



Wolfgang Breul, Jan Carsten Schnurr, eds. *Geschichtsbewusstsein und Zukunftserwartung in Pietismus und Erweckungsbewegung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013. 378 pages. EUR 84.99 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-525-55842-3.



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Published on H-Pietism (June, 2015)

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Crisis, Hope, and Eschatology in Pietism and the Awakening Movement

This tightly focused collection brings together contributions that explore the spiritual valences of conceptions of time in Pietism and the Awakening movement, with particular attention given to eschatology and the writing of history. The first section covers historical consciousness and the expectations for the future in Pietism, while the second section considers the same topic in the Awakening movement. The third section engages with biographies, *Lebensläufe*, and Pietist ideas of Providence and history. Although each contribution merits close attention, this review will focus on several chapters that most closely align with the volume's principal themes.

The chapters in the first section draw out the diversity in Pietist eschatological thinking. Heike Krauter-Dierolf examines Philipp Jakob Spener's *Behauptung der Hoffnung künftiger besserer Zeiten* (1693), pointing out that despite Spener's refusal to align with other chiliastic thinkers, his was a postmillennial chiliastic teaching, but one that did not depend on any particular interpretation of Revelation 20. Moreover, Spener's chiliastic teaching was no late innovation; rather,

his *Behauptung* built upon ideas latent in his earlier work. Spener's optimism was shared, Wolfgang Breul demonstrates, by August Hermann Francke, whose energetic plans for reforms at Halle at the beginning of the eighteenth century were connected to his conviction that the Lutheran Church was mired in crisis. Breul engages with Francke's reform plan and shows how he believed that his proposals for reforming institutions represented a real beginning of the "better times for the Church here on earth" that Spener had envisioned as something yet to come (p. 82).

Jonathan Strom explores these themes further in a chapter on Friedrich Breckling. Strom finds that Breckling, like Francke, perceived an ongoing crisis in the church, making him susceptible to the ideas and opinions of dissidents, including the chiliastic teaching of Georg Lorenz Seidenbecher. Breckling's contact with Seidenbecher, whose biblicism and persecution at the hands of the consistory resonated with him, moved him to adopt a premillennial chiliastic teaching. Douglas H. Shantz tracks sources of variety in chiliastic views by analyzing the ideas of

Jakob B  hme and his heirs J. W. Petersen and Conrad Br  ske. Shantz argues that despite sharing B  hme's legacy and some similarities in chiliastic ideas, Petersen and Br  ske's different social contexts resulted in distinctions, such as the differing emphases each placed on the importance of chronology. Finally, Dietrich Meyer examines future expectations in the context of Zinzendorf's anticipation of a Year of Jubilee in 1750. Zinzendorf prepared his followers to expect Jesus to return incognito, secretly, unnoticed by the world and in the power of his side wound (p. 130). This return would, he believed, usher in a new age for the spread of the Kingdom of God. After 1750 came and went, Zinzendorf's prior eschatological fervor ebbed, and Meyer notes that by the end of the eighteenth century, Spangenberg had replaced Zinzendorf's teaching with one focused on enduring the current hostile age, which he believed would culminate in the last judgment.

Taken as a whole, the first section reveals several patterns within the diversity of Pietist eschatology. Although Pietist expectations for the future varied across a wide spectrum, these contributions highlight persistent strands of optimism. Thus, while Francke expected Christian renewal in visible institutions and Zinzendorf anticipated Jesus's return as an inward and secret event, both shared Spener's hopefulness for better times ahead. Furthermore, these chapters show the extent to which Pietist eschatology was united in its sense of crisis and validated by opposition and even persecution. Breckling, for example, saw deficiencies and failures within the ranks of the Lutheran clergy as a crisis in the church. He faced not only conflict with the consistory, but eventually even opposition from dissidents who had been his allies. For the churchmen investigated here, chiliasm represented the triumph of God in both the world and the church.

Most of the contributions focus on developments in theology and practice that were of importance primarily to the internal self-understanding of communities of the faithful. Judith Becker's chapter in the second section, on the other hand, provides a welcome glimpse of how expectations for the future provided an impulse for missionary evangelism throughout the world in the first half of the nineteenth century. Becker examines letters and reports printed in mission society publications and missionary *Lebensl  ufe* to reconstruct missionary ideas of the future. Anticipation of Christ's return, she finds, permeated what missionaries reported about their work, what the mission societies advertised to their supporters, and what missionary candidates studied during their

training. Mission work was driven by the expectation of the coming of the Kingdom of God, and its successes indeed, its very existence served to confirm to missionaries that the Kingdom was at hand.

In his noteworthy chapter, Lucian H  lscher surveys the same time period, asking not what the pious thought the future held, but what the nature of their future was. To Pietists, the future was not what could be projected forward based on the past and present; rather, the future denoted that which was determined by God for man or the world as a whole (p. 290). H  lscher notes that Pietists held to a narrow horizon of time that contrasted with a growing secular concept of the future that emphasized its openness. Despite this fundamental opposition, H  lscher nevertheless argues that comparing the Pietist way of thinking about the future with the secular futurity of socialists from the period reveals a nearly identical way of structuring time. Still, the modern historian is prone to dismissing the Pietist past future as little more than a failed prediction, while the series of revolutionary visions for the future articulated through the nineteenth century is explained as progression through stages of historical consciousness.

H  lscher thus turns his exploration of the nature of the future in Pietist thought into a plea for historians to examine their own biases and to view past futures through the lens of contemporaries' own presuppositions. Taken on their own terms, we can see that Pietists evaluated the same events in vastly different ways than their secular counterparts, yet each group's analysis was equally valid from the standpoint of their respective interpretive paradigms. Although the secular paradigm eventually came to dominate, H  lscher points out that an interpretation of the future that sees what is to come as arising entirely from the past and present shares with the religious concept of the future an insistence on the fundamental unity and continuity of historical development (p. 298). In that sense, the enlightened idea of the future merely subsumed a core assumption of religious thinking about time. This assumption of unity held until the First World War, after which it was broken, and H  lscher closes with the intriguing if not entirely convincing suggestion that when it comes to conceptualizing the relationship between past, present, and future, today's observer may have more in common with the premodern religious view than any other.

This collection raises important questions about how the faithful appealed to eschatological notions of time in order to answer urgent questions about their immediate

circumstances. It will be of value to scholars of Pietism and the Awakening movement who seek to understand the complex dynamics at work in how the faithful plotted their position within their immediate historical contexts and the longer unfolding of salvation history. More-

over, this volume will be useful to those interested more broadly in the emergence of modern historical notions of time, and will challenge them to consider the persistence of religious conceptions of time and their influence on the development of ideas of historical progress.

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Citation: Stephen Morgan. Review of Breul, Wolfgang; Schnurr, Jan Carsten, eds., *Geschichtsbewusstsein und Zukunftserwartung in Pietismus und Erweckungsbewegung*. H-Pietism, H-Net Reviews. June, 2015.

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