

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

them is not impossible, since the grace of God may quicken and call into action new and redemptive forces within us which, if only we are true to them and give them free play, will yet raise us from our low and fallen estate, conduct us into new happier conditions, and so lift us into a new and better life.

SAMUEL COX.

SOME CRITICISMS ON THE TRANSLATION OF
THE REVISED VERSION.

In concluding my Article¹ on the uses of *ὅτι*, I drew attention to a curious text, namely verse 18 of 1 Corinthians ix. This central text is an important one, standing midway in a long argument. Like Janus, it looks backward and forward, connecting what precedes with what follows. It is therefore desirable, if possible, so to render the Greek that the English translation shall fit in with what goes before and with what follows. The correctness of the translation appears to depend entirely upon the selection and adoption of the right use of the particle *ὅτι*. Of the three uses of this particle, namely the *definitive* and the *telic* and the *subjectively ecbatic* or use of contemplated result, only two seem to be admissible here. These two are the *telic*, meaning "in order that one may do so and so," and the *subjectively ecbatic*, which denotes "requiring or making it possible that one should," or "inducing, causing one to do so and so." The question then is, which of these two admissible uses will make the passage yield the best sense; which of them will give such a turn to the rendering of the text, as shall place it in logical touch with the foregoing and succeeding contexts. Both the Authorised and Revised Versions have adopted the *telic* or final use of *ὅτι*, rendering

¹ Vol. iii. pp. 653, ff.

“that I may make the gospel without charge.” As the R.V. has translated the last clause of this verse 18 more correctly than the A.V., its rendering shall be given here: “What then is my reward? That when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel.” It may be remarked here, by the way, that the word *right* very happily expresses *ἐξουσία*.

But what is the meaning of the whole passage thus translated in the Revised Version? Has it any meaning at all?

What is the logic of the expression “my reward is that I *may* preach the gospel without charge?” To make this translation yield sense, one of two things seems requisite: either *may* must be identified with *can* (which may not be, cannot be, as *ὅτι ἔχω θεῖναι* would be required to express that idea), or the word *reward* must be identified with *object* or *design*; which again may not be, cannot be. What is to be done? Is, after all, the definitive use of *ὅτι* admissible here. Or, if admissible, will it import sense? Will it give such a turn to a new translation, as shall make verse 18 a link of harmony between verses 17 and 19? Is it possible, is it sensible, to render thus—“What is my reward? That I should preach the gospel without charge.” Neither possible is it, nor sensible, to make the “preaching without charge” definitive of the “reward:” for in the first place the form or structure of the sentence is against the definitive use of *ὅτι* here, and in the next place, even if such use were admissible grammatically, it would not make the sentence fit in logically. The context, for instance, that follows verse 18, shews plainly enough that “preaching gratuitously” is not in itself the “reward,” contemplated by St. Paul, but a *means thereunto*: his preaching comes to view as a long labour of love, earning and accepting no recompense in the present, but pointing the finger of hope to a recompense in the future. To what recompense in the

future? What reward was before the Apostle's mind, when he penned or dictated the words "What then is the reward that I have in view" (τίς οὖν μοι ἐστὶν ὁ μισθός;)? It was, we may infer from verses 19-23, nothing less than a blessed share in the grand Messianic salvation to be revealed at the Parousia. *This*, it seems, was the heavenly magnet that secretly induced the Apostle to preach and to teach without money and without price, ever labouring in the gospel, if by any means he might attain to that palmary salvation, not alone by himself, but in society with a multitude of souls gained and saved by dint of a voluntary evangelism.

The attainment of that *prærogativa σωτηρία*, for which indeed we ourselves daily pray in the versicle, "And grant us Thy salvation," in company with many of his hearers, was an idea seated in the mind of St. Paul; and this seated idea may be regarded as a contemplated cause of a contemplated effect; the effect itself being a persistent refusal on the Apostle's part of that right of maintenance, which *de jure* he might claim from the church, as *de facto* other evangelists did claim. That he refused to avail himself of this privilege or right of ecclesiastical maintenance, is evident from verse 12 of this chapter: where he exclaims to his amanuensis, clearly in tones of triumphant emphasis, *But the fact is we never made use of this privilege!* We never availed ourselves of it! Why, it may be asked, did the Apostle waive this right? Why, rather than accept contributions which were his due, did he prefer to earn a living with his own hands, working as a tent-maker? Answer from this ninth chapter: in order that, after renouncing his right, he might be in a position to preach gratuitously. Why did he desire so much to preach gratuitously? Answer from the same: in order that unfettered by a sense of obligation to Christians inside the Church of Corinth and placed beyond all possible imputa-

