

## PREFACE.

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IT is with much thankfulness that the Editors issue the final volume of a work so extensive as this Dictionary of Early Christian Biography, and liable to so many contingencies. No scholar, they think, will be surprised that it has taken somewhat longer to complete this volume than was requisite for the second and third. Not only is it larger; but the changes and chances of life expose the conduct of such a work to increasing difficulties as it proceeds. Too many of those whose names are recorded in the following List of Contributors have passed away since the work was commenced, and many others have advanced to more distinguished and more laborious positions. From these various causes not a few difficulties and disappointments have been encountered; but they have been surmounted by the generosity and enthusiasm with which the enterprise has been pursued by the contributors, especially by some of the most learned and at the same time the most closely engaged in other duties. The plan of the work, as explained in the Preface to the Second Volume, has been maintained, the only exception being that it has not been found practicable to give the names of all the Bishops who are known only by their signatures at Councils and by nothing more. But it is hoped that the endeavour to give some account of all names directly or indirectly connected with Christian Literature has been substantially carried out. One other explanation may be desirable in reference to a doubt expressed by some critics, on the publication of the third volume, whether a single volume would be sufficient to do justice to the names in the letters from N to Z. As near a calculation, however, as was possible had been made of the space requisite for this purpose, and a reference to the more important names at the close of the volume will show that this Dictionary is not liable to the charge, to which many biographical works are open, of scamping the treatment of the later names of the alphabet. A fair test of the equality of treatment in this respect may be afforded by examining the space occupied by names in any Index to Patristic Literature and Ecclesiastical History, such as the Index to Ceillier's work, or Chevalier's invaluable *Bio-Bibliographie*. An Index is a mere witness to the material contained in the work or series of works to which it applies,



and is equally impartial throughout. It is satisfactory, therefore, to find that the proportionate space occupied by the letters contained in this volume—about three-sevenths of the whole—is very nearly the same as is occupied by the same letters in both those indices. The Editors must also express their sense of the liberality with which the publisher has facilitated this completeness of the work.

The contingencies and anxieties, to which the Editors have referred, render them the more bound to record their grateful thanks to the contributors and advisers who have continued their support to them, notwithstanding their own varying and increasing burdens. More especially are they bound to express their warm gratitude to the Bishop of Chester and to Dr. Salmon, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Dublin, for the kindness with which they have continued to read through the proofs of the work to the very last, and to assist the Editors with their learned counsel. A special acknowledgment is also due from them to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, notwithstanding his arduous responsibilities, has found time to complete, even to the smallest name, his treatment of the persons connected with St. Cyprian. They find it difficult to single out other names where so many have been generous and unwearied; but one other colleague claims a peculiar tribute of gratitude. The devotion, the accurate and thoughtful learning, the generous labour and the unwearied care, of the Rev. Charles Hole, Lecturer in Ecclesiastical History at King's College, London, have conferred incalculable advantages on this work, and have, it is hoped, rendered a degree of accuracy practicable which, without such help, would have been scarcely attainable in so large a work, conducted under such conditions. With all these efforts, there must remain much to be desired in this first effort to furnish a complete Biographical Cyclopaedia of Christian Antiquity. But the Editors venture to hope that, by the combined efforts of the contributors, a great advance has been made in this direction, and that the work may materially promote, both here and abroad, a fuller comprehension of Church History.