REVIEW OF JUNIUS B. REMENSNYDER’S
THE ATONEMENT AND MODERN THOUGHT

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Citation


Executive Summary

This book should be appreciated by all Christians. It reads easily for lay people while holding substance for pastors. It addresses an important topic from two sides: What is the atonement scripturally and what does modern thought make of the atonement. The author and this book both have recognized standing. While it, of course, has some weaknesses, its strengths outweigh them. For English-speaking Lutherans, it is especially interesting because there are not so many Lutheran books about the atonement in English. While written by a Lutheran and containing some specifically Lutheran content, within the ambit of
orthodoxy it is an ecumenical work. Though published in 1905, because errors about the atonement are perennial, the book remains remarkably up to date. A revision would need the addition of only a few chapters to be current.

Author

Junius Benjamin Remensnyder, D.D. LL.D., was born at Staunton, Virginia on February 24, 1843. He graduated from Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (B.A., 1861), and the Gettysburg Theological Seminary (1865). He served in the 131st Pennsylvania Volunteers in 1862–63. After his ordination in 1865, he held pastorates at St. John's, Lewistown, Pennsylvania (1865–67), St. Luke's, Philadelphia (1867–74), Church of the Ascension, Savannah, Georgia (1874–80), and St. James', New York City. He was President of The General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the USA from 1911 to 1913.

As described by noted church historian Philip Schaff,

In theology he is conservative and is opposed to rationalism, favoring progressive and constructive, not destructive, criticism; he advocates educational rather than emotional methods in religion and in worship holds to the historic liturgies.

On November 23, 1913, he published an article defending Luther in the New York Times that began, “Perhaps the surprising attack of Mgr. McMahon upon Luther, printed in a late issue of THE TIMES, charging that he was ‘deliberately and consciously immoral’ should not go unanswered.”

Among his other works are:

Christian Unity, Savannah, Georgia: George N. Nichols, Printer, 1875.

Doom Eternal: The Bible and Church Doctrine of Everlasting Punishment, Chicago: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887.


History, Doctrine, and Worship of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, New York: Luther League of New York City, 1894.


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The Church’s Mission as to War and Peace, New York: Church Peace Union, 1916.


The Six Days of Creation: Lectures on the Mosaic Account of the Creation, Fall, and Deluge, Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1886.


What Advantages Will Our Church Derive from the Introduction of the Episcopal? Augustana Church Society, 1897.


**Standing**

As one indication of the standing of this work, it is included among the 32 volumes of the Logos collection, “Classic Studies on the Atonement.”

**Plan of the Book**

The book has a 22-page introduction by the renowned Reformed theologian, B. B. Warfield. The 196 pages of the body are divided into 29 chapters, the last of which is a conclusion. Each chapter is well focused on a single aspect or issue. With this arrangement, the chapters are not long, and reading is easy. For a book apparently addressed to the reading lay person, it has a surprisingly thorough index of 9 pages. Between the table of contents and the index, finding a passage previously read is much easier than for many lay-oriented books, and thus it can serve as a source for recurring reference.

**Overview of Substance**

The atonement holds a central and vital place in Christianity. Nearly all Christian teaching is affected by the atonement.

Some of the chief words Scripture uses are covering, sacrifice, offering, ransom, propitiation, redemption, reconciliation, and “atonement” which is New Testament Greek answering to the Old Testament kippur.

Atonement is not just something Christians teach about Christ. Christ Himself teaches his atonement. Jesus teaches atonement at key times such as in the Words of Institution of the Lord’s Supper, when He answers questions about his identity based on the Old Testament, when He rebukes Peter, in

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Gethsemane, and on the cross.

The atonement is vicarious. Jesus is our substitute.

The atonement has an objective effect. Outside of ourselves, it reconciles God to sinners.

Many false ideas of the atonement are overly subjective. They locate the effect of the atonement entirely or almost entirely within us, overlooking the effect of the atonement objectively upon God.

“Reconciliation” is one of the most common presentations of the atonement in Scripture, so one of the book’s elaborates upon reconciliation. Reconciliation is mutual. The erroneous ideas of atonement view only reconciliation on man’s side, but scriptural atonement indispensably accomplishes reconciliation on God’s side. Before the atonement, sin made both God and man enemies of each other.

