



Three Wise Men from the East: The Cappadocian Fathers and the Struggle for Orthodoxy

Patrick Whitworth

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Includes a foreword by Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Cappadocian fathers of the fourth century—Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzen—produced thoughts on the Trinity, the creation, the incarnation, the holistic reading of scripture and the discipline of the soul which are playing a more seminal role in Christian theology today than at any time in the last four hundred years. Too often, however, their teachings are appropriated in a piecemeal manner, with no acknowledgement of their mutual interdependence.


In this comprehensive introduction to their writings, Patrick Whitworth enables the modern reader to share their understanding of the purpose and scope of theology. At the same time, he brings before us three strong personalities, who, like the rest of us, were children of time and place, taking up the pen to address a particular audience on particular occasions. Stripping out the ruling ideas from the polemical or rhetorical dress in which they have come down to us, he shows that the insights of genius lose nothing by being translated from the exquisite opacity of the original Greek into plain but accurate English prose.

— **Professor Mark Edwards**, Christ Church Oxford.

“Wonderfully comprehensive and clear. We are able to see the Cappadocians not as counters in the board game of controversy but as complex human figures wrestling with the challenges of internal and external crises for the Church. This will be a really welcome tool for all students of early Christianity, and excellent and accessible reading for anyone who wants to understand better the formative period of Christian teaching. It is a message that the Church of our own time should take very seriously.”

— *Rowan Williams (from the foreword), Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge*

Patrick Whitworth read Modern History at Christ Church Oxford, and a Theology MA in Reformation Studies under T. H. L. Parker at Durham. He has spent over 30 years in Anglican Ministry, currently Rector of All Saints Weston Bath, Langridge and North Stoke. He is married to Olivia with four grown up children.

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