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Book Review. - Literatur

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Book Review

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo.

The Faith of the Christian Church. By Gustaf Aulén. Translated by Eric Wahlstrom and G. Everett Arden. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. 457 pages, 9½ × 6½. \$5.00.

The Muhlenberg Press deserves praise for publishing in so excellent a form, from its fourth and greatly revised Swedish edition, Bishop Aulén's well-known book *Den allmaenneliga kristna tron* (Der allgemeine christliche Glaube). Not only the general make-up of the book, but also the translation of the author's not too simple Swedish merits high praise, for only rarely is the reader reminded of the fact that he is not dealing with an original. Then, too, the publishers are to be commended for having given to the Christian reading public a book which, over against the overwhelming Barthian-Reformed literature, follows the Lutheran pattern and is the result of the diligent Luther research carried on in Sweden for many years, especially by the "Lundensian School." Dr. Aulén is Bishop of Straengnaes and has become widely known in Europe and America by his work *Christus Victor*. With Dr. Anders Nygren, who recently was created Bishop of Lund, and several other Swedish theologians he established the "Lundensian School of Theology," of which his present work may be said to be an expression and interpretation. Bishop Aulén is a leader in the ecumenical movement and as such has shared in the conferences of Stockholm (1925), Lausanne (1927), Oxford and Edinburgh (1937). He also was one of the founders of the Lutheran World Federation at Lund (1947) and played a leading role in the first assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam (1948). The reader may keep in mind this ecclesiastical background of the author for properly evaluating his dogmatical work, which is neither Fundamentalist nor Modernist, neither Barthian nor orthodoxly Lutheran, but represents a "purely scientific theology" that purports to offer "a new and deeper insight into the meaning and motif of the Reformation" and to supply "a new, fresh, and realistic approach to the biblical message" (cf. Aulén's Preface). Aulén's Dogmatics is divided into four parts: I. Faith and Theology, in which the theological *prolegomena* are discussed; II. The Living God; III. The Act of God in Christ; IV. The Church of God. There are, of course, subdivisions. Thus in Part II the author considers A. The Christian Conception of God; and B. The God of Action, that is, God as Savior, Judge, Creator, etc.; Part III treats A. The Victorious Act of Reconciliation; B. The Broken and Restored Relationship with God, in other words, Redemption, Justification, and Sanctification. Part IV is divided into the following subparts: A. The Nature of the Christian Church; B. The Constitutive Factors of the Church (Means of Grace, Sacraments, Prayer, Christian Ministry); C. The Church in the Present Age (Church Membership, Church and State, Christian Unity); D. The Church from the Viewpoint of Eschatology (the Living and the Dead, *Regnum Gloriarum*; there is no chapter on the eternal damnation of the wicked). This novel arrangement of the "heads" of Dogmatics is in itself satisfactory and could be well used to

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accommodate all doctrines of the Christian faith; unfortunately, however, some essential doctrines are not treated at all, while others are set forth inadequately. In addition, the author's theology is by no means *Schrifttheologie*, as Missouri Synod theologians have learned to evaluate it under the leadership of Walther, Pieper, A. L. Graebner, and other Lutheran church teachers. According to Aulén the function of systematic theology is not to set forth the doctrines of Holy Scripture under proper heads, with their proper antitheses (he deprecates a "loci theology"), but it is "purely scientific, in so far as its task is to clarify the significance of the Christian faith. It can serve the Christian life only by performing this scientific study without any secondary purposes" (p. 4). This scientific orientation of systematic theology in the final analysis undermines the practical relation of doctrinal theology to the life and work of the Christian in general and of the Christian minister in particular. Doctrinal theology thus ceases to be a *habitus practicus* and becomes a *habitus demonstrativus*, since it has for its purpose no more than "to make clear the meaning and significance of the Christian faith" (p. 5). "This purpose," Aulén argues, "would be distorted and limited if systematic theology were to start from and allow itself to be bound by a denominational or confessional conception of faith given once and for all" (p. 16). Aulén, then, does not believe in a fixed theological truth. He writes: "Systematic theology cannot assume as self-evident that a certain confession in every respect represents that which is perfect and genuinely Christian" (*ibid.*). Aulén thus favors doctrinal progress. But just as he does not wish to have systematic theology limited to any confession, so also he does not consider it to be bound to the revelation which in Holy Scripture has been made in Christ. He writes: "Revelation is fulfilled in Christ, but at the same time is continually in progress" (p. 44). Again: "This conception of divine revelation is the opposite of that which is static and which limits it to certain isolated events, or localizes it in a portion of past history. . . . Nothing is more essential to faith than that God continually manifests and reveals Himself" (p. 45). Or: "When revelation is understood as finished at a certain point of time, a deistic conception is introduced which is foreign to faith" (*ibid.*). A doctrinal theology, so conceived and developed, cannot be a theology fully in accord with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. It misses the definiteness, stability, and Scripturalness of a theology that is genuinely Biblical. Nor can it be rightly oriented to Scripture as its only *principium cognoscendi*. Aulén does not accept the Lutheran principle of the *Schriftprinzip*. To him the doctrine of verbal inspiration (and for all that, of all inspiration), which he regards as a mere theory, means a "mechanical objectivizing" of the Word (p. 365). "This mechanical objectivizing," he says, "is contrary to the actual attitude of faith and to the real character of the Word" (*ibid.*). To Aulén the Bible is a "collection of historical documents of religion," to which he adds: "But in the midst of all this human and incidental in these religious documents of man, faith discerns the divine voice, the Word of God, speaking with unconditional and inescapable authority directly from God to man. The Word of God comes in the 'form of humiliation.' These conditions under which the Word of God exists cannot be improved or overcome