tion of mercenary motives from Pagans on the outside—in order that *being*, as he himself says he was in verse 19, *free from all men* and dependent upon none, he might thus be in a position to obtain access to all sorts and conditions of men, and, by that enlargement of access, to win more hearts and to gain more souls. But the crown in view, the goal at the end of this long unpaid labour in preaching to men of all classes, was what he calls in verse 23 *a fellowship with them in the blessings of the gospel*, that is, a fellowship with them in the Messianic salvation, which he hoped himself to reach together with a great number of others brought to the same salvation by the gospel which he had preached to them. The more saved by this preaching of his, the larger hope for him of that Messianic *reward*.

The above views may be inferred as extremely probable from the latter half of this chapter, and if they are correct, it is quite impossible to identify the apostle's *μισθός* or *reward* with his "making the gospel without charge," *i.e.* with preaching gratuitously. It seems therefore that in rendering this text aright the *definitive* use of *ἵνα* is out of the question. Moreover it has been shewn, earlier in this article, that the appliance of the *telic* use, adopted in the A.V. and in the R.V., makes the text yield no sense, none whatsoever. It remains for us, therefore, thus twice repulsed, to fall back upon the *triarri* or third use of *ἵνα*, so serviceable in so many despairing texts. We must summon to our aid the *subjectively ecclastic*. This veteran use of *ἵνα*, on the banner of which is written "contemplated result," has been shewn in a former Article, which discussed this particle, to be in its appliances flexible and manifold, and one that may be expressed in English by *causing* or *inducing* to do so and so, or by *requiring that one should*, ever varying with the varying colour of the context. But in bringing up this reserve a new arrangement must be made in the punctuation, and the mark of interrogation removed

to the end of the text and itself replaced by a comma thus :

τίς οὖν μοι ἐστὶν ὁ μισθός, ἵνα εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀδάπανον θήσω τὸ εὐαγγέλιον εἰς τὸ μὴ καταχρήσασθαι τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ ;

“ What then is the reward for me, that in preaching the gospel I should make the gospel free of charge, so as not to use my right in the gospel ?” In other words, “ What is the reward before me, the reward of which I spoke just now (verse 17), causing, inducing me to, requiring that I should, make the gospel without charge ?” The last clause beginning with εἰς τὸ μὴ clearly denotes a purpose or choice *leading* the writer to decline availing himself of his right of maintenance in doing gospel-work. Precisely similar in construction to the expression “ a reward requiring that I should make the gospel free from charge, or inducing me to do so,” is the text St. John xviii. 39, “ Ye have a custom, that I should release ” (ἵνα ἀπολύσω), that is in full, “ Ye have a custom of releasing one at the passover, a custom requiring that I should release unto you one at the passover, or inducing, causing me to do so.” Here in the mind of Pilate, the speaker, the prevailing custom is a contemplated cause of a contemplated result : and quite similarly (in our text) in the mind of St. Paul the *Messianic reward*, or rather a blessed portion in that palmary salvation for himself in common with many others, is precisely a contemplated cause of a contemplated effect, namely, his *refusal of the privilege* or right of maintenance, a refusal itself based upon a prior determination, for good reasons of his own, to preach gratuitously. The above parallel instance from John xviii. 39 is but one out of many parallels that might be cited.

This new translation, amply sanctioned by Greek usage, also yields a good sense inside the text. We now proceed to consider whether it is in harmony with what lies outside,

