

things, as this Epistle tells us, has this for the purpose of all its words—whether they are terrible or gentle, deep or simple—that God’s grace may dwell among men. The mystery of Christ’s being, the agony of Christ’s cross, the hidden glories of Christ’s dominion are all for this end, that of His fulness we may all receive, and grace for grace. The Old Testament, true to its genius, ends with stern onward-looking words which point to a future coming of the Lord and to the possible terrible aspect of that coming—“Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” It is the last echo of the long drawn blast of the trumpets of Sinai. The New Testament ends, as our Epistle ends, and as we believe the weary history of the world will end, with the benediction: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

That grace, the love which pardons and quickens and makes good and fair and wise and strong, is offered to all in Christ. Unless we have accepted it, God’s revelation and Christ’s work have failed as far as we are concerned. “We therefore, as fellow-workers with Him, beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

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*DR. SANDAY ON THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.*

I THINK we must all be grateful to Dr. Sanday for having undertaken the somewhat delicate task of reviewing the progress which has been made in recent years towards a more correct understanding of the constitution of the primitive Church; and if it be true that the greatest difficulty of all Church historians lies in the manner in which we project our own ecclesiastical selves and our environments, with the proper amount of idealization, upon the mists of

that obscure period which we call the first century, then we shall be obliged to conclude that Dr. Sanday has been remarkably successful in his brief review. We have, for our part, been up the mountain of Research as many times as we ever desire, the object of the ascent being to see a Brocken-spectre; but if, on the other hand, an eminent scholar will show us, instead of a reflection of the institutions of to-day or yesterday, the real directions in which the mists divide, and where a prospect can be obtained through the rifts of the lost city of God, we are ready to climb with him all day long. Such is the task which I understand Dr. Sanday to have undertaken. He proposes to us to find the first foundations for a *textus receptus* of Church history; in which we may be sure that the preliminary work will be found provocative of much questioning, both on account of the omitted and inserted portions of the text. And it will be observed, just as in the familiar New Testament problem from which we borrow our illustration, that the omissions are more productive of irritation than the additions. It is no slight humiliation to be told that the metal which your spectroscope noted in a star was in reality an unsuspected part of your own atmosphere. Something like this however is what all modern investigations in Church history have been leading us to for a long time past; and Dr. Sanday is right in emphasising the convergence of independent investigations alongside of the continuity which is restored by the recovery of missing documents to the broken framework of the Christian records. Theology has its missing links as well as natural science; and that too although, as Dr. Sanday points out, the progress of the Church has been from a condition of greater illumination to one more defective. Certainly no more striking instance has ever occurred than the recovered *Doctrine of the Apostles*. It spans not one gulf, but many; it has bridged the chasm between the Synagogue and the

Church, between the Presbyterate and the Episcopate, between the Jew and the Christian, and between the Christian and the Montanist. And we must be content (even though we might not *à priori* have expected to be grateful), that so much light may come to us in a single flash.

Now with regard to the questions proposed by Dr. Sanday, I understand it to be agreed, as far as possible, to set aside such points as turn upon the early or late date of a given author, and conceive the situation as expressed by the accepted Christian literature. It makes comparatively little difference to the first stage of the problems whether the Epistle to Titus be an authentic Pauline production or not. The same is true of the Ignatian Epistles; for whenever they were written, the possible interval is sufficiently circumscribed, and either the purpose for which they were composed or the result which they achieved (put it which way you like) is sufficiently patent. And although criticism may seem to disarm itself unduly by keeping questions of date and authorship as far as possible in the background, yet in reality the surrender acts on both sides of the question as far as sides exist. No one, for example, ought to acknowledge the genuineness of the third epistle of John, with its unmeasured railing at the man who loves the primacy, and hold that the monarchical episcopate was of apostolic authority; he might indeed maintain the antiquity of the office, but not its apostolicity, and so it is hardly likely that a mistake will be made in working from the conclusions generally current as to the early Christian literature. As a matter of fact, I believe the thesis could be maintained that the whole body of that literature has become more intelligibly homogeneous since the recovery of the *Teaching of the Apostles*: how far that little candle sheds its beams!

