

*THE PRE-CHRISTIAN JEWISH INTERPRETA-
TION OF ISAIAH LII., LIII.¹*

MEN are so accustomed to read the Scriptures in the light of their own peculiar creed that it is often difficult to comprehend how differently Biblical passages may be interpreted by persons of another faith. It is, therefore, not surprising that Christians in general should find it hard to understand how pious Jews can peruse the 53rd of Isaiah without seeing that its predictions have been accomplished in the sufferings of the Son of man.

The believer in Christ, however, cannot fail to attain a deeper comprehension of "the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1) by seeking honestly to understand the difficulties of the Jew. A fuller comprehension of the significance of the great prediction of Isaiah will lead him to exclaim, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out!" (Rom. xi. 33.) It will inspire him also with a deeper sympathy for that people who are the kinsmen of Christ according to the flesh, and, perhaps, assist in leading some of them to understand "the mystery of Christ," whose "gospel" was designed to be "the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16).

The title "servant of Jahveh" (or, when Jahveh Himself speaks in His own person, "My servant") is frequently employed to designate Moses, the great lawgiver (Deut. xxxiv. 5 and throughout the Book of Joshua, etc.); Joshua, the victorious captain (Josh. xxiv. 29); David (Ps. xviii. 1;

¹ The following article was delivered as a sermon before the University of Oxford on March 4th, 1888, at the annual lecture on "the Jewish Interpretation of Prophecy," founded by the late Dr. Macbride, Principal of Magdalen Hall (now Hertford College), Oxford. It was necessary, however, in order to avoid undue length, to omit in delivery several passages which are here given.

xxxvi. 1, etc.; Jer. xxxiii. 21, etc.); Job (ch. i. 8; ii. 3; xlii. 8); and other heroes of the Old Testament. It is applied in a lower sense to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon (Jer. xxvii. 6), and to other conquerors whom the Lord used as instruments to execute His wrath.

In the second portion of the Book of Isaiah (ch. xl.-lxvi.) that expression is employed in three distinct significations. It is used of all Israel, the "Israel according to the flesh," sometimes even in passages where the nation is severely blamed for its blindness and hardness of heart, in spite of its solemn professions of allegiance to Jahveh (ch. xlii. 18, 19).¹ It is used of the faithful in the nation, the "Israel according to the spirit" (ch. xliv. 1, 2). Lastly, it is employed to indicate the great personal Servant of Jahveh, the Messiah (ch. xlix. 5, 6), who is distinguished from the people to whom He belongs, and in the midst of whom He works. As Delitzsch has well observed, "the conception of the servant of Jahveh is as it were a pyramid, whose base is the people of Israel as a whole, whose centre is Israel according to the spirit, and whose apex is the person of the Mediator of salvation who arises out of Israel."

We purpose on the present occasion to survey the explanations current among the Jews, especially in pre-Christian times, of the great prophecy which speaks of the

¹ It is utterly preposterous to refer such a passage as Isaiah xlii. 18, 19, to Christ, although such an exposition is given in many of our popular commentaries. The student should consult especially the commentaries of Delitzsch and Cheyne upon the passage in question, in which the absurdity of such an exegesis is exposed. But it is difficult to make the crooked straight, or to get persons once accustomed to such expositions out of the ruts into which they have once fallen. It is really sad to see how many passages are perverted, and how even those who ought to know better have stuck fast in the thick mire of tradition. Thus the passage in Zech. xiii. 6, which refers to the self-inflicted wounds of a miserable idolator, mad on his idols, is still persistently referred by some to the wounds of Christ on the cross. See my *Bampton Lectures on Zech.*, pp. 426 ff. The latter is a case in which popular evangelical hymns have unduly warped the mind. Men, as Archbishop Whately often noted, claim to have the command over words, but words often in reality get the command over them.

Suffering Servant of Jahveh in the character of the Sin-bearer (Isa. lii. 13—liii.). Such a survey will lead us to see that the prophecy was an enigma, which could not be understood in the days before Christ, but which has been solved by the sufferings, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Him who was the Son of man and the Son of God.

