

**EARLY CHRISTIANITY OUTSIDE
THE ROMAN EMPIRE: TWO
LECTURES DELIVERED AT TRINITY
COLLEGE, DUBLIN, PP. 1-88**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649409426

Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire: Two Lectures Delivered at Trinity College,
Dublin, pp. 1-88 by F. Crawford Burkitt

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Cover @ 2017

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London: C. J. CLAY AND SONS,
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS WAREHOUSE,
AVE MARIA LANE.
Glasgow: 263, ARGYLE STREET.



Leipzig: F. A. BROCKHAUS.
New York: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.
Bombay: E. SEYMOUR HALE.

Early Christianity outside
the Roman Empire 86723

*Two Lectures delivered at Trinity College, Dublin,
by F. CRAWFORD BURKITT, M.A., Trinity
College, Cambridge.*

CAMBRIDGE, at the University Press, 1899.

Cambridge:
PRINTED BY J. AND C. F. CLAY,
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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I dedicate this Book
to the Rev. GEORGE SALMON D.D.
Provost of Trinity College, Dublin,
in grateful acknowledgment
of his kindness to myself
and in admiration of the unfailing acuteness
of his critical judgment.

"With matter of Heresie the West hath beene often and much troubled; but the East part neuer quiet, till the deluge of miserie soberein now they are, ouerwhelmed them. The chiefest cause whereof doth seeme to haue lien in the restlesse wits of the Grecians, euermore proud of their owne curious and subtile inuentions, which when at any time they had contriued, the great facilitie of their language serued them readily to make all things faire and plausible to men's vnderstanding. Those graund bereticall impicitie therefore, which most highly and immediatly touched God and the glorious Trinitie, were all in a manner the moniters of the East."

HOOKER, *Ecclesiasticall Politie* v iii.

INTRODUCTION.

To the student of general history Christianity makes its appearance as a Greek religion. The first Christian communities of any considerable size had their home in the great Greek cities on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. In Alexandria, in Antioch, in Ephesus, in Smyrna, in Corinth—all near the sea, and in easy communication with one another—the little Churches came into being and developed their organisation. The whole Ecclesiastical vocabulary is Greek. Bishops, Priests, Deacons, the Laity, Baptism, the Eucharist, all the terms are Greek in origin. It is the same with literature. From the alien religion out of which Christianity had sprung the Church inherited her Sacred Books in a Greek translation, and the writings of Christians that after a time were added on to the Canon of

Scripture as a New Volume—these writings were composed in Greek also. In a word, the Church grew up on Greek soil.

The life of the Greek cities reacted on the development of the Churches. The thought and activity of small and progressive bodies must always be largely determined by the atmosphere of the great world outside, whether by way of protest or of assimilation. For this reason early Christian literature, apart from the Jewish controversy, is mainly occupied with an attack upon Greek vices and the Greek Pantheon. With these no terms were possible. But as Christianity advanced an antagonist came on the scene more honourable and therefore more dangerous than Jupiter and his court or even than the Genius of the Emperor. No Religion could establish itself in the Greek-speaking world without coming to a reckoning with Greek Philosophy. Christianity had to face the old problems of the One and the Many, of Mind and Matter, of the infinite Divine Essence and its Manifestation in time and place.