REVIEWS

NEW LIGHTS ON THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES.

The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude, edited by the REV. C. BIGG, D.D.
(International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1901.)

THE Catholic Epistles present to the critic a very large number of unsolved problems: and up to the present time comparatively little attention has been paid to them by English scholars. In spite of the work of Westcott, Hort and Mayor much remains to be done upon the Epistles which they edited, and perhaps the best service rendered by Dr. Bigg's commentary will be the stimulus which it should give to further inquiry into texts which no one scholar can exhaust.

Dr. Bigg speaks of the date of the First Epistle of Peter with some confidence: he is clear at least that it is earlier than the Neronian persecution. Now it is possible that Professor Ramsay's theory of the development of persecution is over-elaborate: persecution 'for the Name' may doubtless be older than the Flavian period, and if so 1 Peter need not be dated as late as A.D. 80. But to place it as early as A.D. 62 would bring us into conflict with the evidence of the Pastoral Epistles. Before the Neronian persecution came the crucial case of St. Paul's first trial. Are we to believe that St. Paul was acquitted and released at a time of 'fiery trial' when charges of theft and murder—and Christianity—were being successfully brought against the Church's members? Is it so plain as Dr. Bigg thinks that 'Christian blood had not been shed in any formal systematic way by the Roman government at the time when St. Peter wrote'? The very fact that 1 Peter warns Christians from Pontus to the Aegean that a *πίρωσις* is beginning for them seems to point in the other direction.

Still more difficulty will, we think, be felt over Dr. Bigg's dating of 2 Peter and Jude. There are no books of the New Testament to which most students would be so diffident in assigning a date as these two epistles: we are in fact no more advanced than Origen, who appears indeed to have made some homiletic use of these books, while reserving the scholar's right to be more sceptical than he would like his con-

gregation to become. From the fact that Dr. Bigg has placed the Didache in the fourth century we are prepared to find him original and vigorous in his treatment of literary chronology: but we doubt whether his present argument for the priority of 2 Peter will make many converts, supported though it is by the parallel reasoning of Dr. Zahn. The *criteria* in this matter are no doubt subjective: but we must here pit one subjectivity against another. St. Jude's letter is a general invective against certain antinomians—perhaps we may say antinomian Gnostics: 2 Peter is practically the same invective, with a special reference to persons who made light of the Parousia. St. Jude reminds his readers of an apostolic prophecy that in the last time mockers and immoral false teachers would be plentiful, and enforces his warning with references to Apocryphal instances: 2 Peter brings a far heavier battery into action. His letter comes from one who has seen the splendour of the Lord in the Transfiguration, and the prophecy of the evil teachers has in him a far weightier introduction: it is a word spoken before by the holy prophets, and a commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. Is then the specialised and emphasised form the original from which the weaker and more general copy was derived? We should at least require some collateral evidence for this view, and we do not think that any of Dr. Bigg's instances of St. Jude's indebtedness is incapable of inversion.

Stress has sometimes been laid on 2 Pet. ii 4 (σειραῖς ζόφου τάρταρώσας), a passage from which it is supposed that Jud. 6 (δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφου τετήρηκεν) is by misunderstanding derived. But it is just possible that the right text even in 2 Peter may be σειραῖς, and it is quite clear that St. Jude, who knew the book of Enoch, had his choice in that source between angels in pits and angels in chains; so that there is no real reason for supposing here that he borrowed from 2 Peter. It is possible in other places to say that St. Jude has 're-written rugged sentences, making them more clear and less forcible': but other critics will still feel that 2 Peter is the borrower, and has spoilt these passages in the borrowing. For instance, in Jud. 10 we read: οὗτοι δὲ ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἶδασιν βλασφημοῦσιν, ὅσα δὲ φυσικῶς ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα ἐπίστανται, ἐν τοῖτοις φθειρόνται. The parallel to this is 2 Pet. ii 12: οὗτοι δὲ, ὡς ἄλογα ζῶα γεγεννημένα φυσικὰ εἰς ἄλωσιν καὶ φθοράν, ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσιν βλασφημοῦντες, ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ αὐτῶν καὶ φθαρήσονται. It is not easy to see how St. Jude's trenchant antithesis could have been constructed out of 2 Peter's 'rugged' clauses. St. Jude's ἄλογα ζῶα belong to the second half of the antithesis: they have a sort of knowledge but misuse it. This surely has some point: but ἄλογα ζῶα by itself in 2 Peter is almost pointless. Again, the phrase οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους τετήρηται in 2 Pet. ii 17 is hardly apposite to πηγαὶ ἄνδρῶν καὶ ὀμίχλαι ὑπὸ λαίλαπος ἐλαυνόμεναι: but in Jud. 13 the gloom of darkness which awaits the wandering stars

