

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

## 'The Ancient Catholic Church.'<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR JAMES ORR, D.D., GLASGOW.

PRINCIPAL RAINY has presented us with a volume which students of its subject, and the wider circle who desire to get a faithful idea of the early age of the Church without being burdened with too many details, will be grateful. The work has no doubt an interest which may be called adventitious from its author's personality—for who is better known or more typically identified with the ecclesiastical life of Scotland than Dr. Rainy?—and it will have a yet subtler charm for those, no small number, who retain the memory of the classroom for which, presumably, the bulk of its material originally took shape. These will join with their reading an invisible commentary—reminiscences of look, tone, and manner, by-play of comment and illustration—which will illuminate the text, and enhance appreciation of its manifold *nuances* of thought and expression. But the ordinary reader, who must be content to discount the personal element, and rely on the intrinsic merits of the book, will not on that account be disappointed in what he finds.

It is something to be thankful for that we have a volume of the kind at all. There has long been a crying need for home-work in the region of Church history—especially of patristic and mediæval Church history. The freshest recent investigator in our country—Professor Ramsay—is not a professed theologian, and has confined himself to labour in special fields. For treatment of the period covered by this volume, at all adequate to modern wants, we are mainly dependent either on cumbrous German works—partly in translation, or on the productions of Anglican scholars. Everyone who has to teach is aware that, of the books at present open to him, no one quite meets the requirements of a handbook at once comprehensive and readable, suitable for use as a guide to study, or for class-work. But beyond handbooks, there is the demand for a work in which the entire field of early Church history—life, literature,

beliefs, institutions—will be reviewed afresh in light of the results of modern research, yet in a spirit of faith, and of sympathy with the ideals of Church polity favoured in this land. We are not sure that Dr. Rainy's volume—though it appears in 'The International Theological Library'—altogether supplies what is needed for the purposes of a textbook; but we *are* sure that it does afford a view of the phases of thought and life of the early Church, and of the action and interaction of forces involved in the production of its greater phenomena, which, without starting any novel or paradoxical theories, will give the intelligent reader more insight into the heart of the situation than a dozen books more systematically planned, and more laden with learned detail!

The special quality of excellence in Dr. Rainy's volume does not lie in its plan or arrangement,—for on that, as we shall see, he bestows the minimum of pains,—but in the fact that it is the product of his own mind, and bears on it throughout the stamp of original perception and reflexion. Sources, no doubt, have been investigated, and authorities carefully weighed; but this not with the view of setting before the reader all the steps by which conclusions have been reached, but of presenting results in the purified and generalized form they have assumed after infiltration through the author's own thought, with only so much of the concrete as is necessary for illustration. Dr. Rainy is not concerned simply to narrate; his aim invariably is to get *behind* the movement or phase of thought he is expounding—to see from what causes it originated, how it related itself to surrounding conditions, what gave it meaning and reasonableness to the minds influenced by it. In every part of the volume, therefore, and notably in its more expository chapters, there is an air of what may be called 'impression'—the word is one constantly recurring—an atmosphere which suggests that it is not the bare fact we are getting, but the author's particular way of looking at it and feeling about it,—his judgment on its significance and value. One effect is a certain aloofness of mind or detachment of interest from details, leading sometimes to an unevenness of treatment: those sub-

<sup>1</sup> *The International Theological Library. The Ancient Catholic Church, from the Accession of Trajan to the Fourth General Council (98–451 A.D.).* By Robert Rainy, D.D., Principal of the New College, Edinburgh. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902.

jects to which the author's mind is specially attracted being handled with exceptional fulness; others, on which we should have liked to hear more, being occasionally very summarily considered. The sinking of detail is not indeed invariable: in the chapter, for instance, on the Post-Nicene (Arian) Controversy, and in those on Ecclesiastical Personages, there is no lack of it. But it is not in these chapters that the strength of the book is mainly seen.

The volume, as its title indicates, deals with the rise and shaping of the Ancient Catholic Church—ancient in distinction from the later *Papal* phase of Catholicism—and extends its survey from the reign of Trajan at the close of the Apostolic Age (98 A.D.) to the Fourth General Council—that of Chalcedon (451 A.D.), which forms a convenient halting-place. A future volume, which will be looked for with interest, is to continue the history to Gregory VII. Within the limits specified, three periods are distinguished—the first extending to the death of Marcus Aurelius (180 A.D.); the second to the Edict of Milan, which practically marked the triumph of Christianity in the Empire (313 A.D.); and the third and longest to the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.). In this last division a break might perhaps have been advantageously introduced with the Council of Constantinople, at the close of the Arian period, in the reign of Theodosius (381 A.D.); in which case the chapter on 'Ecclesiastical Personages of Fourth Century' would have come in a little earlier, though then the unity of the chapter on Donatism would have been interfered with. The author had no doubt his own reasons for dividing as he did.

