

FEB 3 1915
THEOLOGICAL SE

The Princeton Theological Review

JANUARY, 1915

CHURCH HISTORY AS A SCIENCE AND AS A THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINE*

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors:

It is with mingled feelings that I rise to address you on this occasion. So strong, indeed, are some of the emotions which the solemn business of this hour reawakens within me, that it would be a sheer affectation on my part not to allude to them.

At your earnest solicitation I have exchanged the chair of Homiletics for that of Church History. In this connection I can only say—but thus much I must say—that as I was unable to make, so I have remained unable to review this decision, without many a secret pang alike of regret and of anxious solicitude. I should be untrue to myself, as I certainly should appear wanting in my obligations to your honorable body, if I should fail to take this opportunity of giving you the renewed assurance of my sincere and grateful appreciation of the privilege of working for three years in the Practical Department of the Seminary,—a service which many cherished testimonies have emboldened me to believe has probably been as useful as any of equal length that I may ever render, and which memory persuades me has been as happy as any that I have ever been permitted to undertake.

But on the other hand, as I face the new duties to which you have called me and to-day formally introduced me, I find much comfort and inspiration in the conviction that in your action I have heard the voice of the Lord,

* An address delivered in Miller Chapel on the occasion of induction into the Archibald Alexander Professorship of Church History, October 13, 1914.

Theology of Schleiermacher and his followers." The address closes with some ringing words summoning its hearers to faithful testimony to the truth as it has once for all been delivered to the Church.

Princeton.

B. B. WARFIELD.

Calumnies Anti-Protestantes. Tome I: *Contre Calvin*. Par E. DOUMERGUE, Doyen de la Faculté Libre de Théologie de Montauban. Paris: Bureaux de *Foi et Vie*; Lausanne: Georges Bridel et Cie. 1912. 12mo; pp. 204.

On the back of the title-page stands this note: "This volume may be considered a second edition of *Une poignée de faux*. But the matter has been more than doubled and differently arranged." *Une poignée de faux* appeared in 1900 and bore the secondary title of "The death of Calvin and the Jesuits". The subject of the death of Calvin occupies some fifty pages of the present volume though some of the topics treated in its predecessor are given a separate place here. The volume is to be followed by another which will deal with the *Calumnies Against Luther*; doubtless, that is, with instructive examples of the calumnies which have been put in circulation against that Reformer. For Dr. Doumergue does not pretend to have gathered and answered here all the calumnies against Calvin. That, he gives us to understand, would be an endless task. New calumnies will always be found and the work of refutation will never be completed. "What is essential", he says, "is to demonstrate that the calumniators have a wrong mentality, that they see badly, that they judge badly, that their mentality is, like their method, from the critical, historical point of view entirely disqualified. Whether it is their fault or not, how far they are responsible for their mentality and their method, are other questions. Their historical work is altogether null and void".

The Preface from which this exposition of Dr. Doumergue's purpose in writing this little book is quoted, though brief, is itself an illuminating document. In it he tells of the constancy of the attacks made by Romanists on Protestantism, and of the appeals made to him for aid in meeting them; of the facility with which attacks may be made, and of the difficulty of response—requiring that long and wearying labor should be expended on matters intrinsically trivial; and of the depressing effects of long engagement with such calumnies. "Response is always a difficult matter, demanding much time and learning, if not science. . . . This is true in all domains. A calumny, a negation, is easily launched. The proof of the error is a matter of prolonged labor, sometimes very prolonged. And this is particularly true of historical calumnies. . . . And when a week has been spent in the company of these calumniators, you can scarcely know where you are. These hundreds and hundreds of calumnies give you a kind of vertigo. You end by being fairly suffocated by the number of inaccuracies which you uncover, wrong citations, wrong indications, wrong translations, and so forth. It is an atmosphere in which breathing becomes labored".

It is no easy or pleasant task which Dr. Doumergue has set himself therefore in tracing down this representative body of calumnies against Calvin; as we admire the neatness and dispatch with which he executes justice on them, let us be grateful to him for the service he is rendering the cause of truth.

