

of Paul's chapters two definitions of the Christian ideal blend—'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God'; John makes Jesus stake the future on the 'other Paraclete.' These texts represent all schools of New Testament thought. Indeed, the New Testament is just 'the book of the Spirit.' It is not necessary to repeat the old proofs that in it the 'Spirit of

God' and the 'Spirit of Christ' are one, nor to argue that he who has another's spirit and none other is sure to grow really like him. He who receives God's Spirit becomes Christ-like and God-like. This third notion of true manhood is synonymous with the other two.¹

¹ C. Ryder Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Society in its Historical Evolution.*

The Parable of the Unrighteous Steward.

BY FREDERICK EDEN PARGITER, M.A., FORMERLY JUDGE OF THE HIGH COURT, CALCUTTA;
AUTHOR OF ART. 'PURANAS' IN THE *ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS.*

SERMONS and discourses have often been delivered on the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward (Lk 16¹), but none that I know of has seemed really to fathom his conduct, and I venture to put forward an explanation of it, which some insight into the devious ways of unscrupulous men, gained through twenty-five years' magisterial and judicial experience in India, has suggested. I set out the parable, quoting from the Revised Version with inverted commas, and inserting remarks and comments to elucidate the meaning of the various incidents.

'There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he was wasting his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, "What is this that I hear of thee? Render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward." And the steward said within himself, "What shall I do, seeing that my lord taketh away the stewardship from me? I have not strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed."' He had lost his position because of dishonesty and embezzlement, and no one would employ him. He was absolutely 'broke.' The only livelihoods open to him were manual labour and begging. He had led a life of respectability and ease, hence he was physically unable to do manual work, and he could not face the shame of begging. He thought a while and then decided—'I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they (the debtors) may receive me into their houses.'

The account required of him would have shown as income (1) all the money and goods he had received, and (2) all debts of money and goods

outstanding due to the estate; and as expenditure (a) all payments made rightly by him, and (b) the amounts spent that he could not justify or account for and so had wasted (embezzled). He did not, however, apparently trouble himself to go through all his papers and draw out that account fully and correctly, but took a summary course. 'And calling to him each one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, "How much owest thou unto my lord?" And he said, "A hundred measures of oil." And he said unto him, "Take thy bond (Greek 'writings,' that is, 'account'), and sit down quickly and write fifty." Then he said to another, "And how much owest thou?" And he said, "A hundred measures of wheat." He saith unto him, "Take thy bond (account) and write fourscore."'

He asked all those who were in debt to the estate to say how much their several debts were, and each one made his admission. Their admissions may have been correct or may have been understatements, but this question is immaterial, because he did not dispute over that and just accepted them as accurate. (If their admissions were understatements, this does not alter the following exposition, but only aggravates his and their conduct.) Instead, however, of taking from them their personal accounts accordingly, he proposed to them to write out that they owed less than they admitted. He thus offered each debtor a substantial reduction of liability. He himself was 'broke,' yet it still lay in his power to do them a seemingly good turn, and his proposal suggested to them that he was taking upon himself the liability for the difference between what they

admitted and what he told them to write down—an extra liability (besides his own embezzlements) which mattered nothing to him, because he was ruined in any case, whatever the amount of his defalcations. To them his proposal looked like a handsome and advantageous offer, dictated by magnanimously friendly feeling on his part. They naturally did not refuse that relief, and so falling in with his proposal (which the word ‘quickly’ suggests that he rather hurried them into, without giving them time for reflexion) they wrote out their accounts, falsely understating their debts.

The full significance of his conduct comes out when we examine the position he had thus created. He had induced all the debtors to write out and sign false and fraudulent accounts. They had thus put themselves into his power, and he could use his power to serve his own ends, that is, he could blackmail them. If they should try to resist his demands, he could hand them up to the lord for false and fraudulent acts, and not only would they be liable to be punished criminally, but also their characters would be blasted. They had all joined in a wholesale scheme of fraud and involved

themselves in his defalcations. He could thus live upon them thenceforward. He could oblige them to receive him into their houses and support him. He had turned his own ruin into a means of deliverance for himself. By conduct that seemed so generous on his part and so advantageous to them he had inveigled them into a position that was disastrous for them and beneficial to himself.

His lord came to know somehow or other what he had done. ‘And his lord commended (praised) the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely (astutely).’ He praised the steward’s astuteness, and no wonder, for the scheme was an extraordinarily clever piece of rascality, a masterpiece ‘of unrighteousness.’ One cannot but admire the steward’s amazing ingenuity, while reprobating his utter villainy. Certainly ‘the sons of this world (those who live only for this world or age) are for (or towards) their own generation wiser (more astute) than the sons of light’—because they are bound by no scruples. They not only possess all intellectual faculties equally with the sons of light, but they can also use their faculties in unprincipled ways wherein the latter cannot compete with them.

A New Edition of the Syriac New Testament.¹

BY PROFESSOR A. R. S. KENNEDY, D.D., UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

THE issue of the first complete critical edition of the New Testament in Syriac is an important event in the history of Biblical scholarship. The Peshitta, it is true, can no longer be described, as it was by Westcott, as ‘the earliest monument of Catholic Christianity,’ while as an aid to the textual criticism of the Gospels it must now give first place to the ‘Old Syriac,’ as represented by the famous codex from Mt. Sinai and the somewhat later Curetonian manuscript. Still, the Peshitta, or Syriac Vulgate, remains an important historical witness to the text of the New Testament as read by all branches of the Syrian Church, and is the gateway through which the student must pass to the study of the older version, and indeed of the whole body of Syriac literature.

To appreciate the importance and value of the

¹ *The New Testament in Syriac*. 7s. 6d. London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1905–1920.

new edition it is necessary to recall briefly the history of the more outstanding previous issues of the Syriac New Testament. The *editio princeps*, as is well known, was prepared by the scholar and statesman, J. A. Widmanstadt, Vienna, 1555, from a MS. brought from the East by a priest, Moses of Mardin.² Of the fairly numerous editions that followed, the Syriac part of the Paris Polyglot (1645) is noteworthy both as the *editio princeps* of the Old Testament Peshitta, and as giving for the first time certain of the New Testament books which are lacking in the Canon of the Peshitta, viz. the Apocalypse and the four minor Catholic Epistles, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude. These had been published a few years previously at Leiden by Le Dieu and Pococke respectively.

² A detailed account—probably from the pen of Dr. Gwynn—of the preparation of this edition was given in the *Church Quarterly Review*, for July 1888, pp. 262 ff.