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pdfs are named: [Volume]_[1st page of article]

THE MUCH-BELABOURED DIDACHE

I FEEL a prick of conscience, comparable to that of a knight-errant who, hearing repeated cries of a distressed damsel, had merely remarked that he was too busy to come to her rescue. In the JOURNAL as long ago as October 1931 my old friend Burkitt—I must needs think in an erratic mood—pronounced in favour of Dr J. Muilenburg's then recent attempt to prove that the Didache was dependent upon Barnabas. Dom Connolly followed up the attack with further articles (*J.T.S.* Apr. 1932, and Apr. and July 1934) restating and developing the arguments of Armitage Robinson. Unless somebody says something soon on the other side, the case may seem to go by default.

Burkitt begins by accepting Muilenburg's contention that the 'interpolation' (Didache i 3 b-ii 1) is part of the original text. On this point I take leave to quote from an Appendix in my book *The Primitive Church*:—

'The *Didache* survives in a single manuscript dated by the scribe who wrote it in the year A.D. 1056. Now if we take any one average MS of the Gospels of that date, we find a number of complete sentences and a very large number of individual words which editors like Westcott and Hort or Tischendorf (who base their text on the oldest MSS) will not allow us to regard as authentic. For example, every Greek MS but one of the Gospels later than the year A.D. 1000, so far as I recollect, gives Mark xvi 9-20 as part of the authentic text of the Gospel. It is obvious to any critic that the author of those twelve verses made use of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts—from which fact it would, if the passage were authentic, be a necessary inference that the date of Mark is later than that of Luke and Acts. . . .

'The text of the *Didache* presents an exact analogy. Near the beginning there is a passage (i 5) which appears to contain a quotation from Hermas. . . . Admittedly the "interpolation" is an early one; it is found in texts of the *Didache* both in Egypt and Syria before the end of the fourth century. Curiously enough a papyrus fragment (fourth century) (cf. *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* vol. xv p. 14), which contains only a few lines of the *Didache*, happens to include one sentence of the "interpolation"; it was also in the copy used about the same date by the author of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. In this matter, therefore, the text of our surviving MS can be carried back to the fourth century. But this does not prove the reading authentic; texts of St Mark's Gospel containing the last twelve verses can be shown to have existed as far back as the *second* century, for Irenaeus, c. A.D. 185, used such a text.'

Convincing reasons for believing the passage (which is also absent from Barnabas) to be an interpolation in the *Didache* are:—

(1) It is absent from the long quotation from the Didache in the (probably third century) *Apostolic Church Ordinances* ;

(2) It is absent from the Latin version of 'The Two Ways'. The evidence of the Latin version cannot be disposed of by calling it 'a mere extract made for homiletical purposes'; for it contains the whole of 'The Two Ways' as found in the Didache plus a few sentences.

But even if we allow that the authors both of the *Apostolic Church Ordinances* and of the Latin version wished to abbreviate, what we have to explain is:—

(a) Why, although the one apparently wrote in Egypt and the other in the West, they agree in leaving out *precisely the same sentences* ;

(b) Why the sentences chosen for omission (largely a conflation of sayings in the Matthean and Lucan versions of the Sermon on the Mount) should be the most specifically Christian in the whole of 'The Two Ways'.

Apart from this interpolation, there is no reason whatever to suppose that the Didachist had read Hermas.

For the Didachist's use of Barnabas, the argument which seems to have appealed to Burkitt is stated as follows:—

'Barnabas (c. xii) says: The Israelites were killed when Moses dropped his hands (Exod. xvii)—"Why? That they may know that they cannot be saved, except they hope in it (i.e. the Cross). And again in another Prophet it says: 'All day long I stretched out (ἐξέπέρασα) my hands.'" We may smile at the explanation, but at least the passage referred to is quite clear: ἐξέπέρασα is the actual word used in the LXX of Isaiah lxxv 2. And further, when we consider the early date of Barnabas, there is little reason to deny him the honour of having been the first to apply this passage to the Cross. But in Didache xvi 6, where the signs of the Second Coming are enumerated, we find "first, the sign of stretching-forth of heaven . . ." What is this σημεῖον ἐκπέραςως? Clearly it is explicable if the passage in Barnabas was in the mind of the Didachist, but otherwise it is as obscure as it has been to most of the modern commentators on the Didache (see Muilenburg, p. 162.) (*J.T.S.* Oct. 1931, p. 26.)

