

# Concordia Theological Monthly



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## BOOK REVIEW

*All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Missouri.*

CHRISTUS VICTOR. By Gustaf Aulén. Translation by A. G. Hebert. American Edition. The Macmillan Company, N. Y. 1951. 163 pages, 8×5. \$2.50.

This is not a new book, but one which has been on the theological book market since 1930, when Professor Aulén's "Olaus Petri Lectures" were first published in *Zeitschrift fuer systematische Theologie* (1930; pp. 501—538), after Aulén had delivered the lectures in Germany in the fall of that year. They at once proved themselves so popular that already in 1931 an English translation appeared, somewhat shortened, but revised by Dr. Aulén himself, and this is the one before us.

The title under which the lectures appear in this volume, *Christus Victor*, suggests Aulén's theory of the Atonement, which, summarized as briefly as possible, may be described thus: The atonement of Christ was essentially a conflict and victory, in which the victorious Christ fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the "tyrants" under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, such as Satan, sin, death, hell, divine wrath, etc.; and in Him God reconciled the world to Himself (p. 4). This view Aulén calls the "dramatic" view of the Atonement. He speaks of it also as the "classic" idea of the Atonement, which, he says, the New Testament, the Church Fathers, and, above all, Luther taught, but which was then lost to the Church.

This "classic" view Aulén opposes to two others: 1. The "juridical," or "legalistic" or also "Latin," view, introduced by Anselm of Canterbury in *Cur Deus Homo?* 2. The modern "subjective," or "humanistic," view, defended by Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and other modern liberals. The reviewer agrees fully with what Dr. Aulén says with regard to the "humanistic" view, namely, that it denies *in toto* the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement, making man his own savior by ethical conduct.

The reviewer, however, cannot agree with what Aulén's thesis says concerning the so-called "juridical," or "legalistic," view. In addition, he finds in the book so many historical misstatements and misrepresentations, as also so many one-sided emphases, that the volume cannot rate as "an historical study of the three main types of the idea of the atonement," as the subtitle states. Aulén admits that Melanchthon and the orthodox dogmaticians could not agree to the "classic" view. He thus establishes a hiatus between Luther, on the one hand, and Melanchthon and the Lutheran (also the Reformed) dogmaticians, on the other.

Omitting scores of statements which to the reviewer do not seem to be true, and passing over the question whether Aulén's classic view is really that of the New Testament, which, as the reviewer is convinced, it is not, he desires to discuss here only one question: "Was it really Luther's doctrine of the Atonement that God in Christ merely won the victory over our spiritual enemies and so reconciled the world unto Himself?" This certainly was a part of Luther's doctrine, but not all of it, not even the essence of it. For further study the reader may examine the New Testament, the Lutheran Confessions, Dr. F. Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* (Vol. II), C. E. Luthardt's *Kompendium der Dogmatik*, and Reinhold Seeberg's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV<sup>1</sup>, pp. 237 ff. Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* are sufficient to disprove Aulén's main thesis.

The question before us, then, is: "Did Luther have in mind, chiefly or solely, Christ's victory over our spiritual enemies when he spoke of our Lord's atonement?" Luthardt's Scripture proof for the vicarious Atonement is quite sufficient to disprove Aulén's theory (cf. 13 ed., pp. 278 ff.) with regard to its scripturalness, while Seeberg's quotations from Luther demonstrate that he did not hold the view which Aulén ascribes to him. We refer to these men especially as they were not members of our Church, so that we may not be accused of merely repeating a synodical tradition.

Aulén points out that it was an essential of Anselm's doctrine of the atonement that "God's justice must be satisfied," and that the "satisfaction must be made by man, because man is guilty" (pp. 84 ff.). Aulén contends that in Anselm's doctrine the "incarnation and the atonement are not organically connected" as in the "classic" view (p. 87). This is hardly fair to Anselm's doctrine, since he teaches, as do also our Lutheran dogmaticians, that Christ satisfied the demands of divine justice as the *God-Man*. There is therefore also in Anselm's doctrine a very close connection between Christ's incarnation and His atonement. God had to become man in order to take our place, become our Substitute, and thus satisfy the demands of divine justice, since we are guilty sinners who have broken the divine Law.