The earliest reference to this special prophecy of Isaiah is to be found perhaps in Daniel xii. 3, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." The phrase "turn many to righteousness" is in the Hebrew closely akin to the clause in Isaiah liii. 11, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," or "procure righteousness for many," "make many righteous."¹ The connexion of the phraseology used by Daniel with that employed in Isaiah has been generally recognised by the best critics. The difference between the two passages is that in Daniel the plural is employed, in Isaiah the singular. The difference is significant, but, even if it be granted that the passage in Daniel is based on that of Isaiah, it does not by any means follow that the allusion in the Book of Daniel is to be regarded as explanatory of the former. We are not warranted in drawing the conclusion that Daniel identified the faithful teachers of whom he speaks, who after days of tribulation were to attain to glory, with the righteous Servant of Isaiah, although the latter is similarly represented after days of sore distress as receiving his just recompense of reward.

Scholars are fully aware that the LXX. translation of the Hebrew Scriptures is, in many respects, like the Targums, a commentary on the sacred text. Hence it would be im-

¹ Compare the phrase in Daniel, **וְיִצְדִּיקוּ אֲרֵבָיִם** with **בְּרֵאשִׁיתוֹ יִצְדִּיק צְדִיק** (Isa. liii. 11). The occurrence in both passages of the hiphil of **צָדַק** combined with the mention of **הָרַבִּים** "the many," which is such an important word in the latter passage, can scarcely be fortuitous.

portant, if possible, to discover the interpretation which the LXX. put upon the prophecy in Isaiah lii., liii. The LXX. translators considered the 42nd chapter of Isaiah (almost universally regarded by the ancient interpreters as Messianic) to refer to the nation of Israel. In the opening verse of that chapter, they have with the freedom of paraphrasts introduced the names "Jacob" and "Israel" as explanatory severally of the titles used, "My servant," and "My chosen."¹ No such explanatory gloss has, however, been introduced into any part of the 52nd and 53rd chapters. But an examination, however, of the LXX. rendering of that prophecy leaves us in the dark as to the interpretation they put upon its terms. Much of it might, indeed, fairly be interpreted in a Messianic sense, and was actually so expounded by Philip in his discourse with the eunuch. But there are clauses in the Greek version which can scarcely bear such a meaning, and which lead us to suspect that the translators themselves were more than ordinarily perplexed as to the sense of the prophecy.

The Book of Wisdom contains several allusions to the prophecy of Isaiah liii. That apocryphal work, too little read and studied in the present day, was probably composed about a century prior to the Christian era, and abounds in passages of considerable force and beauty. One of its striking peculiarities is, that although it teems with references to persons and places noted in patriarchal and Israelitish history, and abounds in quotations from the Sacred Writings, all mention of proper names, or of books, is carefully avoided. The name of Israel does not occur in the book,

¹ Luther took a similar liberty in introducing the name Christ into his German translation of Daniel ix. 25, 26. And in our ordinary English Bibles supposed to be (though very erroneously) "without note or comment," we have many a similar instance in the headings of the chapters and pages. Thus we have Jeremiah xxxi. 22 erroneously stated as a passage in which "Christ is promised," although the Biblical student knows full well that the miraculous incarnation of our Lord is not there alluded to.

although that nation is distinctly alluded to under such designations as "thine own people," "thy sons," "the holy nation," etc.

The author of the Book of Wisdom has copiously introduced into his work phraseology borrowed from the second portion of the Book of Isaiah. The references specially made to the prediction respecting the Suffering Servant of Jahveh are numerous enough to enable us to see the general lines of his interpretation.

The writer introduces the wicked as saying :

"Therefore let us lie in wait for the righteous one,	ch. ii. 12.
He professeth to have the knowledge of God	ii. 13.
And he calleth himself the child of the Lord. ¹	"
Let us see if his words be true,	ii. 17.
And let us try what things will happen in his end,	"
For if the just be a son of God ²	ii. 18,
He will help him and deliver him from the hands of his enemies.	"
Let us examine him with insult and torture,	ii. 19.
That we may know his meekness,	"
And test his patience.	"
Let us condemn him to a shameful death,	ii. 20.
Then according to His own words there shall be respect of Him.	"
Such things did they think and went astray, ³	ii. 21.
For their own wickedness blinded them.	"
And they knew not the mysteries of God, ⁴	ii. 22.

