

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 Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

In the Study.

A Study in the Atonement.

THREE years ago Dr. Horton named Herrmann's *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott*, Gwatkin's *Knowledge of God*, and the Rev. W. L. Walker's *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism*, as the books of the year which had influenced him most. Professor Gwatkin and the Rev. W. L. Walker have again published their books together, and we shall not be surprised if again Dr. Horton singles them out from all the rest. Professor Gwatkin's book is noticed on another page. Mr. Walker's may be mentioned here. Its title is *The Gospel of Reconciliation, or At-one-ment* (T. & T. Clark; 5s.).

There is an opening chapter on 'The Gospel and the Cross.' Then the subject of the second chapter is 'Not Atonement, but At-one-ment.' For Mr. Walker recognizes that he can make no progress in his exposition of the Atonement until he has got rid of the modern meaning of the word. And yet Mr. Walker is experimentally evangelical, and a scholar.

It has often been pointed out that the word 'atonement' is used in modern theology in a sense quite different from that warranted by the New Testament. But this has been done most frequently in support of the idea that the reconciliation was wholly on the human side. Mr. Walker finds it necessary to show what is the meaning of the word in the New Testament in the interest of an evangelical conception of the Cross.

The word 'atonement' occurs only once in the Authorized Version of the New Testament—Ro 5¹¹, 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' It does not occur in the Revised Version at all, 'atonement' in this place being turned into 'reconciliation.' The Greek word (*καταλλαγή*) occurs elsewhere in the New Testament, and wherever it occurs the English Versions render it 'reconciling' or 'reconciliation,' and there is no doubt whatever that that is the meaning of the word. Nor does the verb (*καταλλάσσω*) ever occur in any other sense. In 1 Co 7¹¹ we read, 'Let her (the wife) be reconciled to her husband.'

Mr. Walker thinks it possible that the English word 'atonement' is used by the translators of the A.V. in the sense of reconciliation, although

Dr. John Owen, writing not long after the time of the translation, says he does not know by what means this word has been translated 'atonement' (*Works*, x. 263). In any case, 'reconciliation' is the original meaning of the English word 'atonement,' as 'reconcile' is of the word 'atone.' Mr. Walker quotes three passages from Shakespeare:

He and Aufidius can no more atone
Than violentest contrariety.—*Coriol.* IV. vi. 72.

I would do much
To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.
—*Othello*, IV. i. 244.

He desires to make atonement
Betwixt the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers.
—*Richard III.* I. iii. 37.

He finds other examples in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, one of the best being taken from Samuel Clarke, who, as late as 1650, says: 'We must not come to make an attonement with God . . . before we have made attonement with our Brother.'

How is it, then, that the word 'atonement' has come to signify expiation? Partly, says Mr. Walker, through the influence of Anselm's satisfaction theory, and partly from a mistaken conception of the meaning of the Old Testament sacrifices. A mistaken conception. For Mr. Walker does not believe that even in the Old Testament the word translated 'atone' or 'make atonement' means 'propitiate' or 'expiate.' It is the word *Kipper*, and *Kipper* simply means 'to cover.' The great passage in Lv 17¹¹, with reference to the blood, says simply, 'I have given it to you to cover your souls.' Mr. Walker agrees with Schultz that 'the idea of expiation has been put into the word "cover" without any justification.' What is stated is that the blood, being the seat of life and as such peculiarly holy (if not even Divine), *is given by God* to them as a covering in relation to certain offences, so that by offering it before Him in a prescribed way His people may continue in covenant relations with Him. The impossibility of 'atonement' meaning 'expiation' is evident to Mr. Walker from the fact that the atonement is always represented as proceeding from God.

All this is self-evident to some. It has yet to be

made self-evident to the multitude. Mr. Walker's delightful new book will go a long way towards making it so.

Ⓐ Study in Translation.

The words are found in Jn 14¹—πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν θεόν, καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε.