Now, just this Anselmic doctrine of the atonement is also that of Luther. Luther writes: "He [Christ] had to take our place and had to become a Sacrifice for us, bear the wrath and curse under which we lay in His own person and atone for it" (WW 11,246; Luthardt, 13 ed., p. 290; 15. ed., p. 314). Again: "Although now out of pure grace God does not impute to us our sins, yet He did not desire to do this, unless first His Law and justice would be satisfied in every way and abundantly. First there must be purchased and procured for us from His justice such gracious imputation; and because that was impossible for us, He appointed for us in our place One who would take upon Himself all punishment which we had deserved" (7,299; *ibid.*). Again: "So, then, there comes Christ, joins us under the condemnation of the Law and suffers death, the curse, and the damnation, just as if He Himself had broken the whole

Law" (7,271; *ibid.*). Again: "In His tender, innocent soul He [Christ] had to feel God's wrath and judgment against sin, taste for us eternal death and damnation and, in sum, had to endure all that which condemned sinners had deserved and had to suffer eternally" (39,45; *ibid.*).

Seeberg shows that Luther's view of Christ is primarily not that of *Christus Victor*, but that of "*Salvator et Pontifex noster*"; "*priester und mittler*"; "*Versuner und Mittler*" (*Die Lehre Luthers*, IV<sup>1</sup>, p. 238). As Seeberg shows, Luther holds that faith in the grace of God presupposes that forgiveness of sin "does not take place gratis (*nit umbsonst*) or without satisfaction of His justice (*odder on genugthun seyner gerechtickeit*), for . . . His justice must first be satisfied most perfectly, Mtth. 5, 18" (W 10.1, 1,121. *Loc. cit.*, p. 239). Again: "If, then, God's wrath must be taken from me and I should obtain grace and forgiveness, it must first be earned from Him by service through Someone (*so muss es durch jemand ihm abverdienenet werden*), for God cannot be merciful ("*hold*") and gracious to sins nor cancel the punishment and wrath, unless there has been made payment and satisfaction for it" (E 11,290; 9,381 f. W 2, 137; 12,544. *Loc. cit.*, p. 239). Luther argues that if this payment had not been necessary, then Christ would have done His work "foolishly and uselessly" (*naerrisch und unnuetzlich*; *loc. cit.*, p. 240). "But now He took our place and in our stead He permitted sin and death to fall upon him" (W 36,693; 25,328; *ibid.*). Seeberg here multiplies quotations from Luther to show that the Wittenberg Reformer thought of Christ not merely as the *Christus Victor*, but primarily, in His atoning work, as our divine-human "Substitute," "Redeemer," "Victim," and "Payment" for the sins of the world. (*Loc. cit.*, p. 240 ff.)

It has been said that this thought is not stressed in Luther's Small and Large Catechisms. But is it not sufficiently stressed in Luther's words: ". . . is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins . . . with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death"? In his Large Catechism Luther points out that "to explain these single points separately belongs not into brief sermons for children, but rather to the ampler sermons" (No. 32; *Conc. Trigl.*, p. 687), for which reason he does not enter into details on them. Still the doctrine is sufficiently brought out in No. 27 to 31. (*Conc. Trigl.*, p. 685).

We have spent more time than usual on this book review, because Aulén's thought is being accepted in wide areas and proclaimed as a new doctrine that must be spread, whereas it is neither new nor true to fact.

J. T. MUELLER

THE SILENCE OF GOD. By Sir Robert Anderson. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1952. 215 pages, 5×7½. \$2.00.

