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978-1-107-66501-9 - The Parables of the Gospels in the Light of Modern  
Criticism: Hulsean Prize Essay, 1912

Laurence E. Browne

Frontmatter

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THE PARABLES OF THE GOSPELS  
IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN CRITICISM

HULSEAN PRIZE ESSAY, 1912

by

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## PREFACE

IN the investigation of the Parables of Jesus the name of Jülicher stands pre-eminent. His work marked a great turning point in their interpretation. It is not without due respect for his learning that exception has been taken to some of the leading principles on which he based his theory. Disagreement with some of his root principles has led to such a complete restatement of the case, that a casual reader might be led to think that the object of this essay was merely to contradict Jülicher on every side. The reality is far from being so. To no writer do we owe so much as to him, chiefly indeed for the masterly way in which he raises the questions, but also for showing to what conclusions one must be led by his premises. Of those who follow him in his theory we should perhaps chiefly mention Weinel, who gives the theory with scarcely any modification in a concise form. For any who might be inclined to doubt the value of Jülicher's work we might quote from a book only published in 1903<sup>1</sup>. Among other reasons for the use of parables the author gives as one that "the parable sets a new value on the truth by making men take pains to find it out." It seems then that Jülicher's pioneer work is needed even to-day to contradict such statements as this which see the

<sup>1</sup> *The Parables of Jesus*, by various authors. Chap. I by G. H. Morrison.

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difficulty of parables in their form rather than in their substance. For direct criticism of Jülicher's work we have used Fiebig's book published early in 1912. He approaches the question merely on one side, and his conclusions sometimes seem to go beyond the evidence he brings forward. The rabbinic parables quoted in this essay are all taken from his book. Spitta's articles on the Parable of the Shepherd in the Fourth Gospel have been found most suggestive and useful; while Lagrange's articles in the *Revue Biblique Internationale* contain some of the wisest criticism of the parables that we have seen. A work by Otto Eissfeldt, *Der Maschal im alten Testament*, has appeared too late this year to be made use of.

It is scarcely possible in such a subject as this to say anything really original. Jülicher did not even claim it for his own work. We are all children of our generation, and the most that we can hope for is, here to express a thought more clearly than it has been expressed before, here to rescue some thought that was in danger of oblivion, here to gather together various strands of thought and weave them into a unity.

It has been a great pleasure to me to be able to make even this small contribution to theological study, amidst the engrossing work of a large town parish.

L. E. B.

CANTERBURY.

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The following are the principal works used :

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(2) *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1912, Heft 2, "Der Talmud, die Gleichnisse Jesu, und die synoptische Frage."
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