

# THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

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## SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CRITICISM AND THEOLOGY.

Fashion in religious controversy, as in other things, is continually changing, and the methods of apologetics have to change with them. Instead of discussing either the attack or the defence in the abstract, I propose in this paper to illustrate the temper of the times, on both sides, from a few books which lie at this moment on my study table, and seem to me to be exceptionally suggestive.

I do not know that there has been a time within recent memory when the attack on the foundations, records, and doctrines of revealed religion has been more outspoken, confident, and daring. It seems in many quarters to be quite assumed that the older Christianity is dead; that the new conception of the world evolved within the last fifty years or so has given it its death-blow; that the kindest thing the world can now do for it is to see it decently buried. In such a learned quarterly, for example, as *The Hibbert Journal*, on this side of the Atlantic, the assumption in many articles openly is that Christianity, in the old sense, is obsolete, and that the only question left to ask is, what substitute can we find for it? The supernatural, of course, is to be given up; there must be an end, as one article puts it, to "the entangling alliance of religion with history"; religion is to be based on moral and spiritual, or on rational,

charm, is impaired by the introduction of altogether too much irrelevant material both from the realm of objective history and from the subjective domain of the musings and moralizings of the authoress. The chapters could, moreover, have been more satisfactorily organized and adjusted to one another as well as to the work as a whole. None the less the abundant information here presented merits a careful reading.

Princeton.

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

THE REFORMATION. By GEORGE PARK FISHER, D.D., LL.D., Emeritus Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Yale University. New and Revised Edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906. 8vo. pp. xxx, 525. Price, \$2.50.

Dr. Fisher's work on the Reformation has been so widely known and so highly appreciated by a whole generation of students of history that we may here content ourselves with a purely formal notice of this "new and revised edition." Reduced in the text by about ninety pages, but practically unaltered in method or content, with the elaborate bibliographies brought up to date, the book will no doubt enter upon a further career of deserved popularity, as a sketch of the Reformation which is both compact and comprehensive, scholarly in method and graphic in style, equally felicitous in arranging biographical detail and in grasping the deepest significance of the great events, thoroughly Protestant in spirit yet perfectly candid and just with respect to the merits and defects of the papal church. It gives us pleasure to welcome in its new form this admirable manual on the Reformation.

Princeton.

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

A HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION. By THOMAS M. LINDSAY, M.A., D.D., Principal of the United Free Church College, Glasgow. Vol. I, The Reformation in Germany from its Beginning to the Religious Peace of Augsburg. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906. 8vo. pp. xvi, 528.

As was to have been expected, Prof. Lindsay has admirably discharged his obligation to the editors of the *International Theological Library* in this initial volume on the Reformation. He here reveals the same abundant learning, the same clear discernment of the religious, social, and political problems of the period, the same candor and moderation, the same skill in generalization and realistic description which we had learned to prize in his previous works on Luther and early Protestantism. We cannot but express the hope that the second and concluding volume, which is to deal with the Reformation beyond Germany and the Counter-Reformation, will be equally successful in plan and execution.

Certainly the most distinctive, and perhaps also the most valuable, portion of the work under consideration is that comprised in Book I, which, bearing the caption *On the Eve of the Reformation*, discusses in six preliminary chapters the complex conditions of Europe at the close of the Middle Ages. In harmony with the best present-day tendencies of German scholarship in this field, Dr. Lindsay has taken special

pains to trace the religious movement of the 16th century in as direct and natural a manner as possible to "its roots in the simple evangelical piety which had never entirely disappeared in the Mediæval Church. Without detracting in the least from the importance, as a formative influence, of the intellectual awakening that culminated in the ecclesiastically conservative, predominantly ethical humanism of the Erasmian type, with a thoroughly up-to-date presentation of the economic or social questions of that age, and with ample recognition of the political factors that shaped the destinies of the evangelical cause, the author has succeeded in reproducing, with more life-like reality than any other writer in English with whom we are acquainted, the diverse and often discordant elements in the popular religious life of the closing decades of the 15th century. Much of the material utilized for this purpose has been made accessible only within the last twenty years; and even where the data discussed in this connection are not of recent discovery, Dr. Lindsay's interpretation of the facts gives a more adequate explanation, than that commonly given, of the manifold upward tendencies in the religious life of the period, especially those centering in the non-ecclesiastical religious confraternities. In this respect, indeed, the work before us has much of the merit of von Bezold's or Karl Müller's treatment of the genesis of the Reformation: the atmosphere of the book is surcharged with the very odor of the soil that could and of necessity did produce a Martin Luther. Worthy of special commendation, too, among these introductory chapters, is the sympathetic yet critical treatment of Erasmus, though we are of the opinion that a little more might have been justly said in behalf of his religious ideals, as distinguished from his more ethical and practical interests.