This volume has appeared repeatedly since its first publication. The present edition is a reprint of the complete first one. The title suggests

that God does not manifest His concern for the Church by any evident intervention in its fate. Christians are persecuted and killed, but God remains silent. The author holds that miracles ceased with the rejection of the favored nation. The grace of God is now a sufficient miracle for the Gentile era. His defense of divine miracles against the attacks of skeptics is good. He is not so successful in his effort to prove that Satan is not the author of immorality, but limits his activity to tempting the Christian faith. The thesis that God is silent involves him in difficulties with the doctrine of prayer. As a defense of the Christian faith in general this study merits the reader's interest. L. W. SPITZ

THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY. By George Allen Turner. Light and Life Press, Winona Lake, Ind., 1952. 292 pages, 5½×8½. \$3.00.

Dr. Turner, herewith presenting a scholarly apologetic for the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection, states his problem as follows: "The present study is dominated by a threefold objective: first, the discovery of the Biblical teaching concerning man's perfection in righteousness; second, tracing historical development to Wesley and ascertaining Wesley's distinctive emphasis, whether this is in accord with the Biblical teaching; and third, the critical evaluation of whether this doctrinal emphasis has validity in a utilitarian age when the ideas of God, of human nature, and even of the Bible itself, have undergone changes." Dr. Turner attacks this problem with tremendous energy and a demonstration of profound erudition. This is his dissertation for the Ph.D. degree with all the documentation such a study demands. Unfortunately John Wesley was unable to separate Law and Gospel clearly, and Dr. Turner has likewise not come to grips with that basic problem. No amount of linguistic research or historical investigation can serve as a substitute for a clear distinction between the two. L. W. SPITZ

THE SABBATH; Its Meaning for Modern Man. By Abraham Joshua Heschel. Published by Farrar, Straus, and Young, Inc., New York, 1951. 118 pp., 9×6. \$2.50.

The author represents the relatively new school of thought in Judaism which takes a mediating position between Orthodox and Reformed Judaism. This branch of American Judaism wants to retain the Jewish rites and ceremonies, but attempts to fill them with spiritual meaning. The author's concept of the Sabbath is such that a perfunctory and mechanical performance of the Sabbatical rites is virtually excluded. He makes the Sabbath a symbol of his basic religious thought. He states: "The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the

creation of the world." (P. 10.) He holds that Judaism is a religion of time and aims to sanctify all time by making the most of the Jewish "sacred events," such as the Day of Atonement (pp. 79, 98). The reviewer has always felt that the observance of the Sabbath as imposed upon the Jew made the Sabbath a rather burdensome event in his life. However, the author points out that for the Jew who really understands the meaning of the Sabbath, this day becomes a day of rejoicing. In fact, "All our Life should be a pilgrimage to the seventh day; the thought and appreciation of what this day may bring to us should be ever present in our minds" (p. 89, cp. p. 28).

The publishers are to be congratulated on the beautiful layout and the artistic wood engravings which embellish the text. F. E. MAYER

LA REFORMATION LUTHERIENNE. Par J. T. Mueller. Edition des Missions Luthérienne. Oeuvre des Eglises Luthériennes Libres de France et de Belgique. 105, rue de l'Abbé Groult/Paris XV<sup>e</sup>, 48 pages, 4×6.

More than two and a half centuries have passed since Veit Ludwig von Seckendorf, the great Lutheran historian of the Reformation, found it necessary to reply to the misrepresentations of the Jesuit Louis Maimbourg's *Historie du Luthéranisme*. Dr. Mueller's miniature of the Reformation does not pretend to match Seckendorf's monumental *Historia Lutheranismi*, but it serves the same informative and apologetic purpose. Being distributed by the Lutheran Free Churches in France and Belgium in thousands of copies, it will doubtless reach more people than did Seckendorf's massive tome. In three tersely cogent chapters Dr. Mueller describes the world before the Reformation, the life and work of Martin Luther, and the consequences of the Reformation. His reflections on the duties of those today who enjoy the blessings of the Reformation aptly conclude this persuasive booklet. L. W. SPITZ

THE TRAVAIL OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. Nine Biographical Studies by Roland H. Bainton. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 272 pages. \$4.00.

