

# THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

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## AUGUSTINE'S DOCTRINE OF KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORITY.

Augustine marks almost as great an epoch in the history of philosophy as in the history of theology. It was with him that the immediate assurance of consciousness first took its place as the source and warrant of truth. No doubt there had been a long preparation for the revolution which was wrought by his announcement of the principle of "self-assured subjectivity", as Windelband calls it, and his establishment of it in "the controlling central position of philosophic thought". But the whole preceding development will not account for the act of genius by which he actually shifted the basis of philosophy, and in so doing became "the true teacher of the middle ages", no doubt, but above and beyond that "one of the founders of modern thought".<sup>1</sup> He may himself be said to have come out of Plato, or Plotinus; but in even a truer sense out of him came Descartes and his successors.<sup>2</sup> When he urged men to cease seeking truth without them, and to turn within, since the home of truth

<sup>1</sup> Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, E. T., pp. 276, 264, 270.

<sup>2</sup> Leder, *Augustins Erkenntnistheorie*, p. 76: "If we must see in Plotinus the father of Augustine's Platonism, we may yet recognize it as an especially original service of the Church-Father, that he established over against all scepticism the first point of all certitude in self-consciousness. He found in Plotinus no guidance for this: rather by an act of genius he anticipated in it the line of thought which Descartes (1640) made in his *Meditationes* the starting point of his expositions."

the compromise, character of the Heidelberg document. Lang finds the great excellence of the Heidelberg Catechism in its comparative freedom from theologizing, and its emphasis on a religion rooted in vital fellowship with Christ.

It seems a pity that the author did not put a climax to his sound and sane work by introducing his German readers to the crown of all Reformed catechetical treatises, in which were gathered and properly set all the jewels from all these earlier works, and which proved at last that theology need not be sacrificed in order that religion may be kept alive,—in a catechism or anywhere else,—but that consistent thinking and fervent devotion belong together and help each the other to reach the end of every catechism, which is a well-rounded edification—"that ye may be perfect and symmetrical, lacking in nothing". And who, by dedicating to our Westminster Standards such painstaking research as Lang's, will bring to American Presbyterians what we still lack and so much need, the well-laid foundations for a better knowledge of the history of which we are the heirs?

*Erlangen, Germany.*

E. B. WELSH.

JOHN CALVIN, THE ORGANIZER OF REFORMED PROTESTANTISM (1509-1564). By WILLISTON WALKER, Titus Street Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Yale University. G. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. 1906. 12mo.; pp. xviii, 456.

In days when French and German scholarship is doing so much to enrich our knowledge of Calvin and his age it is especially gratifying to welcome an American biography of the celebrated reformer. The volume before us, contributed by Prof. Walker to the series of *Heroes of the Reformation*, presents, with a reasonable degree of completeness, in a straightforward though somewhat listless style, the salient facts in Calvin's life and work. The author has striven hard to preserve a judicial temper in the treatment of the many controverted points, and his book is remarkable, considering its theme, for the absence of all superlatives whether of praise or of blame. He is not indeed devoid of a certain sympathy with his distinguished subject—a thorough study of Doumergue's great work must do at least so much for any one; but, on the other hand, no reader will catch from these pages any of that enthusiastic regard, not to say affectionate reverence, for Calvin, which those of his own day who knew him best seem so freely to have manifested. Least satisfactory of all is the twenty-page characterization of Calvin's theology. We should have preferred a more thorough and accurate exposition of the facts, and less of the author's patronizing comment that insinuates that an abandonment of many Calvinistic principles by the thought of to-day necessarily marks great progress since the first or last edition of the *Institutio* appeared. We cannot at any rate blame Calvin, if with him "as with Augustine" Adam "is a personage of great significance"; for Calvin, whom even the author regards as the prince of exegetes in that age, was probably correct in supposing

that St. Paul had a similarly high estimate of Adam's "fateful" "relation to the race".

