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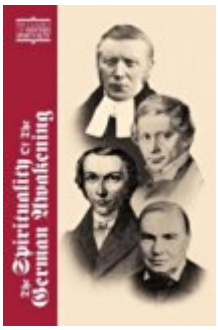
David Crowner, Gerald Christianson, eds.. *The Spirituality of the German Awakening.* Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2003. xii + 440 pp. $39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8091-0549-6.



Reviewed by Thomas Bach

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David Crowner and Gerald Christianson have compiled an interesting and useful anthology dedicated to the nineteenth-century German Awakening. Specialists in nineteenth-century Germany will find little in the text that is new and they would prefer, no doubt, to work with the original texts. However, an instructor who requires students to produce research essays will find this volume a welcome addition to his or her university's library. This text provides easy access to the ideas and institutions that formed the core of German Awakening. Their claims that the Awakening's outstanding characteristic was the "impulse to serve the needy of society" and that an important connecting thread for those involved in the Awakening was the desire to respond to the "human needs brought about by the Industrial Revolution" provide a nice concise definition of the Awakening (pp. 29, 7). Furthermore, they buttress this claim by providing translations from a wide array of texts from four representative figures whose work encompassed the whole of the nineteenth century.

The introduction provides an overview of the Awakening's antecedents and its intellectual, political, and economic contexts. Crowner and Christianson argue that eighteenth-century Pietism laid the basis for the Awakening. They also contend that the Enlightenment helped shape the Awakening but insist that it was more than "simply a reaction to the Enlightenment" (p. 13). The body of the work consists of extensive new translations, provided by the editors, of texts that "illuminate the tradition in which the" four men worked and were chosen out of a "variety of genres" and can "be regarded as characteristic because they gained widespread fame." The editors did not select texts because of their "documentary or scholarly interest"; instead, they based their selection on the texts' "value in bringing to life the spirit of the authors and the vitality of their heritage" (pp. 1, 4). Serendipitously, significant overlap emerges between these two categories.

The editors selected August Tholuck, Theodor Fliedner, Johan Hinrich Wichern, and Friedrich von Bodelschwingh as ideal exemplars of the Awakening, a social movement that grew out of

the idea that the proper "response to God's love is service to others" (p. 27). Fliedner founded the Deaconess movement in Kaiserswerth, which trained nurses and teachers and attracted international attention (pp. 144-147). Wichern founded the "Rough House" movement in Hamburg, where young boys could escape the misery of the urban poverty for countryside idylls and was instrumental in creating the "Inner Mission" (pp. 232, 235-236). Bodelschwingh, who built on the work of Fliedner and Wichern, founded the "Institutions of Bethel," where doctors conducted pioneering research on epilepsy in addition to providing medical care for "those with physical or mental disabilities; the homeless; psychiatric care; urgent care hospitals" (p. 333).

It is not clear that Tholuck fits in this group, as he was not involved in service to the poor. Crowner and Christianson include excerpts from Tholuck's ***The Lesson Learned about Sin and The Reconciler, or The True Consecration of the Skeptic***, to provide insight into Tholuck's spiritual development, which they seem to see as typical for the Awakening. The selections are unfortunately brief. In addition, the editors provide very little on Tholuck's scholarship and thus create a very one-sided portrait of him, as they leave out his importance for theology and church history in the nineteenth century and beyond. Although it is true that his reputation as a theologian has waned, his scholarship enjoyed wide circulation in the nineteenth century and historians still consult it.[1]

The editors divide the text into four sections dedicated to each author and each section begins with a short but effective introduction. These introductions make clear the authors' importance for and connection with the Awakening. In addition, the editors give each text its own introduction, which provides a more precise context, identifying, for example, the original prospective audience for the work. The texts selected provide insight into each author's central preoccupations. In particular, the editors did a fine job of drawing attention to their commitment to social work in God's service. The sections dedicated to Fliedner, Wichern, and Bodelschwingh illuminate the editors' central contention about the Awakening, that it was an important moment in the continuation of Protestant social work in the face of the increasing poverty and social dislocation arising from the Industrial Revolution.

Crowner and Christianson make clear the connection between the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Pietism of Philipp Jakob Spener and August Hermann Francke and the nineteenth-century neo-Pietists. They undervalue the model the Halle Institutes provided the neo-Pietists, in terms of piety harnessed to social work and, perhaps more importantly, the Halle Institutes' revolution in obtaining funding.[2] Furthermore, their decision not to address Robert Bigler's well-known argument about the role the neo-Pietists played in purging the Prussian church of pastors with a liberal bent ignores an important political component of the Awakening.[3]

The authors do a nice job of providing a basic list for further reading on the Awakening and each author. The decision to exclude mention of the nineteenth-century translations of Tholuck and Fliedner is a bit of puzzle. The text is a welcome and compact introduction to the connection between the Awakening and social work in nineteenth-century Germany and is well suited for undergraduates.

Notes

[1]. On Tholuck's continued scholarly influence see Nicholas Hope, ***German and Scandinavian Protestantism, 1700-1918*** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. viii.

[2]. On the issue of the Halle Institutes and their funding see Renate Wilson, "Philanthropy in Eighteenth-Century Central Europe: Evangelical Reform and Commerce," ***Voluntas: International***

Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations 9, no. 1 (1998): pp. 81-102.

[3]. Robert Bigler, *The Politics of German Protestantism: The Rise of the Protestant Church Elite in Prussia, 1815-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

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