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A Bibliographical Guide to the Study of Church History

1 The Early Church to the Middle of the Fifth Century

David F Wright

The compiler writes: 'This guide to the three periods of church history that most frequently feature in the theological curriculum has been prepared in response to student requests. It is designed to assist the type of student for whom a course in one of these periods constitutes only one of several courses to be taken in a particular year, so that students specializing or "majoring" or taking honours in the subject should not expect to find it adequate for their needs. It is restricted to works in English (books translated from other languages are not identified as such). Publishers' names have been included for those books believed to be still in print, but the date of the latest edition is provided only in cases of particular importance.

Any guide of this nature is bound to reflect to some extent the compilers' own libraries and prejudices, and can scarcely hope to achieve a satisfactory balance and wholeness. We can but say that we are not averse to suggestions and criticisms, and, if these are forthcoming, promise to do better next time — if such should be granted us.'

SECTION I: FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO CONSTANTINE

(N.B. Works which belong more properly to New Testament history, such as the influence of Qumran and its documents, are not listed in this guide.)

1. Source material

J. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius* (London, SPCK, 1957, paperback) is a superb collection of documents in translation with all the necessary accessories, quite invaluable. *The Early Christian Fathers* by H. Bettenson (OUP, 1969, paperback) is more systematically theological in scope. Note also R. M. Grant, *Second-Century Christianity: A Collection of Fragments* (London, SPCK, 1957, paperback), 'a little corpus of these odds and ends which link the New Testament period with the developed catholicism of the end of the second century'; fuller than Stevenson. H. A. Musurillo, *The Fathers of the Primitive Church* (London, New English Library, 1966, paperback) includes inscriptions and lesser-known extracts.

2. Reference works

F. L. Cross, *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (OUP, 1957) is for the time being unrivalled,

and generally near its best on the early era, though not completely clear of its well-known 'Catholic-Anglican' bias. *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines*, ed. W. Smith and H. Wace (4 vols., London, 1877-87) has not been superseded. Though hard on the eyes and obviously dated it is still of great value (e.g. on Basilides, Eusebius, Montanism, Origen, Tertullian) and remarkably comprehensive. Its companion, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, ed. W. Smith and S. Cheetham (2 vols., London, 1875-80) will likewise be of great usefulness until replaced. B. Altaner, *Patrology* (Edinburgh, Nelson (Herder), 1960) is the standard guide to the literature of the early church. Much fuller and more obviously 'Catholic' at points is J. Quasten, *Patrology* (3 vols., Westminster Md., Newman Press, 1950-60). Shorter accounts are *A History of Early Christian Literature* by E. J. Goodspeed, revised R. M. Grant (University of Chicago Press (London, Allen and Unwin), 1966) — surprisingly readable — and F. L. Cross, *The Early Christian Fathers* (London, Duckworth, 1960), especially good on recent discoveries. F. van der Meer and C. Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World* (London, Nelson, 1959) not only makes delightful browsing but is also an illuminating demonstration of the importance of geography for historical studies.

3. General histories

The student will require more than he can get from H. Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967, paperback), or W. H. C. Frend, *The Early Church* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1965, paperback) or J. G. Davies, *The Early Christian Church* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965). Of these the first possesses greater balance and accuracy, combined with a masterly thoroughness, the second is a rather livelier and more personal presentation and the third is strong on fringe topics like architecture and social life but somewhat jejune (and expensive!). *The First Six Hundred Years* by J. Daniélou and H. Marrou (*The Christian Centuries*, vol. 1; London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964) is marred by frequent mistakes and ill-proportioned in its coverage in the first half, largely through Daniélou's fond interest in 'Jewish Christianity'. Marrou's part is more satisfactory, and contains some excellent summary accounts and generous treatment of some topics not normally well covered

in one-volume histories, such as impact on society, church expansion and the early Christian life-style.

