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978-1-107-42905-5 - Eustathius of Antioch and his Place in the Early History
of Christian Doctrine

R. V. Sellers

Frontmatter

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DOCTRINE**

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Ο ΤΗΣ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑΣ ΠΡΟΜΑΧΟΣ Ο ΜΕΓΑΣ ΕΥΣΤΑΘΙΟΣ

(THEODORET, *H.E.* i, 21)

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PREFACE

There can be no doubt that, on account of its startling modernity, the teaching of the Antiochene theologians in the early centuries of the Church's history has no small appeal to men of the present generation. Their rationalistic method of interpreting Holy Scripture, their Christological outlook with the historical Christ in the foreground, and their insistence upon the reality of man's freedom to rise to higher things, not only strike us as being surprisingly modern, but also furnish us with those truths which it is necessary to assert in making a reasonable answer to the problems of modern thought. That Eustathius was a worthy representative of this school of thought, and that he occupied a definite place in the developing thought of the Antiochene theologians, I attempt to show in the following pages.

But the subject is of even wider importance in view of the part that Eustathius played at a most critical time in the Church's history. His prominence at the Council of Nicaea, and his attack on the principles of Arius, make it abundantly clear that he was one of the leading ecclesiastics of his day. In this respect it should be called to mind that it was not at this time that Athanasius was the chief opponent of Arianism. His later glory overshadowed those witnesses to the truth who went before him, and among these Eustathius must be counted as one who stood in the foremost rank. Although, as I think, his views were not strictly orthodox, yet in helping to establish and maintain the Nicene Definition he was a servant of God in his own generation.

Since I imagine that my conclusions concerning his orthodoxy will not meet with the support of every student of the history of Christian Doctrine, I feel that I ought to say that I approached both the man and his teaching from the traditional point of view: I regarded him, as I had been taught, as an orthodox Nicene who was vilely subjected to the intrigue of his opponents. As I pursued the subject, however, I began to feel that everything was not so straight-

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PREFACE

forward as I had at first imagined, and, as I proceeded, I reached my present conclusions. Even then, I was not altogether satisfied; I went over the whole ground again, only to be even more convinced that, to the best of my judgment, I had arrived at a consistent interpretation of all the facts.

It remains that I should acknowledge my gratitude to those who have assisted me in my work. I would thank the Rev. Chancellor J. H. Srawley, D.D., who was one of my teachers at Cambridge, for his kindness in lending me his copy of M. Cavallera's *In Lazarum*; the book is now out of print, and copies of it appear to be very scarce. I am indebted to the Very Rev. J. C. Du Buisson, M.A., for the loan of good editions of some of the original authorities; his generosity has been of considerable help, in that, having the care of an industrial parish, I have had but little time to consult such works in the theological libraries. I have also to thank the Rev. Professor J. F. Bethune-Baker, D.D., for calling my attention to one or two points of detail. To Professor F. C. Burkitt, D.D., I (and all students of Eustathius) owe a debt of gratitude for translating some of the fragments preserved in Syriac; his translation goes to show that in all probability the fragments in question are genuine.

Finally, without the devotion and self-sacrifice of two who would be nameless, this work, whatever may be its real worth, could never have been produced. To them I owe more than words can express.

R. V. SELLERS

MYTHOLMROYD

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