¹ *παῖδα Κυρίου*; compare *ὁ παῖς μου* in Isaiah lii. 13. We cannot, however, render the phrase in the Book of Wisdom as "servant of the Lord," because *παῖς* is in so many passages of that book used interchangeably with *υἱός*. See chaps. ix. 4, 7; xii. 19-21, etc. But the *παῖς Κυρίου* of the LXX. corresponds to the Heb. *עֶבֶד יְהוָה*. The same uncertainty prevails in the N.T. passages (Acts iii. 13, 26; iv. 27, 30). In consequence of the references made in the context of those passages to the sufferings of Christ, of which the apostles had themselves just learned the real significance, the Revised Version has rendered the phrase *τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν*, etc., "his servant Jesus," with a reference in the margin to Isaiah lii. liii., while the Auth. Vers. less suggestively has rendered "his holy child Jesus."

² Gr. *υἱός Θεοῦ*.

³ Greek *ἐλογίσαντο καὶ ἐπλανήθησαν*. Compare the use of *λογίζομαι* in the LXX. of Isaiah liii. 3, 4, 12; and *πλαναόμαι* in Isaiah liii. 6.

⁴ *Μυστήρια Θεοῦ*, the secret counsels of God, like Heb. *דָּבָר בְּ* in Psalm xxv. 14,

Nor hoped for the wages of holiness,¹ ii. 22.
 Nor deemed that there was a reward for blameless
 souls."² "

Speaking later concerning the sufferings of the righteous,
 the author says of God :

"As gold in the furnace hath He tested them, ch. iii. 6.
 He has received them as the whole-offering for a
 sacrifice; "
 They shall judge nations, and shall subdue peoples, iii. 8.
 And their Lord shall reign for ever. "
 They that have trusted in Him shall understand
 truth,³ iii. 9.
 And the faithful in love shall abide with Him. "
 * * * * *
 But though a righteous man be overtaken by
 death, he shall be at rest. iv. 7.
 For honourable age is not the long-timed, iv. 8.
 Nor is it measured by the number of years. "
 * * * * *
 Having become pleasing to God he was loved, iv. 10.
 And (while) living among sinners he was trans-
 lated.⁴ "
 He was snatched away⁵ lest wickedness might
 change his understanding,⁶ iv. 11.
 Or guile deceive his soul. "
 Having been perfected in a short time he fulfilled
 a long time, iv. 13.
 For his soul was pleasing to the Lord; iv. 14.
 Wherefore He hastened [him] away from the
 midst of wickedness." "

etc.; compare the N.T. use of the plural expression in 1 Cor. iv. 1; Matt. xiii. 11; or of the sing. in Eph. i. 9; iii. 3, 4, 9; Col. i. 26; ii. 2, etc.

¹ Contrast 2 Pet. ii. 12.

² Greek ἀμώμων, compare in reference to the righteous (Eph. i. 4; v. 27; Col. i. 22; Rev. xiv. 5); and in reference to Christ (Heb. ix. 14 and 1 Pet. i. 19).

³ Gr. συνήσουσιν ἀλήθειαν; compare ἴδου συνήσει ὁ παῖς μου in Isaiah lii. 13.

⁴ Gr. μετετέθη, the phrase is constantly used in reference to the translation of Enoch, compare Sir. xlv. 16; Heb. xi. 5.

⁵ Gr. ἠρπάγη; compare Acts viii. 39; 2 Cor. xii. 2; also καὶ ἠρπάσθη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸν Θεόν in Apoc. xii. 5. The primary reference here in the Book of Wisdom is to Enoch, but compare also, *quoad sensum*, Isaiah liii. 8 in the LXX.

⁶ Gr. σύνεσω, see previous note ³.

Further on the writer represents the wicked as recognising their folly at last, and speaking thus of the righteous :

" We, the fools, esteemed ¹ his life madness,	ch. v. 4.
And his end dishonourable. ²	"
How is he reckoned among the sons of God, ³	v. 5.
And among the holy is his lot." ⁴	"

It is no wonder that a portion of this remarkable passage from the Book of Wisdom was in early times regarded by several of the Fathers (as Tertullian, Origen, and Augustine), as a distinct prophecy of Christ. It is also natural that such an exposition should have been popular in later times with Roman Catholic theologians. It has been defended even by able Protestant interpreters like Rudolf Stier. These remarkable coincidences, between the trials of the righteous man in the Book of Wisdom and the incidents of our Lord's earthly career, have also led some critics to maintain that the book itself was written subsequent to the Christian era.