The subjective ideas take offense at blood sacrifice and punishment of Jesus for our sin, and therefore deny scriptural atonement. Remensnyder answers three categories of objections to the atonement: ethical, scientific, and theological. While many false ideas of atonement pervade modern thought, nearly every one of them is, at the same time, an old idea.

The atonement is universal, yet Christianity is not universalism. One receives the benefit of the atonement when one has faith in Christ’s person and work as being “for me.” By nature, man does not receive the doctrine of the atonement. It must be given to each one by the Holy Spirit.

Remensnyder explains and evaluates the standard so-called “theories” of the atonement: penal substitution, moral influence, governmental, and so on.

Unorthodox ideas of the atonement typically involve denial of scriptural teaching about sin. They also often travel together with higher critical or other erroneous ideas about Scripture.

The true scriptural doctrine of the atonement, when believed by faith, has a marvelous burden-relieving effect upon the conscience of guilt-stricken sinners.

The doctrine of the atonement is well developed in the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church. Remesnyder brings the confessional teaching of atonement forward is a chapter of its own.

All Persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – are involved in the work of the atonement.

The final chapter displays the vista of the atonement from eternity past to eternity future.

Summaries of Chapters

Chapter 1 sketches the spirit of the times. It is one of superficiality, opposition to Christianity, and denial of the supernatural. The relevance of this chapter is not limited to the atonement but has general application to religion.

Chapter 2 asserts the vital nature of the atonement. “No truth is more emphatically revealed in Scriptures, none centres more directly in the person of Christ, and none is more integral to the Christian system.”

434.
“Man, being impotent in his sin and fall to make atonement for himself, the propitiation proceeds from the divine side and is made by the Son of God.”6 “Christ came into the world to save sinners.”7 Because the atonement “directly concerns each one’s personal salvation, the interest attaching to it is not to be computed. The realization of the significance of the atonement is the most tremendous thing for every immortal soul.”8

Occupying this vital place in the body of Christian truth, it naturally is selected as a principal target of attack. So we find that against perhaps no other doctrine confessed by the whole Christian Church is there such a concert of hostile criticism as is now experienced by this one. It is either openly denied or so stated as to deprive it of any positive significance.  

Chapter 3, with a few brisk brushstrokes, paints the scriptural picture of the atonement. This chapter is so highly distilled and concentrated that it hardly can be condensed any further. Because the inspired writers of Scripture regarded the atonement as the central truth, “so it is shot in golden threads through the entire woof of revelation. It is presented in such varied forms and in such diversified phraseology as to develop it in the broadest and minutest outline.”9 Some of the chief words Scripture uses are covering, sacrifice, offering, ransom, propitiation, redemption, reconciliation, and “atonement” which is New Testament Greek answering to the Old Testament kipper. Remensnyder quickly elucidates each of these words. Christ offers himself as our sacrifice, our Passover lamb, into suffering and death as an acceptable substitute to God the Judge that guilty man might escape.

Chapter 4 focuses on what Christ himself taught about the atonement. Opposition to the atonement is immediate and vociferous from the disciples. “Peter rebuked him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord.”10 By nature man does not receive the doctrine of the atonement. It must be given to each one by the Holy Spirit.11

Jesus applied to himself the Old Testament prophesies that the Messiah must suffer and be killed. He said that He came to give his life a ransom for many.

Jesus teaches the atonement in the Words of Institution of the Sacrament of the Altar. “No subterfuge of interpolation, no loose theory of inspiration, and no extreme method of higher criticism can invalidate their force.”12

Poignantly and affectingy, Jesus teaches the atonement in Gethsemane. When he prayed, “Father save me from this hour,” He then continued, “But for this cause came I unto this hour.”13 Jesus was not appalled simply at the thought of physical pain in the crucifixion. “The agony in Gethsemane . . . was the

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5 34.
6 34, citing 1 Timothy 1:15.
7 36.
8 36.
9 38.
10 43, citing Matthew 16:22.
11 43.
12 45.
13 45, citing John 12:27.
consciousness in the Son of man that He was delivered up for our offenses, that He was suffering the penalty due our sins.”