Speaking of certain passages, of which this is one, Westcott says (*Lessons of the R.V.*, p. 29), 'The eloquent significance of the original order is untranslatable.' But it is not the order of the words that makes this a problem in translation, though there is something in that; it is the ambiguity in the form of the verbs. For πιστεύετε may be either 'ye believe' (indicative) or 'believe' (imperative). And so, as Erasmus pointed out long ago, there are four possible ways of it. The meaning may be (1) 'Ye believe in God, and ye believe in me'; or (2) 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me'; or (3) 'Believe in God, and believe in me'; or (4) 'Believe in God, and ye believe in me.'

Nor are the possibilities exhausted yet. There are at least two more ways in which the text may be translated. It is possible (5) to take the first verb interrogatively: 'Ye believe in God? Believe also in me'; and (6) if the punctuation of Westcott and Hort's margin is adopted—πιστεύετε, εἰς τὸν θεόν καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε—the translation would be: 'Believe,—believe in God and in me.'

Look at the last first.

It is given in the margin of Westcott and Hort's text as a 'secondary' reading, not being so well attested as the reading in the text. But Hort himself was greatly attracted by it. In his posthumously published *Commentary on 1 Peter i. 1 to ii. 17*, at the end of a note on πιστοῦς (1 P 1²¹), he states without reserve that it is the most probable punctuation, translates the sentence, 'Believe, on God and on me believe,' and adds that there is a double suggestion in the words so punctuated, 'The first suggestion being of constancy opposed to troubling and fearfulness, and the second of the ground of that constancy, rest in God, itself depending on rest in Christ.' No version appears to have adopted this rendering, but Weymouth (*The N.T. in Modern Speech*) in a footnote says: 'The second half of Jn 14¹ may be punctuated—"Trust: in God and in me, trust"; and Rotherham (*The Emphasised N.T.*) has the footnote—

'Or punctuate thus: Believe,— | on God and on me | believe.'

Take next the interrogative. This is Beza's rendering—'Ne turbator cor vestrum: creditis in Deum? etiam in me credite.' It is discussed by Edwin Abbott (*Johannine Grammar*, § 2236 ff.), though he does not notice Beza. Abbott points out that πιστεύετε has the interrogative sense in Mt 9²⁸, πιστεύετε ὅτι δύναμαι τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' The translation of the verb here *might* be imperative, he says, and then it might be argued that the imperative is used by Jesus to stimulate their faith, as He stimulates that of Jairus, 'Be of good cheer, only believe' (Mk 5³⁶, Lk 8⁵⁰). But the answer of the blind men, 'Yea, Lord,' shows that the meaning is interrogative. It is either directly interrogative, 'Do ye believe?' or indirectly, 'Ye believe that I am able to do this?'

But Dr. Abbott admits that the usage of St. Matthew does not regulate the usage of St. John, and all he claims is that the interrogative sense in Jn 14¹ is possible.

There remain the four alternatives of Erasmus.

I. Are the verbs both indicative?—'Ye believe in God, and ye believe in me.' This would most probably be their meaning in classical Greek, where the interrogative would be introduced by some adverb, and the imperative could be expressed unmistakably by the aorist (πιστεύσατε). But we have here to do with the language of the Gospels, which was the language of everyday life, not with classical idiom; and we have to observe the usage of the Fourth Gospel in particular.

Now, πιστεύετε is found in St. Matthew once (9²⁸), in St. Mark three times (1¹⁵ 1²⁴ 13²¹), not at all in St. Luke, but in St. John sixteen times (3¹² 5^{38, 47} 6³⁶ 8^{45, 46} 10^{25, 26, 37, 38} 12³⁶ 14^{1bis, 11bis, 31}). The example in St. Matthew is interrogative, as we have already seen. The three examples in St. Mark are all imperative (the third with μή). Of the sixteen examples in St. John, seven are ordinary cases of narrative with οὐ, and another (8⁴⁰) is an interrogative introduced by διὰ τί. There remains 10³⁷ (imperative with μή), 10³⁸ (evidently an imperative also: 'Though ye believe not me, believe the works'), 14³¹ (an interrogative introduced by ἄρα), and three cases of πιστεύετε followed by εἰς (12³⁶ 14^{11bis}), the only really apposite examples, and all unmistakably imperative. The remaining occurrences of πιστεύετε are the two in the verse

before us (14¹), and the natural conclusion would seem to be, that here also, in both cases, the verb is imperative: 'Believe in God, believe also in me.'

