

6-1-1943

## Book Review. - Literatur

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### Recommended Citation

Arndt, W. (1943) "Book Review. - Literatur," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 14 , Article 40.  
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol14/iss1/40>

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## Book Review

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**Jesus in Action.** By Benjamin W. Robinson, Professor of New Testament Interpretation in the Chicago Theological Seminary. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1942. 217 pages, 5×8. Price, \$1.50.

What gives this book distinction is that it was written by a well-trained, mature New Testament scholar who wielded a graceful pen. We have to use the past tense in speaking of him because he died last summer, being still in the fifties. Those that have read one or several of his books—he was the author of *The Life of Paul*, *The Gospel of John*, *The Abingdon Bible Commentary on First Peter*, and *The Sayings of Jesus*—know his thorough scholarship and his gifts as a writer, and whoever was personally acquainted with him will gladly recall his genial, winsome personality. The Chicago Theological Seminary, in which he occupied the chair of New Testament Interpretation, is Congregational in its denominational affiliation.

The book is not intended to be a life of Jesus or a commentary on the Gospels. It draws attention to special aspects of Jesus' work and teaching, explaining at the same time some matters that strike the reader as obscure and laying stress on passages which without a guide or commentator would be given scant notice. In the preface (p. V) the author says, "It is hoped that there is nothing sectarian in this book. It is written for Christians and modern thinkers of whatever creed or Church." Accordingly controversial subjects are avoided. The question What think ye of Christ? is not dwelt on—a real weakness of the book, though undoubtedly a result of the author's plan not to enter the sphere of polemics. The work is divided into four parts having these headings: *The Positive Personality*, *The Positive Program*, *Positive Use of Previous Religion*, *The Positive Teaching*. As these captions indicate, the author wishes to emphasize that the teaching of Jesus was positive rather than negative, that in his exposition of the Christian life the "Thou Shalt Not" has not nearly the prominence of the "Thou Shalt," especially of the law of love in its various applications. In his attitude toward Gospel criticism the author, as the preface shows (p. V), shares the views of negative higher critics but of the less radical kind. Jesus is described as Savior, but not as the Substitute for sinners. "The death of Christ is not to appease His Father's wrath, but to infuse new life into the world. Failure to accept His death is to fail of having life. He gave His life as a vicarious sacrifice, not in the sense of a 'rigid satisfaction, death for death,' but as a ransom which bought for many that positive spiritual liberty which was so dear to His heart" (p. 92 f.). The precise way in which through the death of Christ the spiritual liberty was purchased and the meaning of spiritual liberty in this context are not explained.

The book abounds in helpful glimpses as to the meaning of parables and sayings of Jesus. Concerning the kingdom of God the author

believes that the term refers to a force, an energy (p.186). "The kingdom of God is simply a divine power of love viewed as a force taking effect in ways as wide and varied as the life and history of mankind and of the earth it inhabits" (p.184). After many years of occupation with the Gospels we hold the position of Zahn that the term at times designates the rule or the reign of God, but at other times the divine kingdom in a concrete sense, namely, a society or a group of which God (Christ) is the Head. Professor Robinson himself admits with respect to the latter significance that "Jesus Himself used similar language when He spoke of entering the kingdom of God" (p.186). But he holds that if one reads at one sitting all the statements of Jesus on the kingdom of God, one will have to conclude that what the Savior is speaking of is "a force which is acting in a thousand ways and producing a thousand effects." The subject has been written on voluminously during the last hundred years, but it still requires the earnest study of every theologian.

There are many other points concerning which we should like to express agreement or disagreement. The above will suffice to draw attention to the book which, though tinged by Modernism, contains much that is useful and stimulating.

W. ARNDT

**Religion in Colonial America.** By William Warren Sweet. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 367 pages, 6½×9¼. Price, \$3.00.

We are glad that Dr. Sweet of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago has been able to issue the first volume of his projected three-volume history of religion in America. There is a real need for this work. It is now fifty years since the American Church History Series was published. In reality this set is not an integrated study of church history but a collection of volumes in which the various denominations are treated as units. Dr. Sweet's approach is entirely different, for he integrates and correlates the pertinent events and influences in Colonial history and weaves them into a meaningful pattern. The reputation of our author as a thorough scholar is firmly established. The bibliography in the present volume covering sixteen pages and including all the recent studies in the field of Colonial history bears witness to Dr. Sweet's scholarship. And we know from personal experience that he examines his sources carefully. We saw him work on photostatic copies of source material on the Franconian settlements in Michigan in order to guide Homer R. Greenholt, a candidate for the doctorate, in writing his thesis: "A Study of William Loehe, his Colonies, and the Lutheran Indian Missions in the Saginaw Valley of Michigan."