by any kind of theories of inspiration or by arguments that are designed to protect the Bible from its 'humanity.' Faith always discovers the revelation of God in 'secret,' in the human covering that hides it" (*ibid.*). — The orientation of Aulén's theology becomes apparent especially in his treatment of the doctrine of the means of grace. He reproves "scholastic theology," which "confined the Word as a means of grace to the Bible and conceived of this Word almost as a divine record or protocol" (p. 369). Against this scholasticism he argues from Article IV (Part III) of the Smalcald Articles that Luther did not, as did the later orthodox Lutheran scholastics, limit the Word simply to the Bible, but strongly emphasized also the spoken and living Word, the Word as proclaimed, as a means of grace, and besides he added to the other means of grace (mentioned in Article IV) the "mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, or . . . "the word of conversation" (p. 355). Aulén evidently means to support his departure from Scripture as the sole source and rule of faith by words of Luther, which, however, he either misunderstands or misinterprets. Manifestly he conceives of a "Word of God" outside and beyond Scripture, which Luther never did. When Luther speaks of the "spoken Word of God," he means Holy Scripture, declared to hearers either in a sermon or in any other instructive discourse. For Luther the spoken Word of God is never different from the written Word. Again, when Luther speaks of the "mutual conversation and consolation of brethren," he does not think of any Word of God essentially different from that set forth in Scripture, but merely of the divine Word of Scripture, as it is employed by Christian laymen; for in Article IV of the Smalcald Articles he inveighs not only against the enthusiastic immediacy of the Spirit's operation, but also against the *ex opere operato* theory of Rome. — Aulén's presentation of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper is so lacking in clarity that often it becomes difficult for the reader to follow him. He certainly does not correctly represent Luther's doctrine of the real presence. When Luther argued the Real Presence, he meant to preserve the simple meaning of Christ's words of institution, namely, that with the bread and wine the communicant receives, in a supernatural, incomprehensible manner, Christ's true body and blood, and not, as Aulén's presentation puts it, "Luther wanted to maintain that the Lord's Supper is a gift, a means of grace" (p. 395). Christ's true body and blood was to Luther the *materia coelestis* of Holy Communion and not, as Aulén avers, "the concept of the heavenly and transfigured body of Christ," which really has nothing to do with the Real Presence, as Luther pointed out time and again. — How badly a theology fares that is not rooted in Scripture is evident from Aulén's treatment of Infant Baptism. He writes: "If the value of baptism is inseparably connected with an ability on our part to discover some faith in the child, it cannot be said that its value rests on any sure foundation. In reality this discussion of 'faith' in the little child obscured entirely that which to Christian faith is the very heart of the matter, viz., that infant baptism is the act of election by divine love through which the baptized person receives and is assured of his right to membership in the church" (p. 385). This presentation of Infant Baptism is so altogether at variance with our Lutheran faith that it requires no special refu-