Erasmus says that St. Chrysostom favours the indicative, 'Ye believe in God, and ye believe in me'; but Abbott denies that Chrysostom's words demand the indicative; they are quite compatible with the imperative. His paraphrase is, 'All dangers shall pass you by, for faith in me and in my Father is more powerful than the things which come upon you, and will permit no evil thing to prevail against you.'

This first rendering, therefore, is usually set aside. There is a certain attraction in it; for the calm assurance of 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, and ye believe in me,' is in keeping with the tone of the context. But the linguistic usage is considered to be against it.

2. Is the first verb indicative and the second imperative?—'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' This is the translation of the Vulgate ('Creditis in Deum, et in me credite'), of Erasmus, of Wyclif ('ye bileuen in to God, and bileue ye in to me'), and of Purvey's Revision ('ye bileuen in God, and bileue ye in me'), of Murdoch Nisbet ('ye beleue in God, and beleue ye in me'); not of Tindale, but of Coverdale, though he introduces a superfluous 'if' ('Yf ye beleue on God, then beleue also on me'); of the Great Bible, and the Genevan ('Ye beleue in God, beleue also in me'); of the Bishops' Bible, the Rhemish Version ('You beleuee in God, beleuee in me also'); of the Authorized and Revised Versions; and of the margin (only) of the American 'Standard' Version. It is the translation of Diodati ('voi credete in Dio, credete ancora in me'), and of the new French version of Abbé Crampon ('Vous croyez en Dieu, croyez aussi en moi').

This is a long list. But it is not overwhelming in authority. The surprise is the Revised Version. Many of the Revisers must have felt (even though it is possible that the majority of them preferred the imperative, which finds a place in their margin) that the usage of the Evangelist did not decide the question, but that the context had its claim for consideration. And on the face of it the sense of the context seems to demand that emphasis should be laid on the belief in Jesus. The disciples did surely believe in God. But in the near approach of the death of their Master, it is their faith in Him that seems to need encouragement.

And yet this translation has commended itself to scarcely any modern expositor.

3. Are both the verbs in the imperative then? 'Believe in God, believe also in me.' This is the translation of the Diatessaron and of three of the Old Latin versions. It is Luther's rendering and Tindale's ('beleve in God, and beleve in me'). It is Bengel's ('credite—credite'), who uses two arguments in its favour: first, that it corresponds with the previous imperative, 'Let not your heart be troubled'; and second, that Jesus uses the imperative here, and again in v. 11, until at last He is able to use the indicative in 16³¹, whereupon He offers up His priestly prayer and departs. It is the rendering of almost all modern commentators and versions—of Godet, Westcott, Plummer, Bruce, Dods, Bernard, Maclaren; it is given in the margin of the Revised Version, in the text of the American 'Standard' Revision, in Rotherham, Weymouth, the *Twentieth Century New Testament*, Lloyd, and Weizsäcker.

But Olshausen questions it, and Olshausen is never to be neglected. 'If πιστεύετε is imperative in both instances, then,' he says, 'the position of εἰς ἐμέ is strange, since in that case these words should follow the second πιστεύετε instead of preceding it.' And he gives another reason. 'Faith in Christ,' he says, 'is never *added to* faith in God, but the object of faith is God in Christ.'

