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In the ancient world 'philosophy' included all branches of higher learning except mathematics and medicine. It was the keystone of a university education; and it helped to change the Christian Church from an obscure Jewish sect into a worldwide civilizing force. This book gives a brief, lucid and systematic account of its origin among the Greeks and its transforming influence on Christian thought. Based on up-to-date scholarship, but requiring no specialist knowledge, it aims at theological penetration supported by accurate logic.

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Preface

Christian theology begins with the New Testament. The earliest Christians, it shows us, were ready to expound the Scriptures and to defend their faith in Jesus against Jewish and pagan opponents. But before long they faced the new task of expressing their beliefs in a way that well-educated pagans could understand and appreciate. And as the Christian movement expanded, new expressions of the faith were devised, and had to be examined and approved so that as far as possible disagreements and misconceptions could be avoided. The great development of early Christian theology took place in the three hundred years extending from the mid-second century to the Council of Chalcedon in 451: the age of Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius and Augustine.

At this time the various schools of philosophy gave their adherents many of the benefits we now expect from religion. The conventional state religion was often little more than a formality; the so-called 'mystery cults' offered comfort and reassurance, but provided no explanations and made few demands; the worshipper could enter one, two or several such fellowships as he wished. The Jews had largely detached themselves from the main stream of ancient culture. It was the philosophers who both called for commitment and presented a way of life based on a rational view of the world and man's place within it.

Christians therefore began to present their faith as a 'new philosophy', and thus were drawn into debate with the established schools. In this process Christians often learnt from their pagan critics, sometimes corrected them, and often borrowed their ideas. And this dialogue has left its mark on the classical

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structure of Christian theology, which passed from Augustine to the Schoolmen, and so to Luther and Calvin, to Schleiermacher and to Karl Barth, and is the common inheritance of Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican churchmen.

The work before you sets out to explain the influence of philosophy on early Christian thought, and the way in which Christian writers contributed to philosophy. For convenience I have included in Part I a brief account of the birth of philosophy among the Greeks; this of course can be checked and confirmed by the numerous books, both concise and extensive, which deal with this ever-fascinating topic; while those who are already well informed should feel free to omit this part, or possibly begin reading at Chapter 6. Part II, on the other hand, breaks new ground by bringing together some results of modern study which are not conveniently accessible, and in places extending them by new research. Here I have thought it best to arrange my material by topics rather than by authors. The reason, as I shall explain, is that early Christian writers differ so greatly in their knowledge, competence and sympathy with regard to philosophy that there is no continuous development of Christian philosophy to set beside the well-known development of Christian doctrine and theology. In this part I have concentrated on the basic articles of Christian belief, the existence and nature of God himself, and the philosophical terms employed in expressing the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

In Part III I have written a brief sketch of the philosophy of Augustine. Historians of philosophy can, at a pinch, pass over all earlier Christian writers; but Augustine is the one figure which no student of late antiquity can ignore, and no philosopher should disparage. I hope my treatment of him will not be thought dismissive. Philosophers delight in learning from each others' mistakes, and are well prepared to acknowledge their own; whereas theologians, who have responsibilities towards their whole worshipping community, are expected to set forth saving truths, and may understandably feel wounded if they, or their revered authorities, are taken to task. As a philosopher, Augustine will stand up to the toughest criticism. But it has long been difficult to find a comprehensive work on him which takes

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account of the new philosophical methods and insights developed over the past hundred years. Fairly recently, a good study by Christopher Kirwan has partly met this need. But it is not altogether easy reading, except for those well acquainted with the language of modern professional philosophers. There is room, I would think, for a much briefer and simpler critical study.

The work I now present is a revised, and I hope improved, edition of my *Philosophie und Theologie 1*, published at Stuttgart in 1990. Warm thanks are due to Professor Geoffrey Lloyd and to Professor Rowan Williams, as they then were, who read parts of my original manuscript and offered invaluable suggestions; also to Dr Christian Wildberg and Professor Martin Ritter, who gave much careful thought to the translation. Subsequently Professor Peter Geach made kind but annihilating comments on one chapter, which I hastily rewrote; but probably not to his satisfaction. The English version was further revised with generous help from Dr William Horbury, on Old Testament scholarship, and from Professor Michael Frede, who gave thoughtful and expert advice both on ancient philosophy and on St Augustine. And I must thank Professor Goulven Madec for the loan of an unpublished work on Augustine. I hope he will not mind if I borrow his prefatory words: 'I had to leave the philosophers for love of thee', *philosophos transgredi debui prae amore tuo*, *Confessions* 3.6.10. But our love is founded on God's love for us; and we should try to believe that that love extends even to philosophers.

Abbreviations

<i>DG</i>	H. Diels, <i>Doxographi Graeci</i> , Berlin 1879, 4th edn 1965
<i>DTC</i>	E. Amann <i>et al.</i> (eds.), <i>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique</i> , Paris 1903-72
<i>ECD</i>	J. N. D. Kelly, <i>Early Christian Doctrines</i> , London 1958, 5th edn 1977
<i>GNO</i>	W. Jaeger <i>et al.</i> (eds.), <i>Gregorii Nysseni Opera</i> , Leiden 1920-
<i>GPT</i>	G. L. Prestige, <i>God in Patristic Thought</i> , London 1936, 2nd edn 1952
<i>JThS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LCC</i>	J. Baillie <i>et al.</i> (eds.), <i>Library of Christian Classics</i> , London, 1953-
<i>LGP</i>	A. H. Armstrong (ed.), <i>Later Greek Philosophy</i> (see Bibliography 6)
<i>MSR</i>	<i>Mélanges de Science Religieuse</i>
<i>PCF</i>	H. A. Wolfson, <i>The Philosophy of the Church Fathers</i> , Cambridge, Mass., 1956
<i>PG</i>	J. P. Migne, <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca</i>
<i>PGL</i>	G. W. H. Lampe (ed.), <i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> , Oxford 1961
<i>PL</i>	J. P. Migne, <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i>
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> , Stuttgart 1950-
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> , Paris 1941-
<i>SVF</i>	H. von Arnim, <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> , Stuttgart 1903-24, repr. 1964-8
<i>TRE</i>	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> , Berlin 1977-
<i>ZKG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>