

divine revelation does not rest on merely historical grounds, but involves a judgment of faith; a man must himself have experienced divine revelation to recognize its presence and operation in other religions. 'If the method of Troeltsch,' says Reischle, 'seems to make too high scientific claims, the result is too modest': (1) Christianity is not only relatively the highest existing religion, but absolutely the highest conceivable. 'He who has found in Jesus Christ here salvation, communion with God Himself, and eternal life, has therein experienced the absoluteness of Christianity, and understands how Christianity must carry on world-missions, if it is not to deny itself'; (2) the person of Jesus Christ is not like all individual historical facts relatively uncertain; for, although by historical inquiry only probability can be secured, yet 'he who in faith seizes Jesus Christ presented to him in a living witness, because he is seized by Him, and finds eternal life in Him, knows himself, in spite of all historical mediation, placed in a personal intercourse with the person of

Jesus Christ, and therewith gains a certainty of living reality of this person, which transcends the probability to be gained in the historical critical way.'

The interest and importance of this essay warrants this full outline of its contents. The Ritschlian school is so often misrepresented, suspected, and censured, that it is desirable and profitable for English readers to know what a thinker like Reischle has written, not only as an individual, but as a representative of the school and in its name, on the right method of theology. We are not much given in Britain to the investigation of questions of method. Many theologians seem to work by 'rule of thumb.' And, therefore, besides the importance of the essay as a defence of the Ritschlian school, the subject itself should possess interest. These two reasons seem more than only to excuse, but even to justify this demand on the attention and patience of readers.

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Montrose.

The Unrighteous Steward and Machiavellism.

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COMMENTING upon my recent treatise on 'The Logos in St. John,' which appeared in the February number of the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, some critics, including THE EXPOSITORY TIMES (April, p. 290 f.), have expressed surprise at, and even incredulity in, my statement that, 'as it appears in our printed editions, the New Testament is perhaps the worst edited of all ancient books.' These words of mine, which represent the mature result of long and assiduous studies in the New Testament, can be substantiated by numerous instances of editorial misreadings and misrenderings throughout the sacred text, and I propose here to adduce a fresh illustration.¹ If I select the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward (Lk 16), it is because it forms one of the most vexed questions in the New

Testament,² and then because I was recently treated to a sermon on that text and derived therefrom that kind of pleasure which is often overmingled with annoyance. For the minister, who is widely-read, practical, and very able preacher, strove to have his audience believe that in the parable referred to Jesus holds out the dishonest steward as an example to Christians who should endeavour to spread the cause of the Gospel and the Church even by questionable means. After the spirited sermon I could not help approaching my reverend friend to whisper into his ear the rather in-

¹ Other instances have already been adduced in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES of January last, p. 189 ff., while a surprising number of them will be pointed out in my forthcoming edition of St. John's Gospel and Epistles (London: Nutt).

² 'The difficulty of this parable is well known and the variety of interpretations is very great. A catalogue of even the chief suggestions would serve no useful purpose. . . . The literature on the subject is voluminous and unrepaying. For all that is earlier than 1800 see Schreiber [read Schreier], *Historico-critica explanationum parabolae de improbo oeconomo descriptio*, Lips. 1803. For 1800-1879 see Meyer-Weiss, p. 515, or Meyer, Eng. tr. p. 209' (A. Plummer, *St. Luke*, in the 'International Critical Commentary,' p. 380 f.).

patient question, 'Could you not have selected a better text for your sermon?' to which he replied, 'I have done my very best to smooth away the awkwardness of the teaching.' And truly awkward it is. For here we are asked by the very soundest and most conservative expositors of the New Testament to believe that the keynote of the parable—καὶ ἐγὼ (or κἀγὼ) ὑμῖν λέγω· ἐαυτοῖς ποιήσατε φίλους ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας, 'I also say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the unrighteous mammon'—is an argument *a fortiori*: si laudari potuit ille . . . quanto amplius placent Domini (Augustine; so too Euthymios Zigabenos, Grotius, Corn. a Lapide, Maldonatus, and most subsequent expositors down to this day).—'Hasten to make for yourselves, with the goods of another, personal friends, who shall then be bound to you by gratitude and share with you their well-being' (Godet, in *loco*); 'In this portraiture Jesus does not scruple to use the example of the wicked for the purpose of stimulating His disciples' (*idem, ib.*). In plainer terms: The end justifies the means.—Nor do we improve matters much by reading into the text the less unpalatable and far-fetched meaning according to which 'the steward, however wanting in fidelity and care, showed great prudence in the use which he made of present opportunities as a means of providing for the future [sic]. The believer ought to exhibit similar prudence in using material advantages in this life as a means of providing for the life to come.' (A. Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 380). In this respect Meyer (*Commentary to St. Luke*, p. 226, note, Eng. tr.) is praiseworthy in honestly and candidly disallowing this lame and forced interpretation: 'Also the expedient which many have adopted of maintaining that attention is not directed to the morality of the steward's conduct, but only to the *prudence in itself* worthy of imitation (see Luther, Calvin, Grotius, Michaelis, Löffler, Bleek, and many others) must be regarded as mistaken, as on general grounds it is unworthy of Christ.'

