

11-1-1941

Book Review. - Literatur

W. Arndt

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Arndt, W. (1941) "Book Review. - Literatur," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 12 , Article 74.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol12/iss1/74>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

Book Review — Literatur

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Can We Still Hold to the Lutheran Doctrine of the Lord's Supper?
 By Dr. M. Reu. The Wartburg Press, Columbus, O. 88 pages.
 Price, 50 cts., net.

Here we have an extremely valuable monograph supplementing through its examination of the modern antithesis the presentation of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper by our classical dogmaticians. No one will deny that it is important for Lutheran theologians constantly to restudy what the Scriptures say on the great teachings of the Church. A renewed survey of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper by Lutheran pastors and teachers has become doubly necessary in these days, because many so-called Lutheran theologians no longer hold the doctrine of Luther, of the Lutheran Confessions, and of our great Lutheran dogmaticians. Quite a general apostasy in this sphere seems to have occurred, reminding one of what took place in the period of rationalism a century and a half ago. While, as Dr. Reu shows, not all of the prominent Lutheran theologians in Germany have joined in this denial, the majority, alas, seem to have adopted the view of Calvin or some similar doctrine. It was undoubtedly this falling away from the confessional Lutheran position which induced Dr. Reu at the Luther Academy in Dubuque in 1940 to reexamine the question whether the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper agrees with the Scriptures.

The pamphlet containing the three lectures which Dr. Reu delivered on this subject is divided into two parts: 1) The Origin of the Lord's Supper, and 2) the Meaning of the Lord's Supper. In the first part the author surveys the view advanced by many modern scholars that if Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, its original character was different from that given in the New Testament, or that Jesus did not institute the Lord's Supper at all, and that the New Testament doctrine of the Lord's Supper represents a development in early Christianity, a Christianity profoundly influenced by elements outside of it. Many of these negative critics put forth the thesis that it is Paul who must be looked upon as the founder of the Lord's Supper, Paul, who in his turn had imbibed numerous ideas current in the religions and cults (such as those of Mithras and Attis) about him. These modern views are thoroughly examined, and the author demonstrates to the satisfaction of all who are not prejudiced that these negative positions are entirely untenable.

In an interesting fashion the learned author enters upon the problems of textual criticism which confront the exegete. In his view, the opinion that the authentic text of Luke (ch. 22:19 ff.) is the so-called "short text" (the text of *Codex Bezae*) must be adopted. My own opinion is that the longer text, as given in Nestle's edition, though bracketed, need not be surrendered. I am willing to grant the high importance of *Codex*

Bezae and of the *Itala*, which are the chief authorities for the short form. But in view of the reading given in the Egyptian and Caesarean manuscripts, to which may be added the Syrian text, although it presents the words of Jesus in a sequence different from that of our great codices, one may hold that the Christian tradition favors the longer text, and that the shorter reading is due to the misunderstanding of some early copyist.

When the meaning of the Lord's Supper is discussed, the old Lutheran view is upheld that in the Sacrament Christ offers us His body and His blood together with the bread and the wine for oral eating and drinking in order to assure us of the forgiveness of sins. The slogans of the Lutheran dogmaticians in which they set forth their teaching, the *unio sacramentalis*, the *manducatio oralis*, and the *communio indignorum*, are reiterated and defended. The exegetical methods by means of which many modern theologians try to get rid of the old Lutheran teaching are not ignored, but fearlessly scrutinized. There is a candor in the presentation which convinces the reader that the author is not writing to uphold a thesis, but is looking for and defending the truth.

Dr. Reu has rendered the Lutheran Church of America a great service through this treatise. Most of us have no access to the modern works which he quotes and examines. We have to fight the resultant unbelief, but the works to which this unbelief is largely due are beyond the reach of the average theologian. Let our pastors buy this learned, scholarly treatise and thank God for the confirmation it brings that the Lutheran teaching of the Lord's Supper is firmly anchored in the divine Scriptures.