Wrenchingly, Jesus teaches the atonement on the cross: “My God! My God! Why has thou forsaken me?” “The Father juridically holds Him—the sinless One—as if guilty, and hides his face from Him.” Apostle Paul explains, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” “When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” (Galatians 4:4).

Chapter 5 demonstrates the vicariousness of the atonement. This means that Christ is our substitute. The New Testament employs an abundant variety of words “to express by all possible shades of language the idea of substitution. They and the context in which they appear show that by no jugglery of words can the point be evaded that Christ’s passion was vicarious.” “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin’ is the constant Scriptural teaching.” “He was able to stand as [sinners’] representative, to take their sins upon Himself, and in their stead to make an infinitely acceptable offering, to make a full atonement.”

This is the absolutely unique and transcendent feature in Christ’s great sacrifice that it is expiatory. In the Zend-Avesta; in the teachings of Confucius; in the doctrines of Buddha; and in the liturgic hymns of the Rig Veda, “mortify the body; crucify the desires; thyself must expiate thine own sins,” is the best and utterly impotent advice that can be given the sin-smitten, guilt-burdened soul. But that Christ takes our place and renders that satisfaction which was beyond our power, and that God, for the sake of this incalculable offering, holds our expiation fully made, is the great distinctive characteristic of the atonement.

Chapter 6 illuminates the objective efficacy of the atonement. This means that, outside of our own feelings, consciousness, experience, or subjectivity, the atonement atones. “The Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all.” Note that all of this is extra nos (outside ourselves). The Lord did something. We did not do or feel it. He laid our iniquities on Christ, and this He did objectively regardless of whether you feel or believe it. Only because it is an objective fact does it have its proper subjective effect: “It relieves burdened consciences.”

From the time of Anselm, a contrary subjective theory of the atonement has circulated. In this view, sin is removed not by the blood of Christ in the place of our blood. Sin is removed by the subjective influence upon our conscience that Christ’s divine love and compassion inspire. Remensnyder quotes the following as an example.

Here is, then, no literal substitution of one person for another, no literal satisfaction of the claims of

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14 46.
15 49.
16 49.
17 49-50.
18 51.
20 55.
justice, no literal payment of a debt, no literal ransom or redemption, but a work of grace on our behalf which may be more or less well described in these terms . . . [as] the language of emotion and devotion and gratitude and discipleship.\textsuperscript{21}

In other words, any substitution or satisfaction is only emotionally true, not objectively true. It is true only because you feel it – if you feel it.

Chapter 7 deals with a strain of modern thought that separates the benefit of Christ’s work from his death and focuses it entirely in aspects of his life. Remensnyder says that, of course, the life of Christ is important, and that without the life He lived, his death would not have atoned. Still, it is the death of Christ that atones. “The wages of sin is death.” Death is how those wages were put upon Christ and lifted from us.

Chapter 8 show the connection of sacrifice and blood. Scripture declares that “the life is in the blood.” With the shedding of blood, life goes out. Blood was offered in the Old Testament sacrifices, and Christ offers his blood in the New Testament – life for life. In the Old Testament, the blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled to cover objects in the Tabernacle and the Temple which stand for us and our sin. By that sprinkling, the blood covers (kippur) our sin. “From this Old Testament usage we are prepared for the emphasis placed upon the blood of Christ in the New Covenant of grace, and its meaning and significance at once appear.”\textsuperscript{22} In the New Testament, the blood of Christ does what the blood of sacrifices did naturally, but it accomplishes it supernaturally. It covers spiritually. New Testament verses in which we read that Christ is our “propitiation” are rendered in some translations as “sacrifice of atonement” using a Greek word that corresponds to the Hebrew kippur for covering.

Because man’s incapability to enter directly into communion with God appears at every offering, therefore every complete offering must be preceded by the covering of the atonement of blood, and, therefore, this is the condition,\textit{sine qua non}.\textsuperscript{23} (“\textit{Sine qua non},” without which, not. In other words, the condition without which nothing else can happen). It is the blood of Christ that makes approach to God, communion with God, and everything else possible.

