

rain falls in torrents ; down rush the floods, filling the dry bed of the water-course from bank to bank ; the winds blow with tropical violence : and away goes the house which was built on the loose sand in the dry river-channel that looked so well in the bright summer sun. How many illustrations of this picture one might draw, if he wished, from current events !

A. B. BRUCE.

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THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ST. PAUL,

IN THE SUPERSRIPTION OF HIS EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THE superscriptions of St. Paul's Epistles are a special study. In them the Apostle appears, not so much standing, equipped in full for the task lying before him, as starting, like a racer eager for the race. He cannot, with cool conventional exactitude, hold himself in, within the lines of customary commonplace, until the formalities of designation and salutation are hurried over. He is quivering with restrained emotion in every fibre of his moral being. His mind is not only full to the brim : it is gushing up and running over. The overflow laves the astonished reader. But his astonishment rises into admiration when he notes that the ideas thus lavishly poured forth are among the richest that ever welled up in the mind of the Apostle. The superscription of the Epistle to the Romans is peerless for its wealth of theological idea.

Verse 1.—*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.*—KING JAMES'S VERSION.

*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle,*

*having been set apart to God's gospel.*—THE WRITER'S REVISED VERSION.

The first word in the superscription of this Epistle is, in accordance with Hebrew, Greek, and Roman usage, the name of the writer, "Paul."

He immediately adds, differentiatingly, "a servant of Jesus Christ." Tischendorf, on the authority of the Vatican manuscript in particular, reverses the order of our Saviour's names, and reads, "Christ Jesus." Certainly without good reason; for not only is the overwhelming majority of external authorities, inclusive of Tischendorf's Sinaitic manuscript, in favour of the *Received Text*; it is likewise the case that, when the two names are used by the Apostle conjointly in the genitive, he almost always collocates them "Jesus Christ;" whereas, when he uses them in the dative, he almost always reverses the order, and says "Christ Jesus."

"Jesus Christ's servant," says the Apostle. But instead of "servant," Schrader and Rilliet use the word "slave." Wordsworth, Conybeare, Hodge, and Darby approach the same translation: they render the expression "a bondsman," or, without the article, "bondsman of Jesus Christ." And so Bishop Colenso, "a bondman of Jesus Christ." Very unhappily, as we conceive; for slavery and bondage suggest ideas of degradation and compulsory service. The Apostle was no slave, even to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is no slaveholder. Slavery is not of the essence of servitude or service. It is only an accidental and ignoble phase of a relationship that is far more generic than itself.

It has been disputed whether, in calling himself a

“servant,” St. Paul uses the word to denote what he was, in common with all other Christians, in his relation to Jesus, or, specifically, to denote what was his peculiar relation to the Saviour, in distinction from that of the majority of other Christians. A precise line, we suspect, cannot be drawn between the generic and specific spheres of the word’s reference. It is not the differentiating peculiarity of any particular class of Christians to be Christ’s “servants.” Even those who are the least of the little ones in the Church are “the servants of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> They “serve the Lord Christ.”<sup>2</sup> All those who intelligently and in sincerity “say that Jesus Christ is *Lord*,”<sup>3</sup> acknowledge, in the very act of saying what they say, that they are his *servants*. Lordship and service are correlates. And in proportion, therefore, as men are characterized by submission to Christ’s will, and devotedness to his work, are they, whatever their social position, more or less intensively and emphatically, “servants of Jesus Christ;” just as Moses of old was intensively and emphatically “a servant of God.”<sup>4</sup> With a corresponding emphasis was Abraham a “servant of God.”<sup>5</sup> So were Joshua,<sup>6</sup> Elijah,<sup>7</sup> Hezekiah,<sup>8</sup> and many others, inclusive of all Jewish kings, prophets, priests, in general. So, with supreme intensity of emphasis, was Jesus Christ Himself “the servant of God.”<sup>9</sup> From first to last of his mediatorial career, He took the will of his Father as his own will, and surrendered his entire energies to do the work which his Father gave Him to do. “My meat,” said He, “is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eph. vi. 5, 6.<sup>2</sup> Col. iii. 24.<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 3.<sup>4</sup> 1 Chron. vi. 49; Dan. ix. 11.<sup>5</sup> Psa. cv. 6, 42.<sup>6</sup> Judges ii. 8.<sup>7</sup> 2 Kings ix. 36.<sup>8</sup> 2 Chron. xxxii. 16.<sup>9</sup> Isa. xlii. 1; lii. 13, &c.<sup>10</sup> John iv. 34.