(recalling the sudden extinction of a meteor) is finely imagined: it is a complete phrase: why suppose that it was built up out of 2 Peter's unrelated fragment? Again, Dr. Bigg suggests that Hesychius misunderstands *σπιλάδες* (Jud. 12) when he gives it the meaning 'sunken rocks': we would suggest that 2 Peter's *σπίλοι καὶ μῶμοι* is the fruit of another misunderstanding. Finally, he is not prepared to allow any weight to what in Germany is called the *Apokryphenscheu* of 2 Peter. Yet it is a significant fact that Jude is free in his use of apocryphal sources, and that by subtracting apocryphal elements from Jude and substituting references to canonical books, we could arrive at something like 2 Peter. On the other hand 2 Peter has a noticeable tendency to lay stress upon prophecy; its intrinsic and evidential value, its source and its interpretation are emphasised: the *ἅγιοι προφῆται* are adduced along with the apostles: and the general topic of the letter belongs to the prophetic sphere and is handled in the prophetic manner. Now we learn from Dr. Bigg's introduction to 1 Peter that St. Peter shows markedly little interest in prophecy: indeed, in Dr. Bigg's essay on doctrine, discipline, and organisation in 1 Peter we are told that 'Prophetism sums up in one word the difference between Paul the mystic and Peter the disciplinarian.' If this generalisation is to hold good, then the *Prophetenscheu* of 1 Peter would seem to indicate something of a difference between its author and that of the Second Epistle.

Other details both of internal and of external evidence indicate a similar conclusion, and we believe that their cumulative effect may fairly be called overwhelming. Let it be conceded that St. Paul's Epistles were collected at a very early date; the concession makes it easier to explain the *ἐν πάσαις ἐπιστολαῖς* of 2 Pet. iii 16. 1 Peter seems to shew acquaintance with more than one of the Epistles: we should be inclined to say more definitely than Dr. Bigg that he was certainly influenced by the Epistle to the Romans: the composite quotation, in which Rom. ix 33 is so strikingly similar to 1 Pet. ii 6, 7, together with the coincidences between Rom. xiii and 1 Pet. ii, make this hard to deny. The writer of 2 Peter had also read the Romans: in 2 Pet. iii 15, *τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν μακροθυμίαν σωτηρίαν ἠγγείσθε* is quite close enough to Rom. ii 4 to fix the reference which is there made to St. Paul. It then might be argued that if the writer of 1 Peter had certainly read the Romans, and had also probably read other Pauline Epistles, the writer of 2 Peter might be in a position to speak of those Epistles as a collection. But even when this admission has been made, 2 Pet. iii 16 provides further and greater difficulties: the Epistles have not only been collected; men have perversely misinterpreted them *ὥς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφάς*. It is not too much to say that this phrase carries us into the second century. If, like

Dr. Bigg, we argue ourselves back into the first, we are met by another phrase which demands one more effort of the same kind—the only phrase in the Epistle which directly suggests the period at which the author writes—ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως (2 Pet. iii 4). It is not enough to say that 'no forger would have fallen into so obvious and fatal a blunder' as to use this phrase in reference to the first generations of Christians. On that principle any pseudepigraphic work could be accepted as genuine, if only its anachronisms were sufficiently bold. Does not the point of the phrase lie in the word ἐκοιμήθησαν? The ἐμπαίεται did not mean 'since the time of Abraham': they meant 'since the time when certain people died, whose dying was of some importance for the doctrine of the Parousia'; and their difficulty was not wholly unlike that of the Thessalonians to whom St. Paul wrote that ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες . . . οὐ μὴ φθάσωμεν τοὺς κοιμηθέντας. The most natural explanation of their complaint, we cannot but think, dissociates them from the first generations of Christians altogether.

A question of external evidence may also be raised here, as one which calls at least for further inquiry. In the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Pet. i 16–18 the phrases φωνῆς τοῦ αἰσθε and ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ᾤρει are somewhat striking. Now the Gnostic Acts of Peter (quoted by Zahn, *Einl.* ii 59 from Lipsius) contain a passage which clearly has some connexion with 2 Peter: 'dominus noster uolens me maiestatem suam uidere [cf. ἐπόπτει . . . τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος] in monte sancto,' and a little further on, 'uocem eius audiui talem qualem referre non possum.' It may not perhaps be too fanciful to suggest that in 'qualem referre non possum' we may have a trace of the missing relative to which 2 Peter's τοῦ αἰσθε may have belonged: i. e. that 2 Peter may be later at least than the original form of the Gnostic Acts.

