THE SCRIBES OF THE NAZARENES.

III. THE REED AND THE COURTIER.

It is written:—
Matt. xi. 7 f.
1 Now when these were going Jesus began to say to the crowds (Dat.) concerning John:
"What did ye come out into the wilderness to behold? a reed by wind shaken?
Well, what did ye come out to see? A man in soft things clad?
Behold, they that soft things wear in the houses of the kings.

24 Now when the messengers of John departed he began to say unto the crowds (τὸν with Acc.) concerning John:
What have ye come out into the wilderness to behold? a reed by wind shaken?
Well, what have ye come out to see? a man in soft raiment clad?
Behold, they that in glorious apparel and luxury exist in the palaces are.

These two parallel passages constitute a notable example of superficial discrepancy in the extant records of the teaching of Jesus. The suggestion that St. Matthew and St. Luke preserve—not the same but—similar utterances is excluded not only by the verbal identity of their reports of the first and part of the second, but also by their agreement as to the time, place and circumstances.

In such a case it is necessary and legitimate to follow Origen 1—with a difference—and find a solution in the deeper meaning. 2 But it must be with a difference. For here and elsewhere it would seem that Origen and his followers were apt to regard the two versions as equivalent, and therefore to disregard the modifications deliberately introduced by St. Luke. Such sophistry warps the mind of the apologist generally, and in particular robs him of the apologia and

1 E.g. in Joh. Tom. x. init. 2 ἤ ἀναγωγή.
the knowledge, which may be derived from a candid
inquiry.

The "deeper meaning" is the cause of St. Luke's depar­
ture from the authority, which else he followed, rather than
a valid solution of the resultant difficulty. His altera­tions
indicate his own interpretation of this and other "hard
sayings," which deserves at least our careful considera­tion.
Steeped in the prophecies of the Old Testament, he, if any
of the elders, was capable of selecting for himself or adopt­
ing from others the Scripture most appropriate to each
oracle of the Lord. The faith of the early Christian Church
in the Scripture and the word which Jesus spake led them
to deliver to their disciples the tradition of the latter, as
they themselves had understood it in the light of the former.
And in this case the bare riddle is preserved side by side
with the secondary form, which has been modified by
primitive exegesis.

There is nothing here to suggest the employment of different
Greek versions. In each Gospel the setting of the Sayings
consists of a Genitive absolute followed by a formula, to
which is appended the definition of the persons addressed
and the subject with which they are concerned. It is
ture that St. Luke has *when the messengers of John departed*
in place of St. Matthew's vague phrase *when they were going.*
But the latter is supported by the words of the command,
which they were obeying, "Going report" 1; and the
former is sufficiently explained as a possible paraphrase
of an ambiguous original, eked out from the context.

In the first Saying the only divergence is the change of
tense in St. Luke: *have ye come out for did ye come out.*
In the second St. Luke rewrites the reply which Jesus gives
to his own question, but follows St. Matthew in his report
of the question itself.

1 Matt. xi. 4; Luke vii. 22.
The thesis of my paper is twofold:—

(1) Jesus wished to suggest to the crowds that, by coming out to Him and to John Baptist in the desert, they had relinquished, consciously or unconsciously, the hopes and ideals of Zealot and Herodian.

(2) The sayings were preserved and remodelled in accordance with Scripture, because they were understood to contain a veiled description of the Son of God and His brethren as they are in Heaven.

The First Saying: The Reed.

The introductory question, What came ye out into the wilderness to behold? is commonly taken as referring to some previous occasion, on which these crowds had gone out to John Baptist. It is, however, more natural to suppose that Jesus refers to their present gathering. After all, John is not expressly mentioned as yet. Even the prophecy, This is he concerning whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger,” despite its familiar application to the Baptist, is indecisive. The description “more than prophet” fits Jesus\(^1\) at least as well as John. The traditional interpretation, which rests presumably on the title of the section concerning John, need not be excluded altogether, provided that the natural sense is also recognized. The crowds came out into the desert to behold both John and Jesus. Neither of them was Reed or Courtier: both were more than Prophet.