“A called apostle.” The two words should undoubtedly go together, although the Peshito Version has separated them, introducing, indeed, the conjunction between them, “called, and an apostle.” Theodore, too, apparently had regarded them as standing apart. And J. C. Herzog would likewise separate them; but, instead of regarding the word “called” as standing apart, he would connect it with the preceding expression, thus, “a called servant of Jesus Christ, an apostle.” Both methods of interpretation, though possibilities, are unnatural and violent.

Wycliffe had misunderstood the Vulgate Version of the phrase.<sup>1</sup> He renders it “clepid (*i.e.*, yclept) an apostle.” The rendering is reproduced by Heinfetter, “denominated an apostle.” And, what is far more wonderful, it is reproduced by Jowett, who certainly, however, did not, like Heinfetter, regard the word “called” as equivalent to “named.” His version is, “called an apostle.” Dr. Hodge’s version is the same. It is very objectionable. It would be much better to adopt the paraphrastic version of Erasmus, reproduced by Tyndale in the first edition of his New Testament, “called unto the office of an apostle.” It would be better still to accept the briefer version of Tyndale, in his 1534 edition, “called to be an apostle,” a version followed by the Geneva, and adopted by King James’s translators. But there is an ambiguity in both of these renderings which is not in the Original. He who is simply “called to be an apostle” may have his apostleship as yet only in the future. *The Greek expression imports that the writer was actually in the office of the apostolate.* The word rendered *called* is an

<sup>1</sup> *Vocatus apostolus.*

adjective<sup>1</sup> qualifying the noun "apostle," so that the expression means, and must mean, "a called apostle." And yet the translation is only approximatively exact, inasmuch as the English word "called"<sup>2</sup> is a participle, not an adjective. The Vulgate translator, working with the Latin language, had the same difficulty to encounter. The nicety of the Greek original is untranslatable.<sup>3</sup> St. Paul was desirous, it seems, that the Roman Christians should understand that he had not run on his apostolic errand unsent. He had not intruded into the office, or assumed it to himself. He had been divinely called, and he was not disobedient to the heavenly summons. Whether, at the time he employed the word "called," he had actually in his mind those ecclesiastical malcontents who represented him as an ultroneous apostle, or at best one that was man-made; or whether, without intentional reference to those malcontents, he desired to assert his perfect equality, as regards Divine vocation, with those other apostles of the Lord who had been called to the office ere our Lord's ascension, we cannot tell, and need not conjecture. It is enough that we know that the expression claims for his own apostleship a Divine origin.

The call of Paul to the apostolate dates from the supernatural event which occurred while he was on his way to Damascus. It was involved in the answer which was given by our Saviour to the earnest interrogatory of the stricken man, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The answer was, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must

<sup>1</sup> κλητός.

<sup>2</sup> Corresponding to κληθείς, or κεδημένος.

<sup>3</sup> Erasmus felt the difficulty. "*Valet autem ferme perinde quasi vocaticius apostolus, sive vocatione apostolus.*"

do.”<sup>1</sup> The Lord revealed through Ananias “what he must do.” “Go thy way,” was the Lord’s injunction to Ananias, “for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”<sup>2</sup> After he was baptized, he straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”<sup>3</sup> Thus he began his apostolical work. On going to Arabia,<sup>4</sup> he would doubtless prosecute it, while he would improve the opportunity of getting ripened, in more or less of voluntary seclusion, for the full discharge of its responsibilities. And when, at length, he went up to Jerusalem, he gave himself unreservedly to the work which was the supreme and central duty of the office.<sup>5</sup> During this his first visit as a Christian to Jerusalem, his commission was renewed, and the sphere within which he was in the main to exercise it was specified: “Depart; for I will send thee far hence, unto the Gentiles.”<sup>6</sup> He was not disobedient. He went to Tarsus,<sup>7</sup> and thence to Antioch;<sup>8</sup> and while he was in this latter city, his commission was once more formally renewed. “The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”<sup>9</sup> It was thus emphatically true that St. Paul was a *called* apostle.”

