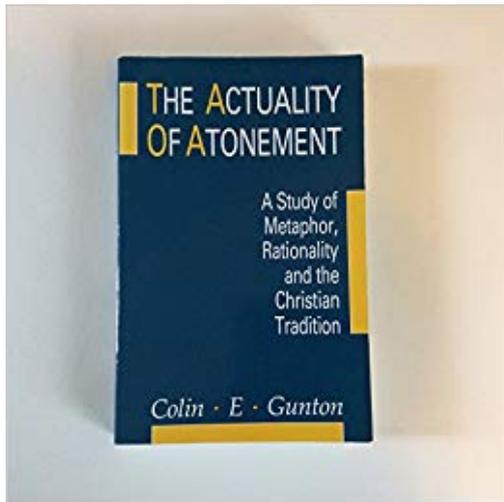


The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition *by* Colin E. Gunton



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In a reissue of a masterly examination of both the Christian doctrine of Atonement and the nature and working of theological language, Professor Gunton reassesses the doctrine and the language in which it is expressed in the light of modern scholarly developments. He explains how the traditional metaphors of Atonement, drawn from the battlefield, the altar and the law courts, all express something of the meaning of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and examines their bearing **on human life in today's world.**



Reviews of the [The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition](#) *by* Colin

E. Gunton

Jaiarton

This book was extremely difficult to read. It could not have been more dry or dull. It was so hard to read that it was almost completely meaningless. I could tell that Gunton meant well, if you take merely the table of contents or the title, you can read into it about all that you will get from it. I feel like Gunton tried so hard, too hard, that he covered so many layers over top of what he was really trying to say that he ended up not saying much of anything at all. If he could have brought it down to a human level, because theologians are humans too, it could have been an incredible book. I truly believe that he meant well but it needs some serious editing and revision. I know what he means to say can be said better than this. Unfortunately, because it was written in a foreign version of the English language, I got absolutely nothing from this book and I was so frustrated with it by the time I finished it for my class that I was ready to destroy it. It is a frustrating read. I do not recommend reading this book on purpose. Sorry.

Nilabor

This book is a significant contribution to how we use language in theology. It is not written for a common readership, but rather is for those with some theological training. The issue of metaphor is significant in that the Bible and the study of Theology use metaphor which some reduce to being less than literal or actual. But Gunton argues that metaphors are the very tools we use to depict the actuality of things, they point beyond themselves. Thus, the many metaphors of the Atonement should not be dismissed or limited to a single one. The many images enrich our understanding as each points to different valid insights. One should not ask what actually happened on the cross without metaphors, its meaning is made clear through the many metaphorical images. This book is rich in research, profound in its implications, and necessary to understand for advanced study in theological studies.

Kizshura

As an engineer, I found Gunton's writing style verbose, unconcise and difficult to read. Frequently, I had to read sentences several times just to understand what he was saying grammatically. Even after understanding him grammatically, I often felt like he was describing a fuzzy and unclear periphery to his theology, rather than describing the core of it explicitly. I have read more scholarly books that are presented much better.

The book primarily draws on the works of other people, and Gunton highlights aspects of their ideas as he sees fit. However, I was left at the end of each chapter still waiting for any real content from the author. It seemed dry and tedious, with no useful insight.

To his credit, Gunton seeks to deal fairly with the views he investigates. It often seemed that he devoted much time to relatively minor points, while when it came to important aspects of doctrine he glossed over them with words like "obviously...", "clearly..." and "the fact that...". He certainly does not outlay a cohesive view of the atonement in a logical manner. In some cases, his logic seemed circular - e.g. that the words used to describe the atonement are themselves defined by it.

There was little consideration given to recent scholarly developments, which he often simply glossed over with phrases suggesting they were wrong and needed to be "defended against". There is only limited use of Scripture, but even when used it is often out of context and somewhat glossed over to provide superficial evidence in his discussion.

I found nothing new in this book, and would not recommend it.

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