

The origin of the Marcan 'baptism of repentance for the remission of sins', which is adopted also from him by St Luke, is easily explained as being a characterization of John's baptism as it was viewed later on from the standpoint of the experience of the later Christian baptism. The alternative assumption that it is more original than St Matthew's phrase entails, I would submit, serious theological as well as historical difficulties.

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THE 'AFRICAN TEXT' IN ST FRANCIS AND THE PRAYER-BOOK.

It is a far cry from Cranmer to St Francis and from St Francis to St Cyprian. Moreover 'liturgiology' and 'textual criticism' are usually reckoned as dry as the story of St Francis is romantic. Yet I hope to demonstrate that there is a real connexion between the three and that the conjunction produces a not uninteresting result.

In the summer of 1221 St Francis had called Caesarius of Speier, the first German among the Brothers Minor, to put into shape the Rule which he had composed for his Friars.¹ The result was the work which begins *Haec est vita* and which used to be called 'Regula Prima', printed by Wadding, pp. 133-155. It differs among other things from the final Rule, ratified by Pope Honorius in 1223, in having a number of hortatory and scriptural passages, and it ends with a very beautiful Prayer (Wadding, chap. xxiii, p. 152) in which anticipatory echoes of the *Canticum solis* have been heard. It is with a sentence in this prayer that this Note is primarily concerned.

'Omnipotens, sanctissime, altissime et summe Deus (it begins), Pater sancte et iuste Domine, Rex caeli et terrae, propter temetipsum gratias agimus tibi quod . . . creasti omnia spiritualia et corporalia, et . . . nos captiuos redimere voluisti. et gratias agimus tibi quia ipse Filius tuus iterum venturus est in gloria maiestatis suae, mittere maledictos qui penitentiam non egerunt et te non cognouerunt in ignem aeternum, et dicere omnibus qui te cognouerunt et adorauerunt et tibi seruierunt in penitentia: Venite benedicti Patris mei, percipite Regnum quod vobis paratum est ab origine mundi.'

I am afraid that when I first came upon this quotation of Matt. xxv 34 I was too much astonished to think of the dawn of Italian poetry or

¹ Jordanus of Giano says: *Et videns beatus Franciscus fratrem Caesarium sacris litteris eruditum ipsi commisit, ut Regulam quam ipse simplicibus verbis conceperat verbis Evangelii adornaret. Quod et fecit.* (Quoted by Jørgensen, E. Tr., p. 213 note.)

the cult of Lady Poverty. The words I have underlined do not agree with the Vulgate, and they do agree with Cyprian and with Optatus and the very oldest stratum of the African version! It is just as if some one were to find a line of Chaucer accurately quoted in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. St Francis and Caesarius were quite innocent of any Biblical text except the mediaeval Vulgate, yet the coincidence is too great to be accidental: how did they come by it?

On reading the passage again the words seemed strangely familiar, and then I remembered that in the 'Collect' for the Burial Service we pray for 'that blessing which Thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce . . . saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world'. Why 'receive', and not 'inherit' or 'possess'? Why 'beginning', and not 'foundation'? May the Collect not come from a Latin liturgical text which had *percipite* and *ab origine*, instead of *possidete* and *a constitutione*? And what is the connexion between this form and that which underlies the prayer of St Francis?

These questions appear to be more easily asked than answered. I have not been able to answer them fully, though I have asked several specialists in the various lines of research thus so curiously brought together. I publish here what I have found already in the hope that others may supply the missing links.

1. *The textual facts.* The Vulgate text of Matt. xxv 34 is

Venite benedicti patris mei *possidete* paratum vobis regnum
a constitutione mundi.

Neglecting small variations such as *praeparatum* for *paratum*, &c., the Latin authorities group themselves as below:—

(a) *possidete* . . . *a constitutione* *abffhqr* vg Hil⁶ Amb 1/2 Hier
Leo Aug¹

(β) *percipite* . . . *ab origine* Cyp⁶ Opt Lucif Aug² Cass 1/2 Philastr
[hiant *e k*]

(γ) *percipite* . . . *ab initio* 'book of Mulling' Aug² Cass 1/2

(δ) *possidete* . . . *ab origine* *c(d)r₂ corb* vg D-E-R Max.ar Gaud
(*d* has *hereditate* *possidete* . . . *ab origine* = Amb 1/2).