Turning then to the question of the origin of the episcopate, may we not say first, with regard to the *office* of

the *episcopos*, that since the two companion terms, presbyter and deacon, date from Jewish soil and involve Jewish ideas, that it is *à priori* likely that there is a Jewish base for the episcopal office. If, as I suppose, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which is one of our first authorities for bishops and deacons, is in the main Jewish or Judæo-Christian (and all the investigation tends that way), then we have another indication of the same view. I am not speaking of the *name*, but of the *office*. Too much weight can hardly be assigned to Dr. Hatch's theory (or rather demonstration) of the difference between the synagogue and its associated Sanhedrin: the point is one which, in modern days, is hard to realize, when the Church has lost all legislative functions, or all except some that attach themselves still to the shadow of a great name. We do not grasp the fact that the early dream of a new social order involved *law* as well as *gospel*: that the Church contemplated a political isolation of its members as well as a moral, and that the new religion was almost more of a theocracy than the old. At all events, the primitive Christian did not suppose himself less able to find a solution of a civil case with his fellow in the assembly which had been transferred from Moses to Christ, than he had been able to obtain under the earlier organization, for both were similar in structure and they were equal in simplicity. The presbyters certainly did not limit themselves to participation in a consecrated eating and drinking, not to say to the attendance upon prayer or prophecy-meetings. We see this clearly in Paul's reproof to the Corinthians, in which he deploras the absence among them of the "wise man" who formed a part of the Jewish court of justice and sat on the right hand of its president. Now if this be so, as I think it will be found to be, then the *episcopos* in his earlier form will probably be found to belong to the local court that attaches itself to every primitive Christian assembly. But

lest there should be any doubt that such functions really were exercised, we turn to the *Teaching of the Apostles*, and there find the very thing that we speak of in its most pronounced form. For we are told that a person who sins against the community by taking from another member money for which he has no real need, is to be brought under examination, and if he cannot make his innocence good is to be cast into prison until he pay the uttermost farthing. Do we suppose that this means a Roman prison or a Jewish trial? Is it likely that either Roman or Jewish ruler would concern himself with charges of this kind? It follows then, that sins against the new Society were punishable—at least, in early times and in more Eastern localities—by the Society itself. The conclusion is a strange one, but not therefore incorrect: we do not easily realize the simplicity, both of the structure of Eastern society or its reconstruction by the Gospel. Mohammedanism affords instructive parallels. As soon as we see this, we get a ray or two of light upon the qualifications of the episcopal office. It is not hard, for example, to explain why the bishop must be a husband of one wife, when we know that a similar regulation held with regard to the Sanhedrin of the Jews.

Nor is it without importance (as Dr. Hatch has noted, p. 62) that we find an analogy in the number of Church officers (a bishop and two presbyters) assigned to smaller communities, and the number which is necessary to constitute a proper official assembly in Jewish towns of less than a certain population. And this identification becomes more clear if we observe that the Jews actually discussed the question whether the Shekinah was with the three persons who constituted the minimum *beth-din*, or house of judgment, in the same way as it was promised to the assembly at large. The following note from Dr. Taylor's *Pirke Aboth*, p. 61, will explain the point: "R. Eliezer ben Jacob

said . . . Hence they have said, Every ten men that are assembled in the synagogue, the Shekinah is with them, for it is said, God standeth in the 'edah (congregation), etc. And whence even three that JUDGE, because it is said, He judges among gods," etc. It is granted that the Shekinah is with an ἐκκλησία, a congregation assembled for the discharge of religious duties; but is the Shekinah present likewise at secular functions? Yes! Where three are gathered to administer justice, the Shekinah is in the midst. It appears therefore, that the ἐπίσκοπος and the πρεσβύτερος are forms whose origin is purely secular. And this at once reduces almost to zero the statement of Dr. Sanday, that the share which the bishops and deacons had in the Church was in the services, and particularly in the eucharist: "For," says he, "the regulations in regard to these are immediately followed by instructions as to the appointment of bishops and deacons, Appoint therefore," etc. A little consideration will, I think, show that the passage does not refer to Church ceremonial at all, but to the exclusion from the assembly of persons who were at variance with one another; and this disciplinary exclusion belongs, of course, to the bishops and their inferior officers.

