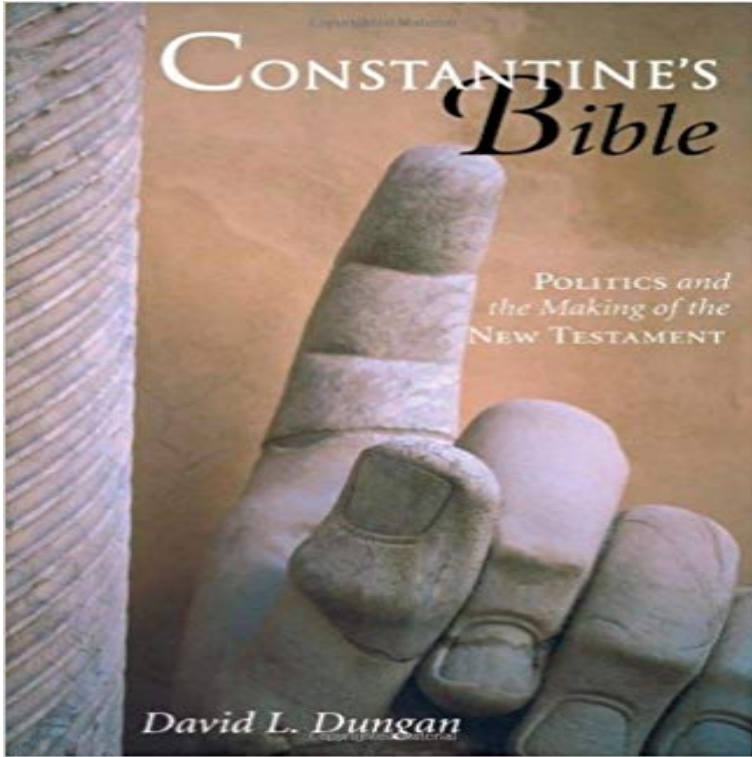


Constantines Bible: Politics and the Making of the New Testament



Most college and seminary courses on the New Testament include discussions of the process that gave shape to the New Testament. Now David Dungan re-examines the primary source for this history, the Ecclesiastical History of the fourth-century Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, in the light of Hellenistic political thought. He reaches startling new conclusions: that we usually use the term canon incorrectly; that the legal imposition of a canon or rule upon scripture was a fourth- and fifth-century phenomenon enforced with the power of the Roman imperial government; that the forces shaping the New Testament canon are much earlier than the second-century crisis occasioned by Marcion, and that they are political forces. Dungan discusses how the scripture selection process worked, book-by-book, as he examines the criteria used-and not used-to make these decisions. Finally he describes the consequences of the emperor Constantines tremendous achievement in transforming orthodox, Catholic Christianity into imperial Christianity.

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Thus I believe that Cyprian, in his confrontation with Stephen, was wrestling with a problem of his own (and not, as Dunn believes, of Stephens own) making. Thus I believe that Cyprian, in his confrontation with Stephen, was wrestling with a problem of his own (and not, as Dunn believes, of Stephens own) making. The canon of Christian scripture has received much scrutiny since the rise of historical criticism in post-Enlightenment Europe. Nineteenth-century discoveries of