

CHRONICLE

CHURCH HISTORY.

MONSIGNOR CUTHBERT BUTLER, in his *Benedictine Monachism, Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule* (Longmans, 1919), speaks with the authority of special experience as well as of scholarship. The personal touch is felt, for instance, when he discusses (p. 227) the authority and election of the abbot, who had, in St Benedict's system, 'practically unlimited discretionary power', to which, however, responsibility was a counterpoise. This combination of responsibility with power, justified, in all kinds of fields, by experience, is in ecclesiastical matters raised to a religious principle. In discussions of episcopal rule, for instance, it is often forgotten, and in any case it is badly replaced by checks, administrative or constitutional.

The book has already come in for much criticism during the too long interval between its appearance and its being noticed here. But some of this criticism seems to assume that the book had a different purpose from that which the author explains. He did not set out to write a history of the Benedictine system; had he done so some of the criticisms might have been justified. His aim is to set forth the ideal of St Benedict, indicating some essential changes due to the history of the order. A full discussion of the abuses which appeared would be not only unnecessary but out of place. The author, to whom the history of Monasticism is indebted for much sound and brilliant work, is far too good a historian to overlook the existence of abuses: it was enough for his purpose to indicate them, as he does, for instance, on pages 361 f: to have described them in detail would have been not only beside his point, but would have obscured it. We shall do better to accept the book for what it intends to be, and, taking it so, we have every reason to be grateful for it.

The author refers with merited praise to previous works such as Dr H. B. Workman's excellent *Evolution of the Monastic Ideal* (1913) but he himself has the advantage of describing Benedictinism both from within and with experience.

St Benedict's own ideal is described (pp. 24 f and 92). It was (1) 'a school of God's service', with nothing harsh, nothing burdensome. Of course he started from what was already practised, but his rule of life was less severe than existing models. It was also (2) a *Rùle* for monks living in community, a family life under the Abbot (p. 184) as Father with absolute power. Benedict's 'most special and tangible contribution to the development of monasticism was the introduction

of the vow of stability' (pp. 27-28 and 125). By it each monk became for life a member of a permanent family from which he could not wander. 'This idea of "the monastic family", at any rate in its concrete realization, was St Benedict's.' But (3) he had no intention of founding an Order: each Abbey was to be 'a separate entity', standing in isolation. The 'congregation', or assembly representing monasteries, began with Cluny, and national chapters with the Benedictines only came in at the beginning of the thirteenth century. (4) At first the Benedictines had for object the sanctification of the soul and the service of God under a community life after the Gospel counsels, but without any special work. A monk's service was in self-discipline, prayer, and work. Hence first came prayer, and above all the canonical offices in choir, termed the 'Opus Dei'. But the celebration of these offices was not the whole purpose of the institution. Then (5) came the service of work, manual labour (largely superseded later on by the choir offices, p. 296), and reading. The former work was natural to Italian peasants, but, as the class of monks changed, it became less prominent, and the latter became more important. Intellectual life and work had as such 'no place in St Benedict's programme' (p. 333). 'The tradition of studies and learning, which in after times made an entry into the Benedictine monasteries, is to be traced back to Cassiodorus. But to the reading of Holy Scriptures or the Fathers much time (three or four hours daily) was assigned. And thus in time (1621 f) arose the Maurists (p. 338 f) with their massive learning.

Later changes modified the Benedictine type, and especially ordination, which very soon became the rule, as that great authority Edmund Bishop assured the author. 'This change from the lay to the clerical state was the most vital of all changes that have taken place in the Benedictine life' (p. 294). It led to the abandonment of manual labour on the one hand, and greater frequency in the celebration of masses on the other. And as a consequence monastic servants multiplied. Then followed St Benedict of Aniane (c. A.D. 748-821), almost a second founder, with his reversion to severer life, and with additions to the canonical office. Thus the original ideal and rule was greatly modified.