What came ye out—now or when John Baptist preached—into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind?

No reply to the second question is given. If there were reeds in the desert referred to, we may suppose that Jesus

answered it with a wave of his hand: "If it is a reed you seek, behold."

But it must be said that there is no certain foundation for this assumption. A wilderness or desert is, to speak by the card, a waterless place, and therefore the exact antithesis of a marsh, which is the abode of the reed. So, for example, it is written in the book of Isaiah: Your God will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened. . . . For in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert . . . in the habitation of jackals . . . a court for reeds and rushes.¹

It is, then, a sign of the Restoration of all things, that the thirsty desert should produce reeds. It is true that the various Hebrew words rendered desert in the Old Testament do not all necessarily bear this narrow sense. But this prophecy underlies the reply of Jesus to John Baptist's messengers; and the original context may, therefore, be fairly adduced as a guide to the exegesis of this complementary saying. It is senseless and futile to look for reeds or courtier in the desert, as the prophet conceived it.

Why, then, does the Lord speak of a reed as a possible or impossible object of their quest? Two answers may be given to this question, according as one prefers to rest upon the Old Testament or to attempt to reconstruct the original Aramaic words employed.

First, then, to examine the figurative value of the Reed in Scripture. It is applied to Egypt as an untrustworthy ally and to Israel as powerless in the hand of Jehovah.

Of Egypt it is written—

Thus saith the Lord God, "And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they take hold

¹ Isa. xxxv. 4 ff. : LXX . . . ἐκέει . . . ἄφαθος καλδούν καὶ ἐλη : Targum תמר וסקל קנה נגמה, "There shall rise up reed and bulrush."
of thee with the hand, thou dost break, and rend all their shoulder; and when they lean upon thee, thou breakest, and makest all loins to shake.\(^1\)

And again—

Thus saith the king of Assyria, "Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him." \(^2\)

Of Israel it is said—

Jehovah shall smite Israel as a reed that is shaken in the water.\(^3\)

And again—

Behold, my servant whom I uphold . . . A bruised reed he shall not break.\(^4\)

The former usage suggests that Jesus convicts the crowds of looking to the arm of flesh to save them, untaught by the fatal consequences of this policy in the history of their race. But the description *shaken by wind* points rather to the latter employment of the figure. Neither is inconsistent with the associations inevitably connected with the Aramaic word, which lies behind the Greek.

We proceed then to attempt to reconstruct the original. There can be little doubt that Jesus employed some form of the root Kānēh—probably Kānyā. If this be so, well might Jesus refer to the Reed as a possible attraction for the crowds. Among the Twelve Disciples was Simon Cananaeus, Simon Kānnā, Simon Zelotes. He at least belonged to the party, who claimed as their own that zeal for God, which distinguished the Heroes of Israel, and arrogated to themselves the title which belonged to their Zealot God.\(^5\) That the dangerous spirit which animated

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\(^1\) Ezek. xxi. 6 f.  
\(^2\) Isa. xxxvi. 6.  
\(^3\) 1 Kings xiv. 15.  
\(^4\) Isa. xlii. 1, 3: LXX: κάλαμον τεθλασμένον ὑπὸ σντρίψει.  
\(^5\) Exod. xx. 5.
this faction of the Pharisees was present among the band of Jesus' disciples is clear from the incident which followed the healing of the demoniac of Gerasa.¹ In the Histories of Josephus ² the Zealots appear first as rebels in the days of the census of Cyrenius, A.D. 6. The revolt was crushed for the time—the reed was bruised; but the flax smouldered, until it burst again into flame and finally consumed the Holy City in 70 A.D.

