
It is regrettable that these beautifully printed volumes are not more widely known. The price of the set, in the light of present costs, is in no sense abnormal. Indeed, an inspection of the work should go far towards removing any Aberdonian restraint on the score of expense. The varieties of type involved and the precision of printing demanded (and so largely attained) in dealing with such extensive material more than compensates for the apparently high price.

'Coleman-Norton', as its standard name may well come to be, has no rival in English. It is strictly sui generis. It is a collection of legal documents to A.D. 535 — the conventional date for the ending of Roman law — presented in the form of reliable translations of the most significant documents in what is one of the most controversial aspects of the history of the Church, viz. that embracing the relationship of the Church with the contemporary secular and dominant power. Introductions and extensive and frequently exhaustive annotations to the wealth of material are provided, while a comprehensive and ingeniously constructed index raises ease of use and of consultation to a maximum.

Here is a research tool par excellence. It is essential for original work at an advanced level on the history of the Imperial period down to the events of the Later Empire and the early Byzantine era. It is a treasure trove of accurate information for the trained Latinist, the specialist in Church History, the lawyer and the historian, and offers fascinating, if occasional and desultory, reading for the informed layman who is desirous of further enlarging his coasts.

A résumé may be appended. Volume I contains inter alia a Table of Contents, an Introduction (most valuable), Names and Dates of Emperors (command of which is not invariably a strong point of academic mentors), and the renditions of Documents 1-177 (i.e. From the Rescript of Trajan on Trials of Christians c. A.D.113 — Pliny Ep. 10,97) to A.D.381.

Volume II contains Documents 178-486, comprising the period A.D. 381-453.
Volume III in Documents 178-486 traverses the period A.D. 453 to 534, closing with the Mandate of Justinian I on Admission to Religious Life. This final volume also contains a most useful Appendix on Persecutions — the important references to reported imperial legislation instigating persecution of Christians (pp.1179-1196); a Glossary (pp.1199-1245, in itself a veritable mine of information); and a series of Indices including Sources, Persons, Places, Subjects, supplemented by Biblical, Classical, Legal and Patristic quotations and allusions.

Altogether a super contribution to scholarship, and in its own right more than enough to place the academic world under a permanent obligation to the illustrious compiler and author.

H.R. Minn


The mounting interest in late Roman and Byzantine studies is an encouraging feature of the contemporary stirring in the academic dovecotes. The student preparing to farewell the Western Empire will find a delightful sketch of the Transition from Antiquity and the Emergence of Byzantium in the first chapter of this book where he will read a thrilling account of the chaos of the third century, of the Reforms of Diocletian and Constantine, of the darkening barbarian threat, of the crisis of the fourth and fifth centuries leading on to Justinian the Great. So enlightened, he will (as the writer fervently hopes) adjust his views on the thorny question of the ‘Fall’ of the Roman Empire, and be eager to get a working knowledge of its great Eastern extension, the resources of which resisted exhaustion till A.D. 1453. A visit to Istanbul will then become one of his greatest ambitions for future travel.

H.R. Minn
