

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

BREVIA.

Notes on Gal. v. 8.—That ἡ πεισμονή should mean “this persuasion” (R.V. as well as A.V.) is difficult to believe, even when due weight is allowed to what Bishop Lightfoot calls “a faint reference to the preceding πείθεσθαι” (v. 7). Bengel’s note *ad loc.* is even more than usually suggestive.¹ His feeling is evidently against translating the article as though it were the demonstrative pronoun. This is probably an error inherited from Latin versions, with their “*Persuasio haec.*” One can understand how blindly the Jesuit compiler, Cornelius à Lapide, who used the Vulgate as his text and the original Greek as his commentary, followed Anselm and the Latin fathers in their conventional exegesis. (See Augustine and Jerome on the passage.)

Nor was it likely that Luther should see with other eyes than those of Augustine. His words here only represent his master’s teaching: “Paulus . . . indicat hanc persuasionem et doctrinam non esse ex Christo, qui vocaverat eos in Gratia, sed ex diabolo.”

The Greek fathers are not unanimous. Chrysostom and Theophylact agree with the Latin rendering, and make ἡ πεισμονή refer to the Judaizing schism in the churches of Galatia against which the Epistle was mainly directed. Origen, however, seems to take a different view (*Contra Celsum*, vi. 57): “Even if the uttering of persuasive arguments comes from God, persuasion at least (*i.e.* the proper result of persuasive and sound arguments) is not of God: as Paul clearly teaches when he says, ἡ πεισμονή κ.τ.λ.”² In other words, Origen regards the term “Persuasion” in this passage as used generically. Parallels to this use of the article may be said to swarm in the Epistles of St. Paul, as Godet has noted *passim* in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.

Theodoret’s testimony is in support of Origen, and is also independently interesting: ἴδιον θεοῦ τὸ καλεῖν, τὸ δὲ πείθεσθαι τῶν ἀκούων. “It belongs to God to call; it is the part of His hearers to obey (be persuaded).” With this comment on the verse his

¹ This is not meant to imply that his reference to Eustathius, the Homeric Grammarian, is more than indirectly useful, as showing the difficulty of understanding ἡ πεισμονή naturally.

² καὶ τὸ πιστικούς λέγεσθαι λέγους ἀπὸ θεοῦ, τὸ γὰρ πείθεσθαι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀπὸ θεοῦ. σαφῶς ὁ Παῦλος διδάσκει, λέγων ἡ πεισμονή κ.τ.λ.

remarks on another passage (2 Thess. iii. 2: "For all have not faith") are in perfect, and almost verbal, agreement. He confirms his exegesis by references to John vii. 37 and Luke ix. 23, and adds: οὐ γὰρ ἀναγκη βιάζεται, ἀλλὰ τὴν γνώμην ζητεῖ="For (God) does not force (belief) by compulsion, but seeks a voluntary assent."

St. Paul's words convey a general statement, not indeed unconnected with the context, but bearing the same sort of relation to it as that occupied by the proverb quoted in the next verse (v. 9). It is the familiar thought of (*e.g.*) 1 Thess. ii. 12, 13. God calls; it is for man to receive and accept the word of His message as a new force of which the potent energy is confined to them that believe. *πεισμονή* may be either active or passive, according to Bishop Lightfoot. It seems best to follow the great Alexandrian and Antiochene commentators whose interpretation has been given, and adopt the passive sense. ("Certe verbale hoc, ut cetera in—ονή, intransitivum est."—Bengel.) "Persuasion (*i.e.* logical certitude) is not to be expected from Him who calls you." If, with Grimm's ed. of Wilke's *Clavis N.T.* (s.v.), we adopt the active meaning, we must understand the word in a bad sense: "It is not God's way to use enticing or plausible arguments to produce conviction: He calls, and you must either obey, or refuse His call." God's method of appealing to men will thus be contrasted with the illicit intriguing and specious pleas of Judaizing pseudo-apostles. But the former rendering is simpler.

CLEMENT BIRD.