There is no single section of the book that has interested us more than that entitled, "With regard to the execution of Michael Servetus" (pp. 80-110). No better test of the competency of a writer on Calvin could easily be devised than is furnished by his mode of dealing with this matter. If he says "Calvin burned Servetus", there is no earthly use in reading further: he is either too blindly prejudiced or too grossly ignorant to waste time upon. Dr. Doumergue does not attempt to treat the question of Calvin's relation to Servetus here; he only undertakes to indicate the precise terms in which it must be posed. That Calvin was convinced, in accordance with the general judgment of his times, that it was the duty of the State to punish certain heresies with death; and that, when Servetus came to Geneva, he did his best as a good citizen to bring him to the punishment he held to be his due, is true. All the rest is calumny. Calvin did not in point of fact denounce Servetus to the tribunal at Vienne. He did not instigate de Trie to denounce him. He did not betray Servetus' confidence. So far from "burning" Servetus, he earnestly sought to save him from that "atrocious punishment", as he himself calls it. "Therefore", as Dr. Doumergue sums it up, "there is nothing left of the charge against Calvin except this single fact,—Calvin desired Servetus' death. There is nothing more at all". Dr. Doumergue is far from contending that Calvin is not to be blamed for sharing the general view of his day as to the amenability of heretics to civil process. So far is he from this that it was at his instance that there was erected at Geneva in 1903 the already famous "Expiatory Monument", confessing Calvin's fault as the fault of his age; and he here appeals to the erection of this monument as the sufficient proof of the regret felt by Calvin's "respectful and grateful children" for his fault. We have never thought this was the right way to express our regret, and we are not surprised to learn that certain difficulties have been raised by it since, and that perhaps it has exerted some provocative influence in the erection since of monuments elsewhere to Servetus. We cannot profess to be an admirer of Servetus, and we regret that such a man should be thrown into such undeserved prominence. Meanwhile it is of course true that there is a great difference between confessing the faults of those we love and proclaiming the faults of those we hate; and there is a greater difference still between respectfully acknowledging that faults which we hate still cling to those we love, and violently charging as faults against those we hate what we cling to as virtues in ourselves. And Dr. Doumergue has no difficulty in showing that the latter is precisely what the Romish controversialists do when they charge

Calvin with brutal intolerance when he "burned Servetus". The right and duty of punishing heresy by civil penalties is proclaimed to-day by the Roman church and the quotations, proclaiming that right, drawn from recent Roman authors, which Dr. Doumergue gives, make lurid reading for the twentieth century. "All this", he concludes, "is not probable, but is true; it is all incredible,—but here are the documents and facts."

Princeton.

B. B. WARFIELD.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The Problem of the Atonement. By W. ARTER WRIGHT, Ph.D., D.D.
S. F. Harriman: Columbus, Ohio. 1913. Pp. 291.

Dr. Wright has written this volume on the Atonement with a two-fold purpose: viz. to attack the satisfaction doctrine held by the Christian Church, and to propound and defend a Moral Influence theory of the Atonement. He says, in somewhat colloquial language, that one cannot read far into the literature of the subject without getting the impression that the ideas of the imputation of guilt and of Christ as the sinner's substitute are "a sort of frame-up" (p. 10).

In order to prove this assertion he defines guilt as moral ill-desert, and then triumphantly shows that since Jesus was sinless, He had no moral ill-desert, and consequently could have had no guilt in any sense. This argument will convince only one who accepts Dr. Wright's definition of guilt. It cannot, however, be said that he assumes his definition of guilt with no attempt at proof. It would be a mistake, therefore, to say that his argument rests on a bare assumption. It does, we think, rest on an unproven assumption. For in order to prove that there is no guilt in the sense of liability to punishment, which could be transferred or imputed to Christ from the sinner, Dr. Wright argues that there is no such attribute of God as retributive Justice. And if we look for proof of this assertion, we find only such so-called arguments as the following: that God is not a "vindictive" God who cherishes "resentful feeling" in His "heart", which "resentful feeling" must be "satisfied" (p. 132). If, Dr. Wright continues to argue, God is resentful and spiteful and hates the sinner, He never would have sent Christ to save sinners, and so there could have been no Atonement or reconciliation. Moreover if this is a true idea of God, Dr. Wright continues, then Christ, who loves sinners, is at variance with God who hates them, and we are forced into Tri-theism instead of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. This most astonishing mode of argument is capped to a fitting climax by the unproven and gratuitous assumption, no shadow of evidence being given in its support, that in the New Testament