STUDIES IN CHURCH HISTORY

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SAINTS AND SANCTITY

EDITED BY PETER CLARKE
and TONY CLAYDON

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Saints and Sanctity

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Christianity has generally been a religion focused on the salvation of individuals. This has meant that its churches have questioned what sort of people, and which, are saved; and so have tried to describe the qualities of such 'saints'. The debates have ranged through the outward signs of salvation; whether saints can be identified in this life or after their deaths; whether their lives should serve as examples for a wider Christian public; and whether saints have a power that they can exercise on their own initiative or are owed a particular devotion.

The essays here provide recent historical research on Christianity's approach to these questions, from the earliest construction of personal sanctity in the Eastern and Western traditions, through the 'golden age' of saintly cults in the medieval period and post-Reformation debates about the role of saints, to the meaning of canonization within a variety of churches in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It provides insight into a key issue of Christian history which still has a huge influence on ecclesiastical practice and politics.

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