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Jesus and the Temple.

BY PROFESSOR DR. D. PLOOIJ, THE UNIVERSITY, AMSTERDAM.

It is certainly a remarkable fact (especially when we assume, as I think we should, that Jesus had been several times in Jerusalem during His ministry) that not until the last time did He come into conflict with the authorities of the Temple. From that time the two leading parties—however they may have differed in other respects—are united in their efforts to crush Jesus and His influence. When Jesus, on entering Jerusalem, was hailed with Hosannas by the Galilean pilgrims and a part at least of the Jerusalem population, and when by His Cleansing of the Temple He assumed the right to act as one who comes in the name of the Lord (Mt 21⁹), both the Chief Priests and the Scribes ask Him whether He does not hear what the children in Jerusalem are crying (Mt 21¹⁶); and both the Priests and the Scribes ask him in what capacity He does 'these things,' and who has given Him the right to act in this way (Mt 21²³). And after that we read again (Mk 14¹) that both the High Priests and the Scribes are pondering upon the best way to get hold of Him and to put Him to death. When Judas comes to Gethsemane to betray Jesus, he comes charged by the High Priests and Scribes and elders (Mk 14⁴³); in the palace of Caiaphas, in addition to the High Priests, there are representatives of the Scribes; and in the Sanhedrin, which finally condemns Jesus to death, the two groups are united in passing sentence.

Before that time the priestly nobility had paid not the least attention to Jesus and His work. On the other hand, the Pharisees and the Scribes had for long resented the way in which Jesus transgressed the Law and its commandments. This sudden, sharp reaction proves that with His Cleansing of the Temple Jesus had hurt the priestly leaders of the nation in what seemed to them central for the existence of Israel. As Caiaphas expresses it, 'it is preferable that one man should die for the people, instead of the whole nation being destroyed' (Jn 11⁵⁰). So far the situation is entirely clear.

Equally clear, however, is it that this sharp reaction was Jesus' own intention and was deliberately provoked by Him. Before the incidents at Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16^{13ff.}) there is in the conduct of Jesus not a single trace of any destructive intention with regard to the Temple. Exactly similar is His attitude with regard to the Law. Jesus is never *negatively* revolutionary with regard to the Temple.

On the contrary, the lepers healed by Him on the way to Jerusalem are ordered by Him to show themselves to the Priests (Mt 8⁴, Lk 17¹⁴). This is exactly the attitude of Jesus towards the Law and towards the Pharisees: He acknowledges the Pharisees and Scribes as sitting in the seat of Moses; 'so do whatever they tell you' (Mt 23³). This, of course, is not all. If Jesus had taught nothing but what the Scribes and Pharisees taught, if He had sanctioned nothing else but the traditional cult in the Temple, then a conflict would not have occurred. Both those who, for instance, in the Sermon on the Mount found nothing new, asserting that there are Talmudic and Rabbinic parallels for all of these sayings, and those who, perhaps referring to the Old Testament prophets, could explain the conflict with the priesthood merely as a misunderstanding, misrepresent the grave significance of the conflict and its historical importance. It is, on the contrary, a proof of the positive contents of the message which Jesus brings, that neither in His relation to the Pharisees nor in His attitude towards the Temple does the negation stand in the front. I do not believe that words like that about 'the tittle and jot of the Law which shall not pass away,' are to be set down to the account of the *Gemeinde-theologie*, as in many theological circles it is the fashion to do. The saying (Mt 5¹⁸) is followed by another (v.²⁰), demanding that our righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and the Pharisees if we are to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. There never was, as far as I know, any Judaic group in early Christianity which could have pretended to supersede the Pharisees in this respect. Accordingly, this indicates that the 'excellence' demanded by Jesus is an excellence of a different kind, on another level: instead of casuistry, however accurately obeyed, the love of God and the love of our brother are to be all-ruling principles for our conduct. This rule supersedes the Law, and accordingly, for instance, the Sabbath has been made for men, not men for the Sabbath; and in every case where help or healing is needed the Law is to be transgressed without hesitation.