Chapter 9 answers the question, did Christ suffer the punishment of sin. Put another way, Did God punish Jesus Christ? Modern thought answers, “no.” Remensnyder says this is in the teeth of the facts of what Scripture says. In Scripture, Jesus suffered sin in our place in several ways. He suffered its penalty. He suffered its guilt. And thirdly, this suffering of the guilt went farther than we usually think. Though Jesus was innocent, “Yet Christ did feel the guilt of sin. This was the very sword which pierced his soul.”\textsuperscript{24}

Chapter 10 begins by observing that one of the most common methods of stating the atonement in Scripture is by the term “reconciliation.” Thus, it becomes important to know what this reconciliation means. In modern thought, reconciliation in no way affects God. Reconciliation is wholly on man’s part. Scripture, however, teaches that reconciliation is mutual. Sin put us in a state of enmity with God in which the stance of each of the parties, God and man, is as enemy of the other. On God’s part that meant wrath,

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{21} 55-56.
    \item \textsuperscript{22} 63.
    \item \textsuperscript{23} 62-63.
    \item \textsuperscript{24} 68.
\end{itemize}
curse, and judgment. The propitiation of Christ’s blood replaces the sinner’s guilt with innocence and divine displeasure is displaced by graciousness. Propitiation is not offered to the transgressor but to the judge. While we must bear in mind that God’s mercy is the source of the propitiation, yet without propitiation there would be no reconciliation.

Chapter 11 asserts not only that the atonement holds the central place in Christianity, but that it does so in a way that affects every other major doctrine. The atonement is inseparably interwoven with the incarnation. Even creation is dependent on the atonement. Foreseeing man’s fall into sin, God would not have created man without foreordaining the Savior. The atonement is the correlative of the scriptural doctrine of sin. While the Law reveals sin, so does the cross. Moreover, the cross reveals and provides its remedy. God’s love may be contemplated abstractly, but in the cross, we know it concretely. The divinity of Christ is shown by the fact that his death renders a satisfaction of immeasurable worth. The atonement illuminates the Trinity. The Trinity is a “mysterious feature in the secret being of the Godhead” without which “the atonement would be inconceivable.”25 (“The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God,” Hebrews 9:14.) The atonement is what makes justification be by faith alone. Nothing needs to be or could be added to the atonement, so its benefit is received without work or merit. The suffering of Christ including his death, so confounding and abhorrent to his disciples until his resurrection, can be understood only with the atonement. The atonement explains Christ’s resurrection from the dead. Only because of the atonement does the Lord’s Supper hold anything for us Christians: “the bread broken for you,” and “the blood shed for the remission of sins.” The church is created and defined by the Word of reconciliation and the Sacraments, both of which are founded on the suffering, dying, and rising of Christ.

Chapter 12 upholds that the atonement is universal. It is universal as rising above nation and ethnicity. It is for the whole world and all its peoples. It is universal in being for all people and not for only a predestined few.

Chapter 13 affirms that, despite the universality of the atonement, Christianity is not universalism. The benefit of the atonement is received by faith, and unbelief does not receive it.

Chapter 14 reviews “theories” of the atonement. Remensnyder jumps over many centuries of church history and begins with Anselm and the penal substitution theory. He presents this as “the orthodox theory of the atonement.”26 (In a later chapter, he reviews earlier centuries and theologians to show that this always was taught in the church.) Then he treats the governmental and moral influence theories. Both are erroneous because they cannot be found in Scripture, and they address necessities only in sinful man and not necessities in God. Anselm, in contrast, explains the atonement as a necessity in God that, for man to be saved, the justice of God must be satisfied. There are other theories of the atonement not treated by Remensnyder, but in his program of short chapters that briefly sketch topics, these three are adequate as an introduction for lay readers.

25 79.
26 93.
Chapter 15 deals with three classes of objection to the vicarious aspect of the atonement. This is one of the longer chapters in the book. The first objection is ethical. It claims that the vicarious principle is immoral. Punishing the innocent and letting the guilty go free looks bad. This objection raises the issue, why does substitution work? Remensnyder gives a few explanations based on reason, classical literature, and original sin. Original sin no doubt is involved, but his formulation is unsatisfying. The other two explanations are next to worthless and constitute one of the greatest weaknesses of the book. He might have felt this himself, because after giving them, he says, “there is involved here a deep insoluble mystery.”