Throughout the first half of the book the author has leaned hard, as was inevitable, upon the monumental work of Doumergue—a misfortune, though in no sense a fault, which every biographer of Calvin for many a year to come will have to suffer. But freely as he acknowledges his indebtedness to the professor of Montanban, the author has manifestly spared himself no pains in coming to his own conclusions. He has examined the sources for himself and his independent judgments are worthy of the most earnest consideration. As over against the conclusions of Doumergue the most interesting portion of the book, as also the most valuable portion from the scientific point of view, is the chapter on Calvin's religious development. To be sure, if we scrutinize the positive results of the author's investigations, we might be inclined to say that he has given this phase of his theme a disproportionate treatment. Nevertheless, the discussion will stand upon its own merits as an exceptionally solid piece of historical work. Prof. Walker states the problem of Calvin's conversion with clearness and accuracy and then gives an admirable critical sketch of the attempts that have been made toward its solution. We are satisfied, as we had been before reviewing the evidence as set forth anew by Prof. Walker, that if by Calvin's conversion—which he himself called "sudden"—we are to understand something deeper and more thorough-going than mere intellectual assent to the evangelical principles, this radical change cannot be placed, as it is by Doumergue, so early as 1528. Prof. Walker tries to do justice to the statements of Beza and Colladon according to which the influence of Olivétan upon Calvin must indeed have been exerted at about that time. But, as our author with nice discrimination points out, there is no evidence that Calvin was attracted to distinctively Protestant views by any influence emanating from Olivétan. And so far as the celebrated Greek teacher Wolmar is concerned, it is likewise unsafe to assert more than that, in all probability, he was an ardent Erasmian humanist at that time. It was, according to Prof. Walker's interpretation of the facts, some time between the publication of the *Commentary on Seneca* and the delivery of Rector Cop's Address that the decisive change must have occurred; in other words, late in 1532 or at least before Nov. 1, 1533. We agree, too, with the author in rejecting the artificial antithesis of Lecoultre's celebrated dictum, that the change was "*ni une conversion de l'intelligence, ni une conversion du sentiment, mais une conversion de la volonté*". On the question of Calvin's authorship of Cap's Address Prof. Walker, in harmony with the tendencies of the day, is inclined to favor the negative. As a matter of fact, therefore, the last word on the subject of Calvin's conversion has still to be written. The author's statement in regard to the reformer's religious development is doubtless as good a one as present possibilities permit.

Prof. Walker purposely refrained, in order to save space, from giving a detailed account of the varied contests in Geneva that absorbed so

much of Calvin's strength, but the Servetus episode is fully related and justly characterized. The sojourn in Strassburg (Chap. ix.) brings out in clear outlines Calvin's indebtedness to the German reformers, especially Bucer. As the sub-title indicates, special stress has been laid upon the reformer's achievement as the organizer of Protestantism.

Taken as a whole, the work is fully up to the standards of scholarship and literary skill which this admirable series of biographies has taught us to expect. The volume is adequately indexed. The bibliographical note at the beginning gives a critical resumé of the Calvin literature up to date. The illustrations are not so numerous as in some of the companion volumes, and neither of the two reproductions, one of an engraving and the other of a painting of Calvin, can claim to give us a thoroughly life-like representation of the reformer: even the portrait after the style of Holbein, in the Public Library in Geneva, cannot with certainty be said to have been taken from life.

*Philadelphia.*

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

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## SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

THE RELIGION OF CHRIST IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1906. Crown 8vo.; pp. vii. 197.

A brightly and persuasively written plea (from the pen, one would imagine, of a hereditary Unitarian,) for the new "humanitarianism" in the conception of the Christian religion—of Christ and His work. There is no "external authority" in religion, no "special revelation",—no "dogmatic authority outside the human heart"; "history and psychology furnish the only safe foundation upon which to build". Building on this foundation, we determine Jesus to have been a mere man, teaching a religion which is "mere theism", theism fired by love. By deifying Jesus, we deprive humanity of its noblest witness that God is with it: for He is the first religious genius who has taught us by word and example that greatest of truths, and they are His faithful followers who—not cry to Him "Lord, Lord,," but—, "encouraged by his assurances and example to believe that men are in truth the children of their Father in heaven, set themselves very simply to try and do the will of that Father as declared by His Son Jesus". It is true Jesus was not a perfect man: He shared the popular unphilosophical outlook of His day and environment, falling below some pagan thinkers in some of His teachings. But who among the spiritual leaders of the world have equaled Him in His power of turning the ideal into reality? His power lay, in one word, in His faith: and therefore Christianity is something more than an ethical code—it is a faith,—the faith of Jesus continued in His followers; for it is the religious consciousness of Jesus "transmitted to His followers which is the inspiring and energizing power among them". Entering by the force of our will, "strong and single", into the life He has illustrated—shaking off the spiritual palsy that