Of the large-scale histories L. Duchesne, *The Early History of the Christian Church* (3 vols., London, John Murray, 1909-24) is still one of the best available, by an old-style liberal RC who was supreme in his field. B. J. Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461* (3 vols., Oxford, 1922) contains far more information so solidly packed as to be excellent for reference purposes but otherwise digestible only in small helpings. Of the two, Kidd is more strictly 'ecclesiastical' in emphasis, Duchesne more impressionistic in tone. J. Lebreton and J. Zeiller, *A History of the Early Church* (4 vols, under separate titles, New York, Collier Books, 1962, paperback) is a very comprehensive, well organized, conservative treatment written in the 1930s and hence somewhat out-dated with regard to the period up to AD 150. Though thin on the social side and presenting too tidy a view of the developing church, it is well documented and probably the most complete history yet available. *A History of the Early Church* by H. Lietzmann (4 vols., London, Lutterworth, 1937-51, paperback (4 vols. in 2)) is scholarly, strong on the 'history of ideas', but in general requires some prior knowledge of the subject in order to be understood in its true depth. The latest full-size history is K. Baus, *From the Apostolic Community to Constantine (Handbook of Church History, vol. 1; London, Burns and Oates, 1965)*, a thoroughly reliable and up-to-date volume, again with a particular concentration on theological developments. But the fullest and most recent account of the earliest decades is L. Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times* (London, A. & C. Black, 1970), one of the first parts to appear in a multi-volume history of the church which promises to be of outstanding importance. Goppelt's book is significant for its analysis of the transition to 'early Catholicism' (*Frühkatholizismus*). P. Carrington, *The Early Christian Church*, (2 vols., CUP, 1957) covers the first two centuries at great length. Though a good survey of the literary sources, it is deficient in synthesis. Impressionistic studies of the leading figures in the story are given by H. von Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Greek Church* and *Fathers of the Latin Church* (London A. & C. Black, 1963 and 1964, paperback) — fuller and much more satisfying in the latter volume. Finally, of the general histories of the period *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 12 (CUP, 1929), deserves sole mention, for some excellent chapters by noted historians of the church.

4. History of doctrine

J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London, A. & C. Black, 1958), is deservedly standard, but has not entirely superseded its predecessor, J. F. Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine* (London, Methuen, 1903), e.g. on the Dionysii. Students who find that even Kelly fails

to render the controversies intelligible will appreciate M. F. Wiles, *The Christian Fathers* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1966, paperback), a splendid introduction and a model of lucidity. A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* (London, Mowbray, 1965), is an erudite survey of Christology up to Chalcedon on a scale perhaps beyond most students' requirements. The same probably holds good for G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London, SPCK, 1959), profound and mind-stretching. The same author's *Fathers and Heretics* (London, SPCK, 1954, paperback) is an attractive yet scholarly study of six case-histories, to be enjoyed by all, and Wiles, *The Making of Christian Doctrine* (CUP, 1967), a most enlightening 'study in the principles of early doctrinal development'. A solid conservative account of the relations between orthodoxy and heresy in the early centuries is provided by H. E. W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth* (London, Mowbray, 1954). J. Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity (A History of Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea, vol. 1; London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964)*, is a fascinating avant-garde exposition of a primitive Jewish-Christian framework of thought which, it is claimed, ante-dates both the orthodoxy and the heresy of the early Catholic era. This seminal work, undoubtedly exaggerated at many points, is still too much of a pioneer for its permanent value to be accurately assessed. Finally, one should not forget A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vols. 1-5 (in 3 vols., New York, Dover Publs., 1961, paperback), immensely perceptive concerning the *movements* of thought from generation to generation.

5. Background: intellectual, cultural, religious

C. K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* (London, SPCK, 1958), serves equally well for the primitive church, and can be used with R. Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (London, Collins, 1960, paperback). *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy* by A. H. Armstrong and R. A. Markus (London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1960) is a valuable survey of the issues at stake, and may be supplemented by W. Jaeger's lecture, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (OUP, 1969, paperback), and the profound classic by C. N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New York, OUP, 1957, paperback). The relevant chapters in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Mediaeval Philosophy*, ed. Armstrong (CUP, 1967) are of outstanding value, while the most ambitious treatment of philosophical presuppositions is H. A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1956). On the more explicitly religious side A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (OUP, 1961, paperback), is not plain sailing for beginners, and the same writer's *Early Gentile Christianity and the Hellenistic Background* (New York, Harper, 1964, paperback), though brief, is also an advanced study. In *Pagan and Christian in an Age*

of *Anxiety* (CUP, 1965), E. R. Dodds discusses 'some aspects of religious experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine'. Finally, A. Toynbee has edited *The Crucible of Christianity* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1969), a magnificent verbal and visual portrayal of 'Judaism, Hellenism and the Historical Background to the Christian Faith'.