The scientific objection is that Earth in this solar system in the Milky Way galaxy is too puny, too insignificant for a creator of the universe to have become one of us to die as one of us in our guilty place. This is another weak point in the book. Remensnyder tries to answer science with competing science rather than simply staying with the authority of Scripture.

The theological objection recoils from God making atonement to himself and from his requiring such an extreme propitiatory sacrifice. Today, we think we are too cultured and enlightened for such a gospel. The whole idea is too backwards and ancient. But, that culture and enlightenment already existing in apostolic times. Paul reports it, saying “Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.” (1 Corinthians 1:22-23) Remensnyder makes effective use of this, but he also resorts to rationalistic arguments from nature, history, social fabric, and love. What amazes me about many books including this one is that when we come to theological objections to Christianity, Christians act as if the only source not to be used is God himself. Does God not know himself? Is God lacking an adequate theology? Isn’t “Thus saith the Lord” good enough evidence to rebut faithless theological objection? If God says He atones vicariously, by substitution, and to himself, why is that not satisfactory?

Chapter 16 catalogs several gross misrepresentations of the atonement which are used by opponents of the Gospel to deny the orthodox idea of the atonement. These may be dismissed because the misrepresentation of any idea is not a ground for rejection of the idea in its own true self.

Chapter 17 answers whether God suffered in the atonement. Remensnyder’s answer is based on the unity of the person of Christ. In this unity, the properties of both of his natures are communicated to his person. When Christ suffers, one person suffers. This one person is both God and man, so in the unity of the person of Christ, the God-man suffers. Remensnyder goes on to deny the impassability of God and to assert that the Father also suffered in the atonement.

Chapter 18 traces the relation between the understanding of sin and the atonement. Naturalistic, evolutionary, and hereditary views of good and evil abolish the sinfulness of sin. This in turn abolishes the atonement. Insensibility to sin leaves one insensible to salvation.

Chapter 19 speculates on what becomes of the heathen who never heard of Christ or the Gospel.

Chapter 20 discusses several heresies and their relation to the atonement, including rationalism,
universalism, Unitarianism, Christian Science, theosophy, and Gnosticism. While all of these are well represented in modern thought, all of them also are very old.

Chapter 21 sets forth the impact of higher criticism on the atonement. Higher critics tend to view New Testament language about the sacrifice of Christ as figurative. They tend to deny the wrath of God on sin. Hence there is no need for an atonement that satisfies God. Rather the obstacle to reconciliation is man’s own guilt-consciousness and the distrust of God which it engenders. The removal of guilt-consciousness and distrust does not require a vicarious, sacrificial substitute. It requires only a revelation of the forgiving grace of God.

Remensnyder uses quotations about higher criticism that bear reproducing here. One is from T. E Schmauk

Their treatment of the Old Testament makes a revolution in Hebrew history. Abraham was a mythical figure. Moses wrote no laws nor history; David wrote no psalms; Solomon no proverbs. The pillar of fire did not precede the journeying Israelite. The Lord did not command the construction of a tabernacle. There is no trace of sin and guilt offerings in the Old Testament before Ezekiel. The divine and supernatural is eliminated according to the radical school of critics. If these things be so, it follows that the promise and doctrine of redemption are not the substance, and the sole reason of existence for the Old Testament.28

The other is from an editorial in the New York Independent.

Christ died on the cross. This is a very important fact and very useful to Christianity, and yet Christianity would exist if Christ had ascended without dying. God would still have been a loving Father, and could have forgiven prodigals just the same. Christianity does not require us to look on the death of Christ as propitiating the Father, who needs nobody to excite or encourage His love. No expiatory sacrifice is needed, for God is abundantly able to forgive, out of His own store of love. Christ’s death is the crown of His life, teaching, and example. It proves His genuineness and is a power to draw us into a life like His; but it is not an expiatory sacrifice.29

Chapter 22 confronts the attitude of Remensnyder’s day that idolizes the present and capricious individuality. It slights the past as authoritarian. It has little use for catholicity of the faith through history. Remensnyder provides a historical survey of catholicity of the doctrine of the atonement.