The Apostle proceeds to say of himself, *Having been set apart to God’s gospel*. This expression, while constituting a third clause in apposition with the name “Paul,” stands, nevertheless, in special intimacy of connection with the immediately preceding clause, even as that immediately preceding clause stands in a similar relation to the one that goes before. As it was spe-

<sup>1</sup> Acts ix. 6.      <sup>2</sup> Ibid. ix. 15.      <sup>3</sup> Ibid. ix. 20.      <sup>4</sup> Gal. i. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Acts ix. 27-29.      <sup>6</sup> Ibid. xxii. 21.      <sup>7</sup> Ibid. xi. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. xi. 26.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. xiii. 2.

cially in the way of being "a called apostle" that St. Paul was "a servant of Jesus Christ," so it was specially in the way of "having been set apart to God's gospel" that he was "a called apostle."

The expression, "God's gospel," is preferable as a translation to the articulated expression, "the gospel of God," inasmuch as there is no article in the Original. The particular *good news of God* referred to stood out, of itself, so prominently to the mind of the gospel-loving writer, that he dispensed with the usual phraseological sign of demonstration. The omission does not seem to be wonderful, nor is it perplexing, although it is all but unique in connection with the New Testament usage of the word *gospel*. We say, "all but unique," for Revelation xiv. 6 may be regarded as a similar instance. In all other passages—2 Corinthians xi. 4 and Galatians i. 6 being of course excepted—the word "gospel" is accompanied with the article. In consequence, however, of the omission of the article here, Van Hengel proposes to interpret the expression as meaning "a godlike gospel."<sup>1</sup> It is an unhappy proposal, though emanating from a distinguished exegete. The expression, though anarthrous, is evidently quite parallel in import with the articulated phrase, "the gospel of God."

Chrysostom had no difficulty with the omission of the article, but he thought that the expression meant "good news *concerning* God." He thus regarded the word "God" as being in what grammarians call *the genitive of the object*. But the special contents of the second and third verses seem to make it evident that the word *God* is here in *the genitive of the subject*,

<sup>1</sup> *Eene Goddelijke heilmaar.*

which, in this instance, is equivalent to *the genitive of the author, or the cause*. "The gospel of God" is "the gospel that has emanated from God." It is the good news which He has communicated to men concerning Jesus Christ.

The Apostle says of himself that he "had been set apart to this gospel." The expression is *multum in parvo*. It means that the Apostle had been divinely set apart from all other occupations, for the purpose of devoting his entire energies to the furtherance of the gospel. He was to give himself "wholly" to the work of proclaiming, explaining, defending, and enforcing the good news concerning Christ.

When was he thus devoted to the service of the gospel? Expositors differ. Some suppose that the reference is to that Divine purpose which is spoken of in Galatians i. 15, "When it pleased God, who *separated* me from my mother's womb."<sup>1</sup> Others think that the reference is to the actual historical accomplishment of the purpose in the occurrence of his conversion.<sup>2</sup> Others, that the reference is to the still later event that is recorded in Acts xiii. 2, in which we read that "the Holy Ghost said, *Separate* me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." This last opinion, if held in such an exclusive way as to oust from consideration the realities on which the other two opinions are based, cannot be commended. It is too slavishly dependent on "letter" as distinguished from "spirit," deriving, as it does, almost all its cogency from the use of the word "separate." As to the other two opinions, they are but the two sides—the obverse and the reverse—of one single reality, bearing

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Jer. i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See Acts ix.



the insignia and superscription of the Lord. The historical fulfilment of the Divine purpose is the obverse of the coin, on which we naturally fix, in the first place, our attention. The Divine purpose itself we consider in the second place. It lies behind.

Some have supposed that in the word, which we translate *having been set apart*, or *separated*,<sup>1</sup> the Apostle makes a glancing allusion to his former *Pharisaism*. The word *Pharisee* certainly means *Separatist*. And the critics referred to, inclusive of Erasmus on the one hand and Paulus on the other, have imagined that the Apostle, as if with a holy phraseological play, intimates that he was now a Pharisee in the best sense of the word—a Christian Pharisee. The pun is far too small and artificial to be entertained for a single moment.

Verse 2.—(*Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.*)—KING JAMES'S VERSION.

*Which he promised afore through his prophets in sacred writings.*—THE WRITER'S REVISED VERSION.

The relation of this second verse (bracketed, as will be observed, in King James's Version) to the preceding and succeeding context is matter of dispute among expositors. We shall consider it, after we have passed under review the details of the phraseology.

*Which he promised afore*, that is, *which gospel God pre-announced to men in a promissory form*. King James's translators have rendered the verb as if it had been a pluperfect. In this peculiar rendering they followed in the wake of the Geneva Version (though not of its first edition in 1557). The Geneva Version,

<sup>1</sup> ἀφορισμένος.

again, followed in the wake of Beza, who, in his turn, followed in the wake of the Latin Vulgate. The version of Tyndale, followed by Alford in his New Testament, and by the "Five Clergymen," is undoubtedly the correct one, "he promised afore," or "before."

