

**EUCKEN AND BERGSON:
THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR
CHRISTIAN THOUGHT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649214341

Eucken and Bergson: their significance for Christian thought by E. Hermann

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E. HERMANN

BOSTON : THE PILGRIM PRESS
LONDON : JAMES CLARKE & CO.

1912

ABSTRACTS OF THE
NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

B
3227
E86H4

PREFACE

WHILE there is an excellent general introduction to Eucken's philosophy for English students—that of his distinguished pupil, Professor Boyce Gibson, of Melbourne—and while we can supplement our study of Bergson by such scholarly discussions as those of Mr. A. D. Lindsay and Dr. J. M'Kellar Stewart, no attempt has been made as yet to present the thought of Eucken and Bergson in its specific bearing upon the problems of theology. It is with a view to supplying this lack in some small measure that this book has been written, and any apparently one-sided emphasis of certain aspects of their thought, as well as the omission of other aspects interesting and valuable in themselves, must be understood with reference to this controlling purpose.

There can be no doubt that the work of Eucken and Bergson is pregnant with theological implications and suggestions, and that it contains powerfully formative elements for Christian thought. Eucken's philosophy, indeed, has justly been

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described as a philosophical restatement of the teaching of Jesus, and his affinities with theology are so deep and explicit that the theological student instinctively appropriates the valuable elements in his thought, and, swimming with the current, as it were, does not realise its force as a provocative and stimulating agent. It is only where Eucken's rejection of dogmatic values excites the opposition of the positive theologian that his impact upon Christian thought is fully realised. It is different with Bergson, whose work has not yet passed from its critical to its constructive stage and whose philosophy of religion is yet to be given us. In his case a more than tentative critique is impossible, while his untheological training and outlook make his thought take a sharply provocative and suggestive form.

My sincere thanks are due, in the first place, to Professor Eucken, who has most generously encouraged me by his kindly appreciation of my past fragmentary efforts in various journals and by his warm interest in the preparation of this book. To the Rev. Principal Forsyth, D.D., of Hackney College, London, and to the Rev. M. L. Johnson, B.A., of Sydney—the Australian Forsyth—I have long been deeply indebted on the theological side: to the first for initial inspiration, to the second for my introduction to

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the thought of Bergson in its theological implications. In the section on Eucken I have derived help from Professor Boyce Gibson's book ; in that on Bergson from Mr. Lindsay's, Dr. Stewart's, and Mr. Solomon's. Among books which I have consulted with profit I would specially mention William James's " A Pluralistic Universe " and Professor Ward's massive and illuminating book, " The Realm of Ends."

E. HERMANN.

LONDON,

March 1912.



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