

**STUDIES IN
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EDITED BY DEREK BAKER

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**RELIGIOUS MOTIVATION
BIOGRAPHICAL AND
SOCIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS
FOR THE
CHURCH HISTORIAN**

For the Ecclesiastical History Society
BASIL BLACKWELL, OXFORD

Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian

Edited by Derek Baker

department of history, university of Edinburgh

Problems of motivation haunt the ecclesiastical historian, for 'religious' motivation can be overwhelmingly irrational, its manifestations ambiguous, and hypocrisy and self-deception are proverbially found in their most extreme form in the religious context. Further, since the religion of an age inevitably takes forms which reflect the economic and social climate of the times, by what standards should we attempt to judge, if at all? Is religion some pure essence, defined by us, or should we accept the interpretations of the average conformist minds of the day? There are too the problems posed by recent sociological analysis of religious phenomena, and of the conditions, milieux and groupings in which they flourish and decline. These fundamental questions are the concern of the wide range of papers which comprise this volume. The emperor Constantine, more spiritually-aware than 'the late, illiberal Augustine', the Seven Bishops, the eighteenth-century French episcopate, and Gladstone, 'earnest for the cause of Christ', are the subjects of major studies. The consideration of the collapse of *convivencia* in later medieval Spain, Luther's 'tower-experience', and the relations of Anglicans and Orthodox in the age of Laud and Lucaris comprise others. One series of papers focusses on the inter-relationships of medieval patrons and their protégés; another on the problems of proselytism, ranging from catholic activity in Stuart and Georgian England to nineteenth-century evangelism, revivalism and missionary enterprise; two other papers consider Barth, Dibelius and Bonhoeffer; in two more the theory of an *equestris ordo* is nicely contrasted with practice in the career of Reynald of Châtillon, while the conditioning effect of political influences at later periods is exemplified in studies of Cromwell's major-generals and 'the Athanasius of Irish presbyterianism'. Ecumenical initiatives are considered in their contemporary context and in the seventeenth-century career of De Dominis, while papers on twelfth-century authors, orthodox eccentrics and schoolmen, and later medieval spirituals and flagellants reveal parallels to, and suggest comparisons with, the contemporary sects studied in the final paper, for whom too 'what is true is good and beneficial'.

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PAPERS READ AT
THE SIXTEENTH SUMMER MEETING AND
THE SEVENTEENTH WINTER MEETING
OF THE
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY SOCIETY

EDITED BY
DEREK BAKER

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