But a more careful examination of the details in question is sufficient to refute such hasty assumptions. The untenable nature of such a theory, has not only been exposed by Grimm, but is also fully pointed out by Deane in his excellent edition of that book.⁵ Both scholars have also refuted the ingenious theory of Noack, advocated among us by Dean Plumptre, which would ascribe the composition of the work to Apollos.

"The righteous" one of the Book of Wisdom is throughout a collective designation for the pious in all ages. The

¹ ἐλογιάμεθα, compare previous note ³, p. 368.

² ἄτιμον, compare τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον, Isa. liii. 2.

³ πῶς κατελογίσθη ἐν υἱοῖς Θεοῦ.

⁴ ἐν ἁγίοις ὁ κλῆρος αὐτοῦ; compare ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη, Isa. liiii. 12, and with the ὁ κλῆρος, the LXX. translation αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλοῦς of Isaiah liiii. 11.

⁵ See C. L. W. Grimm in the *Kurzgef. exeget. Handbuch zu den Apokryphen des A.T.*; Leipzig, 1860. W. J. Deane: *The Book of Wisdom*, Greek, Latin, and English, with comm., etc.; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1881.

ideal which the writer had in his own mind is one which, as he does not fail to point out, has been realised, more or less perfectly, in the individuals whose lives and actions are not obscurely glanced at, although all names are carefully suppressed. In the passage already cited, Enoch's short life, the testimony given concerning him in the LXX. translation, that "he pleased God" (Gen. v. 22, 24), and his final translation, are all included in the description of "the righteous one." In refutation of the theory of the Christian origin of the book, it is sufficient to note that the enemies of the righteous one are represented throughout as light-minded lovers of the world, and seekers after pleasure; while the enemies whom our Lord encountered were for the most part the chief priests and the Pharisees. The Book of Wisdom teaches the immortality of the righteous, but not their resurrection. Christianity is, however, inseparably bound up with the fact of the resurrection of Christ, and with the doctrine of the resurrection itself. The death of the righteous one is ascribed in the Book of Wisdom to the eagerness of the wicked to test his meekness by some crucial experiment, and thus to bring to light his concealed hypocrisy. The translation of the righteous one after a short life on earth is, in accordance with the doctrine of Isaiah lvii. 1, described as a blessing, inasmuch as he was thereby removed from out of temptation (comp. 2 Pet. ii. 9), under which he might finally have succumbed. And though the notion that the death of the righteous may be a sacrifice once crosses the writer's mind, there is "not the slightest allusion made to the atoning power of the sufferings and death of the righteous one" (*Grimm*).

These points are conclusive against the notion that the work referred to was the composition of a Christian. It is, however, certain that in several places the writer had in view the prophecy of Isaiah lii., liii. In the description of the righteous one he makes use (as we have seen) of its

phraseology. But his "eyes were holden" that he saw not therein the marvellous picture of the Suffering Messiah. In the *παῖς κυρίου* (the servant of the Lord) of that passage he saw only a delineation of "the Israel after the spirit." He did not regard the prophecy as Messianic.

In the other books of the Alexandrian canon, commonly known as the Apocrypha, no distinct allusion can be traced to the prophecy of the Great Sufferer. The perusal of those books exhibits rather the dying away of the Messianic expectations which filled the hearts of the Israelites or Jews when they returned out of exile to the land of promise. The great Maccabean chieftains were members of the priestly tribe of Levi, and in the day of their success were unwilling to remain in the position of "Judges of Israel." It seemed beneath them to assume the *rôle* merely of an Eli and a Samuel. They aspired to a higher place, and assumed first the position of high priests, and afterwards that of kings. Simon, the last of the gallant band of the five brethren, combined in his person the office of high priest, which he inherited from his brother Jonathan (1 Macc. xiv. 30), with that of prince (1 Macc. xiv. 41). In occupying that position he seems to have been conscious of acting in a manner opposed to the Messianic predictions, according to which the throne of Israel was reserved for the house of David. Hence "the Jews and priests" added to their solemn declaration of their acceptance of Simon as "prince and high priest for ever," the saving clause, "until there should arise a trustworthy," or "reliable prophet (*προφήτην πιστόν*)," because such a prophet was expected to announce the advent of Messiah the Son of David. Strange that the Jews in the day of liberty forgot the sign given by Zechariah, the greatest of the prophets of the Restoration, when he prophesied that "the Branch" which should shoot up from the house of David should "bear the glory," and "sit and rule upon his throne" and be "a priest upon

his throne" (Zech. vi. 12, 13). The crown of the priesthood and that of the kingdom could not be lawfully worn by any individual but the long-expected Messiah.