Those who regard the second century as rather more likely than the first to have given birth to 2 Peter are naturally challenged to find an historical context into which it would fit. The book cannot be much later than the middle of the century. It was known in the South of Gaul in 177 A.D.: and it was not the only pseudepigraphic Petrine book of prophecy circulating there at that time¹. It cannot have been a new book when the Gallican Churches wrote their letter, with its incidental and almost unintentional quotations: but would not the circumstances of the middle of the century fit in fairly well with its tenor? The

¹ To the passages adduced by Dr. Bigg from the Letter of the Churches of Lugdunum and Vienna (Eus. *H. E.* V i) as *testimonia* to 2 Peter we may perhaps add the first words of the letter—οἱ ἐν Βιέννῃ καὶ . . . τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ Φρυγίαν τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως ἡμῖν πίστιν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἔχουσιν ἀδελφοίς. This letter also quotes the Apocalypse of Peter.

success of Montanism was surely due, not to mere Asian fanatics, but to serious persons like Pinytus, with his taste for *στερροτέρα τροφή*: it was due, in fact, to the prevalence of a tone not unlike that of 2 Peter: a tone of reaction against secularism, of reviving desire for strictness of life, of reviving insistence on the nearness of the Parousia. We do not suggest that the writer of 2 Peter was a Montanist—Tertullian's silence forbids: but the causes which provoked and fostered the 'new prophecy' may also have called forth this vehement prophetic protest against the encroaching evils of the age.

Turning from literary chronology to a subject of deeper interest, we notice that in § 6 of his Introduction to 1 Peter Dr. Bigg presents us with a picture of two types of religious thought or modes of religious life, that of the Disciplinarian and that of the Mystic. The picture is admirably drawn, lifelike, and enlivening. It sets those who 'hear God speaking to them' over against those who 'feel the presence of God within.' On the one side is St. Peter, with Laud and Bishop Butler, and on the other stands St. Paul with George Fox. Dr. Bigg recognises the difficulty of classifying: 'many people use mystic language though they are really and truly disciplinarians.' St. Paul perhaps belongs to the class of those who are really mystics and use disciplinarian language: at any rate he seems to be much further from being an unmixed example of his type than St. Peter. Certainly the essence of the Gospel to him (as to St. John) is contained in the words *ἐν Χριστῷ, Χριστὸς ἐν ἐμοί*: but is the Predestinarian argument in Romans ix the work of a mystic, or is the doctrine of Church and Ministry in Ephesians untouched by 'disciplinarian' feeling? Among the leading Mystic ideas Dr. Bigg places that of 'discontinuity (Law and Gospel, Flesh and Spirit, World and God)': continuity belongs to the other side. Both the Roman and the Galatian Epistles, however, suggest difficulties in the way of associating St. Paul only with 'discontinuity.' In Galatians the contrast between Law and Grace, Judaism and Christianity, is vehemently asserted: but the point of the latter is surely not that it is a bad thing to be a Jew, but that the Judaizers are bad Jews who do not understand Judaism: it is an appeal to the original character of an institution, and in effect it taxes St. Paul's opponents with a vicious inclination towards 'discontinuity.' Further, when we read that by St. Peter 'the titles of the chosen people are transferred without hesitation to the Christian community,' and that 'the Christians are priests, kings, a holy nation, the people that God always had in view,' we cannot feel that in this respect St. Peter stands widely apart from St. Paul. St. Paul as a Christian writes of the Jewish fathers as his own kinsmen: 'our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea'; as a Christian he claims to be a true Israelite; to him, as to St. Peter, 'history flows on from the far past to the present

in a widening but continuous stream.' The Judaizers are his opponents, not because their conception of history is too continuous, but because they dam the stream where it ought to widen.