The liturgical evidence is given later. Some of the attestation of β is perhaps derived direct from Cyprian's *Testimonia*.¹ It is unfortunate that both *e* and *k* are missing at this point. The Irish and English evidence, which (as so often) has points of contact with the African text, suggests to me that the full African reading *percipite* . . . *ab origine* was once current in these Islands, a consideration which may have some bearing upon the origin of the liturgical form for which we are in search.

¹ Lucifer's reference, however, seems to me to come from Cyp 430 (*De zelo et livore* § 15).

2. *Cranmer and his sources.* The familiar 'collect' in the Burial Service is derived from the Book of 1549. In that book Matt. xxv 34 is used in three different places: (1) in the Commendation at the Burial, where it runs 'Come ye blessed children of my father: Receyve the kingdome prepared for you before the beginning of the worlde'; (2) in the prayer after the *Kyrie* at the Burial, 'Come to me ye blessed of my father, possesse the kingdom whiche hath bene prepared for you from the beginning of the worlde'; (3) in the Canon of the Mass after the commendation of the departed, 'Come unto me, O ye that be blessed of my father, and possesse the kingdom, which is prepared for you, from the begynning of the worlde'.¹ It will be seen that the beautiful rhythm of (1) has survived in the present use, the only change being a correction of the inaccurate rendering of the preposition *ab*. 'Possess' in (2) and (3) is a correction to the wording of the Latin Vulgate, of which other examples occur below.

It does not seem to be known for certain whence Cranmer took these forms. They are usually regarded as an adaptation of the Collect in the mediaeval devotion called the Golden Mass or the Mass of the Five Wounds.² This runs: *Domine I. X. . . te humiliter deprecamur ut in die iudicii ad dexteram tuam statuti a te audire mereamur Venite benedicti Patris mei. Qui cum Deo.* That is to say, it refers to Matt. xxv 34, but the quotation breaks off before *percipite* (or *possidete*). It is generally assumed that Cranmer filled up the verse without caring to render the Vulgate wording with accuracy. That of course seemed probable enough, as long as no late Latin forms with *percipite* were known; but I venture to think that the quotation in St Francis's Rule turns the scale the other way, and that we are justified in looking for a common source underlying both the Mass of the Five Wounds and Cranmer's formularies.

3. About half-way in time between St Francis and St Cyprian comes the eighth-century MS in the British Museum numbered 2 A xx. It has been transcribed in full by Dom Kuypers as an Appendix to his edition of the 'Book of Cerne', but so far as I know no regular investigation of its contents has been instituted. In this MS ff. 29-38 contain a sort of Alphabetical Litany, each stanza ending with the refrain *Domine mi Iesu Christe*.³ After the Z-stanza comes a coda (Kuypers, p. 217) praying our Lord *ut cum omnibus tuis pariter possim sanctis illius felicissime uocis audire sonum Venite benedicti patris mei PERCIPITE*

¹ (3) is still retained in the Scottish Communion Office, but the wording of the text has been assimilated to the Authorized Version of the Bible.

² This Mass is traditionally ascribed to *Sanctus Bonifacius Papa*. The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* (s. v. Wounds) says Boniface II, but gives no reason.

³ The first line is *Altus auctor omnium creaturarum*.

regnum quod vobis paratum est AB ORIGINE mundi. *tunc introduc me in thalamum regni tui ubi epulantur tecum omnes amici tui, Domine mi Iesu Christe, qui cum, &c.*

Here we have a full form of the prayer, with both the 'African' catchwords preserved. The Alphabetical Litany in 2 A xx is very verbose, and is not likely to be the original source of anything whatever. Its interest for us is that it attests the turn of phrase which we have found in Cranmer and St Francis five hundred years nearer the time when it was the wording of a Biblical text in common use.