W. ARNDT

The Light of the World. A Children's Christmas Service. By A. C. Mueller. 16 pages: Price: Per copy, 5 cts., postpaid; dozen, 50 cts., and postage; 100, \$3.50, and postage.

The Story of the Reformation. Prepared by J. M. Weidenschilling. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 15 pages. Price: Per copy, 5 cts., postpaid; dozen, 50 cts., and postage; 100, \$3.50, and postage.

Rally Day Service. Christian Stewardship. Prepared by Arthur L. Miller. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 15 pages. Price: Per copy, 5 cts., postpaid; dozen, 50 cts., and postage; 100, \$3.50, and postage.

The Children's Christmas Service by our Sunday-school literature editor is a well-organized service along liturgical lines using the vesper service as basis. The recitation material is divided into the following parts: 1. Night; 2. The Light of the Promise; 3. Toward the Dawn; 4. Day; 5. The Light of the World; 6. Living in the Light. All but four of the eleven *chorales* and carols are taken from *The Lutheran Hymnal*. There are also nine additional recitations suitable for various age groups. It would have been well if the closing liturgy had also been printed out or at least indicated. The service is recommended to all our congregations.—Weidenschilling's Children's Reformation Service also has the background of the vesper service. The following outline

is used: 1. Martin Luther the Great Reformer; 2. How God Prepared Luther for his Life-work; 3. The Reformation; 4. The Blessings of the Reformation. While the material in most instances may be too much for the ordinary festival service of this kind, the author has marked those questions which may be omitted with an asterisk. For the convenience of those who do not care for the question-and-answer method, the author has so arranged his material that the questions may be omitted, and the answers, which form a continuous narrative, may be recited by the children. The hymns in the program which appear in *The Lutheran Hymnal* have been given in their newly revised form.—The Rally Day Service by Arthur L. Miller is built into the morning service following the arrangement of *The Lutheran Hymnal* and the children's program coming after the Apostles' Creed. The material is arranged as follows: 1. The Stewardship of Time (Primary Department); 2. The Stewardship of Talents (Junior Department); 3. The Stewardship of Money (Intermediate Department); 4. The Stewardship of God's Word (Senior Department). This notice will appear too late for the use of this service in the current year. Our pastors, however, will do well to keep it in mind for future use.

W. G. POLACK

The Sovereignty of God or the Proceedings of the First American Calvinistic Conference. Edited by Jacob T. Hoogstra, Th. D., President. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 216 pages, 5½×7½. Price, \$1.50.

These essays and addresses, by members of the Reformed, the Christian Reformed, and the Presbyterian churches, strikingly exemplify the tragic inconsistency that marks the Calvinistic theology. On the one hand, the Scriptural teaching that the sinner owes his salvation to grace alone is stoutly maintained, maintained in spite of the protest of reason. "Sinners have earned the wrath and curse of God, and if they are to be freed from His righteous wrath, it can be only as the outcome of His holy will in gracious intervention." "The cause, or fault, of this unbelief as of all other sins is in no wise in God, but in man. But faith in Jesus Christ, and salvation through Him, is the free gift of God" (Canons of Dort). "This choice was not made of works or good desert on the part of the one who was chosen. . . . Esau went on in sin. So, too, would Jacob have done but for God's call. He was chosen not for good that was in him. . . . Each was a sinner, and, on the ground of merit, each had earned the same doom" (Pp. 46, 63, 175 ff.). Reason rises to protest against this teaching of *sola gratia*, but it was not given the floor at the First American Calvinistic Conference. One of the favorite arguments of the Pelagians and Synergists is thus disposed of in the Proceedings: "The plea may be put forward that man is responsible for only what is within reach and compass of his present power. . . . They reason that when men are called upon to repent and believe the gospel, they must have some reserve of power still inherent in their nature, which lays a rational ground for asking such obedience from them! Along this line lies Pelagianism, with its diluted varieties and modifications in semi-Pelagian Synergism and Arminianism. Those who espouse this kind of

