A Bibliographical Guide
to the Study of Church History

2 The Early Church to the Middle of the Fifth Century (continued)

D F Wright

This part of the Guide should be read in conjunction with Section 1, which appeared in the last issue of the TSF Bulletin, and to which frequent reference is made in this Section.

SECTION II: FROM NICAEA TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTH CENTURY

1. Source material

J. Stevenson, Creeds, Councils and Controversies (London, SPCK, 1966) is again quite invaluable, though necessarily more selective than its predecessor. The concentration of H. Bettenson, The Later Christian Fathers (OUP, 1970), on more systematically doctrinal concerns, makes it a useful supplement to Stevenson.

2. Reference works

See Section 1. 2 for three dictionaries, for Altaner’s Patrology and the Atlas by van der Meer and Mohrmann. Quasten’s third volume (1960) covers the Greek Fathers of the post-Nicene church; he has not yet dealt with the later Latin Fathers. For these use can be made of P. de Labriolle, History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius (1924; London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969).
3. General histories

See I. 3 above for Chadwick, Frend, Davies, Duchesne vols. 2 and 3, Kidd vols. 2 and 3, and Lietzmann vols. 3 and 4. Lietzmann's account reaches only to the end of the fourth century but marks a decided advance on earlier works. The Church in the Christian Roman Empire, by J. R. Palanque, G. Bary and P. de Labriolle (2 vols., London, 1949 and 1952), like Lebreton and Zeiller, on the earlier centuries (see I. 3 above), is translated from the great French history of the whole church edited by Fliche and Martin. It provides the most comprehensive reliable treatment of the fourth century at present available in English, with strengths and weaknesses similar to those noted for Lebreton and Zeiller. Von Campenhausen's two volumes (see I. 3) are relevant to this later period, with particularly valuable studies of Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine.


4. History of doctrine


On the Christological debates, R. V. Sellers, Two Ancient Christologies (London, 1940) and The Council of Chalcedon (London, 1953), should be added to the works mentioned in I. 4, above. On individual aspects the student can use C. E. Raven, Apollinarism (Cambridge, 1923); R. A. Norris, Manhood and Christ: A Study in The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia (OUP, 1963); and F. Loofs, Nestorius and His Place in the History of Christian Doctrine (Cambridge, 1914). There is also an illuminating study by H. Chadwick of the relation between 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy', JTS n.s. 2 (1951) pp. 145-164.

The Oecumenical Documents of the Faith, ed. T. H. Bindley, revd. F. W. Green (London, Methuen, 1950) is a helpful compendium, with texts, translations and full annotation, of the statements canonized from Nicaea to Chalcedon. Kelly on the Creeds (see I. 6e) must not be neglected here, nor Wolfson's study of patristic Trinitarian and Christological thought in the light of philosophical assumptions (see I.5). The complications created by the evolving patriarchates' rival aspirations are discussed by Chadwick, 'Faith and Order at the Council of Nicaea', HTR 53 (1960), pp. 171-195, and N. H. Baynes, 'Alexandria and Constantinople: A Study in Ecclesiastical Diplomacy', in Byzantine Studies and Other Essays (University of London, Athlone Press, 1955).

5. Specialized studies


b. Paganism and Christianity. The works by Armstrong and Markus, Jaeger, Cochrane and Nock (Conversion) listed in I. 5 above all have material dealing with the post-Constantinian era, and The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Mediaeval Philosophy mentioned in the same place

c. The papacy. The three books recommended in I. 6b pursue the story at least as far as the papacy of Leo the Great, of whom there is also a full biography by T. G. Jalland, The Life and Times of Leo the Great (London, 1941).


f. Worship, life, art and architecture. The books by Dugmore, Jungman, Duchesne, Srawley, Lampe, Telfer, Poschmann, McArthur, Davies (three), Gough, van der Meer, Grabar and Krautheimer listed in 16i relate also to the fourth and fifth centuries. H. Lietzmann, Mass and Lord’s Supper (Leiden, Brill, 1953ff. appearing in fascicles), is much more commendable when delineating different types of developed liturgies than in tracing them back to two quite diverse originals. Bouyer’s study of early Christian spirituality (see d above) should have found
Three editions in seventeen years constitute a fairly impressive record for a one-volume Bible commentary. For good measure, there have been no fewer than nine impressions of the second edition in eleven years. And this second edition was called for within one year of the appearance of the first edition!

It isn't that the NBC has had no serious competitors. The names of long-established guides spring readily to mind: Jamieson, Fausset and Brown; Wycliffe and others. Each has for long been a standby to serious Bible students. In addition, the Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture (2nd edition, 1970) and now the new Jerome Commentary (£10.50!) are erudite contributions from Roman Catholic scholars.

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Among the new articles there is none dealing specifically with the New Testament church. This is a serious omission, if for no other reason than that there is a wide spectrum of views on the church among evangelicals, and a commentary written primarily for that part of the religious constituency would have rendered a service by providing a statement on the New Testament teaching on the nature, functions and destiny of the church.

The editors plead that 'restriction on space' has compelled the team of writers 'to curtail discussion of some speculative matters regarding dates and questions of authorship'. Those interested in these matters are directed by the Editors to the sources and authorities which deal with them.

The NBC is a work by a team of writers who in themselves strike a fine balance between biblical scholarship and the practical experience of the self-authenticating power of Holy Scripture gained by men in the parish ministry. Here is a group of writers, scholars and parish ministers, who have recognized that biblical scholarship must be integrated with traditional Christianity if it is to bear any spiritual message or fruit in modern society.

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The New Bible Commentary Revised

J. G. S. S. Thomson

In 1970 the Inter-Varsity Press published The New Bible Commentary Revised (1310 pp. £3.00). It represents a thorough-going revision of the original work published in 1953, over half the articles being entirely new. It therefore seems appropriate to publish this brief commendation of the volume by Dr Thomson, a Semitic scholar now engaged in the pastoral ministry.

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