So Jesus warns this disciple, and all who shared his ambition for the political independence of Israel, against the leaven of the Zealots. The warning is contained in a parable. But they whose watchword was zeal, whose title was Kanna, would understand this reference to the reed which is Kanya and the significant silence and wave of the hand which followed it. Once and again the leaven might work in them. Simon Peter was soon to rebuke the Christ for his cowardice, and to act as if he could and would fulfil God's promise, Sit thou still until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

But Simon Kanna never plays the part to which his surname points. He had exulted in the crowds, which came out into the wilderness, as recruits for the army of his dreams. He, Simon Kanna, would have moulded them and led them against the Romans, who usurped God's sovereignty and appeased His priests with a contemptuous toleration of the Law and the Worship. And behold, the Prophet whom he followed and would fain enthrone, speaks to them and to him. He and his have usurped God's prerogative. God's Elect will have none of their aid or defence. The Zealot is a wind-shaken reed.

But yet a little and there is comfort in store for this Reed shaken by reproof, bruised by the chastisement of the comrades, whom he hoped to enlist under the banner of Jesus

¹ See Mark vi. 52 with John vi. 15. ² Ant. xviii. 1.
the Christ. As Simon, if not as Zealot, he might yet help to establish the Kingdom of Heaven. Human aid is necessary to God and His Christ until the final victory be won: that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying... A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory; and in his name shall the Gentiles hope.\(^1\) He who followed the Fugitive to his doom, no more and no less than his fellows who repudiated the New Model, was an instrument of the Divine purpose. The rejection of the Nation and the Nationalists was the reconciliation of the world.

The original significance, then, of this first Saying may be stated thus: Jesus rebukes the Zealot and those who thought to find in himself or in John Baptist a zealot-leader as one of the Zealots. He probes and exposes their ideals with a play on words. Nevertheless, in the deeper sense there is a hint that these imperfect ideals shall be fulfilled.

But to appreciate this, one must turn to the modifications of the Second Saying about the Courtier, and learn that what is not to be found in John Baptist or in Jesus is present and shall be made manifest at the last in the glorified Christ who sitteth at the right hand of God.

**THE SECOND SAYING: THE COURTIER.**

In St. Matthew's version, which possesses at least a certain relative originality, the reference to the Herodian or Courtier is plain enough.

*Well, what came ye out to see? A man clothed in soft*

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\(^1\) The Greek version of Isa. xiii. 1 ff., cited in Matt. xii. 17-21, strengthens the promise of mercy to the uttermost; for it has κάλαμον σωτηριμένον ως κατέδεικ, "even though it be—not only bruised but—broken, he will not shatter it."
things? Behold, they that wear the soft things are in the house of kings.

The crowds who came into the desert were perhaps in search of a Zealot—whether or no they found him. But they would not look to find there a leader taken from the Herodian faction. Nor, probably, would they be ready to serve and follow such an one.

But the language is remarkable, and has given rise to successive interpretations of the Saying. Some of them have affected the report and can therefore be reconstructed.

In the first place, it is to be noticed that the word *maːtakos*, that is, *soft*, is a strange one to be used in this connexion. The sense required is common enough in "profane" Greek; but in the Greek Bible adjective, noun and verb are all appropriated to that of disease, sickness or effeminacy. If, however, we may venture to reconstruct the Aramaic original, we can readily see why the word was pressed into this new service. The Saying ends with *kings*, that is, *Malke*. What translator—especially one who shared the belief of his contemporaries in the efficacy of the original sounds—could resist the obvious assonance? What better apparel could there be for the courtier than the *malaka*, which were redolent of the royal presence and of the houses of the *malkē*?

And if the *kings* were not strong enough to suggest the proper Greek equivalent of *the soft raiment, my messenger*, that is *Malaki*, follows below to enforce their appeal for some recognition of the root *MLK*.