The unlawful union thus cemented between the offices of high priest and king resulted in the decay of the Messianic hope. The "trustworthy prophet," not Messiah himself, was henceforth the real object of expectation. The Elijah predicted by the prophet Malachi was looked for, in place of the Branch of the House of David. Kings not themselves of the house of David were not pleased to hear that they, or their children, would have to vacate the throne for a scion of a fallen house. Hence the brilliant writer of those days, Jesus the Son of Sirach (or Ben Sira as we prefer to call him), in his eulogies on the memory of righteous men, ignores the Messianic hopes of the prophets of Israel. But he does not forget to recall to mind the great deeds of Elijah, or the hopes which centred round that prophet. Elijah, according to him, is one "who was written of," or "enrolled (*καταγραφείς*) in warnings for special times,"¹ namely, in the warnings uttered by Malachi and Isaiah concerning the season preceding the day of the Lord. Ben Sira had in view not only the "warnings" of Malachi, but also the prophecy of Isaiah in chap. xlix. 6 concerning "the Servant of Jahveh." He ventures to unite the latter with that of Malachi as if it referred to one and the same person. He asserts that Elijah's future work would be (1) "to pacify wrath before fury (*i.e.* to still God's wrath ere it breaks out into fury) and to turn the heart of father to son, and (2) to restore the tribes of Israel" (Ecclus. xlviii. 10). He thus assigned to Elijah a work which was peculiar to "the Servant of Jahveh" or Messiah.²

¹ The translation "ordained for reproofs in their times" (A.V.) misses the true sense of the passage.

² See Dr. G. H. Dalman's very important work, though it is small in extent (pp. 100), *Der leidende und der sterbende Messias der Synagoge im ersten nachchristlichen Jahrtausend* (Berlin, 1888), which is a reprint of several articles in

Thus had the Messiah as the great object of expectation faded from the hearts of the Jewish writers of the post-Maccabean era. The prophecies concerning "the Servant of Jahveh," his sufferings and victory, were interpreted of the sufferings of the righteous, and of their ultimate reward.

The elevation of the priesthood to political power was followed by the increase of irreligion. The form of piety remained, but its spirit had departed. Retribution followed hard in the train of apostasy from God. The nations, or heathen around, began again "mightily to oppress the children of Israel." The hereditary rulers increased in wickedness and cruelty. The holy city became a place of massacre. The priest-kings were deposed; Pompey profaned the sanctuary; and the cursed Idumean race became rulers of the land.

But in that day of sorrow and affliction, the inhabitants of the land began to learn righteousness. The voice of penitence and of prayer was once more heard in its borders. The pious began to express their feelings in penitential psalms. The prophecies of the ancient Hebrew seers were again listened to—those prophecies which spoke of a Deliverer who should spring forth from the old trunk of the tree of Jesse.

In eighteen Psalms (extant only in Hellenistic Greek, but strongly indicative of a Hebrew original), we have a picture of the revived hopes of the pious in Judah. Those Psalms, known by the incongruous title of "the Psalter of Solomon," were probably composed at this era. The profanation of the sanctuary by Pompey, and the retribution meted out to that conqueror on the sands of Alexandria, is not obscurely pointed at in the second of those Psalms.

Prof. Dr. H. L. Strack's interesting magazine *Nathanael* (1886, 1887), a journal specially designed for friendly controversy with Jews. We have derived many suggestions from Dr. Dalman's work.

In the Psalter in question, Messiah and his kingdom once more became prominent. His righteousness was the theme of the poet. "A righteous king" himself (Ps. xvii. 35), Messiah will purify his people. "He will know them that they are all the sons of their God" (xvii. 30). He "will not permit injustice to lodge in their midst, and no man that knows evil will dwell with them" (xvii. 29). He will judge the nations and purify Jerusalem (xvii. 31). "Pure from sin," he will extirpate sinners by the power of his word (xvii. 41). Messiah will divide out the land to the people according to their tribes (xvii. 30) when they shall have been made righteous.

