

## DR. JALLAND'S BOOK ON THE PAPACY<sup>1</sup>

### I. THE QUESTION OF THE PRESBYTERS

As stated in the Preface, the present work comprises within the compass of eight lectures the Bampton Lectures for 1941, a survey of the relation of the Papacy and the Christian Church, paying particular attention to their character within the first six centuries. The spirit in which it is written is accurately set forth by the author when he writes: 'It may be that by a fuller recognition of its (the papacy's) status in the history of our Faith there will grow a more generous acknowledgement of its appropriate place in the glorious reunited Christendom of the future.' It is the eirenic spirit of theology, which in historical matters means a benevolent neutrality.

And we do need books of this kind. In the Catholic Church, most of our ecclesiastical history has been dealt with as a department of Apologetics and few are the Catholic historians detached enough to allow for the human element in the communion of saints. It seems so difficult for one who loves the Church as a son to reveal her past as a historian; or for one who revered her as divine to analyse such of her actions as are obviously human. Outsiders, of course, labour under the same difficulty the other way about and often fail to see the divine wood for the human trees. *In medio stat virtus.*

Anglican historians of the Roman Catholic Church are fewer even than their Catholic opposite numbers, but few as they are, they substantially assist us in the arduous task of stating facts without bias either for or against the Church, of showing the possibility of criticising with love and reverence, of discerning the divine without overlooking the human. A pioneer along this road was H. Maynard Smith, Canon of Gloucester, in his *Pre-Reformation England* (Macmillan), and he has now found a worthy successor in T. G. Jalland.

The author, like every enlightened Christian, is a reunionist and as such asks himself tentatively: 'Is it not possible that after all the Papacy is a Christian institution which can only be discarded or ignored at the cost of some serious loss to Christianity as a whole?'—in answer to this, after a description of the last session

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<sup>1</sup> *The Church and the Papacy—A Historical Study.* By Trevor Gervase Jalland, D.D. (S.P.C.K.; 25s.)

of the Vatican Council and a brief examination of Leo XIII's *Satis Cognitum*, he examines afresh Christ's intention that his disciples should be an organised society, together with the evidence of the New Testament for the Petrine claims, and reaches conclusions which every Catholic will accept. He then discusses the origin and the primitive organisation of the Church of Rome, the attitude of non-Roman Christians to that Church or to its bishops before the Council of Nicea, the reaction which followed organised persecution in its effects upon the Roman See, the transition from a federal order to a closely knit oecumenical organisation, and finally the consolidation of papal authority in the West. The last three lectures deal with the essential continuity of papal theory and practice.

It would be impossible to attempt an exhaustive review of this important publication in a few pages. The author has already proved his ability in handling historical documents and in mastering difficult problems in his previous book—*The Life and Times of St. Leo the Great* (1941), and the study of this important period provided excellent equipment for tackling such a thorny subject as the relations between the Papacy and the Church. It was then only to be expected that the best part of the book should be the pages devoted to the earliest period of the Church's history. Church historians will be particularly grateful for his able summary of the theories that concern the problem of the Church—ecclesiology—as this subject exceeds in some way the field with which historians are familiar. The same may be said about the chapter entitled 'St. Peter in the New Testament.' Here and in the two following chapters the author covers the same field as was explored by P. Battifol, who for reasons that are not invariably acceptable is still reputed the best Catholic authority on the subject. But in many ways I prefer T. G. Jalland's guidance, since his way of handling sources and documents inspires confidence: not that he considers the largest possible purport of a source, but he does base his generalisations on its essential and fundamental meaning. For instance, he wisely refrains from using the first letter of Clement as proof of the Pope's intervention in the internal affairs of another Church at so early a date, because Corinth was a Roman colony. This topic was the subject of a penetrating study published in the *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* of Louvain (t. 31) by R. van Cauwelaert in 1935. This young Benedictine of Amay produced a series of documents proving that Corinth was in such close contact with its mother-city that the colonists actually took part in the municipal elections of Rome; and he pointed out that in intervening in the internal troubles

of the young Christian Church of Corinth, Clement was only addressing his own Church. According to van Cauwelaert's findings on the genesis of the argument, it is now admitted that Catholics never used it in support of the papal Primacy before the Vatican Council. This study provoked a reply from the French specialist J. Zeiler and deserved to be quoted in full in Dr. Jalland's book.

The way the author discusses the various interpretations of the 'Tu es Petrus' is at once satisfying and subtle (pp. 50 sq.); and yet we should have liked fuller treatment of the theory that makes the rock on which the Church was to be built the faith in Jesus Christ which Peter had so solemnly professed. It is well known that this interpretation, though suggested by some western Fathers such as Cyprian and Ambrose, did not prevail, but it did nevertheless exercise a preponderant influence on the theology of the Eastern Church and considerably contributed to a lack of understanding that could not keep pace with the papal claims as they gradually unfolded in papal documents resting mostly on the 'Tu es Petrus' which the East often understood differently. It is not assumed that the eastern interpretation excludes that of the West, but it does deserve more sympathetic and fuller treatment at the hands of theologians and Church historians.