Moses Stuart says that "our English Version, *promised afore*, does not give the proper meaning of the word." He would render it "declared," or "published in former times." And even Ewald gives the same translation.<sup>1</sup> But both critics had lost sight of the difference between the conventional import of the word as used in the active voice, and its conventional import as used in the middle. The compounded verb<sup>2</sup> occurs indeed nowhere else in the New Testament, but the uncompounded verb<sup>3</sup> occurs frequently, and always in the middle voice; and it never means simply *to publish* or *declare*, but invariably either *to promise* or *to profess*.<sup>4</sup>

When the Apostle says that *the gospel was promised in former times*, he doubtless had reference, though perhaps somewhat indefinitely, or without conscious discrimination, to its subject-matter. It was not so much the Divine news, as news, that was promised all along the Old Testament dispensations; it was rather the great reality itself, the great mediatorial work, which, on its historical eventuation in the dawn of the New Testament times, gave occasion to the New Testament form of the gospel, and constitutes the animating "spirit" that gives all its moral vitality and potency to the news. The promise of this great reality was itself an invaluable form of gospel, though a

<sup>1</sup> *Vorverkündete*.

<sup>2</sup> προεπαγγέλλομαι.

<sup>3</sup> επαγγέλλομαι.

<sup>4</sup> See Mark xiv. 11; Acts vii. 5; Gal. iii. 19; Titus i. 2, &c.

simpler and grander form was realized when the promise was fulfilled in historical fact. The promise was the life-blood of the ancient dispensations : the preaching of that, which at length fulfilled the promise, is the life-blood of the new.

It is of some importance to notice that it is in the way of pointing out what was distinctive of the ancient dispensations that the Apostle speaks of *the "promise" of the gospel*. Hence it would be unwarrantable to assume, with Melancthon, that *promise* is the distinguishing peculiarity of the gospel.<sup>1</sup> There is, it is true, an element of promise that is essentially involved in the gospel. There is, in other words, an element that looks forward, and points with its fingers to blessings to come. There is in the gospel, and in all good news, a bud of promise for the future. But there is likewise something which, in these latter days, is retrospective, ever earnestly pointing back to that great event, accomplished for all ages, which constitutes the "meritorious cause" of human salvation, and of everlasting life to those who are "dead in trespasses and sins." This retrospective feature must now be for ever one of the gospel's prominent characteristics.<sup>2</sup>

The gospel was promised afore by God "*through his prophets*." Many of the older editors of the Greek Text regarded the pronoun<sup>3</sup> here employed as intensive.<sup>4</sup> Robert Stephens, for instance, and Beza, the Elzevirs, Mills, Wetstein, Griesbach, and Scholz. But as we should not have expected, had the statement run in the first person, that the Divine Speaker would have said

<sup>1</sup> "Lex est doctrina præcipiens quales esse nos et quid agere oporteat, . . . at Evangelium est promissio quæ pollicetur nobis remissionem peccatorum gratis," &c.—*Comm. in loc.*

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4; 1 Tim. i. 15, &c.

<sup>3</sup> αὐτοῦ.

<sup>4</sup> αὐτοῦ.

“through *my own* prophets,” instead of “through *my* prophets,” modern editors have with the greatest propriety treated the pronoun as unintensive <sup>1</sup>—“through *his* prophets.” This is the reading of Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles; and, in consequence of fineness of literary instinct, it was the reading of Bengel in his day, and of Erasmus too in his.

The prophets, through whom the gospel was divinely promised, were “God’s prophets.” They were under the peculiar influence of God, and spake “fore” and “for” Him. The corresponding Hebrew term, which no doubt floated in before the mind of the Apostle, has no essential reference to prediction, but graphically represents the up-welling, from a hidden source, of thoughts too deep for the mind of man to originate. As, however, the most wonderful of these thoughts had actually reference to what was yet future, during the currency of the Old Testament dispensations, the ideas of prediction and prophecy did, as a matter of fact, to a large extent coalesce.