Didache xvi is, as I have myself argued (*The Four Gospels* p. 510 f), based on Matthew xxiv, and Muilenburg is clearly right in regarding the 'sign of the out-stretching' as the Didachist's interpretation of the 'sign of the Son of Man' in Matt. xxiv 30. That is a real contribution to the exegesis of the Didache. But if it is argued that this shews the dependence of the Didache upon Barnabas, the argument proves too much; for the same argument can prove the dependence of the Fourth Gospel upon Barnabas—which, if Barnabas be dated (as these writers wish) A.D. 131, is manifestly absurd. The passage of Isaiah quoted

above occurs in Barnabas as one in a long series of Messianic proof-texts and is linked up (as part of a continuous argument) with a contention that the brazen serpent made by Moses (Num. xxi 9) is a type of Christ; and Barnabas's language and arrangement is clearly *not* influenced by the famous passage in John iii 14. We know from the Acts of the Apostles that Christians began collecting Messianic proof-texts from the earliest times: there is no more reason to suppose that Barnabas was the first person who read Isaiah lxxv 2 as a Messianic prophecy than that he was the first who so read the story of the brazen serpent.

The second argument for the use of Barnabas by the Didachist is the superior arrangement in the latter of material in the section common to both writers known as 'The Two Ways'.

'We see in Barnabas an artless writer, not ill-informed or stupid, but with very little power of expression and liable to continual digressions. . . . In the Didache, on the other hand, we have the work of a neat and methodical compiler. The strong point of the Didache is its excellent arrangement, exactly where Barnabas is weakest. What Barnabas has put down haphazard as counsels for Christians the Didachist reduces to order.' (*J.T.S.* Oct. 1931, p. 26.)

Had I not happened to have done seminar work on the Synoptic Problem for a matter of thirty years, I might have been taken in by this argument. But, like the argument last mentioned, its weak point is that it proves too much. Precisely the same argument will prove that the Sermon on the Mount and the other great discourses of Matthew were derived by him from Luke—which is, I think, the one explanation of their interrelation which has found no reputable upholder, either in ancient or modern times.

In three ways the interrelation of parallel passages in the Didache and Barnabas is analogous to that of those parallel passages in Matthew and Luke which cannot be explained by derivation from Mark.

(a) Matthew's arrangement of the material is much more orderly and systematic than Luke's; the arrangement in the Didache is much more orderly and systematic than in Barnabas.

(b) The general impression given in Matthew is much more Jewish; Luke's version is slightly Hellenized. Just so 'The Two Ways' has in the Didache a more Jewish flavour; in Barnabas it is more Hellenic.

(c) Matthew does not merely rearrange material which occurs in Luke; he also interpolates into it matter which obviously comes from another source. Dom Connolly's argument (*J.T.S.* Apr. 1932, p. 241) that Didache iii 1-6, which is not found in Barnabas, comes from another source is, I believe, a sound one; but it no more proves that Barnabas is the source of the Didache than the fact that Matthew

frequently has passages lacking in the parallel in Luke shows that he used that Gospel.

Dom Connolly has no difficulty in shewing that in many passages the phrasing in Barnabas looks more original than that in the Didache. Similarly, any student of the Synoptic Problem can produce plenty of passages in which the phrasing of Luke looks more original than that of Matthew. But the student of the Synoptic Problem will also produce passages in which Matthew's phrasing appears to be more original than Luke's. That is why most scholars suppose that the parallels in these Gospels are best explained on the theory that neither copied the other, but that both use a common source—Matthew and Luke alternating in the degree of fidelity with which they reproduce that source. Dom Connolly nowhere asks the question whether there are cases where phrases in the Didache look more original than their parallels in Barnabas. But other scholars have adduced such cases. I may refer to the discussion of this point by Dr A. J. MacLean in his *The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles* (pp. xiii-xv, S.P.C.K., 1922).

Again, Dom Connolly shews that words characteristic of 'The Two Ways' occur elsewhere in Barnabas and vice versa. But, as every student of the Synoptic Problem knows, the same thing holds in Matthew and Luke; words occurring in the so-called Q passages are frequently found elsewhere in the Gospels and vice versa.

Yet again, Dom Connolly (*J.T.S.* Apr. 1932, p. 247) makes a great deal of the fact that, while sometimes the resemblance between the Didache and Barnabas is almost word for word, at other times the parallels have merely a general resemblance; and he has some scornful remarks on theories which attribute this to vagaries in the human memory. The fact remains, explain it how we will, that precisely the same variety occurs in parallels between Matthew and Luke.

Dom Connolly has made it impossible for any future scholar to reverse his hypothesis and argue that Barnabas used the Didache. He has left unweakened the hypothesis that they used a common source, which neither has incorporated without considerable modification.

On one point I am glad to find myself in agreement with Dom Connolly. He argues that one or two phrases in the Didache's version of 'The Two Ways' shew the influence of the Gospel of Matthew. In my book *The Four Gospels* I shewed that the latter part of the Didache was undoubtedly dependent on Matthew, though probably on no other Gospel. That the same should be the case in 'The Two Ways' in no way surprises me. It merely affords additional evidence for an early date of Matthew and of the special prestige of that Gospel in the district in which the Didache was composed.

