

**QUESTIONS OF THE DAY: FOUR
ADDRESSES ON THE ATONEMENT,
ABSOLUTION, THE LORD'S
SUPPER, AND FUTURE PUNISHMENT.
DELIVERED AT THE ISLINGTON CLERICAL
MEETING, JAN. 15, 1867**

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THE ISLINGTON CLERICAL MEETING,

JANUARY 15, 1867.

BY THE

REV. J. C. MILLER, D.D.; REV. J. BARDSLEY, M.A.;
REV. W. CADMAN, M.A.; REV. E. BAYLEY, B.D.



SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET.

LONDON. MDCCCLXVII.

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THE
TEACHING OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ON
THE ATONEMENT.

BY
JOHN C. MILLER, D.D.
VICAR AND RURAL DEAN OF GREENWICH, SELECT PREACHER TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD FOR 1867-8.



THE ATONEMENT.

THE Church of England challenges the test of the Holy Scriptures. We, believing in the full and infallible inspiration of God's Word written, are to be occupied to-day in bringing her to that test of truth, in reference to some of the capital articles of dogmatic teaching, which she prescribes to her members.

For the Church of England is dogmatic—emphatically dogmatic. Whether scriptural or unscriptural, hers is no vague and misty theology; and on no points are her utterances more clear than on that vital and most precious truth which has been assigned to me to-day. She has left some open questions: but, thank God! the Atonement is not one of them.

The brethren who are to follow me will have perceived that our subjects are each of them twofold:—First, What is the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the written Word? Secondly, Is the teaching of the Church of England in accordance with it? We are to prove that she is scriptural; obviously then, we must ascertain what Scripture teaches.

The points to which I invite attention are, the Source, the Nature, the Design, and the Reference of the Atonement.

I. On no point has the teaching of the Evangelical clergy been more misapprehended or misrepresented than on this—the *Source* of the Atonement. They are either misapprehended or misrepresented, when the teachers and the disciples

The Church of England

of the Broad Church school speak of them, as if they put forth the death of Christ as *the procuring cause of the favour of God*. Our Church nowhere suggests the question whether it would have been possible for God to have removed man from the effects of the Fall in any other way, and we shall do wisely, with Irenæus, with Athanasius, and with our own Bishop Butler, to put aside such questions. In the words of Athanasius,—‘By all means the wisdom of God might have done it otherwise; but, if it had done it otherwise, it would have been equally displeasing to our folly.’ It is needless for me to adduce proof in this assembly that our Church does not teach that the death of Christ was the procuring cause of the favour of God. The gift of Christ was the result of the grace of God the Father; and, from beginning to end of our Services, the gift of God’s dear Son is set forth as the brightest exhibition of his love, and not as the means by which an inexorable and implacable Deity, thirsting for vengeance against his sinful creatures, is propitiated; although this is the misrepresentation of Evangelical doctrine often made in the present day. If we would teach what the Church of England holds, that God, as a moral governor, must inflict the penalty of sin, we must dwell much on the majesty of God’s law, and show the superficial character of all those views which proceed on the specious notion of unconditional forgiveness, and on the forgetfulness that the punishment of sin may hereafter be seen to have been actually required by love, no less than by justice and truth.

Surely the language of the 2nd Article is clear. How Bishop Pearson brings out the meaning of the phrase, ‘being reconciled,’ you well remember.* The Article runs,—‘Who

* Pearson on Creed: Article x, folio, p. 365.

on the Atonement.

truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, *to reconcile his Father to us*, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.' The leading thought of the '*Cur Deus Homo*' of Anselm is, that God must deal punitively with sin.

II. We pass on to the *Nature* of the Atonement. What is the Atonement in itself? Underlying the scriptural and Church-of-England doctrine of the Atonement are two great principles. The first is one without a clear discernment of which, however great and insuperable may be the difficulties it presents to our intellect, we cannot understand the Bible—namely, that God deals with his fallen creatures on the principle of *Headship*. The second, which it is equally difficult to understand on the mere principle of human reason, is, that he deals with them on the principle of *Substitution*.

The principle of *Headship* is seen with regard to the Fall. 'In Adam,' in every sense of the term, 'all died.' The principle is equally clear, if St. Paul is to be our guide, with regard to the second Adam.

To pass to the principle of *Substitution*. Before an auditory like this philology cannot be out of place. But I would not lay myself open to the sneer of resting a great doctrine of our holy faith on the force of a preposition. We are all aware that, in those passages in which Christ is said to have died for us, the preposition used is not one which directly, necessarily, and exclusively implies substitution. '*Αντι*' is not used, although we have in Matthew, '*ἀντι πολλῶν*.' On this subject Bishop Ellicott says, '*ἰσως* in its ethical sense has principally and primarily the first meaning (i. e. *in commodum alicujus*), especially in doctrinal passages where the atonement of Christ is alluded to: but as there are