tation. It is impossible, of course, in even a lengthy review to bring to the attention of the reader every departure from Scripture found in a Dogmatics. But the reader may consider the following guidelines if he should study Aulén's new book, which no doubt will be studied widely also in America: 1. While Aulén's Dogmatics contains many correct statements, it is not directly based upon Scripture; 2. It definitely rejects the *Schriftprinzip*; 3. Its treatment of such essential heads as Bibliology, Theology Proper, Christology, Eschatology, and others is regrettably inadequate; 4. Its presentation of doctrine is on the whole very obscure, and often the reader will find it hard to understand what the author means; 5. It does not consistently set forth the theology of the Lutheran Confessions; 6. It does not practically prepare the theological student for his work as pastor and teacher of God's Word; 7. Lacking the conservative note, it is not a safe dogmatical guide for Lutheran seminarians who desire to know the pure and full Scripture truth; 8. Rejecting Scripture as the sole source and norm of faith, Aulén's Dogmatics, just as Barth's, ultimately loses itself in subjective speculation; 9. It is subjective, for it considers the function of Systematic Theology to find the "genuinely Christian" in ecumenical theology.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

The Reinterpretation of Luther. By Edgar M. Carlson. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. 256 pages, 8¼×5½. \$3.50.

Among the theological books published by Lutherans in America in recent years, this new volume no doubt deserves major emphasis. Its author, a graduate of Augustana Theological Seminary and of the University of Chicago, from which he received his Ph. D. in historical theology in 1944, is now president of Gustavus Adolphus College and president of the Synodical Luther League Council of the Augustana Lutheran Church. His thesis chiefly concerns the evaluation of the interpretation of Luther by Swedish scholars such as Aulén, Billing, Bohlin, Soederblom, Nygren, and others. He traces the remarkable influence of Luther upon Swedish thought and life, presents the new approach to Luther in method, and as to focus of attention occupies himself at greater length with the analysis of Luther's theology as interpreted by Swedish divines, especially by those of the Lund school, points out Luther's relation to Medievalism and Lutheran orthodoxy, tests the validity of the Swedish interpretation of Luther, and finally shows the value of the Swedish Luther interpretation for American Lutheranism in particular, for general American Protestant theology in general, and especially for the modern ecumenical mind. In relatively plain and intelligible language the book offers much important historico-theological material, which at present is very much under discussion and perhaps also in debate. For students wishing to acquaint themselves with the modern Luther research work done in Sweden, Carlson's presentation of the subject is almost a *necessarium*. Nowhere else perhaps are the issues discussed so plainly and objectively as here; and nowhere else perhaps by an American scholar better informed on the subject than is the author. We heartily recommend this new, profound study to all who are interested in this special phase of theology. The book, however, requires careful and judicious study, and the student is apt to place not a few question marks on the margin with regard to single state-

ments, governing principles, and entire evaluation complexes. To select only a few instances. The author states, for example, that according to Aulén it is virtually meaningless to distinguish between "Christ for us" and "Christ in us," since what Christ does in us is precisely what He has done for us (p. 75). But ultimately that means to ignore the difference between justification and sanctification. Swedish scholars, moreover, find it baffling that Luther at times speaks as though "the whole Christ" were present in the Lord's Supper and then again as though only His "body and blood" were present (p. 138). As a matter of fact, this is not perplexing at all, since Luther emphasized both the spiritual eating and drinking in the Holy Supper, that is, the embracing of the whole Christ and His merits by faith, and the sacramental eating and drinking, or the oral eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood with the sacramental elements. Luther also here speaks Scripturally and not after the fashion of medieval scholasticism. Furthermore, the supposed difference between Luther and the later Lutheran theologians on the question of the inerrant, inspired Scriptures (p. 158) does not exist; for not only Quenstedt or Calov or Chemnitz, but also Luther believed that the canonical books of the Holy Scriptures are God's inspired, infallible Word, and he said so in scores of places. Then, too, there is in reality no difference between Luther and the later dogmatists on the doctrine of the atonement (p. 159f.), as some of the Swedish divines seem to think. In fact, our Lutheran dogmatists consistently go back to Scripture and Luther to support their teachings on the atonement. Moreover, it cannot be denied that Luther in his theological *Werdegang* was largely influenced toward his theological thinking by the masters whose books he treasured. But when Luther preached God's holiness and righteousness and His grace and love, in other words, the Law and the Gospel, he stood entirely on Scriptural ground. These, however, are only a few of the many cautions which the reviewer would address to those who take up this book for study. While he deeply appreciates the fine Luther research work done in Sweden and elsewhere during the last decades, there is greatly needed in our own Church a personal Luther research, a diligent study of Luther's writings, in which he himself pleads his cause and presents his doctrine. Let the reader carefully study this new book; and may it lead him not to blind acceptance of the *ipse dixit* of any scholar, but to a renewed interest in the perusal of Luther's works to discover for himself what the great Reformer taught. The great Swedish scholars certainly put us to shame inasmuch as they studied Luther, while we in America neglected the great man whose theology we so highly prize.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

American Freedom and Catholic Power. By Paul Blanshard. The Beacon Press, Boston. 1949. 350 pages, 5½ × 8¼. \$3.50.