6. Specialized studies

a. *The Apostolic Fathers and the development of the ministry; Montanism.* B. F. Streeter, *The Primitive Church* (London, 1929), is a rumbustious entry to the subject but not to be slavishly followed. R. M. Grant, *Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers* (New York, Nelson, 1964), is not only a fine up-to-date guide but also the preliminary volume to the best of recent English translations, with full annotation (6 vols. in all, still in progress). J. B. Lightfoot's essay on 'The Christian Ministry' in his commentary on *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (1868; London, Oliphants, 1953) and separately (London, 1901) must not be missed. Its main conclusions were endorsed, in the light of new developments such as the discovery of the *Didache*, by J. A. Robinson's essay in H. B. Swete, ed., *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry* (London, 1918), which also contains a fundamental study of apostolic succession by C. H. Turner. A. A. T. Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession* (London, 1953), is a learned attempt to trace the doctrine mainly to the idea of succession to the Jewish high priesthood. It also looks at other types of succession, such as prophetic and catechetical. A good modern discussion of early episcopacy is provided by W. Telfer, *The Office of a Bishop* (London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1962), while the major modern study of the whole area is H. von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (London, A. & C. Black, 1969), which no ambitious student should bypass. On Montanism there is little in English apart from chapters in more general works and the still useful article in *The Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

b. *The papacy.* An excellent sketch is available in B. J. Kidd, *The Roman Primacy to A.D. 461* (London, 1936), and a more expansive discussion in T. G. Jalland, *The Church and the Papacy* (London, 1944). More than adequate documentation, well annotated, is to be found in E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority A.D. 96-454* (London, SPCK, 1952). There is an important article by G. La Piana on 'The Roman Church at the end of the Second Century' in *HTR* 18 (1925), pp. 201-277.

c. *Gnosticism and Marcion.* R. M. Grant, *Gnosticism: an Anthology* (London, Collins, 1961), provides sufficient source material, but no student can be excused ignorance of the intriguing Gospel of Thomas (best translation in edition by A. Guillaumont *et al.*, Leiden, Brill, 1959). It may not be Gnostic at all. An outstanding exposition of Gnostic

thought is H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Boston Mass., Beacon Press, 1963, paperback), and the most reliable studies of the whole problem are Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1959), and R. McL. Wilson, *The Gnostic Problem* (London, Mowbray, 1958), a cautious piece of work on the relations between Hellenistic Judaism and Gnosticism.

Marcion stands somewhat apart from mainstream Gnostic currents, but may suitably be mentioned here. E. C. Blackman, *Marcion and His Influence* (London, SPCK, 1948), is a careful account and a necessary corrective to both Harnack's over-enthusiastic yet quite fundamental study (still untranslated) and John Knox's speculative *Marcion and the New Testament* (Chicago, 1942). There is a fine chapter in Jonas.

d. *Persecution: church and state.* The early chapters of T. M. Parker, *Christianity and the State in the Light of History* (London, A. & C. Black, 1955), are a good introduction. W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1965), though tending to overstatement and in need of correction at many points (see the review by G. E. M. de Ste Croix in *JTS* n.s. 18 (1967), pp. 217ff.), is nevertheless a magisterial work, and almost usable as a general social history of the early church. Ste Croix has written a key article on 'Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?' (with subsequent discussion) in *Past and Present* 26 (1963) and 27 (1964).

On Constantine A. H. M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (London, EUP, 1948), remains the standard introduction, from which students may proceed to N. H. Baynes's fundamental monograph *Constantine the Great and Christian Church* (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, XV, 1929, and separately, London, 1931), and A. Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1948).

e. *Creed and Canon.* R. P. C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (London, SCM, 1962), contains handy discussions of most topics in this area. For thoroughness of treatment B. F. Westcott, *A General Survey of the Canon of the New Testament* (London, 1896) is still unrivalled in English, though inevitably partly outdated. A briefer account is given in A. Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, revised C. S. C. Williams (London, Duckworth, 1954). No full discussion has yet been devoted to the implications of recent discoveries, but reference should be made to W. C. van Unnik, 'The "Gospel of Truth" and the New Testament' in *The Jung Codex*, ed. F. L. Cross (London, Mowbray, 1955). The role ascribed traditionally to Marcion as a catalyst in the creation of the Canon is likely to need severe pruning. *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1, ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (CUP, 1970), contains articles on the Canon and early Christian exegesis.

