

STUDIES IN
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EDITED BY KEITH ROBBINS

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RELIGION
AND
HUMANISM

For the Ecclesiastical History Society
BASIL BLACKWELL, OXFORD

Religion and Humanism

Edited by Keith Robbins

department of modern history, university of Glasgow

The relationship between the ancient classics and the scriptures has been an abiding difficulty in Christian history – an aspect of the wider problem of the spheres of learning and of faith. Several papers, including the presidential address, consider the influence exercised by the ancient world on scholars and saints in the medieval centuries. Thomas à Kempis, Plutarch and Dominici, give different glosses, as it were, on Kingsley's injunction: 'Be good, sweet maid, and let who can be clever'. In the world of art, we find visual images responding subtly to changing commentaries on the biblical text. And 'history' comes into conflict with 'hagiography' in the confused attempt to discover the truth about Constantine. A little later, we note Henry VII's concern with the origins of holy kingship, a concern with practical implications. On a different tack, a paper probes the Neoplatonic influences which lay behind Colet's 'eclectic, rapid, creative, fervent' cast of mind. The reformation in renaissance Italy forms a link between a discussion of Luther's piety and humanism and the activities of an Italian in Scotland. 'Primitivism' was a feature of the Catholic as well as the Protestant reformation – as a paper on seventeenth-century France makes clear. In an act of reciprocity, seventeenth-century Anglicans found themselves with the awkward task of educating contemporary Greeks. Later contributions, such as those which discuss miracle, science and orthodoxy in restoration England, Kant's humanism, orthodoxy, the enlightenment and religious revival, and the famous Huxley-Wilberforce debate, move away from the problems posed specifically by classical antiquity into other areas where scholarly enquiry seemed to cause difficulty for religion. We learn, finally, that just before the First World War some experts considered that the ideal training for a missionary was the School of *Litterae Humaniores* at Oxford. What would Giovanni Dominici have thought?

RELIGION AND HUMANISM

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PAPERS READ AT
THE EIGHTEENTH SUMMER MEETING AND
THE NINETEENTH WINTER MEETING
OF THE
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY SOCIETY

EDITED BY
KEITH ROBBINS

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