The early working title of this book, "The Social Policies of the Roman Catholic Church," indicates the limitations which the author had set for himself. The purpose of the book is to set forth the dangers of Rome's political, cultural, and economic policies for the democratic principles to which the vast majority of Americans subscribe. In 13 chapters the author brings conclusive evidence that Rome, i. e., the American hierarchy, is determined to regulate the behavior of as many people as possible according

to its moral standards. The author shows how the hierarchy attempts to foist its views on the American public, particularly in the areas of education, publications, medicine, marriage and divorce, politics, science and scholarship, capital and labor. The Church presumes to speak with absolute authority in all these areas and determines what the doctor, the legislator, the workman, the industrialist must or must not do under a given circumstance. The facts which the author marshals forth give the reader an opportunity to look behind the scenes and to see at first glance how the hierarchy works to shape American thinking. More important, the reader will gain an understanding of the "whys" and "wherefores" of Roman practices — to mention only one example, why the Catholic doctor must save the fetus if he is confronted by a choice between saving the life of the mother and her unborn child. In his book the author brings together in one volume factual material which could be acquired only by years of reading and research. And all his statements are carefully documented and, what is equally important, are highly relevant. He has succeeded in showing that in the Roman Church America is confronted by "the use and abuse of power by an organization that is not only a church, but a state within the state, and a state above the state" (p. 4). The Roman Catholic press has taken due cognizance of this book, and in the Jesuit weekly, *America*, one of the most liberal Jesuits, Geo. Dunne, has attempted in several review articles to refute Blanshard's book, though in our opinion most of the blows were a considerable distance below the proverbial belt.

No doubt, many of our laity will read this book, and it should be pointed out to them that the author is oriented in liberal theology. For this reason he rejects every form of religious authoritarianism, for example, he objects to the Catholic parochial school (and by the same token to the Lutheran parish school) on the ground that the child's mind is molded into a fixed pattern, something which is contrary to his interpretation of the liberal spirit. He views the clash between Rome and Protestantism primarily as the tension between medieval darkness and modern enlightenment. Rome's theology and practice, however, make sense only in the light of its basic assumption, viz., that it, and it alone, is the Church to which Christ gave all authority. All other attacks on Rome are shadowboxing. This is quite evident in the recent attacks by leading Protestants, particularly in the article by Dean Bowie and the answer by the Jesuit Murray in the September issue of *American Mercury* (see the synopsis in *Time*, Sept. 12, 1949), where the Jesuit in our opinion had the better of the argument. One must attack Rome at its jugular vein, the arrogant and presumptive claim that the Pope as "vicar of Christ" is the final source for the answers to all religious, moral, scientific, economic, and political questions. In the light of this authoritarian theory Rome is driven by an inner necessity to make a totalitarian demand on all its subjects — and that includes all properly baptized people! As long as Rome's claim stands that there is only one Church, the Holy Catholic Roman Church, she will insist on the absolute rule of the clergy, on the submission of the laity; on the regimentation of its children, on the condemnation of the public schools, on intolerance of all non-Roman churches, on the

right to determine legislation, etc., in short, on its claim to control the behavior of all from the cradle to the grave. Rome is and remains a menace to the Christian Church and to the State because of this basic premise.

F. E. MAYER

Handbook to the Mennonite Hymnary. By Lester Hostetler. Publisher: The Board of Publications of the Mennonite Church of North America, Newton, Kans. 425 pages. \$3.00. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis 18, Mo.

The author of this very fine *Handbook* is the Rev. Lester Hostetler, minister of Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kans. The Rev. Hostetler is a member of the Hymn Society of America and served as co-editor of *The Mennonite Hymnary*.