Its premature recognition in the word *malaka*, afterthought though it be, secures a perfect antithesis. The crowds came to see not wearers of *malaka*, but *malaki*—God's messenger. In early days, when Christian missionaries spoke Greek and Aramaic indifferently, such echoes would be noted and prized.
But this is not a matter of sound only, signifying nothing. Even in St. Matthew's report the formula of the answer differs from that of the question, and the difference leads straight to the deeper sense discovered by primitive expositors. The goal suggested is not John Baptist. Did the Lord merely wish to convince the crowds by tender raillery of the futility of trusting to Zealot or Herodian? What was Herodian or Zealot—or Hecuba—to the Christian reader of the record? All Scripture, of whichever Covenant, must be profitable for edification. Let the man in soft things clad be where he will: the Evangelist is concerned with they that wear soft things. A Greek hungry to taste and to impart the bread of life, he knows the degradation of the word malakos, and believes that, consciously or unconsciously, men are always and everywhere seeking God. These crowds which came out into the wilderness are but types for him. They seek not a Wearer of soft things, a Wearer of silks, but a Bearer of sicknesses. Though they might not realize it fully as yet, they had found Him of whom the prophet had spoken, in all the indignity which belied His glory for a season. It is written, He was despised and man-forsaken; a man of pains and acquainted with sickness. And again, Surely it was our sicknesses He bore.

So the Greek translator of Isaiah inferred that the Servant of Jehovah was one who knew how to bear sickness—forein malakian;—and prompted the variation of phrase, which St. Matthew adopted when he wrote, they that wear soft things—forein malaka.

But the rest of the Saying is not obviously appropriate to this interpretation. Not in the houses of kings but there in the desert stood the Wearer of diseases. Already Jesus went about healing all manner of sickness among

1 Isa. liii. 3.  2 Isa. liii. 4.  3 ἐξ ὁλοκληρον μαλακίαν.
the people,¹ and had sent his disciples on the same errand. The inconsistency seems to have attracted the notice of St. Luke. He avoids the phrase which suggested this function of the Incarnate Life.

But it was not bodily sicknesses only which Jesus wore or bore. The Prophet foretold that by his death the Servant should bear the sin of many. And the Evangelist knew that the great object of the Incarnation had now been fulfilled by what seemed the final catastrophe. It is the glorified Christ in the houses of kings, who made intercession for the rebellious—for the sins of the whole world.

The two plurals wearers and kings present some difficulty. St. Luke, as we shall see, took exception to the latter. It might be justified as referring to the angels who surround the throne and accompany the Son of Man at the Parousia; or again, as proper to the allegory. The former is more serious. St. Luke is content to preserve the form because he has avoided the dangerous words. At first sight it seems to exclude the interpretation which we attribute to early Christian teachers. But their ingenuity was able to conquer greater obstacles than this, when they endeavoured to unveil Christ latent in the Scriptures.² It is true that Peter said, There is none other name under heaven given to men wherein we must be saved.³ But St. Paul could speak of himself and his colleagues as the world’s scapegoats,⁴ and as partners in the travail of the Christ.⁵ The Hebrew Jews and the Jews of the Dispersion alike trusted in “the merits of the patriarchs.⁶ And if any reject as Jewish

¹ Matt. iv. 23, ix. 35, x. 1.
² See, e.g., Epistle of Barnabas, the works of Clement of Alexandria and Origen passim.
³ Acts iv. 12.
⁴ 1 Cor. iv. 13; cf. Rom. ix. 3.
⁵ Col. i. 24.
⁶ See Philo, Concerning Curses, ix., and compare Rom. xi. 16, 28.
fables the intercession of Abraham and Jeremiah, warrant may be found for this plural in the fact of the Mission of the Twelve: *He gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all disease and all sickness.*

In the Gospel according to St. Luke the original is faithfully preserved as far as the end of the second question; but the reply becomes, *They that in glorious apparel and luxury exist in the palaces are.* By this paraphrase all difficulties are removed and the spiritual interpretation revealed. The true Herodian is not Jesus here in the desert but Christ in heaven—why seek the living among the dead?

