



The Lesser Eastern Churches

Adrian Fortescue

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This is a comprehensive history that looks at some of the more obscure early churches in the east. From the preface: "This book forms a continuation, or second part, of *The Orthodox Eastern Church* by the same author. Its object is to describe the lesser separated Eastern Churches in the same way as that described the greatest. "Greatest" and "lesser," by the way, are only meant to qualify their size. No opinion is thereby expressed as to their relative merit (see p. 446). There is a difference in the subject of this volume, which affects its treatment. These smaller Churches are much less known. There is a vast literature on the Orthodox Church, so that the only difficulty in writing the former book was that of selection and arrangement. Moreover, Orthodox official documents and service-books (at least in their original form) are in Greek, which it is no great merit to know. Much of the matter treated here is rather of the nature of a land, if not unknown, at least difficult of access. There is far less information to be had about the other Eastern Churches. And their native literature is contained in many difficult tongues. So to write this book was a much more arduous task, and the result may be less satisfactory. On the other hand, it has the advantage of greater originality. Concerning the Orthodox I said nothing which could not be found fairly easily in European books already. Here I think I have been able, in certain points, to bring what will be new to anyone who has not made some study of Eastern matters and languages. Part of this is gathered from notes made by myself in their lands, interviews with prelates and clergy of these rites, observations of their services, and information supplied by friends in those parts. As for literary sources, I have, of course, read many books on Eastern Churches by modern writers. But, as will be seen from my references, I have compiled my own book, as far as I could, from original sources. It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that all my quotations are at firsthand.

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