The present volume traces the transplanting of the European churches to America during the seventeenth and the gradual Americanization of the churches during the eighteenth century. To understand the modern religious scene in America, an acquaintance with the genetic history of the various denominations is almost indispensable. Our volume supplies this information in a scholarly and yet highly interesting manner. The analysis of early Anglicanism in America will lead to a better understanding of the present Episcopal Church. The chapter on the Puritan settlements is particularly illuminating. Dr. Sweet shows that "to the Puritan leaders in New England democracy was a dangerous thing in

a government such as theirs, pledged to carry out God's will; for, they asked, 'How could ungodly rulers know the will and purposes of God?' Thus they felt under the necessity of keeping the godly minority in control. Winthrop argued that there was no democracy in Israel, and that among civil states it was the meanest form of government" (p. 85). The Puritan form of government was not, strictly speaking, theocratic, but, according to Dr. Sweet, "more Erastian, which is to say that the Church was indirectly concerned in government, but that the government was directly concerned with the affairs of the Church" (p. 89). Roman Catholics often claim that Rome is the real mother of our democratic ideals, because the Baltimoreans were the first to grant religious liberty in their Maryland colony. But Dr. Sweet shows conclusively that this is, "to put it mildly, misleading," for Romanists were tolerant not of other people's, but of their own religious freedom, even as "minorities are always in favor of toleration whatever their real principles might be" (p. 131). Since Dr. Sweet treats the various immigration groups together, the German Lutherans are discussed in the chapter in which all the early German immigrants are treated: the Mennonites, Dunkers, Schwenkfeldians, Moravians, Reformed. Another reason why he groups the German Lutherans and Reformed with the German sectaries is the fact that a "pietistic strain was common to them all (the various German groups) in colonial America" (p. 211).

The second part of the volume shows the tremendous influences of the Great Awakening on the American cultural, social, moral, and particularly the political life. He traces briefly the abnormal psychological phenomena which attended the revivals under Frelinghuysen, Edwards, Tennent, Davies, and especially the twenty-six-year-old Whitefield. Dr. Sweet makes this significant observation: "Miss Winslow [in her book, *Jonathan Edwards*] has well pointed out that success came to Whitefield too soon and too easily, resulting in his stunted growth, for at the end of his career he was preaching the same kind of sermons as in his youth, and there was no indication of an enlargement of view or of deepening wisdom" (p. 187) — an observation which every young pastor might well ponder before accepting a call to a very large parish. But the chapter on the Great Awakening deserves careful study, chiefly because it points out the important contributions which the churches made to the formulation of the American ideals of liberty, how the unionizing tendencies of the revivals welded the colonists together, how the Quaker and Baptist principles led to the separation of Church and State. However, we believe that Luther's ideal of religious liberty—to which Dr. Sweet refers only in passing, p. 320, n.—was a direct influence in the founding of our democracy. Qualben, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 439, n., states that Jefferson studied Luther's treatise *Liberty of the Christian Man* in a Lutheran parsonage two months prior to the Declaration of Independence, and Dr. Wm. Dallmann calls my attention to a statement in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* that Jefferson studied "an old abstract of Lutheran doctrine on the way to writing the Declaration of Independence." There were numerous streams which met in the momentous decades prior to the Revolutionary War, and the Lutheran

stream is one of the important ones and should therefore receive more attention in the chapter discussing the unchurched Liberals. (P. 334 ff.)

Dr. Sweet does not write a history of doctrine. His interests lie chiefly in showing the close correlation between the cultural and the religious life of the colonists. This accounts for the fact that relatively little is said about doctrine and doctrinal controversies. Only one page is devoted to the New England theology. The standard work on this important phase of American church history, Foster's *Genetic History of New England Theology*, is not included in the otherwise complete bibliography. More space should have been given to the basic principle of Roger Williams, the right and competency of the individual soul in all matters of religion, and its importance for the development of Baptist theology. Naturally, one will not agree with every historical or doctrinal judgment, for example: "The principal difference between the Quakers and Luther in respect to the universal priesthood was that they put into actual practice what he had advanced only as a doctrine." (P. 163.) Luther's universal priesthood is unthinkable without the Word as the only means of grace, whereas Quakers dispense with the Word entirely. We also question the statement that John Wesley separated himself from the Moravian Society because "it was not big enough for the things he felt needed to be done" (p. 228). Wesley withdrew from the Moravians because his theology was basically different from the anti-nomianism of the Herrnhut group. A second printing will also correct such typographical errors as Grobner for Graebner, pp. 237 and 349, and Salzberger for Salzburger. We have placed this book on the reserve shelf for our class in Comparative Symbolics and recommend it highly for an understanding of our American religious scene. F. E. MAYER

**The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg.** Translated by Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein. Published by the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States and The Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. Vol. I. 728 pages, 7x10. Price, \$10.00 for three volumes by subscription.