The author of this volume needs no introduction. Lectures given by him for the James Sprunt foundation at Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., at the Danforth Camp Miniwanca, Shelly, Mich., at Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo., and at the Vermont Congregational Ministers Conference, Montpelier, Vt., furnished the material for the book. The aim is to explain the struggle within the Christian Church to achieve religious liberty. The method adopted is a popular biography of nine men, both persecutors and persecuted, who took part in the struggle. The introduction stresses the timeliness, the very need of discussing this subject now. Twenty-five years ago a historian deemed the question of religious liberty settled; religious persecution was a thing of the

past, to be recorded merely as a matter of history. But the situation has suddenly changed. Not only is religious persecution flaring up in many countries, but we are roughly confronted with the fact that religious persecution has never been overcome; our error has been defective knowledge of, and lack of interest in, the conditions in the regions in which the present conflagration has its origin. Perhaps we may learn something for the present struggle by the study of the past. — The story is divided into three parts: 1. Catholic and Protestant persecution, with the biography of Thomas of Torquemada representing the peak of Catholic persecution; of John Calvin, the peak of Protestant persecution, and Michael Servetus, the victim of Protestant persecution. 2. The toleration controversy of the sixteenth century; biographies of Sebastien Castellio, the Remonstrator; David Joris, the heretic as hypocrite; Bernardino Ochino, the heretic as exile. 3. The freedom of the individual in the seventeenth century; biographies of the Bard of Speech Unbound, John Milton; the Seeker, Roger Williams; the Apologist for the Act of Toleration, John Locke. — No two historians would probably agree to select the same nine men for a discussion of this kind; nor would they agree on the author's judgments. When he, e. g., says (p. 59) that "Luther in his youth had been as intolerant as an Inquisitor . . . but when he found himself suspected of heresy, he endorsed the Erasmian principle that to burn heretics is against the will of the Holy Spirit," he implies something that is his opinion, for which, however, he cannot adduce any proof. — Be it understood, by the way, that this reviewer does not endorse all the theological statements scattered through the book. But there is a mass of historical information which is both interesting and valuable.

THEO. HOYER

FOR BETTER OR WORSE. By Morris L. Ernst and David Loth. Harper & Brothers, New York. 245 pages, 6×8, \$3.00.

It were splendid if some philanthropist would set aside sufficient funds to supply all applicants for a divorce with a copy of this book while there is yet time to withdraw the suit. Perhaps the march to Reno and other divorce mills would slow down to a walk and include only such for whom the situation is intolerable and against whose divorce neither man nor God would have objection. The authors instituted a painstaking research into the effects of divorce and received an appalling insight into the loneliness and frustrations and heartache and other forms of misery and suffering that follows the wanton disruption of the sacred ordinance of matrimony. True, dissuading unhappy couples from severing their union on such grounds would not be a God-pleasing solution of their problem; yet if many of those who rush headlong into the divorce courts could see some of the disaster which lies ahead, they would be more ready to listen to the pleading voice of their pastor or fellow Christians who seek to safeguard them against such sinful folly. This is a book that deserves a place on the counseling shelf of our library.

O. E. SOHN

**SACRED MARRIAGE VOWS.** By Bernard Brunsting. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 56 pages,  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ . 75 cents.

Something different in wedding booklets. Instead of the customary art work, it contains seven chapters of marriage counsel, five on the meaning and sacredness of the vows and one each on the family altar and on family life. These are followed by a message of congratulation and the usual wedding certificate. Several pages are devoted to a guest and gift register. Perchance the presentation of the rather frank marriage counsel in this form will, if occasionally reread by both spouses, be helpful means toward a more successful Christian wedded life.