teaching reason from 'I must' to 'I can.' They infer that there is power where there is duty. The pride of unbroken and unhumiliated human nature comes out in the Kantian ethic that deduces 'I can' from 'I ought' . . . *The truth of Scripture*, the whole truth as to man's awful ruin, is to be held and taught subject to no abatement. The truth that man ought to obey and yet cannot is to be maintained in its integrity" (P. 47 f.). This is a fine application of the Christian principle proclaimed on page 150: "We do not consider our reason as an autonomous power, but a gift of God which *must always remain subject to His revelation.*" On the other hand, these same Calvinistic doctors succumb to carnal reason when they persist in maintaining the Calvinistic dogma of an election of wrath. We read: "Since faith is thus given to some and not to others and given to those who are equally unworthy with those to whom it is not given, the ultimate reason is that God is pleased thus to operate in some and *not in others.*" Predestination is "the decree that bears in electing grace on the destiny of the people of God and the *twin decree* that bears on the appointed destiny of those that He is pleased to pass over and ordain to wrath and dishonor as the reward of their sin." "The last Assembly maintained intact the Westminster doctrine of predestination and *preterition.*" "Well, here is Calvinism in its most characteristic doctrinal features. Here are unconditional election, limited atonement, irrestorable or efficacious grace, and the perseverance of the saints. . . . We feel ourselves at the threshold of the Holy of Holies when we make this public confession" (Pp. 39, 51, 164, 212). And this flagrant denial of the Scriptural teaching of universal grace is based solely on rational considerations. The decree of the election of grace must have a *twin decree*, the election of wrath. The "sovereignty of God," misinterpreted by reason, demands such a teaching. What a tragedy—here are men who uphold the *sola gratia* in spite of the protest of reason and deny the *gratia universalis* on the behest of reason!

On the question of Inspiration the First American Calvinistic Congress takes the Scriptural position. "Here (John 10:35; Matt. 5:18) we see that Christ extends the authority of Scripture to the very letter" (P. 199). In the essay on "The Sovereignty of God and the Barthians" we read: "To us, the stability of the Christian faith and of the Christian life hang together most intimately with the Bible as their only infallible rule and norm, and with its verbal inspiration. To our ears it sounds strange indeed when the question is asked: When is the Bible inspired? And yet this impossible question is in all seriousness asked and answered by Barth. . . . Barth holds that the Bible is indeed inspired, verbally inspired in the strictest sense, when taken up in the complete circuit of the revelation as it passes from the triune sovereign Lord who is revealed in it and reaches the Holy Spirit, who hears the revealing Word in the faith of the sinner. . . . The verbal inspiration of the Bible hinges from case to case and from incident to incident and from moment to moment on the inscrutable working of God's sovereign good pleasure in such fashion that the same Bible may in the same hour and moment be inspired in the case of one man and uninspired in the case of the other" (P. 86).—By the way, Barth's theology in general is thus

characterized: "All that we can say on the basis of our actual observation is that Barth is adrift. He has sailed forth from the modernistic port on a course that took him nearer and nearer to the Calvinistic haven, but as far as appearances go, there is greater, far greater, probability that he will reach the shores of Anabaptism, to which he is perilously near" (P. 90).

The discussion of the difficult question of Necessity and Freedom, God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility, is most helpful. We read: "At one and the same time God is sovereign and supreme, and the will of man is naturally and morally free" (P. 54). "Morally free" is thus defined: "As for the term 'human responsibility,' I should say that it is intended to express the truth: Man by creation is a moral creature. As such he is fully accountable to his Creator for all his thoughts, words and actions. . . . Man was created to live responsibly in a universe over which a sovereign God presides" (P. 184 f.). "Man is responsible for his causality in every case" (P. 156). Note particularly this: "In considering any human event, we are called to run both the divine and human line accurately through the event and carefully to avoid changing categories in the midst of the consideration. Forgetting this axiom, some Primitive Baptists have said that since God raised up Judas for the purpose which he fulfilled, therefore, he would be saved. Determinism teaches the single line of God's will and makes no provision for human responsibility" (P. 158). Most helpful of all is this: "We see that it is quite consistent to ascribe to man as a moral agent an inalienable freedom, while in regard to spiritual service to God, his Maker, we deny to him as fallen the true and holy freedom which was his glory in his unfallen state" (P. 55).