Chapter 23 presents a Lutheran view of the atonement. The Lutheran view is affected by its high view of Scripture, its confession of sin, its giving prominence to love among the attributes of God, its being Christocentric, and its emphasis on justification by faith. In concord with these, the Augsburg Confession says, “Christ truly suffered and was crucified that He might reconcile the Father to us and be a sacrifice, not only for original sin, but also for all actual sins of men.”

Chapter 24 develops the sinner’s justification by faith alone. This faith is, generically, in the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the whole Gospel. But specifically, it is faith in the death of Christ, in his suffering

29 152.
on the cross, in the offering He made for sin, as being “for me” relieving the burdened conscience. Justification is an objective gift in which, by faith, a sinner personally becomes a partaker.

Chapter 25 deals with the modern age’s antipathy to miracles. The atonement is replete with miracles in the incarnation, the divinity of Christ, his working miracles, and his resurrection. But besides all this, Remensnyder asserts that the atonement is a miracle regarding the primary law of ethics that guilt cannot be transferred to another. “In the death of Christ to atone for the sins of the world . . . the infinite Judge breaks in upon and suspends the universal moral order. Hence the cross becomes the miracle of miracles.”

Chapter 26 concerns the Holy Spirit in the passion and atoning work of Christ. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit appeared at his Baptism and immediately thereafter drove Christ into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. “Through the eternal Spirit [Christ] offered Himself without spot to God.” (Hebrews 9:14.) Christ was quickened by the Spirit and resurrected by the Spirit.

Chapter 27 examines what evangelical preaching of the atonement – versus preaching based on faulty ideas of the atonement – accomplishes in conscience-ridden sinners. It relieves their burden of guilt and animates them to self-denying mission. Real conviction of the atonement makes missionary and martyr.

Chapter 28 displays the vista of the atonement from eternity past to eternity future. Christ is the lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world. He was delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God. “The highest point in the visions of the Apocalypse, and the climax of the rapturous worship in heaven, is reached when the

“four living ones and the twenty-four elders fall down before the Lamb,” and all the saints join their prayers, and “They sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy, for thou was slain, and has redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

**Evaluation**

This work is excellent in multiple ways.

- It identifies the issues modern thought raises about the atonement.
- Though published in 1905, it still is nearly up to date. The basic issues remain ones Remensnyder already observed and answered. It lacks only some more recent problems such as views of the atonement by Liberation Theology, Cultural Marxism, and Feminist Theology.
- While devoted to correcting error, on balance the work remains more irenic than polemical. As a result, not only is error refuted negatively, but the truth is clearly set forth positively.
- Even when it sometimes drifts off into rational and speculative arguments, presently it homes back to scriptural authority.

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30 187.
31 208.
The work has some weaknesses.

- While the authority in Scripture predominates the book, there are sections predominated by reason or even speculation.

- In contrast to Roman Catholic and Reformed theology, Lutheran theology is known for letting scriptural paradoxes stand without trying to rationalize seemingly contradictory elements. Remensnyder does exhibit this, but sometimes he tries to harmonize the apparent contradictions. His harmonies are not revealed in Scripture and are not satisfying. This occurs for example in chapters 12 and 13 about the universality of the atonement and the countervailing lack of universalism.

- There is a streak of ecumenism in praising and quoting from non-Lutherans that, while usually good, sometimes produces ill effects. Several times when Remensnyder quotes from the Reformed Hodge or Warfield he affirms a harmony of Lutheran and Reformed ideas that really does not exist.

The strengths outweigh the weaknesses. The book is well worth reading. The investment of time and labor to read this book is better than expending similar time and effort to read many newly issued books. The reader easily can discriminate between its strengths and weaknesses and gain a large treasure of valuable take-aways from its strengths. A reader can gain from this book a knowledge of the orthodox teaching of Christ and the atonement that touches mind, conscience, and affections.

While written by a Lutheran and containing some specifically Lutheran content, within the ambit of orthodoxy it is an ecumenical work. It fits well with, for example, multiple works on the atonement by the Anglican Leon Morris. The book can and should be appreciated by all Christians.