However, the justice of Dr. Bigg's generalisation is in the main not to be denied, and we recognise its truth especially with respect to St. Peter. 'The Petrine theology regards God as the object of Christian thought, aspiration, worship, rather than of experience, possession, inner realisation': it is 'predominantly objective.' And yet even here we feel that qualification is needed. The First Epistle of St. Peter is not theological in anything like the sense in which the word is applicable to Romans or Ephesians or Colossians. It implies a *Weltanschauung*, no doubt: but so does all conduct and all speech: and we are inclined to doubt whether St. Peter was at all deeply concerned with the theory of religion. If not, it seems somewhat misleading to treat his phraseology as though it were that of a theorist who had faced the same problems as St. Paul and had thought out a different answer. Dr. Bigg's treatment of 1 Pet. ii 1, 2 may be criticised in this connexion. St. Peter writes ἀποθέμενοι οὖν πᾶσαν κακίαν . . . ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη τὸ λογικὸν ἄδελφον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ αὐξηθῇτε εἰς σωτηρίαν. To Dr. Bigg this seems highly symptomatic. 'The passage marks better than any other the difference between St. Peter, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and St. Paul.' In the Hebrews and in St. Paul, it is true, a contrast is drawn between γάλα and βρώμα: both writers have to do with men who are living on a lower plane than befits Christians of their standing. The contrast which they draw does not reappear in St. Peter, but there is no reason why it should. He is merely endeavouring to stimulate the spiritual appetite of his readers: his context in no way suggests the discrimination between the food of children and that of adults in Christ; it is simply an exact parallel to St. James i 21 διὸ ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν . . . δέξασθε τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον τὸν δυνάμενον σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν. If it be urged that St. Peter's ἀποθέμενοι is enough to suggest the contrast between the *vita purgativa* and the higher stages of spiritual life, we would suggest a comparison of the whole passage 1 Pet. i 13–ii 10 with Colossians iii 1–17. There the mystical phrases συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ Θεῷ are followed by νεκρώσατε τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς . . . ἀπόθεσθε ὀργήν, θυμὸν, κακίαν . . . ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον . . . ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον: and when this sequence is compared with St. Peter's μὴ συνσχηματιζόμενοι ταῖς πρότερον ἐπιθυμίαις . . . ἀναγεννημένοι . . . ἀποθέμενοι . . . ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομείσθε, it is possible that the Petrine γάλα may seem hardly to bear the stress of contrast which Dr. Bigg's interpretation lays upon it.

Two small points of detail may be noticed in conclusion. Dr. Bigg need not perhaps have suggested 'prudery' as a motive for refusing to

interpret ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή (1 Pet. v 13) as referring to St. Peter's wife: on the contrary, the fact that Μάρκος ὁ υἱός μου, mentioned in the same breath, is an individual, is almost the only reason for suggesting that interpretation. Against it we would urge that ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι reads like a local designation, a synonym for ἡ βαβυλωνική. Was St. Peter's wife the only Christian lady in Rome? and if not, why should he choose to call her 'the lady in Babylon'? We imagine that even if he had so chosen, his readers would have been likely to misunderstand him: the symbolic ἐν Βαβυλῶνι would have suggested that the whole expression was a symbol, and συνεκλεκτή would have led them to suppose that the greeting came from a body co-ordinate with their own.

In the very difficult passage 2 Pet. iii 10 (στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται, καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὐρεθήσεται), where κατακαήσεται and ἀφανισθῶσονται, variants for εὐρεθήσεται, are mere corrections, Dr. Bigg believes the original reading to have been οὐχ εὐρεθήσεται. But perhaps neither this nor Westcott and Hort's conjecture ῥυήσεται is quite necessary. In 2 Clement xvi, in a closely similar passage, we find καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὰ κρύφια καὶ φανερά ἔργα τῶν ἀνθρώπων. May not the idea in 2 Peter be that when 'the heavens pass away with a roaring noise,' and the planetary world, like an envelope enclosing the earth, is burnt off and dissolved, then 'the earth and men's doings will be laid bare for judgement? This interpretation would fit in with σπουδάσατε . . . ἀμόμητοι αὐτῷ εὐρεθῆναι a few verses further on.

We have ventured in this notice to doubt the soundness of some of Dr. Bigg's results in the sphere of literary history: we ought not to omit an expression of gratitude for his work as a commentator, and for his introductions as a whole, which have a distinction and charm such as few commentaries possess. For freshness of conception and illustration this book has few parallels in recent literature: and if it does not exhaust its subject, it has the high merit of investing the study of it with a new fascination.

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A CRITICAL TEXT OF THE PESHITTA GOSPELS.

Tetraeuangelium Sanctum iuxta Simplicem Syrorum Versionem ad fidem Codicum, Massorae, Editionum denuo recognitum. Lectionum supplementilem quam conquisiverat P. E. Pusey, A.M., auxit digessit edidit G. H. Gwilliam, S.T.B. (Clarendon Press.) Pages xvi + 608.

THE work before us must be called the first critical edition of the Gospels according to the Peshitta Version. Walton's *Polyglot* and Schaaf's edition of the N.T. contain a few various readings, and