It was fitting that in the year 1942 there should come off the press the first volume of *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, for that year marked the two hundredth anniversary of Muhlenberg's coming to America. The publishers inform us that the other two volumes will appear in 1943 and 1944 respectively.

We wish to congratulate the Muhlenberg Press for its farsightedness in publishing this great work and thus making available in the English language source material of real value to the student of history. It will be a blessed day for the Lutheran Church in the English-speaking world when other great Lutheran classics from German and Scandinavian sources are similarly put into English dress, and the various Lutheran groups in our country, together with their publishing houses, will do well to set themselves to the task. No one, we are confident, will doubt the wisdom of such a program; and there should not be competition among us, but co-operation, as we shall all derive the benefits therefrom. It would seem eminently important to this reviewer that a conference be held by those who are interested, at an early date, and that a plan be drawn up and a publication program agreed upon.

It will not be necessary for this review to enter upon the details of Muhlenberg's life as a survey of his career appeared in the *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY* last year. This volume of the *Journal* begins with an entry dated Jan. 2, 1742, and ends with an entry dated Dec. 31, 1763. The years 1711—1742 are covered by an account of that period from a revision prepared by Muhlenberg in 1782 and published in the *Selbstbiographie*.

Thus the *Journal* relates the story of Muhlenberg's coming to America, his contacts with the Salzburgers in Georgia, his arrival in Philadelphia, and his handling of the confused situation he found among the congregations which had called him to this country, his work up to and including the founding of the first permanent Lutheran synod on American soil, and the busy and trying fifteen years after that historic organization.

Muhlenberg was thirty-one years old when the *Journal* began and fifty-two at the close of this volume, which thus gives us the detailed picture of twenty-one years of his active life.

The translators, in their valuable introduction to this volume, tell us how the *Journals* were written:

The journals themselves throw considerable light on the way in which they were written. It appears to have been Muhlenberg's practice to make sketchy notes day by day. A few of these original notes are still extant. Those which he prepared in New York during May, 1752, he called "annotations." Similar notes for part of the year 1775 he called "fragments, i. e., bones without sinews and muscles." These daily notes consist of names of persons and places and a few mnemonic symbols or words. They were intended to serve as pegs for his memory. Then when he was released for a time from the necessities of travel or the pressure of official duties, he expanded these notes by putting "sinews and muscles" on the "bones." A single name or word was often expanded to a page or more. In this process of filling in his original notes, Muhlenberg sometimes introduced anachronisms. "She did not tell me during this visit," he wrote, for example, "but I learned later. . . ." The replies to letters are occasionally indicated under the dates on which letters were written. When Muhlenberg altered his opinion about events or persons, the later, more mature judgments were sometimes inserted under dates when he held opinions which were quite different. This will explain some apparent chronological inconsistencies between Muhlenberg's correspondence and his journals.

In addition we are told that he used goose quills and made his own ink for writing. He had to buy his own paper, which was expensive, and he therefore often used half-filled books which were intended to serve other purposes. The tedious work of copying he did when he found time, but he also used copyists.

Another paragraph of the introduction is interesting, not only for its insight into Muhlenberg's linguistic ability, but also because of the light it sheds on the antiquity of what we now call "Pennsylvania German":

Although the journals were written in German, Muhlenberg employed other languages. He wrote and received letters in English, Dutch, and Latin as well as in German, and copies of these letters were sometimes transcribed into the journals in the original languages. Muhlenberg also made frequent use of common Latin expressions, and occasionally he inserted a Greek word or two. But of particular interest in

this connection is the fact that, while Muhlenberg never completely mastered either English or Dutch, his German lost something of its purity. He was aware that "old Germans" in America "spoil the English language and in time produce a third language, which is neither English nor German." The same temptation confronted Muhlenberg. He not only adopted Latin and French words by the simple expedient of furnishing them with German suffixes—a not uncommon practice in the eighteenth century—but he also incorporated a large number of English words and idioms into his speech. The result can best be illustrated by a few examples:

