

# Scripture, Creed, Theology: Lectures on the History of Christian Doctrine in the First Centuries


By Robert L. Calhoun

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In this long-awaited edition of the late Robert Lowry Calhoun's lectures on the history of Christian doctrine, a powerful case is made for the scriptural basis of the ancient ecumenical creeds. The way Calhoun reads the patristic authors helps us see that the Trinitarian "three-yet-one" and Christological "two-yet-one" creedal formulations provide patterns for sorting out the highly diverse biblical ways of speaking of God and of the Messiah (Jesus) so that they are not contradictory. The implied lesson (all the more effective for many of Calhoun's students, just because he let them draw this conclusion by themselves) is that the creeds are not to be understood as deductions from scripture (which they are not in any straightforward way) but as templates for interpreting scripture. It is Trinitarian and Christological patterns of reading-which are implicitly operative for vast multitudes even in churches that profess to be creedless-that make it possible to treat the entire bible, Old and New Testaments together, as a unified and coherently authoritative whole.

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#### Review

"Calhoun's Lectures on the History of Christian Doctrine have a mythic status, so thank God we finally have them in reality. No one had a command of theology across the centuries more determinatively than Robert Calhoun. Those reading these lectures cannot but receive the tradition from one of its most generous minds. We are in George Lindbeck's debt for the labor of love in editing these lectures."

--Stanley Hauerwas,

Duke University --Wipf and Stock Publishers

#### About the Author

Robert L. Calhoun (1896-1983) was Sterling Professor of Historical Theology at Yale Divinity School. He taught at Yale from 1923 until his retirement in 1965. Among his well-known colleagues and students were Roland Bainton, Hans Frei, Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert Wilken, Stanley Hauerwas, James Gustafson, and George Lindbeck. George A. Lindbeck is Pitkin Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology, Yale University. He is author of several books, including *The Church in a Postliberal Age* (2003) and *The Nature of Doctrine* (1984).

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