Indeed, it must make a sore place in the hearts of many a Christian to be told that Jesus bids us, 'Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness,' thus lending direct support to that immoral doctrine which we deprecate under the name of Machiavellism, *the end justifies the means*. Happily we can question the grievous insinuation, first because there is no

parallel in the whole life and teaching of Jesus, and then because we can prove that even the present passage is misread. I maintain that Jesus nowhere ever—either directly or indirectly—insinuated or encouraged a Machiavellian doctrine; for the supposed parallel of the Unrighteous Judge (Lk 18¹⁻⁸) is not a case in point: there no commendation of dishonesty is implied. Still less relevant is the case, sometimes referred to, of 15⁸⁻¹⁰ where the woman asks her friends and neighbours to congratulate her for having recovered her lost piece of silver; or the case in Mt 13⁴⁴, where the kingdom of God is likened unto a treasure hidden in the field.

As to our passage under discussion: καὶ ἐγὼ ὑμῖν λέγω ποιήσατε φίλους ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ, ἵνα, ὅταν ἐκλίπη (Rec. ἐκλίπητε), δέξωνται ὑμᾶς εἰς τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνάς, 'And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it hath failed (Rec. when ye are gone), they may receive you into everlasting habitations'—the reading becomes the more doubtful the more closely we examine the verse. For, apart from the grievous imputation of Machiavellism to Jesus, how can we imagine friends receiving us into 'everlasting' habitations? Friends acquired in this world by means of mammon and 'everlasting' habitations are two incongruous and irreconcilable things. As to the context, the immediately succeeding verses clearly imply that we should make *no* friends out of the contemptible mammon: 'He that is faithful in the least thing (that is, in the worthless mammon), is faithful also in a great deal; and he that is unrighteous in the least thing, is unrighteous also in a great deal. If, therefore, ye have NOT (mark the negation *Not!*) been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust that which is true? And if ye have NOT (!) been faithful in that which is another man's, who will give you that which is your own (rather, "mine own")?'

So far, then, the whole moral teaching of Jesus, the internal incongruity of the very passage in question, and the context, forbid us to accept the current interpretation, 'Make friends by means of the unrighteous mammon'; indeed they suggest the very opposite, 'Make *no* friends by means of the unrighteous mammon.' Now that opposite or negative sense we obtain by simply discarding the current punctuation of the editors, which is doubly

wrong and grievous, and reading the passage interrogatively: *καὶ ἐγὼ ὑμῖν λέγω ποιήσατε ἑαυτοῖς φίλους ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας, ἵνα, ὅταν ἐκλίπη, δέξωται ὑμᾶς; εἰς τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνὰς ὁ πιστὸς ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ καὶ ἐν πολλῷ πιστὸς ἐστὶ, κ.τ.λ., i.e.* 'Shall I also

say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it hath failed, they may receive you? In the everlasting tabernacles he that is faithful in the least thing is faithful also in a great deal,' etc.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF HEBREWS.

HEBREWS XIII. 8.

'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever' (R.V.).

EXPOSITION.

'Jesus Christ is the same.'—A new sentence with an aspect behind and before. (1) Jesus Christ, who strengthened your departed pastors to live and to die, is the same also for you. Imitate their faith. (2) Jesus Christ is not Yea and Nay (2 Co 1¹⁰). He changes not, Be not carried astray by novel and shifting doctrines. The ambiguous rendering of *ἐκβασι* in the A.V. (*end*) in v.⁷, and the strange omission of the verb *is* in this verse, led to an entirely mistaken interpretation . . . and by degrees to an alteration of the full stop into a colon at the end of v.⁷.—VAUGHAN.

'Yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.'—The notes of time are two, not (as in the Authorized Version) three. (1) The same to-day as yesterday; (2) the same for ever. (1) The same at this day as in the 'yesterday' of your departed *ἡγούμενοι*; (2) the same in the longest future of time and eternity. Therefore (1) trust as they trusted. Therefore (2) hold fast the faith once for all delivered.—VAUGHAN.

THE clause *καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας* is added to the sentence which is already complete to express the absolute confidence of the apostle: 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day: yea, such a confession falls wholly below the truth: He is the same for ever.'—WESTCOTT.

METHODS OF TREATMENT.

I.

Inconsistency.

By the Rev. C. J. Vaughan, D.D.

We have two words expressive of the same general idea—constancy and consistency. The difference may be defined as tenacity of purpose and tenacity of plan. Either term is applicable to Christ. He was constant in that having made the rescue of man His aim, He never swerved from it.

He was consistent in that He was tenacious of His plan, and that plan was seeking the race through the individual. He dealt with human need in detail, not in a grand philanthropic manner. To be the Saviour of the world He began by being the Saviour of one or two—by touching here and there the innermost part of a single human being. And afterwards He caused the record of it to be so written that any one in distress may find Him in His Word. He has not ceased to feel and help. He is the same for ever. He challenged His generation to deny the consistency of His life; and nothing impresses us more than the unity of the representation of Him given by many different writers. He is the same in childhood, youth, manhood; in all the circumstances of life. and He is still the same, the same in sympathy and in love.

We are not so; Scripture, history, experience prove the inconsistency even of the saints. Prophets warn against it. Christ tells the Parable of the Patched Garment—the parable of inconsistency.

1. Who is consistent all through? We set an object before us. We may be constant in purpose. Are we consistent in plan? (1) In thought. We profess to count all things but loss that we may gain eternal life. Yet who does not attach too much value to things seen? Who can indeed think of death as the gate to immortality? (2) In speech. What worldly estimates! What uncharitable judgments! Are they consistent with His service? (3) In life. Every one is conscious of such inconsistency, known only to God and the heart.

2. The motives of inconsistency are various—fear of the world, love of the world, desire to show versatility or to attract others by showing that they need not be ascetics. But all inconsistency