from early Christian experience in evangelism and partly from the ironic oracle in Isaiah 6:9, 10, where the prophet looks back upon his own frustrated ministry and views it as the result of divine intention."<sup>8</sup> Dibelius says it 'presupposes the Cross.'

The simple critical problem of the composition of the chapter as presented in the Jeremias quotation certainly warrants serious consideration, however. The problem of the boat, the private teaching interspersed, the editorial devices, have vexed scholars. Some of them strain the situation so much that they have the disciples rowing out into the lake with Jesus to hear the private interpretation so that no one will hear beside themselves, then returning for more teaching!<sup>9</sup> All this to preserve the idea that Mark 4 is a consistent narrative and no composition.

The complicated critical problem involving theological presuppositions we have tried to face in this thesis. In a sense we may be thankful to critics for helping us draw our lines of purpose, for efforts to

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<sup>6</sup>B. Harvie Branscomb, "The Gospel of Mark" in The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper, n.d.), II, 78.

<sup>7</sup>E. Basil Redlich, St. Mark's Gospel (London: Colet Press, 1950), pp. 94-5.

<sup>8</sup>F. C. Grant, Interpreter's Bible (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), VII, 699-700.

<sup>9</sup>A view that goes back to Chemnitz! Quoted in Adam Fahling, The Life of Christ (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1936), p. 300.

abolish the Logion have clearly indicated the motives (fear of the theological consequences) which prompt so many to consider this as "later."

The important point to be drawn from the paper is this: in the light of God's intent in the commission to Isaiah, the nature and purpose of revelation, the context of Scripture, there is little theological warrant for this consideration, and the 'simple critical view' or scientific conclusion that this chapter is a composition is not necessarily to be challenged.

For if Christ did not speak these words at the time of the narration of the Parable of the Four Soils, the theological point is not lost, in that this expresses not only "the mind of the early Church" but, in truth, "the mind of Christ."

This saying also speaks to the Church today. For the Word of the Living God reveals itself and still divides men, as in the commission of Isaiah in the Old Testament, and in the explanation of the purpose of the parables in Mark in the New. It is still God's purpose to harden those who have hardened themselves, to blind those who have refused to see.

And there is still the Remnant. For the people with the disciples to whom this saying is directed represent the new Qahal Yahweh, the New Testament congregation of God. The Word to these representatives was not simply a test of character or a moral test, but involves much more.

For there is for the Church today the lesson of Luke 8:18, spoken in connection with the parables: "Take heed then how you hear"  $\beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\epsilon\tau\epsilon$   
 $\sigma\tau\gamma\ \pi\omega\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\beta\epsilon\tau\epsilon$  and even more, "Take heed what you hear"  $\beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\epsilon\tau\epsilon$



$\tau\acute{\epsilon}$   $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\nu\epsilon\tau\epsilon$  in Mark 4:24, for God in His grace in revelation still has as His purpose to reveal to His Church, in preaching and parable, the Mystery (Colossians 1:27) of the Kingdom of God. He reveals Himself. Blessed is he, says Christ, who is not offended in Him! (Matthew 11:6).

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