4. Is it possible, then, that the last of Erasmus's four ways—'Believe in God, and in me ye believe'—is the right way?

It is the translation in the Old Latin MS. known as *a*, the important *Codex Vercellensis*. It is also the translation of the Sinaitic Syriac, which Mrs. Lewis turns into English in this way: 'Believe in God, and in me ye are believing,' and remarks (in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, xii. 419), 'The Syriac, we are glad to say, is not dubious.' Beza does not adopt this rendering, but he gives it a place in his note on the passage, saying, 'Vel, *Credite in Deum, et in me creditis*. Id est, *Credite in Deum, quod si faciatis, eadem opera et in me creditis*.' Olshausen finally decides in favour of it, though not emphatically. If, he says, we regard the first πιστεύετε as imperative and the second as indicative, the meaning would be: 'Believe in God, then will ye also believe in me.' And he adds, 'This interpretation may possibly be the most appropriate, since the very faith of the disciples in God wavered.' It is also the translation of at least one good modern

preacher, the Rev. D. R. Fotheringham, M.A., whose volume, entitled *The Writing on the Sky, and other Sermons* (Skeffington), has been the immediate occasion of the present study. Mr. Fotheringham has no hesitation whatever. 'There,' he says, 'plain before your eyes, with the most charming simplicity, with no idea of emphasis or contrast or grammatical complexity whatever, lies the wording of the Greek, the comfortable assurance of our Lord—Believe in God, and ye believe in me.'

A Study in Biography.

There are two ways of writing biography. The one way is to arrange the letters chronologically and sew them together with thin threads of narrative. The other is to write the biography as one would write a history, using the letters as one of the sources of it. These two ways are seen in their extreme form in the two biographies of any importance which have been most recently published. The one is the *Memoir of George Howard Wilkinson*, the biographer being Arthur James Mason, D.D. (Longmans; 2 vols., 28s. net). The other is *The Life of Principal Rainy*, by Patrick Carnegie Simpson, M.A. (Hodder & Stoughton; 2 vols., 21s. net).

Each method has its advantages. Dr. Mason's method is the easier. But if the subject of the biography was a letter-writer; if he was accustomed to let himself go in his letters—some men deliberately write letters in prospect of their biography; but that is not necessary—if the letters reveal the man and are worth reading for their own sake, then the easier way is likely to be the better way. Mr. Simpson's is the more difficult and also the more dangerous way. He does not leave his readers to form their own estimate of Principal Rainy, they have to accept his estimate. And if his estimate is wrong, they are helpless. But if the biographer is intimate enough and has the ability, it is not only the most readable but it is the right way.

Bishop Wilkinson was not a great letter-writer. It is true that he had the great letter-writer's first requisite, he revealed himself in his letters. But his interests were too confined and his ability to express himself on paper too commonplace. The reader must first of all be thoroughly interested in Wilkinson himself before he begins

to read his letters. And that is another way of saying he must have known the Bishop personally, for Dr. Mason does not give others that opportunity before he pours the letters upon them. The biography of Bishop Wilkinson, in short, is a biography for Bishop Wilkinson's own friends. No one will read it without enjoying it intensely; but only his friends will read it.

The Life of Principal Rainy has been written not for his friends' and brethren's sake, but undoubtedly and quite deliberately for his enemies. For it is not enough to say that it is a popular biography. Beyond the people, beyond even the uninterested outsider, Mr. Simpson has had in mind the Church of Scotland Established, the *Scotsman* newspaper, and the House of Lords. For many years of his life Dr. Rainy was identified with the Disestablishment Controversy. 'During this controversy (we quote Mr. Simpson's own words) he became the object of the most unsparring and, one must add, most unscrupulous personal attacks which any public man has had to bear in modern times. . . . On the plea that he did not base the Disestablishment movement on the ground of religious equality and secularism, the *Scotsman* set itself not merely to criticise his views and oppose the cause, but to belittle the man and to impute to him continuously nothing but the shabbiest motives. . . . Day by day the leader of the Free Church was held up to the people of Scotland as the meanest-motived of men and the worldliest of ecclesiastics.' Now, if Dr. Rainy had resented this and had expressed his resentment in letters, and if his biographer had quoted these letters, all would have belonged to the biographer's ordinary duty. But (we quote Mr. Simpson again) 'Principal Rainy never uttered a word of protest; while in private he never referred with anything but good humour to what he called "our friend the *Scotsman*."' It is just on that account that Mr. Simpson writes for the enemy. The method is dangerous, yet it does not seem as if on any occasion the danger had turned into disaster.