whether it will be found to hold logical touch with both contexts. It appears to me to fit in with its surroundings well, for several reasons, and because its adoption necessitates, what has twice occurred in this chapter (verses 9 and 10), the elliptical use in verse 19 of γάρ, which must be rendered *why!* or *why surely!* as indeed it is rendered in Luke xxiii. 22, "Why! what evil hath he done?" τί γὰρ κακὸν ἐποίησεν; very common is this use of γάρ. The adoption of this new rendering will also necessitate the correction of a loose translation in both Versions "*though I was free from all*" into "*being free from all.*" This closer and more true translation of ἐλεύθερος ὧν gives a sense precisely opposite to the erroneous rendering "*though I was free from all;*" for it means, when expanded, "*Why! being free from all, and because I was free from all, I made my own self a slave to all.*" Clearly ἐλεύθερος, a big word, is placed first, *being emphatic*, not although it is emphatic but because it is emphatic. More significant, in fact, is the participial clause in this verse 19 than *the verb* of the sentence, "*I enslaved myself.*" Why so? Because it is clearly in the Apostle's mind to shew that in a chain of causes, moving him to abjure his privilege of alien maintenance, the first link is absolute independence of all men, and next to that an untrammelled access to all men, and next to that an enlarged likelihood of gaining a greater number of souls by reason of an universal access, and next to that, the last link in the chain of causes, a fellowship with very many in the Messianic blessedness. No doubt this series of motives, which prompted St. Paul to waive his rights, constitutes the μισθός: and it is an ascending series, the culmination of which is the joint attainment of the great salvation. This long sequence of inducements rolls itself out in the verses from 19 to 24.

We now proceed to ascertain more exactly how the proposed retranslation, based upon the subjectively ecclastic use

of *ἴνα*, tallies with verses 17 and 19. Comments in parentheses will help to explain the following rendering of 17, 18, 19:—

If of choice (waiving my right of maintenance and working without recompense) *I make this my business* (namely to preach the gospel, what then?), *I have a reward: if however not of choice* (if not on the wing of “I will,” but on the spur of “I must” I am doing this evangel work—what then?), *a stewardship I hold in trust.* (I am no longer a free agent, independent of others, but I am in the position of a steward strictly accountable to my master: you may now fairly ask, if I do not accept maintenance as other evangelists do) *What then is the reward which I have in view, that when I preach the gospel I should make the gospel without charge, leading me to make no use of my right in the gospel? Why!* (it is this) *being free from all men, I made myself a slave to all men:* that is, expanded, what is the reward before me, inducing me to make the gospel without charge and therefore to make no use of my privilege? Why surely, declining to avail myself of my right of maintenance, and consequently being in a position to preach the gospel without costs to any, I was unfettered and independent of all: unrestricted by a sense of obligation to a church recompensing my labours. I was at the same time invulnerable to shafts of slander from outsiders misrepresenting my motives: thus I could work with both hands untied: my disinterestedness was unimpeachable, disarming suspicion even: and being thus free from all, I was at liberty to enslave myself to all, and I did enslave myself to all because I was at liberty so to do.

It may be further observed, the emphatic position of *ἐμαυτόν* seems to indicate a silent contrast between the Apostle's self-enslavement to all and the would-be enslavement of him to themselves by certain members of the Corinthian Church, who wished to place him under some

restraint or obligation by maintaining him at their own expense. But he was ἐκών: he steered his own course; and instead of some making him a servant to some, he himself made himself a servant to all. It is also obvious that the emphatic ἐλεύθερος suggests the less emphatic ἐδούλωσα, making a vivid oxymoron, a figure in which the Apostle somewhat delighted (see 1 Cor. vi. 12).

In this proposed retranslation of verse 18 it should be noticed that there are three or four factors which go to make up the sum of the retranslation. Of these, three at least stand together or fall together. The first and principal factor is the subjectively ecbatic use of ἵνα. The second is the elliptical use of γάρ. The third is the accurate rendering *being free from all*. The fourth, but least significant number, is a correct rendering of μοι ὁ μισθός, which may not, cannot be identified with μου ὁ μισθός, that it should be rendered (or shall I say, "requiring it to be rendered," ἵνα μεθερμηνευθῆ), as it is rendered in both versions, *my reward*. The learned Revisers, who have thought proper to wink at the difference between μοι ὁ μισθός and μου ὁ μισθός, have precisely in the same manner in Ephesians vi. 12 treated οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη, as if it were οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῶν ἡ πάλη, rendering "our wrestling is not." This cannot be called a happy turn; rather the sense is, "There is not for us, there is not in store for us, the wrestling against blood and flesh." Compare, amongst other parallels, Soph. Œd. Col. 188

οὐκ ἔστι σοι ταῦτ', ἀλλὰ σοὶ τὰδ', ἔστ' ἐκεῖ
χώρας ἀλάστωρ οὐμὸς ἐνναίων ἀεί.

"Not (in reserve) for thee are those issues, but for thee this is in store, my avenging spirit yonder dwelling for aye."

T. S. EVANS.