



# Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement

*Gustaf Aulen*

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**Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement** Gustaf Aulen  
Gustaf Aulen's classic work, 'Christus Victor', has long been a standard text on the atonement. Aulen applies history of ideas' methodology to historical theology in tracing the development of three views of the atonement. Aulen asserts that in traditional histories of the doctrine of the atonement only two views have usually been presented, the objective/Anselmian and the subjective/Aberlardian views. According to Aulen, however, there is another type of atonement doctrine in which Christ overcomes the hostile powers that hold humanity in subjection, at the same time that God in Christ reconciles the world to Himself. This view he calls the "classic" idea of the atonement. Because of its predominance in the New Testament, in patristic writings, and in the theology of Luther, Aulen holds that the classic type may be called the distinctively Christian idea of the atonement.



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