O. E. SOHN

**INSPIRATIONAL TALKS FOR WOMEN'S GROUPS.** By Florence Kerigan. The Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. 124 pages,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ , paper cover. 85 cents.

A handy little book designed as an aid to women when called upon to address church groups. There are eighteen addresses, which may be adapted or used as they are. The titles are intriguing, and the messages are timely and worth while. Needless to say, pastors could find the book extremely useful as they cast about for suggestions for talks to their church societies.

O. E. SOHN

**BUILDING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP THROUGH EVANGELISM.** By Dawson C. Bryan. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York, 1952. 188 pages,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ . \$2.00.

Former director of Personal and Visitation Evangelism of the General Board of Evangelism of the Methodist Church, Dr. Bryan has devised and practiced the methods of building church membership which this book summarizes. No panaceas for sudden increases in church membership are here presented. The accent is on training workers, and the book will serve as a textbook or as collateral reading for such training groups. The Gospel which is basic for the book stresses new birth, the doing of the will of God, and the bringing in of the kingdom, rather than the preaching of the completed atonement and the forgiveness of sins through Christ. When this rather basic adjustment is made to the contents of the book, it will prove to be more useful.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

**THE WORD OF TRUTH.** By Samuel Martin Miller. Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill. 158 pages,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ . \$2.00.

It was the author's desire to give instruction in sound doctrine in the fifty-two meditations presented in this volume, to present the old truths with insight and clarity. As far as we can see, he has succeeded admirably except in the chapter on Election, where he is not clear and does not give a satisfactory definition of this article of our faith. We read p. 26: "Election is 'in Christ.' Christ is God's elect. Those who by faith are in Christ are in election." Christ is indeed God's elect, but in a different sense



from those whom God chose before the foundation of the world. Likewise, it cannot be stated categorically that those who resist and reject Christ are not in election. It may well be that some, like Saul of Tarsus, turn from their evil way and live and are eventually found among the elect. Far clearer, we believe, and in fuller harmony with Scripture is the definition found for example in Graebner's *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology*: "The decree of predestination is an eternal act of God, who for His goodness' sake, and because of the merit of the foreordained Redeemer of all mankind, purposed to lead into everlasting life, by the way and means of salvation designated for all mankind, a certain number of certain persons, and to procure, work, and promote what would pertain to their final salvation." And in the Formula of Concord: "The predestination, or eternal election, of God extends only over the godly, beloved children of God, being a cause of their salvation, which He also provides, as well as disposes what belongs thereto. Upon this our salvation is founded so firmly that the gates of hell cannot overcome it." The inclusion of these factors in some form or other would have made the author's definition much clearer and more adequate.

O. E. SOHN

SERMONS ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. Compiled by H. J. Kuiper. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 175 pages, 5¼ by 7½. \$2.50.

By and large this is a stimulating and useful series of sermons on the Ten Commandments by various authors, characterized by clear and pertinent applications to modern problems (including a strong testimony against the evil of lodgery) and by proper direction of the reader to Calvary's cross for pardon and sanctifying power. The sermons are not of equal merit, the one seeking to establish the first day of the week as the New Testament Sabbath with all the solemnities of the Jewish Sabbath transferred to it being quite arbitrary and Scripturally unacceptable. Yet there is a wealth of suggestion for the pastor who decides to present such a series of sermons to his congregation.

O. E. SOHN

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

*From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:*

THE BEGINNINGS ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF GENESIS. By J. M. Weidenschilling. Pupil's Manual, 5×7½, 184 pages, 75 cents. Teacher's Guide, 5×7½, 206 pages, \$1.25.

THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL FROM MOSES TO CHRIST. By J. M. Weidenschilling. Pupil's Manual, 5×7½, 164 pages, 75 cents. Teacher's Guide, 5×7½, 172 pages, \$1.25.