In the Introduction of this volume the author outlines quite satisfactorily the history of Christian hymnody. Beginning with an attempt to define what a true hymn is, he passes over to the beginning of Christian song, then takes up the hymns of the Eastern Church, Greek and Syriac, the hymns of the Western Church in Latin, the hymns of the Bohemian Brethren, then the hymns of the Reformation, and then the English hymnody, beginning with the metrical Psalms and running through to the hymnody of the American churches.

In the section entitled "Mennonite Hymnody" the author states: "Mennonites have made many contributions to society through their religious life and practices, but we have produced no important hymnody of our own. Throughout the four hundred years of our existence as a church, we have been a singing people, in times of persecution as well as in times of peace. Great emphasis has always been laid upon the importance of congregational singing in our worship services. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the Mennonites of various branches in America alone have published over fifty hymn books. But an examination of these hymn books shows that we are heavily indebted to others. Instead of producing original hymns and tunes, we have borrowed, with minor exceptions, our entire repertory from other denominations. The wealth of verse and music produced by German and English writers throughout the century has been found to serve our needs adequately and well."

The body of the *Handbook* is divided into six books, the first giving the notes on words and music of the hymn section, which includes 402 hymns; the second a section on hymns for children, 33 in all; a third Gospel songs, 67 in all; a fourth the church year in *chorales*, 67 in all; a fifth metrical Psalms, 25 in all; and the last 22 pages are given over to Responses, etc. There is a very substantial bibliography.

Of the total of hymns and Psalms, namely, six hundred, 98 are translations: 82 from the German, three from the Greek, one from the Italian, eleven from the Latin, and one from the Welsh. While the 82 translations from the German contain many of the great German *chorales*, it is very evident that the Mennonites, in making their transition from German to English, are not taking along a goodly portion of the rich treasury of German hymnody. For this reason also the *Handbook* is not much different from other handbooks of other denominations, which lean heavily on the English and American hymns. If our recollection is right,

the German hymnody of the Mennonites, although somewhat subjective, nevertheless was very strong in its emphasis on the German chorale. The English hymnary of this branch of the Mennonite Church does not lean strongly toward the German chorale. If other groups that have their antecedents in Germany follow the same trend that the Mennonites are following, it will mean that ultimately most of the treasures of German hymnody will be lost to the American church.

W. G. POLACK

The Radiant Cross. By Paul S. Rees, D. D. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich., 1949. 134 pages, 5½x8. \$2.00.

It is heartening indeed to find a collection of sermons that is evangelical in character from cover to cover. In addition, the sermons of Dr. Rees are interesting as well as inspiring. The illustrations chosen throughout are pertinent as well as thought-provoking. Here and there our pastors will want to change an expression and drop a thought, but they will find much food for thought in these sermons, not a few of which are excellent also from a rhetorical and homiletic point of view. We regret that several excellent opportunities to refer to the Sacraments were ignored.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

BOOKS RECEIVED

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

Concordia Bible Teacher. Vol. XI, No. 1. \$1.00 per annum.

Concordia Bible Student. Vol. XXXIX, No. 1. 65 cents per annum.

Edited by Rev. J. M. Weidenschilling, S. T. D., under the auspices of the Board for Parish Education, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. "The Church Through the Ages" (A Brief History of the Church). October—December, 1949.

1949 Vacation Bible School Material. Workshop.

God's Little Children (Beginner Dept.), 36 cents, net. *Living as God's Children* (Primary Dept.), 44 cents, net. *Walking with God* (Junior Dept.), 44 cents, net. *In God's Pathway* (Senior Dept.), 44 cents, net. *Teacher's Manual*, 65 cents, net. **Handicraft Projects:** Beginner, 27 cents, net. Primary, 27 cents, net. Junior, 27 cents, net. Senior, 27 cents, net. *Teacher's Manual*, 65 cents, net.

Portals of Prayer. No. 93. "Show Me Thy Way." Daily devotions from September 19 to November 9, 1949. By Rev. Martin Walker, Buffalo, New York. 10 cents each.

Andachtsbuechlein. Nr. 93. "Das Heilige Vaterunser." Daily devotions from September 19 to November 9, 1949. By Rev. Paul Sauer, Oak Park, Illinois. 10 cents each.

From Follett Publishing Company, Chicago, Ill.:

The Classic Greek Dictionary. 11th printing. 1,098 pages, 6x8. 73,400 entries, thumb-indexed. \$5.00.

The Classic Latin Dictionary. 12th printing. 933 pages. 51,300 entries, plain. \$3.00.