*Soft things,* with their suggestion of human sins, are become *glorious apparel.* For *the Christ once offered to bear away the sins of many a second time apart from sin shall appear ... having offered one sacrifice for sins,* *He sat down for ever at God’s right hand.*

The glorious apparel belongs to God Himself, as it is written: *The Lord is King: he hath put on glorious apparel. He has said,* *My glory will I not give to another.* But the prophets had visions, now of one like a son of man, now of many saints to whom God entrusted His Kingdom. Of the many the Sage said after Daniel: *The just shall receive the kingdom of beauty.* And of the one it is written: *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.* Here at last is the Scripture

1 Matt. x. 1.
2 Heb. ix. 28, x. 12.
3 Isa. xlii. 8.
4 Dan. vii. 18, 22.
5 Sap. v. 16: οἱ δίκαιοι ... λέγουσιν τὸ βασιλείον τῆς εὐφρενέως.
6 Isa. lxiii. 1.
which explained this Word of Jesus, magnifying and not destroying the original reference to Herod the king. If any hope to find in him the deliverer of Israel, let them learn with the Zealot this lesson:—all their heroes are but types of the Messiah who came once as Jesus of Nazareth.

Coming like Herod from Edom,1 another and a greater Hadar succeeds to a higher throne. For he is the true Hadar, glorious in apparel as in name. But the Christ must suffer and so enter into his glory. Therefore He comes from Edom, which is being interpreted the red place of blood. He comes with dyed garments from Bosor which is the Flesh, which He assumed. With the shedding of his blood came the remission of all sins. For Him and for those whom God gave Him, the silks were outworn: by him the sicknesses had been borne away for ever.

The word luxury (τρυφή) soon explains itself. It is the standard rendering of Eden in the Greek Old Testament upon which St. Luke is so dependent. The Garden of Eden is the Paradise of Luxury. There God placed the first Adam 2 in the beginning; and thence expelled him for his transgression. Thither the second Adam returns in a figure, bringing with him the many, whom his obedience justified. So He said to the penitent thief, To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.3

Once more the glorified Christ is contrasted sharply with Christ Incarnate. The second Adam, who is in Luxury, is a quickening spirit, the heavenly man.4 And His glory is reflected in those who wear His image and become like Him 5—the saints of the Church Triumphant.

Existing or subsisting (ὑπάρχοντες) recalls another pro-

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1 The history of the kings of Edom which is contained in Gen. xxxvi. is incomplete; but even there it is written, "And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead."
2 Gen. ii. 15. 3 Luke xxii. 43. 4 1 Cor. xv. 45 ff. 5 1 Cor. xv. 49; 2 Cor. iii. 18; 1 John iii. 2.
phecy and also a saying of the Apostle Paul. The one
endorses its application to the companions of the glorified
Christ; the other, its use of Christ Himself. Both passages
are familiar to Christians of all ages.

Micah said: *Out of thee, Bethlem, shall come forth one
to be governor of Israel . . . and he shall stand and see;
and Jehovah shall shepherd his flock. And in the glory of
Jehovah their God shall they subsist (ὑπάρξεισιν); for now
he shall be magnified unto the ends of the earth.*¹ St. Paul
said, *Christ Jesus, subsisting in the form of God . . . hum-
bled himself. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him.*²

Later and more clearly Jesus repeated this warning
against Zealot and Herodian. Neither had a gospel for the
Nation, which was as truly as these crowds or the followers
of Moses, in the wilderness. They must *beware of the leaven of
the Pharisees and of Herod.*³ For the Zealots cannot be
distinguished from the Pharisees save by one like Josephus,
who, professing Pharisaism, would live at peace under
heathen domination. But the ideals of both parties, National-
ist and Hellenist alike, were destined to be realized in
Christianity.

Shaken once by the wind, which is the Spirit, clad now
in royal robes, the exalted Jesus Christ sits in the Palace
of the great King—the true Zealot and the true Herodian.

J. H. A. HART.

**PISIDIAN ANTIOCH.**

**VI. CHARACTER OF THE ORIGINAL HELLENIC CITY.**

Apart from the few facts mentioned in the preceding
Sections—facts inferred from inscriptions of the Roman
period—the history of the old Hellenic city Antioch is

¹ Micah v. 2 ff. (LXX). ² Phil. ii. 5 ff. ³ Mark viii. 15.