But it may be asked, Is there any evidence at all to connect the *name* of bishop with the exercise of administrative functions of the character described? The nearest evidence that I can give will be found in the passage of Strabo which Josephus quotes in *Ant.* xiv., vii. 2, where the local administrator of the Jewish colony in Alexandria is said to distribute justice and supervise contracts (συμβολαίων ἐπιμελείται). Is it too much to say that the official thus described was an ἐπιμελητής, especially in view of the passage (1 Tim. iii. 5) where the bishop is said to have the care (ἐπιμελήσεται) of the Church of God?

The foregoing view is also confirmed by the laying on of

hands, which the Jews practised with rabbis and *judges*, signifying thereby “*an association, an approximation so conjoyning of one into the same corporation or company of which he that doth associate and give admission is a member.*”<sup>1</sup>

I have gone into these points somewhat at length because it seemed necessary to point out that Dr. Hatch's theory is not to be limited to the view that the bishop is a financial officer only, and hence derives his name. As to the particular point whether the Greek municipality furnished the name or not, I have no sufficiently clear conviction to wish to express myself. Nor do I know in what manner the bishops are elected from amongst the presbyters, nor whether their position is originally a permanent one, or the contrary.

Turning now to the latter part of Dr. Sanday's criticism, namely, that which relates to the original existence of superior orders, now lost, in the Church, I find myself in almost complete agreement with him and Prof. Harnack. As he says, “We are almost driven to the conclusion.” I take that to imply that we might have reached the point without over much driving. We ought to have seen it without the discovery of the *Teaching of the Apostles*. The few surviving notes which we have with regard to the Montanists would have told us the whole story, if we had been willing to read them, without the prejudice and persistent misunderstanding which we have inherited from the Church of the second century. Even now, with the master key in his hand, Dr. Sanday does not seem to see that the only legitimate conclusion from his admissions is that Montanism was primitive Christianity. Judged by no standard accessible to us, will any other result come to the front? Was the early Church chiliastic as the *Didache* triumphantly proves? So was Montanism. Was it based upon the pre-eminence of inspired persons who owed their election

<sup>1</sup> Godwyn : *Moses and Aaron*, p. 215.

to no human hands? We have in Montanism the apostle and the prophet surviving either under their own names, or under the modification of patriarchs and kenones (*κοινωνοί*). Was the exercise of prophecy in the early Church an asexual gift, as the New Testament represents it to be? It was so in Montanism, and was admitted to have had a primitive foundation by their opponents. It was allowed by the Catholic critics that Montanism was only a heresy from the side of discipline; namely, that they degraded the bishop to the third rank. We know now that this is only another way of expressing the fact that the Catholics raised the *episcopos* from a position *not higher than third* in the new social and official scale. Dr. Sanday is right when he says that Montanus represented himself to be "not the end of a descent, but the climax of an ascent from the day of Pentecost"; but he would have at once invalidated his assumption if there had been any discontinuity in his Church offices as compared with early times. And when Dr. Sanday goes on to say "there was an *element* of conservatism in it," he seems to me to altogether understate the case, and to take his key out of the lock and throw it back again into the swamp from which a good genius had fetched it. Granted that Montanism had an element of reaction in it, yet it differs from the commoner forms of reaction in this, that whereas in many, or in most cases, reaction is like the impact of a ball against a hard wall, which flies off in a direction almost as oblique as its incidence, in Montanism the primitive Church momentum was met by the obstructing influences precisely at right angles, and thus has a reaction in the very same direction as its motion. If anything therefore were to be expected, it would be that the primitive traits of Montanistic Christianity would be more pronounced than in the foundation of the religion, but that this was almost entirely prevented by the wisdom of the leaders of the movement, although it may be sceptically



received by some, through their singular modesty; and this is shown by the fact that when the Catholic Christians reviled the Montanists for their presumption in attributing to themselves the graces of antiquity, they had to bring forward such trivial charges as that one of the leaders had ventured to write a catholic epistle in the apostolic manner, a thing no longer to be tolerated. Sound in morals (for no one now believes the ridiculous and contradictory scandals with which they were besmeared), and pure in faith (for even the Catholics admitted their orthodoxy), inspired in utterance and expression (perhaps even to a fault), their only error is found in discipline; *that is, in their continuity with primitive times*. It is no reproach to them that, in their desire to save the Church, they themselves became cast away on the rocks of the new organization. St. Paul might have suffered the same if he had been the junior of Ignatius instead of his predecessor.