The educational work of the order (322 f) is amply discussed. Some teaching was needed for the boys from the first received into monasteries who were intended for monks. But the 'external' schools, educating men either as clerks or laymen for the world, were another matter. St Boniface, with his English ideals, founded such schools at his monasteries in Germany: they were indeed essential for his missionary work. But Benedict of Aniane forbade them. Then the Cluniac movement kept up this hostility, and education gradually passed from

their hands. But since the Reformation the Order has returned with renewed and more general activity to the older use of external schools.

This short account of the book serves to shew its interest and importance. It would be easy to quote other passages also of great interest, such as that (p. 301) on the elements of earlier monachism discarded by St Benedict, which include the eremitical life, bodily austerity, contemplative life apart from work, and prolonged psalmody; such as that on the evils brought in with feudalism (p. 361 f), with the opinion of Edmund Bishop that the English Benedictines came better out of feudalism than did others, sounder in 'things religious, intellectual and temporal'; and such as that in present elections of abbots. He tells us that his term of office at Downside ends in 1926, when he will be close on seventy years of age, and therefore unfit in his own view for re-election. All will wish longer years to a great Benedictine and (it may be added) Cambridge scholar. This book of his adds to a debt already great.

Some useful monographs, which ought to have been noticed before this, have been either published before the writers were able to complete them as intended, or else because the writers laid down their lives in the war. The first place must be given to Mr Edward Spearing's *Patrimony of the Roman Church in the Time of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge University Press, 1918). Mr Spearing had passed from the Perse School to Emmanuel College, and after honours in History and in Law had become a solicitor, but still kept his old studies and tastes. A career which, to judge from this memorial, edited with great care and skill by his sister (Miss E. M. Spearing, late Fellow of Newnham), was full of promise was cut short at Delville Wood in September 1916. He had intended a comprehensive history of the Patrimony, but this book, of necessity, is confined to the time of Gregory the Great. For that period it is full, accurate, and adequate. The growth, government, organization, collection and expenditure of the revenue from it is sketched with thoroughness and ample discussion of all matters needing it. The editor is to be thanked for the presentation of her brother's scholarly work, which reaches a high standard and will be of the greatest use.

Much work has of late been given to 'the False Decretals', but English books or essays are few. The excellent article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is not too well known. Mr E. H. Davenport, in his Lothian Essay of 1914 (Blackwell, Oxford, 1916), is thus something of a pioneer. It has a small but useful bibliography, to which might be added Bernheim's *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode* (pp. 345-347), where the reasons for holding the Decretals a forgery are summarized, and also the still useful if somewhat biassed and old-fashioned *Cathedra*

Patri of Greenwood (book vi, chs. vi-vii). Prof. Tout, in his *Medieval Forgeries*, has some useful remarks on the mediaeval forger and his motives. In five chapters Mr Davenport deals with (1) the circumstances; (2) the substance; (3) the influence; the nature of the Decretals (4) as a forgery and (5) as a reform. Appendices discuss the date and the relationship to other collections. A fuller work would have been more welcome, but so far as it goes the treatment is sound. The general importance of bishops might have been even more emphasized: among the Franks after Charlemagne there was an attempt to rule the king such as the later Papacy made with more success. The Chorepiscopi might have been discussed at greater length. As to the place of origin Mayence and Rheims are rightly dismissed: Tours, after Fournier's discussion, is held more likely: this result seems correct, but I should for myself support Tours even more strongly. The writer is undoubtedly right in assigning a marked superiority to later French over German critics, but, as he says in his Preface, German works might have been used even more extensively. Mr Davenport will do English readers service if he follows up this praiseworthy beginning.

Mr E. L. Woodward's interesting and able study of *Christianity and Nationalism in the Later Roman Empire* (Longmans, 1916) was published when the writer was home on sick leave, and claims only to state the main facts about the question: how far was the struggle between Orthodoxy and Heresy really a political struggle between the Imperial power and the nations under it? For the full answer to the problem of the association between Heresy and Nationalism later histories, such as those of the Hussites and the Gallican struggles, would have to be surveyed. Dr Figgis had discussed 'National Churches' in a lecture, too little known, in *Our Place in Christendom* (Longmans, 1916), but the earlier centuries raise the question, which Mr Woodward discusses with a knowledge of detail and power of generalization which make us specially happy that he has been spared to History and Oxford. Throughout, external politics come in as a disturbing force, above all at the Reformation, and in the Early Church, Africa, Egypt, and Syria, force upon us the question this book raises. Justinian in the east and the Barbarians in the west come next. The general statement (p. 65) that 'Christianity has always shewn itself incompatible with a pure nationalism' might be questioned, but reservations like this, which might be made by a reader, do not take away from the interest of this suggestive study.