"The objective of this Conference was to rally positive Calvinists to state to defend, and to propagate historic Calvinism in this, our age."

TH. ENGELDER

Courage in Christ. By Walter A. Maier, Ph. D. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 387 pages, 5½×7¾. Price, \$1.50.

This book presents the sermons which were delivered by Dr. Walter A. Maier during the eighth season of the Lutheran Hour on a coast-to-coast network on Sunday afternoons, from October, 1940, till shortly after Easter, 1941. Conditions in our country and in the world at large were unusual at that time, and this fact is reflected in the sermons. Dr. Maier writes in the Foreword to his book, "Written during a turbulent world-crisis, these messages mirror the moving issues of our day, particularly those which affect the Christian and His Church. War is discussed in greater detail than in previous volumes. Avoiding the errors of pacifism and the menace of militarism, these references to current hostilities seek to restate and apply the Biblical utterances concerning international conflicts. With Luther, I have emphasized the disastrous consequences following wide-spread warfare. I have denounced the tyranny and despotism of Nazism, Fascism, and Communism; but I have tried not to blind myself to the serious dangers confronting our own national life: the breakdown of the home, godless education, rampant crime, corruption of justice, class-struggle, radical, anti-Scrip-

tural theories of government and administration, the disloyalty to Christ in modernist circles, and particularly the religious indifference that keeps more than half our population away from the Church.

"These conditions, however, were discussed only incidentally, as the background for the one message to which every Lutheran Hour address has been dedicated: the free, completed, assured Gospel of Jesus Christ, the divine Redeemer. Every time I stepped before the microphone, I was prayerfully conscious that multitudes would doubtless be tuned in who were unacquainted with the clear promises of the atonement through the Savior, and I felt it a sacred duty to show the way of salvation in each message, to explain how for every problem the penitent, trusting soul can find courage in Christ.

"It has never been popular to preach the Law in its severity and the Gospel in its divine comfort; yet through the undeserved grace of God the eighth Lutheran Hour brought a greater response than ever before. About 200,000 individual letters and postal cards were received at the headquarters and in my office — as high as 13,000 in a single week, more than 5,000 in one day! These communications came from practically all the religious groups in our country and from varied social strata. Correspondence from State governors, members of Congress, mayors of cities, college presidents, authors, shows the ever-widening influence of our mission. Most gratifying was the extensive tribute from the labor group."

The Lutheran Hour on a coast-to-coast network has brought our Lutheran Church and its teachings to a large number of people in our country and in Canada who otherwise would not have been reached by our churches, has been a great source of spiritual comfort to thousands, has added members to our churches, and has opened many doors to our pastors and missionaries. By this time we are taking the Lutheran Hour for granted, and we probably fail to realize what a great blessing it has proved to be, especially also since it is now also being broadcast and heard in many foreign countries. Putting the Lutheran Hour sermons into print will increase their usefulness. The radio is a marvelous means of bringing the Gospel to many. May the Lord continue His blessing not only to the Lutheran Hour, but also to the many religious broadcasts that are made by our pastors over KFUD and over many other stations throughout our country, also in such countries as Australia and New Zealand.

J. H. C. FRITZ

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

And, Behold, the Camels Were Coming. By Edward Cuyler Kurtz. 332 pages, 5¼×7¾. Price, \$2.00.

V-for-Victory Series. Vol. 1: *Victory over Satan and Sin.* By Herbert Lockyer. 16 pages.

From Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.:

Born of the Spirit. By T. E. P. Woods, B. D., D. D. 56 pages, 4×6. Price, 50 cts.

From Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, London, and Edinburgh:

Rest Awhile. By Vance Havner. 96 pages, 5×7½. Price, \$1.00.