On pages 142-155 of Dr. Jalland's work we find an interesting discussion on the nature of the priesthood and its relation to the episcopate in the primitive Church, a subject that deserves all the care the author devotes to it. The results of his research will be a surprise to many: 'The presbyter of the second and third centuries was far more a Christian magistrate than a priest, . . . at this time the only proper priest was the bishop' (pp. 143 sq.) . . . 'It seems abundantly clear that the presbyters in the third century had as yet no regular responsibilities of a liturgical character. Any idea that at this time they had become the normal *locum tenentes* of the bishop in celebrating the Eucharist is altogether excluded' (p. 154) . . . 'No doubt deacons and even presbyters had co-operated in liturgical acts, but for all that the bishop, and the bishop alone, remained the sacerdos' (p. 182).

The above conclusions will be welcomed by all those who believe in a monarchic episcopate *at initio* as outlined in Clement's first epistle (A.D. 96, 97) and in the Letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch (before A.D. 117): to such a theory they would lend tremendous weight.

But if such is the author's conviction, how are we to reconcile it with what he writes on page 182: 'It should be remembered that the bishop was chairman of that body (of presbyters), once mone-

piscopacy had been established.' This is somewhat disconcerting. Does this mean that the episcopal collegiate abdicated its powers, liturgical as well as juridical, in favour of one of its members, who thus became the monarchepiscopus, and that it gradually recovered them later? This point is not clear.

There are other difficulties that need clearing up before the above conclusions can be considered proof against every sort of criticism. If priests only dealt with juridical matters and the bishop possessed the exclusive privilege of dealing with matters liturgical, we must assume that the primitive Church considered the sharing in the ritual presidency at the Offering of greater moment than the sharing in the bishop's juridical powers. This is rather difficult to admit, especially in the case of Rome where the juridical sense was so highly developed.

If we assume that only the bishop, assisted by his deacon, performed the Offering, it logically follows that the presbyters who surrounded the bishop on the synthronos around the altar only participated in the Offering to the same extent as any of the faithful present. How then to reconcile this with the injunction of St. Ignatius of Antioch forbidding a priest to celebrate without his bishop? His mention of the presbyters' concelebration with the bishops certainly implies more than the laity's internal assent to the Offering. And how about St. Cyprian's admission that any single priest can celebrate (Cypr. Ep. 5, 4) and his reiterated assurance that the normal procedure is concelebration? There is also the famous declaration by St. Jerome that a priest has all the powers of a bishop, except the power to ordain. And Jerome certainly represented the Roman tradition, since he always boasted to the easterners among whom he lived that he was a Roman of the Romans.

It is true that one bishop of Gaul used to deputise, not a presbyter, but a deacon to perform the liturgical action whenever he was unable to leave his church; but this cannot be adduced as an argument to prove that priests in the primitive Church were only a juridical and disciplinary body without any share in the liturgical services. It was precisely what the Council of Arles (314) prohibited as an abuse. The practice may have grown in some places, as the deacon's function in assisting the bishop and leading the people's prayers in the Litanies looked more spectacular, but the fact that the Synod excluded him from the actual eucharistic prayer goes to show that only the priest, and not the deacon, could deputise for the bishop in the celebration of the holy liturgy.

Here is another point which needs clarifying. We read on page 154: 'And if further proof were needed (for the above thesis), we

might anticipate by pointing out that even in the beginning of the fifth century, while consecration of the elements has been conceded to suburban and rural presbyters, the non-liturgical character of the office is preserved at least to this extent within the urban limits that instead of consecrating themselves, the city presbyters receive the *fermentum* or consecrated loaf from the Pope's Mass by the hands of acolytes for distribution to their own congregation.' But what was this 'fermentum'? Was it not rather a small fragment brought from the Pope's Mass to 'leaven' the elements to be consecrated by the priests? We should like to see the evidence proving that *fermentum* means a loaf. The detail is of some interest, since, if Jalland's conclusion is right, we should get a clearer picture of how primitive Christians used to take holy communion. There are many indications that they communicated with substantially fair-sized portions of consecrated bread, perhaps even whole 'coronas' or rolls. This would be suggested by the testimony of the lady who recognised the 'corona' given to her by St. Gregory the Great as of her own baking. Other matters would call for a more thorough examination, or rather for further enlightenment to help the reader who is not so familiar with this period as the author.

Another suggestion bears on a matter which we failed to understand, possibly for want of opportunity to devote the necessary time to its study: was the controversy between Cyprian and Stephen (pp. 172-176) really a question of 'potestas' and of 'ius' in the administration of the sacraments, Cyprian coupling the two together, whilst Rome made the distinction? Or was it not rather in Stephen's mind a simple case of reciprocity? The papal argument explicitly says: If schismatics (or heretics) do not baptise Catholics who pass over to them, neither should Catholics rebaptise heretics: 'If any person should come to you from any schism whatsoever, let no innovation (i.e., by re-baptising) be made . . . for the schismatics themselves do not baptise those who go over to them' (quoted by St. Cyprian, Ep. 74, p. 175, and note 4).

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[To be Concluded]