The new and revised edition of Dr Gore's *The Church and the Ministry* (Longmans, 1919) is especially useful, not only because it is a revision of perhaps the best work on one side of a long controversy, but also because the revision is made in the light of later discussions,

and since the appearance of the *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*. And, above all, the revision has been made by Prof. C. H. Turner. In the Preface Dr Gore points out some conclusions where he differs from the essayists in the above-mentioned volume. He is generally in agreement with Dr Armitage Robinson in his rejection of a special 'charismatic ministry' distinguished from the local ministry of presbyters, bishops, and deacons, which was, as he says, held to be equally charismatic. On the other side, he thinks that Dr Armitage Robinson 'underrates the evidence for the existence of an "order of prophets clothed with an authority only short of apostolic"', see chap. v p. 233 f. But he further thinks that he is wrong in countenancing 'Lightfoot's statement that the episcopate was formed out of the presbyterate by elevation'. His arguments in support of this fundamental criticism are to be found in chap. vi and in note A ('Dr Lightfoot's Dissertation on "The Christian Ministry"' p. 311 f). Note M (Dr Hort's view of the Apostolate) should also be mentioned.

It is needless to say that peculiar value belongs to such a restatement of a very full earlier work. It is a great advantage for a student to see exactly where a competent scholar finds it well to touch up, to emphasize, or to correct, earlier impressions and conclusions. And those who know Prof. Turner's careful and minute habits of work will, with Dr Gore himself, value to the utmost a revision made by him. It is not, perhaps, superfluous to say that even English discussions of these matters have suffered greatly by the discontinuity in English theological scholarship and thought which came in the later eighteenth century: it was a great loss that the background of solid scholarship, which lay behind many works like Archbishop Potter's *Church Government*, was allowed to disappear, and was only badly replaced by the mingling of first-rate knowledge of fact with elaborate theory which marks modern German scholarship.

One interesting difference between Dr Gore and Prof. Turner may be mentioned. It concerns the interpretation of the well-known passage in St Clement of Rome about the origin of the ministry. Prof. Turner thinks (*Essays* p. 112) that the only succession of which Clement 'speaks in so many words is the succession of presbyters in office in the local church', although 'the whole weight of his argument rests on the one principle of a divinely constituted hierarchy, in which every link of the chain is indissolubly bound to the one before it'. Dr Gore here (p. 283) takes Clement as speaking of the institution of bishops.

In the appended Notes special attention should be paid to Note B (*The early history of the Alexandrian ministry: the evidence of Eutychius*), Note D i (*On Canon XIII of Ancyra*) by Prof. Turner, Note E (*Supposed ordinations by presbyters in East and West*), Note K (*The origin of the*

titles 'bishop', 'presbyter', and 'deacon' with reference to recent criticism), and Note L (*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*). Such careful work, whether altogether fresh or a re-sifting of former writing, is not only useful in itself, but is a lesson to students as to the gain for scholarship from reconsideration and controversy, when conducted as controversy should be.

Mr B. L. Manning's book *The People's Faith in the Time of Wyclif* (Cambridge University Press, 1919), the Thirlwall Essay for 1917, has already and rightly reached success. It uses excellently much and varied material, and it belongs both to religious and literary history. It would have been better still if the religious controversies and tendencies of our own days did not obtrude themselves as they do at times, although Mr Manning is studiously fair and impartial. A wider study might have caused him to be less surprised at the existence in the Middle Ages of conflicting tendencies of thought and life, and when he passes outside his special field his steps are less firm than within it. Laud was not so much responsible for the *Declaration of Sports* as he seems to think; this S. R. Gardner's balanced account serves to shew. But this is of little weight compared with the general excellence and great interest of the book as a whole.

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