Dr. Mason follows the order of events in Wilkinson's ordinarily eventful life with equanimity. The interest is psychological throughout. Not that Wilkinson's personality was either very complex or very momentous. It was, however, a personality that developed, and often in unexpected directions. One of his colleagues at

Durham, the Rev. C. Green, in a letter to Dr. Mason, says: 'The one real and substantial change I can discover in the Wilkinson I worked with in Durham, and as he was known during all the later years of his life, was in regard to Church views. It is perhaps true that from the very first he would have been ready to let any one apply to him the classification Bishop Samuel Wilberforce is said to have adopted as applicable to his own case: "A High Churchman on an Evangelical basis." But both at Seaham and Auckland the "basis" was more in evidence than the superstructure. What the biographer will have to show is that, while the first remained unshaken to the very end, the latter underwent what almost amounted to a reconstruction.'

The most interesting moments in his life psychologically, at least so far as the biography reveals it, were this experience at Auckland under Bishop Baring, whose name was much too easily punned upon for his imperious character, and that dramatic moment when he stood before the General Assemblies of the two greatest Churches in Scotland and requested that a day might be set apart for universal prayer on behalf of union. Both occasions were probably bad for him. What Bishop Baring may have meant for discipline could not have done him good, his aim was too single and his self-discipline more than sufficient. And the other occasion ended still more evidently in disappointment and probably left still greater soreness. For again, Bishop Wilkinson was not the man for it, though for a time it seemed as if he were the very ideal. 'From to-day's proceedings,' says one of his friends, 'I see better what old Canon Bruce meant when he said that the Bishop has "an iron will." Whenever he is satisfied that a certain course is the right one, which he ought before God to take, then nothing matters; along that road he will go straight, whatever he has to encounter; he takes it with no more hesitation than he would eat his dinner.' He seemed at first ideal; he was so eager for union and so unworldly. But he was already

satisfied that a certain course was the right one. 'It is to be feared,' says his biographer, 'that some of those with whom he had to do began to feel that he was more unyielding in his attitude than at first they had hoped.'

The Life of Principal Rainy is more than a biography. It is a history of the Free Church of Scotland from 1843 to 1900, and of the United Free Church of Scotland from 1900 to 1906. It has been written to be read. It has been written as a work of art. Mr. Simpson shows no nervous fear that his readers will drop behind him before the journey's end, yet he does not disdain the use of means to retain them. As he closes the story of the union between the Free Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, a union which was accomplished in 1876, he deftly whirls his readers into an expectation of the Robertson Smith Controversy, which is to occupy the following chapters. 'This union was a notable public event. Yet, if one surveying the Free Church of Scotland at that time could have been gifted with the eyes of a seer, what would have most keenly arrested one's gaze would have been not the Assembly Hall with its crowded benches, but a small room in a street in Aberdeen, where, surrounded by volumes of mediæval, Oriental, and modern learning, a young professor, pale with too constant study, was steeping his mind in the latest criticism of the Old Testament Scriptures.' This dramatic artifice he uses once and again, the most effective occasion, perhaps, being after the passing of the Declaratory Act, when by means of it he throws the interest of his reader forward all the way to the judgment of the House of Lords.

It is a biography that has been written to be read; and it will be read—by friend and enemy and the man in the street. What will be the effect of it? This will be one effect of it, that the saintliness of Principal Rainy's character will at last be recognized, recognized by friend and enemy and the man in the street.

But this is only a study in biography, and for the present we have said enough.