It was “in sacred writings” that the predictions of the prophets, containing the promises of God, were handed on from generation to generation. Thus, upon the whole, would we render the Apostle’s anarthrous expression. It is the most literal rendering. We might suppose, indeed, as do Fritzsche, Krehl, and many others, that the phrase, though indefinite in form, is definite in intention, so that it may be translated, as in King James’s Version, in “*the*” *holy scriptures*. Or we might suppose that the plural phrase, “holy scriptures,” is used as a kind of proper name, like our English expressions, in the singular number, “holy

<sup>1</sup> *ἀνορθ.*

scripture," and "holy writ." Or we might take Paulus's interpretation, "in holy scripture passages." But it is better and simpler to abide by the most literal translation, and the most indefinite interpretation, "in sacred writings," or "scriptures." As there is often a charm in the definite as opposed to the indefinite, so there is frequently just as great a charm, though of another kind, in the indefinite, as distinguished from the infinite. Meyer, Van Hengel, Lipsius, and many others, agree with us in the omission of the article in translation.

It is worthy of observation that this is the only Scripture passage in which the word "holy" is applied to the "scriptures." It has been seized upon, however, with avidity, as an appropriate diacritical characteristic of the contents of "the volume of the book;" and hence nothing is more common in the nomenclature of the Churches, than the expression, "the holy scriptures," "the holy Bible." So far as the Greek adjective<sup>1</sup> is concerned, it is certainly as applicable to *writings* as to *men*. It conventionally corresponds to our word "sacred," and is applicable to all objects that are regarded as having a special moral connection with the "adorable" God. The corresponding Hebrew adjective has a similar width of applicability. In living English, on the other hand, there is a tendency to let the word "holy" side off and appropriate itself to the designation of right moral character, as existing either in the Creator Himself or in the creature in his normal relation to the will of the Creator. If this tendency go on, perhaps by-and-by the word "sacred" may supplant the word "holy" as appropriately qualitative of

<sup>1</sup> ἅγιος. See ἅγιος, ἁγιάζωμαι, &c.

such *things* as *writings, places, days, &c.*, which may have, in the minds of men, a special relation to God.

Why should the Apostle say of the "gospel," to which he was consecrated, that it was "promised by God in former times, through his prophets, in sacred scriptures"? Chrysostom thought that the Apostle had in view to take off the edge from the objection to his doctrine, that it was a novelty. "He shews," says the great oratorical expositor, "that the gospel was older than the Greeks." Theophylact echoes this idea; and it has been re-echoed down through the ages by many succeeding expositors. Grotius caught it up, and handed it on.<sup>1</sup> Others, such as Fritzsche and Jowett, suppose that the one aim of the Apostle was to exalt the gospel as a thing of unspeakable moment and majesty. And the same thought had, to a partial extent, gleamed into the mind of Ambrosiaster.<sup>2</sup> Olshausen thinks that it must have been the Apostle's aim to shew how closely the Old Testament is linked to the New. Köllner thinks that his design must have been to shew that Christianity is not only as Divine as Judaism, but is also its complement. Others have other ideas. But it is vain to spur conjecture. The Apostle has not told us his special aim, and it is needless to guess it. Neither need we assume that it was an aim consisting of but one filament of thought or feeling. The words of the verse may have been dictated in the midst of a multitude of thoughts, embracing not a few of the items which have been laid hold of by expositors, and others to boot. We can easily conceive that the heart of the great Evangelist would be

<sup>1</sup> "Nolite novitate percelli," &c.

<sup>2</sup> "Ut quam vera et magnifica sit promissio, ex his videretur: nemo enim rem vilem magnis precursoribus nunciat."

glowing when he realized that the Divine evangel, to which he had been set apart, was the burden of all anterior ages, and that the burden-bearers, who carried it in their "earthen vessels," and in whose rear he came, constituted a long and brilliant succession of the most illustrious of mortals.

As to the contextual relation of the verse, expositors have very generally recognized that, in the superscription of this epistle, thought urges thought, like wave rolling in upon wave. The exuberance of the writer's mind is something wonderful, and his powers of formal grammatical construction seem to have been taxed to the uttermost by the *embarras des richesses*. Hence the appearance of parentheses in his composition.<sup>1</sup> And this second verse has been very generally regarded as an obvious specimen. The line of thought, in other words, has been considered as suspended at the close of the first verse, and resumed at the commencement of the third verse, so that the first words of this latter verse, "concerning his Son," are viewed as grammatically knitted to the last words of the first verse, "God's gospel," thus intentionally and directly exhibiting the subject-matter of the Divine good news. This conception of the construction was entertained by Melancthon.<sup>2</sup> It was approved of by Beza, who, in all his editions after that of 1556, enclosed the second verse within brackets. He was followed in this typographical fencing by the English Geneva Version, and thence by King James's Version, where it stands erect to this day, and also by many editors of the Greek text, such as Courcelles, Leusden, Mills, Wetstein, Schöttgen,

<sup>1</sup> "Notabile *παρενθέσεως* patheticæ exemplum."—Wolle, *De Parenthesi Sacri*, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Commentarii*, 1540.