But in that beautiful Psalm not a syllable is spoken about a suffering Messiah. Its doctrine is, however, far in advance of that taught in the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach. There are references to the chapters in Isaiah (xlii. and xlix.) which speak of the acts of "the Servant of Jahveh." The cheering promise of Isaiah that "He shall not fail nor be discouraged" (chap. xlii. 4), is re-echoed, and explained of Messiah, just as in the Targum. Twice in the Psalm rings out the cry, "He shall not be weak" (*οὐκ ἀσθενήσει*, *vs.* 42, 43). Nor will Messiah permit his people to remain weak: "He shall feed the flock of the Lord in faith and righteousness, and shall not let weakness (*οὐκ ἀφήσει ἀσθενῆσαι ἐν αὐτοῖς*) be among them in their pasture" (*v.* 45; comp. Zech. xii. 8). But there are no indications to show that the thought ever crossed the mind of the pious singers of that day that Messiah should atone by His sufferings for the sins of His people, or that they regarded the sufferings so forcibly described in Isaiah lii. liii., to be those of the Lord's Anointed.¹

¹ It is possible that a reference to Isaiah liii. may be detected in the language of Psalm viii. 28: "The holy ones of the Lord are like lambs in innocence in their midst," *i.e.* of the nations of the earth. But if the writer alludes there to any Old Testament prophecy it is rather to Ezekiel xxxiv. The Book of Enoch (chap. xc. 6) describes the pious heroes who fell in the Maccabean struggles

In the great controversy carried on with the Jews as to the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth during the two first centuries of the Christian era many passages in the Prophets of Israel were admitted on both sides to be Messianic. The reference of other passages to the Messiah were stoutly denied; while in some cases Jewish opinion seems to have been greatly divided. Thus in the writings of Justin Martyr we read that even the Messianic character of the passages in Isaiah xlii. and xlix. was called in question by the Jews. There is unfortunately much uncertainty as to the exposition then current among the Jews of Isaiah lii. liii. For while Justin Martyr frequently adduces the passage as a prediction of Messiah, and does not represent Trypho, as in other cases, as disputing that interpretation, he does not distinctly assert that the Jews interpreted it in that manner. Trypho, when overcome in argument, confesses, no doubt, the Messianic character of the prophecy (*Dial. with Trypho*, 36, 89). But no argument can be drawn from such admissions as to the Jewish belief on the subject.

It is no marvel that Israel did not know (Rom. x. 19). If the twelve apostles did not comprehend the meaning of Christ's words when He spoke to them of His approaching sufferings and death, and "the saying was hid from them," and they perceived not the things that were said" (Luke xviii. 34), it is, surely, less surprising that the people of Israel in general did not understand the words of the prophet concerning the Sin-bearer. The life, and acts, and voice of the Great Prophet Himself were necessary to teach the lesson that "Messiah ought to suffer these things, and then to enter into His glory" (Luke xxiv. 26). But before He came in person men were in doubt of whom the pro-

under the symbol of lambs. Therefore if Isaiah liii. be referred to in Psalm viii. 28, it would rather show that the writer understood the prophet to speak of the pious in Israel.

phet spake, and shrank back in horror from the thought that "the Leprous One" of Isaiah was none other than the Christ of God.

CHARLES H. H. WRIGHT.

(To be continued.)

THE MEDIATOR-ARGUMENT OF GAL. III. 19, 20.

THERE are three conditions that appear to us to form a good preliminary test of every offered interpretation of this passage, and we should fain see them applied with all the rigour and consistency of an "Ockham's razor." In the first place, Does the interpretation preserve the internal unity of the passage? In the second place, does it pay scrupulous regard to the writer's aim and object—to the point he wishes to establish? And, in the third place, is it such as to be in perfect harmony with other parts of the reasoning—both coming after and preceding? We do not know if these conditions have ever before been distinctly formulated, but, once enunciated, they commend themselves by their simplicity and their reasonableness; and, if a strict application of them were made to current interpretations, the number of competitors would soon be reduced to a manageable compass. No interpretation ought to be allowed a claim on our attention that transgresses any one of them: every such transgression should be regarded as a sin of the first magnitude, for which no extra merits—however great and fascinating—can really compensate or make atonement.

Let us, then, consider these conditions for a little; and let us take them in conjunction with the interpretation here preferred. And, first, let us inquire, What is the connexion between the members of our text—how do the various clauses stand related? This inquiry should not detain us