But to return to the evolution of the *episcopos*: it seems to me that Prof. Sanday does not emphasise sufficiently the fact that the change which we now know to have taken place in the Church order was resolutely contested both before, during, and after the time of Montanus. We see traces of this strife in the *Epistle of Clement*, as well as in the heats of Ignatius. The Johannean epistles show the new dignitary in strife with the elder. The *Apostolic Constitutions* prove to us that the terms used in earlier records of the prophetic gift are transferred to the episcopal (I notice to-day a fresh passage under this head, which I do not remember to have seen pointed out, viz. *Ap. Const.* ii. 45, οὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμῶν εἰσὶν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς, which is carried over directly from the *Teaching of the Apostles*): the same incipient antagonism is implied in the warning given in the *Teaching* against condemning prophets, or criticising their utterances; the words, "ye shall not judge," imply presbyteral functions, and we know that a similar function was in fact exercised

by the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem (the only Jewish council, I believe, which had the right to condemn a prophet).

In the *Shepherd of Hermas* the opposition is between the bishop and the presbyterate, or rather between the bishop and the *πλήθος*, who are warned to defend the presbyterate; while, coming down to later times, the Montanistic *Acts of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas* show us the bishop in opposition to the *illuminati* generally, who furnish him with a reproof for not prohibiting his flock from the attendance at the games in the arena, which again points to administrative and judicial functions. These are indications of something more than a spasmodic fretfulness under necessary changes.

But this throws us back again upon the previous point, Were these changes necessary? We can see that the Montanists were not a sect in any sense of the word; the multitudinous nicknames attached to them (Priscillianists, Maximillites, Taxodugites, Artotyrites, and the like) prove that a sect with so many names is no sect at all. Why then was it necessary that the *ecclesia Spiritus* should have been boycotted by the *ecclesia episcoporum*?

“It was necessary perhaps for the preservation of Christianity,” says Dr. Sanday. “The centrifugal tendencies of the Church were so strong.” But surely, if Montanism is anything, it is a centripetal tendency (for even an extravagant worship of the Holy Ghost has its reward), and the way to abolish the centrifugal can hardly be the disallowance of the centripetal. Would it not be better boldly to face the position, and say that we find in the Church as elsewhere that the folly of man enters as a factor along with the wisdom of God. The spiritual kingdom is as liable to *coup d'état* usurpation, and other imperial ills, as if it had been a merely temporal sovereignty.

While therefore I am intensely thankful to Dr. Sanday for the thoughtful and just manner in which he has pre-

sented the difficult problems of early Church life, and agree almost entirely with his critical conclusions, I regret extremely that he should have expressed himself to the effect that it was necessary for the "splendid dawn of Spirit-given illumination" to "fade into the light of common day." Dr. Sanday will remember in this connexion the preface to the *Acts of Perpetua*, in which we find it stated that "we reverence, even as we do the prophecies, modern visions promised to us, and consider the other powers of the Holy Ghost as an agency of the Church to which He was sent, administering all gifts to all, even as the Lord distributed to every one, that so no weakness or despondency of faith may suppose that the Divine grace abode only in the ancients, whether as regards the condescension that raised up martyrs, or that which gave revelations."

J. RENDEL HARRIS.

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### RECENT ENGLISH LITERATURE ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

FOR some little time back there has been a cessation of hostilities between the camps of faith and unbelief. Sallies, "excursions and alarums," there have of course been; but these have been rather the skirmishing of outposts, or the sham-fights needful to maintain efficiency, than serious and critical warfare. Christianity has perhaps more to fear at present from Socialism than from the criticism of its documents by the Epigoni of the Tübingen school, or from the supercilious confidence of the followers of the *Zeitgeist*, or the earnest one-sidedness of science. An entirely new departure in attack would indeed be a windfall to the Christian apologist. And yet conscientious and thorough grappling with the ordinary problems reminds us that much remains to be done before we can look for the universal acceptance of fundamental truths. Dr. Bruce, in his volume on the *Miraculous Element in the Gospels*,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*. By A. B. Bruce, D.D., Prof. of Apologetics, Free Ch. Coll., Glasgow. (Hodder and Stoughton.)