But in all the cases which lead to a conflict of Jesus with the keepers of the Law, there are only two which involve a conflict with the leaders of the Temple service. These two cases show that in the *positive* attitude of Jesus there is already latent the

germ of the abolition of the Law as external commandment, as well as the abolition of the Temple and the Temple service as external means of atonement. The reply which Jesus gives to the Pharisees, who rebuke Him because the disciples plucked the ears of corn and rubbed them between their hands and ate them (Mk 2²³), has a double edge: 'Did not David, when he and his comrades were hungry, eat the loaves of the Presence, which, however, no one was allowed to eat except the Priests?' (Mk 2²⁶). That is to say, Jesus contrasts the ritual demand of Law and Temple with the simple necessity of the daily needs of men, and says that the latter surpasses the former. But more decisive still is the reply Jesus gives in Mt 12⁵⁻⁷. The passage is here probably out of its proper place, and seems to belong to the story of a healing on a Sabbath, for instance to the case of the man with the withered hand (Mk 3^{1A}). Jesus says: 'Have you not read in the Law that the priests in the temple are not guilty when they desecrate the Sabbath? I tell you something that is greater than the temple is here. But, if you had understood what it means: I care for mercy, and *not* for sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless.' Again an argument with a double edge. In the first place, Jesus says: If the Temple service is so highly esteemed that this by itself already justifies the breaking of the Sabbath law, viz. in those cases in which the priests kill the victims for sacrifice and circumcise children even on the Sabbath, then I tell you: Something greater than the Temple is here, namely, the claim of mercy. The Law is subordinate to the first of all commandments, that of love. But not only the Law: the Temple also. And then Jesus quotes the passage from Hosea, of which we should not blunt the sharp edge by reading it, for instance, as: 'I wish mercy to be done, not sacrifices brought with impure hands.' We should take the word exactly as Jesus quotes it: 'I do *not* care for sacrifices, but for mercy only.' All this means that Jesus does not negatively oppose either the Law or the Temple. He leaves both undisturbed, until they clash with the simple, but primary commandment of Love.

At Cæsarea Philippi we have the turning-point. And it is evident that Jesus recognized it and accepted it, and that, setting His face to the journey to Jerusalem, He realized that the conflict was bound to come. He says explicitly to His disciples (Mt 16²¹) that 'he has to go to Jerusalem and endure great suffering at the hands of the elders, and High Priests, and Scribes (again the leaders of the two great representative groups in Israel), and be killed.' Both the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, where He

allows the crowd following Him to proclaim Him as the Messiah (though as the Messiah of humility seated on an ass, Mt 21⁴), and the Cleansing of the Temple are evidently meant as a challenge, and were intended to *force* the final public conflict with the Pharisaic leaders as well as with the priesthood. Jesus warns His disciples repeatedly about what is bound to come, and prepares them for the issue of the conflict, which was not doubtful. Whatever His disciples may have thought about what was going to happen in Jerusalem, Jesus was quite sure about it, and wept over Jerusalem, which had always killed the prophets, and would do so again. As a political move the entry into Jerusalem and the Cleansing of the Temple were equally hopeless. The Cross is not a tragedy of which He is the helpless martyr; in the whole story of the Passion there is only one who acts, Jesus: all the others are driven.

Jesus *wished* to destroy the Temple. In this light we have to view the accusation brought against Him before Caiaphas. In Mt 26⁶¹ that accusation runs: 'This fellow declared, I *can* destroy the temple of God, and build it in three days.' In Mk 14⁵⁸: 'I *will* destroy this temple made by hands, and in three days I *will* build another temple not made by hands.'¹ The Markan form seems to be the original, and the accusation is not false evidence in the sense that it was not true that Jesus had said this, but that the accusation was not relevant, because it was not a punishable offence to say so. There were—even in the circles of the extremist defenders of the Law—those who condemned the Temple. And certainly Jesus did not mean by the Temple not made by hands, to be built by Him after the destruction of this Temple, the body in which He was to rise from the dead (Jn 2²¹). If this latter explanation, which is given by the Evangelist, has any meaning, we can explain the word 'body' only in the Pauline sense, as the Church, the body of Christ. Jesus wished to abolish entirely the Temple and the service of sacrifices and all it includes; in its stead a new, spiritual Temple was to be erected, in the sense in which this has really happened, and which is expressed nowhere better than in 1 P 2⁴, 'The Lord is the first, the living cornerstone, on which all those who believe in him shall be built as living stones into a spiritual