The minor divisions under these various heads do not, on the other hand, follow any very definite order, but take up topics much as they arise, and treat them with a degree of unconcern for formal plan, which illustrates very strikingly how secondary a place mere order has in the author's mind in comparison with the *things* on which his attention is focussed. The chapters, in consequence, follow each other sometimes almost as a series of monographs. But it is just in these monographs, as on Gnosticism, Montanism, Neo-Platonism, Monasticism, Donatism, that Dr. Rainy's peculiar genius of felicitous and illuminating exposition pre-eminently discovers itself. The reader feels himself at every point in contact with a mind

thoroughly versed in its subject, and possessing a rare gift of sympathetically interpreting it. Turns of expression and literary touches abound, which give a happy unconventionality to the treatment, and keep alive interest. Surprise may sometimes be awakened at the headings adopted, e.g. 'The Church's Life' (chap. 3), to describe what is really an account of the literature of the Post-Apostolic Age ('Apostolic Fathers,' 'Apologists,' 'Apocrypha'); and to gain a complete view of a subject the reader may have to consult several chapters—e.g., for the writings of the Apologists, the chapter just-named; for their general view of Christianity in relation to the thought of the time, chap. 5, entitled 'The Apologists'; for their distinctive Christology, chap. 11 in the next division on 'Christ and God.' But the successive chapters have, notwithstanding, a completeness and literary unity; and the partial isolation of subjects leads in another way to a clearer conception of each. The book has a law of its own, to which the reader will find it his gain to accommodate himself.

It is characteristic of a mind habitually open to impressions, and accustomed to place itself in another's point of view, that it is more than ordinarily sensitive to the many sides and relations of a subject or movement, and is generally tempered and balanced in the judgment it forms regarding it. This quality is needed alike by the historian and statesman, and Dr. Rainy's volume shows that he possesses it in a special degree. There is always a large outlook, and commonly caution, qualification, and reserve—invariably moderation—in the judgments pronounced on men and things. Even the Roman emperors from Tiberius to Nerva are let down with almost excessive gentleness as ruling persons who 'on the whole evoked little attachment and created little confidence.' The author's own sympathies are not concealed, but it is rarely that a strongly worded verdict is passed even on those from whose views or actions he most dissents. Always large-minded and sympathetic, he is charitable in judging of motive, tolerant of divergence in belief, more anxious to see the soul of good in men's errors, than harshly or unsparingly to condemn them. This is so general a feature of the volume that particular illustrations are hardly necessary. It is shown in the capacity everywhere displayed of entering into and expounding the most diverse phases of thought; in the sympathetic account of

Gnosticism; in the kindly judgment passed on Marcion; in the appreciation of the better elements in Montanism; in the portraits of the different Fathers—specially of a man like Tertullian; in the balanced verdicts on the Arian Controversy; in the sympathy shown with the Semi-Arians; in the qualification of the customary sweeping judgment upon Cyril: 'At the same time he was a theological thinker of great power, and undoubtedly he felt the religious value as well as the intellectual or sympathetic importance of the doctrines which he maintained'; in the mild interpretation put upon the views of Nestorius, etc. Dr. Rainy no doubt had in view his own experience in dealing with Assemblies when he wrote as the sagacious man of affairs of the Nicene Council: 'Theologically the writer believes that the turn of thinking on this high subject sanctioned at Nicæa, was the just outcome of the whole discussion. . . . But while this may be maintained theologically, ecclesiastically it is a question whether the Church was prepared for the Nicene doctrine.' In one sense the result showed it was not; but it was, nevertheless, a great achievement for the Nicene Council to decide as it did; and probably that decision saved the Church from worse evils, and longer wanderings in the ways of Arianism, in the end. With regard to Nestorius, one would like to acquiesce in Dr. Rainy's judgment that his views involved no *real* departure from the doctrine of the unity of Christ's Person; but there are a good many declarations and formulæ, if not of Nestorius himself, at least of his followers, difficult to harmonize with this favourable interpretation. Perhaps as finely balanced a piece of discussion as any is that which relates to the type of thinking, and impoverished representation of Christianity, of the Apologists. Some necessary qualifications of Professor Harnack's positions are brought forward in this connexion; but Dr. Rainy leans considerably to Harnack's view. It seems only fair to add—as Dr. Rainy does add—that if this view is to be adopted, 'Justin Martyr and the writer to Diognetus (with Tertullian and Origen later) should have much more ascribed them.'

Reference is made above to subjects either untouched or slightly passed over in the volume, in comparison with others to which large space is devoted. It may have lain outside the scope of the work, but perhaps some illustration of

Christian life and worship might have been gained from the Catacombs, to which we observe only a single passing allusion. The great revolution introduced by Constantine into the relations of Church and State is naturally commented upon; but, in a subject on which much haziness and misconception still exist, it might have been useful had the precise nature of the relations thus established been more fully defined. In the doctrinal sections, nothing could be more admirable than the expositions given of the successive developments of belief and heresy, with the *rationale* of each; but, considering the importance attached by Augustine to his doctrine of predestination, and the influence of that doctrine on subsequent theology, one could have desired to see Dr. Rainy's views upon it more distinctly elaborated. After the restoration of Nicene orthodoxy under Theodosius, the growing Church had as its counterpart the decisive downfall of paganism in the Empire. Though touched on in connexion with Symmachus and Libanius, this singularly interesting change might well have claimed more special description. Still it is to be recognized that a volume cannot contain everything, and we are much more disposed to be grateful for what we have than to complain of what may chance to be absent.

