

Cambridge University Press

0521290163 - The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day

Edited by S. L. Greenslade

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EDITED BY

S. L. GREENSLADE, F.B.A.

*Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History
in the University of Oxford*



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PREFACE

The idea of a Cambridge History of the Bible originated within the University Press and was considered, approved and benevolently assisted through its early stages by a committee consisting of Professors M. D. Knowles and Norman Sykes. It was at first intended that the History should appear in two volumes, divided chronologically at the Reformation; and Dr G. W. H. Lampe, then Professor of Theology in the University of Birmingham, and Dr S. L. Greenslade, then Professor of Divinity in the University of Durham, were invited to edit them. In the event, the plan has been extended. The two volumes originally planned will deal with the history of the Bible in the West only, that is, in western Europe and America. A history of the Bible in English, more ample than any recent one, is envisaged, and further volumes may take up other aspects of the story or cover other areas.

The term 'history of the Bible' is used in a limited sense. These two volumes do not include the composition of the individual books, nor the historical and religious background and content of the Bible itself. They are neither a history nor a summary of Christian doctrine, though considerable attention is paid to theories of biblical authority and inspiration and to principles and methods of exegesis. Nor are they a systematic history of biblical scholarship (a subject which deserves separate treatment), though aspects of it are discussed at some length. To put it more positively, we have tried to give in the first two volumes an account of the text and versions of the Bible used in the West, of its multiplication in manuscript and print, and its circulation; of attitudes towards its authority and exegesis; and of its place in the life of the western Church. And, with much reserve, something has been said of the impact of the Bible upon the world. It is believed that the present volume will be found to be reasonably self-sufficient. It will be followed by that edited by Professor Lampe, which covers the period from the Fathers to the Renaissance.

Though the volumes are substantial, they cannot include everything. Selection and proportion have been difficult, in view of the need to take into account the major interests of English-speaking readers. The present

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editor sympathizes with those of his contributors who would have liked more space, and is grateful for their self-restraint.

The select bibliographies are intended simply to direct attention to the principal works on each subject and to indicate where it may be more fully studied.

Thanks are due, and are offered, to a great many scholars who have generously assisted the contributors. It is not possible to name them all, but we cannot omit to record our deep regret at the death of Norman Sykes so soon after he had left Cambridge to become Dean of Winchester. This volume contains one of his last writings.

S.L.G.

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