Mr Brightman, to whom I wrote for help in this matter, gave me a quotation from St Anselm's Meditations (Migne, clviii 721), where he speaks of *vocem illam felicissimam . . . Venite . . . possidete regnum . . . ab origine mundi*. I found in the same volume of Migne, col. 796, the text quoted with *percipite* as well, and on col. 797 St Anselm goes on to say *regnum illud percipientes quod paratum est illis ab origine mundi*. St Anselm was a learned man and something of a Biblical student. I am not surprised that he has once substituted the Vulgate *possidete* for what would seem to him the mere inaccuracy of *percipite*: I cannot believe that he got *percipite* and *ab origine* out of anything but a patristic or a liturgical source.

I had written thus far when I happened to talk the matter over with Dom R. H. Connolly. He said at once that the form with *percipite* and *ab origine* seemed more familiar to him than the Vulgate, and within a few hours he gave me the reference to what I now think must be the actual source from whence Cranmer, St Francis, and St Anselm drew. It is the Introit of the Mass for Wednesday in Easter Week, which runs

Venite benedicti patris mei percipite regnum, alleluia:

quod vobis paratum est ab origine mundi, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The same words, without the alleluias, are used as an Antiphon to Benedictus on the first Monday in Lent,¹ and the first line as far as *regnum* is used as a response in the second Nocturn for All Saints' Day, both being doubtless taken direct from the Easter Introit.

The Introits and Graduals of the Roman and the various mediaeval Uses would make an interesting study from the point of view of the textual critic, not that the variants in themselves are of textual importance, but because the presence of Old Latin renderings must be an unfailing indication of the age of the liturgical form in which they occur. A cursory examination reveals the different character of these Antiphons: e. g. the Advent Introit *Rorate* is definitely Vulgate in text, while the verses from the Song of Habakkuk (a Tract for Good Friday) are Old Latin. It was doubtless from the Gradual for Friday in Easter Week

¹ Matt. xxv 31 ff is the Gospel for the day (naturally from the Vulgate).

that Venantius Fortunatus took the famous *Regnavit a ligno*, and not the other way round.

The Introit with which this Note is particularly concerned must indeed be ancient. When and where it was first adapted as a liturgical form *percipite* and *ab origine* must have stood in the current version of Matt. xxv 34, or else Cyprian's *Testimonia* must have been as familiar as the words of Scripture. Either of these alternatives takes us back to the fourth century. This ancient form is still in Roman use, and audible echoes of it survive in the familiar Burial Service of the Book of Common Prayer. So ancient a thread of continuity with early Christian worship does seem to me to merit friendly and respectful recognition.

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[It is well known that the text of the Gregorian *Antiphonarium*, to which the Introits &c. belong, is very generally prae-Vulgate. See *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne* i c. 2458.—F. E. B.]

TERTULLIANEA.

I

Notes on the adversus Praxean, §§ 1-17.

FOR some time past I have felt drawn to the study of Tertullian, fascinated both by the difficulty and the importance of the subject. And in casting about where to begin, the *adversus Praxean* offered itself as a very obvious starting-point. No treatise of Tertullian was so much studied in the patristic period; it has better manuscript authority than many of Tertullian's works, though it is unfortunately absent from the earliest and best MS of all; and it is now accessible in a very careful edition by E. Kroymann in the Vienna *Corpus* of Latin Fathers. No scholar who has attempted any work at all on the field of Tertullian will criticize his predecessors lightly; he must be too conscious himself of the difficulties which throng his path; and it is therefore only in a very tentative way that I record my impression that Kroymann, while he has given us some excellent emendations, has dealt in an unnecessarily violent way with the manuscript tradition. I should indeed entirely agree that the *adversus Praxean* must have been published by its author as a treatise intended to be straightforwardly intelligible to those to whom it was addressed: the obscurity of allusion, the habit of stating ironically the exact converse of what was really meant, which render some of the other writings of Tertullian so difficult, would have been out of place on