Book II begins with a detailed study of Luther's religious development and his growth as a reformer, these chapters being essentially an adaptation of the author's contribution to the *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. II. The formative influences here at work are carefully traced to their sources and critically estimated. But the subsequent chapters, dealing with the external fortunes of Protestantism in Germany (and the Scandinavian lands) up to 1555, are somewhat too broadly conceived and too meagre in detail to come up to the high standard maintained in the strongest portions of the volume. Especially unsatisfactory is the last chapter on The Religious Principles Inspiring the Reformation. Within the compass of 60 pages Prof. Lindsay tries to set forth the views of the reformers on such subjects as the universal priesthood of believers, justification by faith, Holy Scripture, the person of Christ, and the Church. Not only, however, does the extreme brevity of the treatment make the author yield too frequently to the temptation of using general terms, such as "all the reformers", when his statements, strictly speaking, can retain their full face value with respect to only some of the theological leaders, but, what is far more serious, there is an unwarranted reading of Ritschlian principles into the writings of these 16th century divines. Outcroppings of this tendency greet us as early as the paragraphs on Colet

(pp. 162-171), who, we are informed, taught "what no mediæval theologian had been able to perceive, that the Bible is a personal, not a dogmatic revelation": an oft-repeated anathemasis (cf. pp. 453, 459) which is about as misleading as another ascribed to the reformers (p. 460) that the chief function of Scripture is "not doctrine, but promise . . . ; not display of God's thoughts, but of God Himself as my God." There is altogether too much modernity in phrases of this kind to permit our finding in them a faithful transcript from the thought of that age. Did Luther, *e. g.*, really think that faith "is neither helped nor hindered by a doctrine of the Person of Christ" (p. 446)? Then why did he, like Athanasius, find "his salvation in the Deity of Christ" (p. 473)? "Back to Luther" is a good battle-cry for these days of weak-voiced evangelicalism, but it is to be hoped that thorough historical investigation of the origin of the great religious awakening of the 16th century is going to yield a richer return than a misguided substitution of Ritschlianism for the more previous and fruitful principles of sound Protestantism. We regret that the present work is marred by the same defects, in the sphere of the construction of Christian doctrine, as those which to a large extent characterized the first of the historical series in this *International Theological Library* we refer to Dr. Rainy's volume, *The Ancient Catholic Church*.

In conclusion,—for, in view of the many excellencies of this book, we prefer to end as we began—attention may be directed to the carefully wrought out Index, to the valuable 22-page Chronological Summary of Events, and to the brief but thoroughly satisfactory bibliographies in the foot-notes.

Princeton.

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

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## SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

BEITRÄGE ZUR FÖRDERUNG CHRISTLICHER THEOLOGIE. Herausgegeben von D. A. SCHLATTER, Prof. in Tübingen, und D. W. LÜTGERT, Prof. in Halle a. S. Neunter Jahrgang. 1905. Heft 5. DIE CHRISTOLOGIE DER BEKENNTNISSE, UND DIE MODERNE THEOLOGIE. Zwei Vorträge von Prof. D. ERICH SCHÄDER. ATHEISTISCHE METHODEN IN DER THEOLOGIE von Prof. D. A. SCHLATTER. 8vo. pp. 465-560. Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann. 1905.

Neunter Jahrgang. 1905. Heft 6. DIE BEDEUTUNG DES ÄSTHETISCHEN IN DER EVANGELISCHEN RELIGION, von G. GROSS. NOCH EIN WORT ÜBER DEN CHRISTLICHEN DIENST, von Prof. D. A. SCHLATTER. 8vo. pp. 551-643. Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann. 1905.

These are the closing parts for 1905 of the *Contributions to Christian Theology* edited by Drs. Schlatter and Lütgert. They present us with four very interesting studies. Prof. Schlatter's *Additional Word on Christian Service* finds its occasion in a criticism lately passed by Prof. Nösgen upon his paper on *The Service of the Christian in the old Dogmatics* which was published in the opening number of these "Con-