On credal developments R. P. C. Hanson and J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London, Longmans, 1960), will probably suffice. The latter is thorough and original, if also rather technical at times.

f. *The Apologists, Irenaeus and the North Africans*. For the Apologists in general one must refer to the basic histories listed above. On Justin, L. W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr* (CUP, 1967) is safe and unexciting. There are profounder studies by H. Chadwick in *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1966) and 'Justin Martyr's Defence of Christianity', *BJRL* 47 (1965), pp. 275-67, and by R. A. Norris in *God and World in Early Christian Theology* (London, A. & C. Black, 1966), which also treats of Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen. There are three valuable monographs on Irenaeus, F. R. M. Hitchcock, *Irenaeus of Lugdunum* (Cambridge, 1964), G. Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation: A Study of the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus* (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1959), and J. Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of St. Irenaeus* (London, 1948). No full-scale studies have recently been devoted to Tertullian, but S. L. Greenslade, *Early Latin Theology (Library of Christian Classics, vol. 5; London, SCM, 1956)*, gives a brief introduction and select translations, as also for Cyprian, and on the theological side there is B. B. Warfield, *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine* (New York, 1930), and a chapter in T. R. Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* (London 1932). A commendable little book on *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian* (London, Lutterworth, 1968) by G. S. M. Walker has not met the need for a comprehensive work on Cyprian. His key writings are available in an excellent annotated translation by M. Bévenot (*Ancient Christian Writers, vol. 25; London, Longmans, 1957*). M. F. Wiles, 'The Theological Legacy of St. Cyprian', *JEH* 14 (1963), pp. 139-149, is valuable.

g. *Alexandrian Christianity*. H. Kraft, *Early Christian Thinkers* (London, Lutterworth, 1964, paperback), is a fine little introduction to the Alexandrians and there are good studies of Clement and Origen by H. Chadwick in *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition*, in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, and, with J. E. L. Oulton, in *Alexandrian Christianity (Library of Christian Classics, vol. 2; London, SCM, 1954)* introductions and selected translations. C. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford, 1913²), is still almost required reading but is not easy. The key modern treatment of Origen is Daniélou's *Origen* (London, 1955), and there is a perceptive study of 'Origen, Theologian in the Cataclysm of the Ancient World' by Ehrhardt in *Oikoumene (Studi Paleocristiani . . . Vaticano II, University of Catania, 1964)*.

h. *Syriac Christianity*. The study of Syriac-speaking Christianity has received great stimulus

from recent discoveries on several fronts, but the situation is still too fluid to permit of convenient works of synthesis, at any rate in English. F. C. Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity* (London, 1904), remains a thesis to be reckoned with but may well be dislodged by a new consensus suggested by J. C. L. Gibson's article 'From Qumran to Edessa: or the Aramaic-speaking Church before and after A.D. 70' in *New College Bulletin* II: 2 (1965), pp. 10-20 and *Annual of the Leeds University Oriental Society* 5 (1963-65), pp. 24-39. Meanwhile interested students can find some guidance in A. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, vol. 1 (Louvain, 1958), and J. B. Segal, *Edessa, 'The Blessed City'* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1970).

i. *Worship, life, art, architecture*. The worshiping community's inheritance from Judaism is well charted in C. W. Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue upon the Divine Office* (London, Faith Press, 1964). C. F. D. Moule, *Worship in the New Testament* (London, Lutterworth, 1961, paperback), is a reliable guide where extravagant claims have too often been entertained of late. A book for beginners that is strong on the forces influencing developments is J. A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great* (London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1960, paperback). More technical are Duchesne, *Christian Worship: its Origin and Evolution* (London, SPCK, 1920, and on the eucharist alone J. H. Srawley, *The Early History of the Liturgy* (CUP, 1947). G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit* (London, Longmans, 1956) is a significant study of the evolution of baptism and related rites. The development of penitential discipline is treated briefly in W. Telfer, *The Forgiveness of Sins* (London, 1959), and more fully in B. Poschmann, *Penance, and the Anointing of the Sick* (London, Burns and Oates, 1964). A. A. McArthur, *The Evolution of the Christian Year* (London, 1953), is a standard account. J. G. Davies presents a selection of lively vignettes of *Daily Life in the Early Church* (London, 1952) and *Social Life of Early Christians* (London, 1954), while a detailed comprehensive survey of pre-Constantinian attitudes to society, culture and the state is available in C. J. Cadoux, *The Early Church and the World* (Edinburgh, 1925). E. M. B. Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1970) usefully fills a gap, and can be read alongside A. Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (2 vols., London, 1908; vol. 1, New York, Harper, 1961, paperback). M. Gough, *The Early Christians* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1961) is a fine introduction to early Christian art and architecture. For art there is F. van der Meer, *Early Christian Art* (London, Faber, 1967), and on a larger scale, A. Grabar, *The Beginnings of Christian Art, 200-395 A.D.* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1967). Note also J. Daniélou, *Primitive Christian Symbols* (Lon-

don, Burns and Oates, 1964). On architecture
Davies, *The Origin and Development of Early Christian Architecture* (London, 1952), and R. Krauthimer,

Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture (Harmondsworth, Penguin 1965), should be adequate for the undergraduate.