¹ In the fragment of the Gospel of Peter the disciples hide themselves for fear of the Jews, because 'we were sought by them as wrong-doers, and as those who wished to burn the temple.' The form of the passage may be influenced by the actual burning of the Temple in A.D. 70, but even so it confirms in its own way the data of the Canonical Gospels.

temple, a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices only, such as are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' In this way also Jn 4^{21ff.} acquires real meaning: the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor at Jerusalem, but the real worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in reality.

Jesus had the courage to destroy all forms, which might suffocate the Spirit, as soon as they tried to govern it: as soon as sacrifice took the place of mercy and a Temple took the place of real prayer. He not only had the courage for it, but by His death on the Cross He made the conflict irreparable: since the Cross no temple can ever take the place of prayer, no sacrifice the place of mercy. And whenever they try to do so, they are condemned beforehand. However tenacious the tradition may have been, both of Law and Temple, they are powerless since the Cross of Jesus; they may struggle against the Spirit still, but they have been conquered.

But the Cleansing and the condemnation of the Temple was not a capital offence: in this sense it was a 'false' testimony. Not only had the same judgment been passed by prophets on the Temple and the Temple service (Am 5^{21ff.}, Hos 6⁶, Is 1^{11ff.}, Ps 50^{9,13}, etc.), but there was in Israel an extremist exclusive group, the Essenes, who avoided the Temple as unclean. Their adherence to the Law was unquestioned, it was more rigid even than the loyalty of the Pharisees. But they condemned the Temple as such. Their real attitude is explained by a passage in the Apocalypse of Enoch. There the building of Solomon's Temple is described in the following terms (89⁶⁰), 'And that house (Jerusalem) became great and broad, and it was built for those sheep: (and) a tower (the Temple) lofty and great was built on the house for the Lord of the sheep, and that house was low, but the tower was elevated and lofty, and the Lord of the sheep stood on that tower, and they offered a full table before Him.' Then after a while the destruction of Jerusalem and the Solomonic Temple is described (v. 66): 'And He (the Lord of the sheep) gave them over into the hands of the lions and tigers. . . . And I saw that He forsook that their house and their tower.' Then (v. 66f.): 'they burnt that tower and demolished that house. And I became exceedingly sorrowful over that tower because that house of the sheep was demolished.' Then the return from the captivity is described in v. 72: 'And behold three of those sheep turned back and came and entered and began to build up all that had fallen down of that house. . . . And they began again to build as before, and they reared up that tower, and it was

named the high tower; and they began again to place a table before the tower, but *all the bread on it was polluted and not pure.*'

It is evident that here a group is speaking which condemns the second Temple entirely, *because the Lord is not in that Temple*, and because, theoretically, the Dispersion has not yet come to an end. There are more traces of the same opinion in Israel, but this may suffice. The Essenes are the exponents of this rigid *legal* group which at the same time keeps aloof from the Temple and condemns all sacrifices in it.

This evidently is the reason why the Cleansing of the Temple by itself was not sufficient excuse for putting Jesus to death. Therefore the leaders of the people ask Him (Mt 21²³), on what authority He is acting in this way. The reply will decide. It is only the Messiah, acting with the authority of God, who can cleanse the Temple with full right. It is only when Jesus claims to be the Messiah, that they can put Him to trial and can condemn Him to death. Still Jesus evades speaking the decisive word. He once again appeals to their conscience by asking them what is their opinion about the Message of John the Baptist. Only at the trial itself, on the decisive question of the High Priest, Jesus speaks the words which bring Him to the Cross: He dies as the Messiah, not as one of the Prophets; as the Son, not as one of the servants.

