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Cross Purposes: The Violent Grammar of Christian Atonement

Anthony Bartlett

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This seminal study of the Christian theory of the atonement examines the story of Christian violence. In Cross Purposes, Anthony Bartlett claims that the key Western doctrines of atonement have been dominated by a logic of violence and sacrifice as a means of salvation. Subsequently, the graphic suffering of the crucified in images and narrative has served to unleash a prolonged sacrificial crisis in which there is always a potential need to displace blame. These doctrines of atonement have sanctioned wide-spread violence in the name of Christ throughout history. But Bartlett argues that a minority tradition also exists. He contends that the tradition of the compassion of Christ provides the possible way out of Christian violence. Bartlett's study gives this tradition a dynamic new reading, showing how it undoes both divine and human violence and offers a powerfully transformative version of atonement for the contemporary world. Cross Purposes provides a rich historical and theological overview of the evolution of various atonement theories, using literature, art, and philosophy to provide a creative and provocative reading of Christian atonement.Anthony Bartlett is engaged in post-doctoral research and is an instructor in Religion at Syracuse University.For: Seminarians; clergy; graduate students; professors>

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