Griesbach, Scholz. With good taste Bengel threw out the clumsy brackets, but he believed none the less in the parenthetical relation of the verse. Almost all subsequent editors have omitted the brackets, but Heumann regards the omission as "a great mistake," and is positive that the verse was an interlineation introduced by the Apostle when he was reading over the letter before despatching it.

Theodoret, characterized by keen exegetical intuition, saw nothing of a parenthetical nature in Verse second. He supposed that the initial expression of verse third, "concerning his Son," is to be grammatically construed with the verb "he promised afore;" so that the gospel of God, according to him, is represented as something that was promised in Old Testament times "concerning God's Son." This interpretation has commanded the suffrages of a very large group of expositors, inclusive of such names as Tholuck, Rückert, Meyer, Fritzsche, Reithmayr, Philippi, Van Hengel. But it has been rejected by Reiche, Winzer, Moses Stuart, Maier, Oltramare, Baumgarten-Crusius, Umbreit, Vaughan, &c., who, whatever theory they have of parentheses—and in this they differ—agree in regarding the words "concerning his Son" as connected with the concluding expression in the first verse, and as thus exhibiting the subject-matter of "God's gospel."

There is a third mode of construing the initial expression "concerning his Son." It consists in uniting it to the concluding words of Verse second: "in sacred writings concerning his Son." This was apparently the interpretation of Augustine,<sup>1</sup> and it seems to have

<sup>1</sup> *Inchoata Expositio.*



been the idea of Erasmus; for in his translation he obliterates the commonly inserted comma between the words "in sacred writings" and the words "concerning his Son," while he interposes commas both before and after the united expressions. Assuredly it was the construction approved of by Tyndale, whose translation is, "in the holy scriptures that make mention of his Son."

Which of the three constructions embodies the idea of the Apostle? That of Tyndale, Erasmus, and Augustine, has not a little to commend it. The omission of the article in connection with the word "scriptures" would at once be accounted for, and the current of the discourse would run on unobstructed. Nevertheless, the solemnity of the expression, "sacred writings," or "scriptures," makes it most natural to refer it indefinitely to the sum-total of the Old Testament Bible. Of the other two constructions, that which throws Verse second into a parenthesis, cuts asunder, in a too violent fashion, the expression "God's gospel" from the words which exhibit its subject-matter, "concerning his Son." And as we should never, without a decisive reason, postulate the existence of an absolute parenthesis, we come to the conclusion that, in the Apostle's mind, the expression "concerning his Son" connected itself with the verb "he promised in former times." The only objection of any weight that can be alleged against this construction is the apparent incongruity of the idea *that the gospel was promised concerning our Saviour*. Strictly speaking, it was not the gospel, or the good news itself, but the subject-matter of the news, which was promised. But the whole perplexity resolves itself

into what is common enough in the composition of those who have not studied, or who do not regard, the "wisdom of words" and the "excellency of speech"—a little tanglement of phraseology. It is common enough in New Testament diction. But in this case the tanglement may be disentangled thus: the Apostle had been "set apart to God's gospel, which, under the form of a promise concerning his Son, he announced afore, through his prophets, in sacred writings."

JAMES MORISON.

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STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XI.—THE LATER TEACHING.

LOOKED at on the surface, the conflict of Jesus with the Jews seems but an ignoble waste of the noblest Being earth has known. And in many respects it was what it seemed. The antagonists of Christ were poor enough, especially when compared with Him. Shallow, selfish, short-sighted men; bigots in creed and in conduct; capable of no sin disapproved by tradition, incapable of any virtue unenjoined by it; too respectable to be publicans and sinners; at once too ungenerous to forgive sins against their own order, and too blind to see sins within it—they remain for all time our most perfect types of fierce and inflexible devotion to a worship instituted and administered by man, but of relentless and unbending antagonism to religion as the service of God in spirit and in truth. And to think of our holy and beautiful Christ, his heart the home of a love that enfolded the world, his spirit the stainless and truthful mirror of the Eternal, his mouth dropping with every word pearls of divinest wisdom—to think of