It is curious to see how difficult the disciples of Jesus found it to walk in His footsteps. Jesus ate and drank with publicans and sinners. But Peter needed a special vision before he conquered his hesitation to enter the house of Cornelius (Ac 10²⁸). Being in Antioch, the Gentile-Christian church of Barnabas and Paul, he freely conversed and ate with the uncircumcised brethren, but drew back as soon as the emissaries from James came and argued that the Gentile-Christians must submit to circumcision and the Law before they could be admitted to the communion table. And, with regard to the Temple, John and Peter went up to the Temple at the usual hour of prayer, at three in the afternoon, as if nothing had happened (Ac 3¹), and James the brother of the Lord and leader of the Jerusalem Church continued to honour the Temple as a devout Jew. Even Paul, though freed from the Law and defending this freedom for the Gentile Christians with all his power, compromised and submitted, both for himself and for the *Jewish* Christians generally, to the ritual Law of the Temple (Ac 21^{20ff.}). Only Stephen accepted immediately the word of Jesus, and followed it. In his speech before the High Priest he is from beginning to end on propheti-

cal lines, both with regard to the Law which Israel had always explained and applied wrongly (Ac 7³⁷), and with regard to the Temple and sacrifices, both of which are contrary to the will of God (Ac 7^{42, 48, 49}). Not only in this respect is Stephen a faithful disciple

of Jesus, but also in the prayer before his death: 'Lord, let not this sin stand against them' (Ac 7⁶⁰). This is the best proof that he had received the Spirit of Christ and grasped the meaning of His Word.

National Contributions to Biblical Science.

V. The Contribution of Germany to New Testament Science.

II.

BY PROFESSOR MARTIN DIBELIUS, D.T.H., D.PH., HEIDELBERG.

PSYCHOLOGY had to proceed in a different way in the field of Pauline research. Here the problems arose from the different character of the Epistles; the more of them one considered genuine, the greater number of changes did it become necessary to assume in the theology of the Apostle. Thus there came into being the method of doctrinal systems, by which distinctions were drawn between particular phases in the theological development of Paul. One had naturally to conjecture the reasons which led to these changes in the Apostle. Some scholars felt themselves actually driven to assume a double conversion in the life of their hero—the first which made him a Christian, the second which made him the Apostle to the Gentiles. That conclusion was due to an exaggerated emphasis laid on the subjective elements in the statements of the Epistles; a great deal was traced back to the peculiar character of the Apostle's conversion. What one sought to do was to represent Paul not as a preacher, but as one who had undergone a certain experience; the result was a very 'modern' figure, subject to all sorts of impressions and moods. In all this there was a failure to realize how improbable it was that one could trace a process of development in the Epistles. Of the activity of the Apostle, lasting about thirty years, the Epistles enable us to follow only the bare half, and that the second half; if development there was, it was more likely to have occurred in the first half! This 'subjective' Paul gained perhaps in human interest, but he had less typical significance; he had understood and transformed the gospel from his own peculiar point of view, with the consequence that he had moved ever farther from Jesus and His teaching. The problem 'Jesus and Paul' was thus set in an altogether new light, and with particular

reference to William Wrede's little book on Paul, it occupied in a lively way the attention of scholars in the first decade of the present century.

Although in this way at least some clearer understanding of the problem was gained, the most substantial result of the psychological way of looking at things has still to be mentioned. Its great aim was to bring the personalities of the New Testament near to people living to-day. To that endeavour are due all the advantages as well as all the defects of the psychological reconstruction. None the less, while the scientific gains of this school are doubtful and burdened by many misgivings, its efforts to gain the popular ear were attended with success. Great undertakings in these years served that end—the religious-historical books for the people (*religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher*), the commentary on the New Testament edited by Johannes Weiss, the dictionary *Religion in the Past and Present (Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart)*. On every hand the aim was clearly apparent to interest wider circles in New Testament questions and to make them sharers in the results of modern research. The honourable position which scientific theology holds to-day in Germany was won by great scholars like Albert Hauck and (above all) Adolf Harnack; but it has been maintained and consolidated in no small degree by those who, by the courageous exposition of their methods and results, convinced a wider circle that their theological work had been done honourably and impartially, and had no need to shrink from close examination or from comparison with other sciences.

In this connexion mention may also be made of a severely scientific work which none the less is calculated to be of service in wider circles and has