On no part of his subject does Dr. Rainy bestow more pains than in the tracing of the growth, in successive periods, of the Church's constitution, worship, institutions, and offices. What is said here on the origins of Episcopacy, and the development of the clerical offices and privileges, deserves all attention. Stress is laid on the simplicity and freedom of early Church organization, and on the congregational character of even second century Episcopacy. 'The points to be emphasized are that the Episcopate, in the later sense, developed at a time when a "Church" was still a congregation,' and when 'presbyters and deacons, and from an uncertain date a presiding bishop' were not 'a professional class as we now understand the term. They were no more so than town councillors and justices of the peace are now,' though 'their office was part of a divine system.'

Space fails to illustrate, as one would wish to do, the literary felicities and striking turns of sentences with which the chapters teem, but the reader will soon discover these for himself. Nor

is it necessary to dwell on scattered points that suggest interrogation. In the remarks on the Apostles' Creed, *e.g.*, in chap 4, is 250 A.D. (p. 74) not intended for 150 A.D. (cf. p. 511)? Are the Elkesaites, who 'retained circumcision' (p. 21) and had a revelation-book of their own, really one with the party of the 'Clementines,' which conceded

the point of circumcision, or only, as Ritschl thought, a related branch of Essenian Judaism? In another connexion, is 'Beron' (pp. 170, 217) to be regarded as a historical person? But as a contribution to the history of the Church in its formative period, the book stands quite unaffected by the answers to such minute questions.

## Recent Biblical Archaeology.

### The Land of Sepharad.

'THE captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south' (Ob <sup>30</sup>). Where was this land of Sepharad, to which some at least of the Jewish captives of Nebuchadrezzar had been carried or sent? Our first idea would be that it was in Babylonia, or at all events in the neighbourhood of Babylonia. It is here, and here only, that we elsewhere hear of the Jewish exiles being settled.

The name of Sepharad is met with in the cuneiform inscriptions, where it is written 'Sapardu and 'Sapardâ. So far as I know, it is first found in the prayers addressed to the sun-god by Esarhaddon at the time when Assyria was threatened by a coalition of the northern nations. The 'Sapardâ are associated with the Medes, the Mannâ or Minni and the Gimirrâ or Kimmerians. The Mannâ lived to the east of Ararat, on the shores of Lake Urumiyeh; and as the Medes were also in the same part of Asia, it seems natural to assume that the 'Sapardâ were their neighbours. On the other hand, the principal seat of the depredations of the Kimmerians was Asia Minor, and it was in Khubusna or Khubisna, on the borders of Cilicia and Cappadocia, that their leader Teuspa was defeated and slain by Esarhaddon. Here, too, his successor Tugdammê, the Lygdamis of Strabo, was killed in battle, in the reign of Assur-bani-pal, while the name of his son 'Sanda-ksatru or 'Sanda-khshatra is compounded with that of the Sicilian god Sandês.

Moreover, we have positive testimony that at a later date the land of 'Sapardu was in Asia Minor. In the great inscription of Darius I. at Behistun, 'Sapardu (Çparda in the Persian text) comes between 'Egypt on the sea' and Yâvanu or

Ionia, and at Naksh-i-Rustem in the list of satrapies the order is: Egypt, Armenia, Cappadocia, 'Saparda, Ionia. The geographical position of 'Sapardu, however, is still more closely defined in a tablet published by Dr. Strassmaier in the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, vi. 3, pp. 235, 236. The tablet is dated in 'the 37th year of Antiochus and Seleucus the kings,' that is to say, in 274 B.C. In the previous year it is said the king had collected his troops and gone to the country of 'Sapardu. Here he had left a garrison in order to face the Egyptian army at the fords of a river, which, nevertheless, it succeeded in crossing. A few days later 'twenty elephants which the governor of Bactria had sent to the king, were brought to the ford of the river to meet him.' Then came the new year, and Antiochus marched at the commencement of it to 'the ford of the river.' Throughout the year prices in Babylon and the neighbouring cities were calculated according to the standard of the 'Ionians,' and there was much sickness in the country.

The first event that marked the beginning of the new year was the return of 'the governors of Babylonia and the royal bodyguard, which had gone to 'Sapardu to meet the king the previous year, to Seleucia, the royal city, which lies upon the Tigris.' As it had been stated in an earlier part of the tablet that the bodyguard had been left in Babylonia for a whole month at the end of the preceding year, Holm (*Griech. Geschichte*, iv. p. 202) infers that an Egyptian garrison had been established east of the Euphrates, in the very heart of the territory of the Syrian king, and that 'Sapardu consequently was eastward of Babylonia. But the inference cannot be sustained. The campaigns of the Egyptian king Ptolemy II. were carried on in Cyrene and Asia Minor, not in Babylonia; and in