I return to Burkitt's article. Apparently in support of Armitage

Robinson's argument that the section of the Didache which comes after 'The Two Ways' (and is largely concerned with church order) is a piece of spurious archaism produced late in the second century, he remarks:—

'It may not be out of place to point out that the beginnings of Christian Archaeology, of an interest in "primitive" Christian times, can be dated round about A.D. 200. It was then that "the places", the Palestinian sites, began to be visited; it was in that generation that Irenaeus appealed to the Roman heritage of Apostolic Scriptures as the norm of teaching. A little later came the *Ἀποστολικὴ παράδοσις* of Hippolytus, a work based on what the author at least believed to be Apostolic tradition. This work, like the Didache, gives directions how Christian services are to be conducted and how Christians should order their lives.'

This is a curious reversal of the real significance of the facts. What Irenaeus and Hippolytus put forward as primitive and apostolic was probably far from being either; but it *was* the kind of teaching and church order which the church in their day regarded as orthodox—and *therefore* as certainly apostolic. But the form of church order represented in the Didache is one which by the time of Hippolytus was regarded as the reverse of orthodox. And church order was not a matter in regard to which orthodoxy was at that moment indifferent. A great controversy was going on between the church authorities and the Montanists in regard to the authority claimed by prophets; and in support of their views the Montanists appealed to primitive usage.

Now the remarkable thing about the church order in the Didache is that it is equally objectionable both from the orthodox and the Montanist standpoint. It represents a system in which Prophets and Teachers are (after Apostles) the most important persons in the church; but it represents that system *as in a state of break-down*. It implies that Prophets, though most important persons, are much rarer than was the case when Paul wrote to the Corinthians; and false prophets are so common that tests of genuineness are in constant demand. In face of this situation the Didachist endeavours to *strengthen the position* of the Bishops and Deacons:—

'Appoint for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not; for they are your honourable men along with the prophets and teachers.' (Didache 15.)

This can only reflect an actual historic situation—the break-down of an old system and the beginning of a new. The situation is one which we can readily believe to have existed between A. D. 90 and 100, but with difficulty either at a much earlier or a much later date.

The picture of church order in the Didache, so far from satisfying the antiquarianism of the second and third centuries, created considerable difficulties. This is shewn by the treatment of the second half of the document by later writers: (a) the author of the *Apostolic Constitutions* evades the difficulty by reproducing the original with elaborate and skilful interpolations; (b) the author of the *Apostolic Church Ordinances* does so by *substituting* a church order of the kind approved in his day; (c) the author of the Latin version does so by *omitting* the whole of the second part of the Didache and rounding off 'The Two Ways' with a few words of exhortation, thus turning it into a kind of homily.

The Latin version so emended is probably the work alluded to by Rufinus. The list of canonical books of the New Testament, which was ultimately accepted, first appears in the 39th Festal Letter of Athanasius (A.D. 367). It is generally believed that this represents an agreement between Rome and Alexandria; and an identical list is given by Rufinus. Now Athanasius and Rufinus agree in adding—as a kind of sub-canonical appendix—two, and only two, other works, viz. Hermas, and a work which Athanasius calls *Διδαχὴ καλουμένη τῶν ἀποστόλων*, and which Rufinus calls *Duae Viae vel Judicium Petri*. The burden of proof surely lies with any one who wishes to deny that the *Duae Viae* of Rufinus is this Latin version of 'The Two Ways', which, in the Greek, constitutes the first part of the Didache.

If that be so, there is an important corollary. In the Gospels it often happens that the Old Latin preserves a true reading which has disappeared in the Byzantine text of the Greek. Similarly, we should expect that the true reading in the Didache will frequently be found, not in our one eleventh-century Byzantine MS of the Greek, but in the Latin version.

B. H. STREETER.

SYRIACISMS IN ST LUKE

A RESPECTABLE tradition has it that St Luke was a native of Antioch. This is stated in the ancient Prologue to his Gospel which there are strong reasons for assigning to the second century,¹ by Eusebius *H.E.* iii 4, and by St Jerome *de Vir. illustr.* Further, the appearance of the first person plural in the 'Western' reading of Acts xi 28 presupposes that the writer of the book was at Antioch before SS Paul and Barnabas set out on the first missionary journey. Eusebius may be dependent on the Prologue, and Jerome may depend on Eusebius or the Prologue; but the Prologue itself and the 'Western' reading of Acts are in all

¹ See de Bruyne, 'Les plus anciens prologues latins des évangiles', in *Rev. Bénédictine* xl (1928) 193 ff.