Am Abend wurde es mit meinem Beruf *gesetzt*  
 Wir *stopten* unterwegs  
 Es wurde mir *allowirt*  
 Welches in meinem Kirchen-Buche *recorded ist*  
 Er hat unter Englischen *geservet* und seine Sprache  
   *vergessen*  
 Sie wolte gern bey uns *boarden*  
 Der Satan hatte sie *encouragirt*  
 Mr. Keple war damit nicht *gepleaset*  
 Welcher *employirt* werden moechte  
 Die *Deeds* sind *recorded*  
 Ich hatte vielen Ueberlauf und *Trouble*  
 Es war nicht in die *Minutes* geenter'd  
 Er hatte drey *Deeds* zu *acknowledgen*  
 Als ich Abends *alle* in war  
 Ich hatte 'was in dem *Stohr gepurchas'd*

This admixture of English with German, while not nearly so pronounced as in the case of some others, proceeded rapidly. He was using such expressions as are listed above within ten years of his arrival in America and continued to use them to the end of his life. That the authorities in Halle were occasionally mystified appears from some of their attempts to put these expressions into German.

We recommend the *Journals* to our readers. The cost of the three volumes is by no means too high, and the value which the interested pastor will receive from a careful perusal of the contents will amply repay him for his investment. It is not a work which will be read once and then laid away, but it will be read and re-read, and we dare say the pastor's wife and grown children will also like to browse around in it.

W. G. POLACK

**The American Origin of the Augustana Synod.** From Contemporary Lutheran Periodicals, 1851—1860. A Collection of Source Material Gathered and Edited by O. Fritiof Ander and Oscar L. Nordstrom with an Introduction by George M. Stephenson. 192 pages. 6×9. Augustana Historical Society, Rock Island, Ill., 1942.

This is volume nine of the Augustana Historical Society publications. It is a reprint of documents, most of them hidden in old periodicals like the *Lutheran Observer*, the *Olive Branch*, also in the minutes of the Augustana Synod. The documents cover the years 1851 to 1860. We find interesting data here regarding the State University of Illinois, organized at Springfield, later occupied by Concordia Seminary. Most of the documents are concerned with the relationships between the various Lutheran bodies in the State of Illinois. Those who have been led to believe that Lutheranism outside the Synodical Conference presents the picture of churches long on a doctrinal decline should read

these pages and be convinced that attitudes such as were espoused by Lutheran spokesmen in the 50's towards the Lutheran Confessions have given way to far more conservative habits of thought both in the Augustana Synod and in the bodies now forming the United Lutheran Church. Professor L. P. Esbjorn and other leaders of that distant time live again in these reprints, and we are permitted to follow in detail the discussions which have led to the present obligation of all Lutheran pastors in America on the Symbols of our Church, whereas ninety years ago men fought for the principle of "receiving the confessions in a qualified sense," as was sponsored by the General Synod in those days. Practically the entire book is given over to this development of confessional consciousness, the debate centering around the "State University of Illinois."

TH. GRAEBNER

**Christian Worship.** By W. A. Sloan, A.M., Th.D. The Herald Press, Louisville, Kentucky. 114 pages, 5½×7½. Price, \$1.00.

Books on worship have been coming from the presses of various publishing houses in increasing numbers ever since the *Hochkirchliche Bewegung* in Germany instigated a liturgical renaissance both abroad and in America. The present monograph represents, on the whole, an attempt to offer acceptable views in the field of Christian worship. Some passages are valuable for both pastor and people, as when the author speaks of the purpose of church music (p.61), or when he deprecates the use of the sermon as an occasion for self-display or a sensational exhibition (p.79). One can, indeed, get much stimulating thought from the book. However, it is inadequate from the standpoint of *Lutheran* worship, and for a number of reasons. Some Scripture passages which are not pertinent to the argument are apparently quoted on account of the sound of the words. The explanation of John 4:24 hardly does justice to the Lord's remark. The Lord's Supper is no mere symbol (p.68). Truth is not merely subjectively the opposite of falsehood, but it is objectively the Word of God. Worship is not a mere intensification of the religious feeling in man, but a drawing close to Him on the basis of the Gospel promises, to render to Him the homage of the heart, the sacrifice of the lips, and the service of the whole person. One misses throughout the book the emphasis on this objective basis of worship, on the instrumentality of the Gospel in effecting the right attitude of the heart and mind. Those who purchase this volume will do well to keep in mind the definition of divine worship offered in the *Concordia Cyclopaedia*: "(Divine worship is) according to the Lutheran view not merely an approach to God in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving (commonly known as the sacrificial elements of worship), but chiefly an acceptance of God's gift of grace to men, through the means of grace (the sacramental element)."

P. E. KRETZMANN

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*From Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn.:*

**The Gospel of the Grace of God.** By J. Clyde Turner. 165 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.

*From the Warner Press, Anderson, Indiana:*

**Wonderful Jesus.** By Charles S. Ludwig. 127 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.