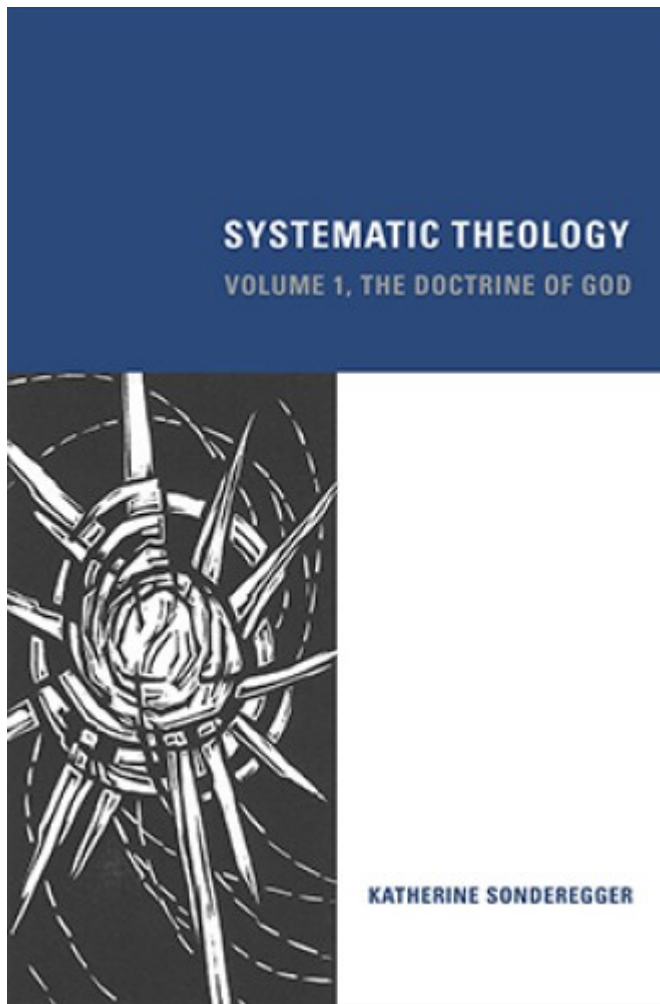


Take & read: Theology

An annotated list of the best new titles

Selected by [Benjamin Myers](#) in the [May 10, 2017](#) issue

In Review

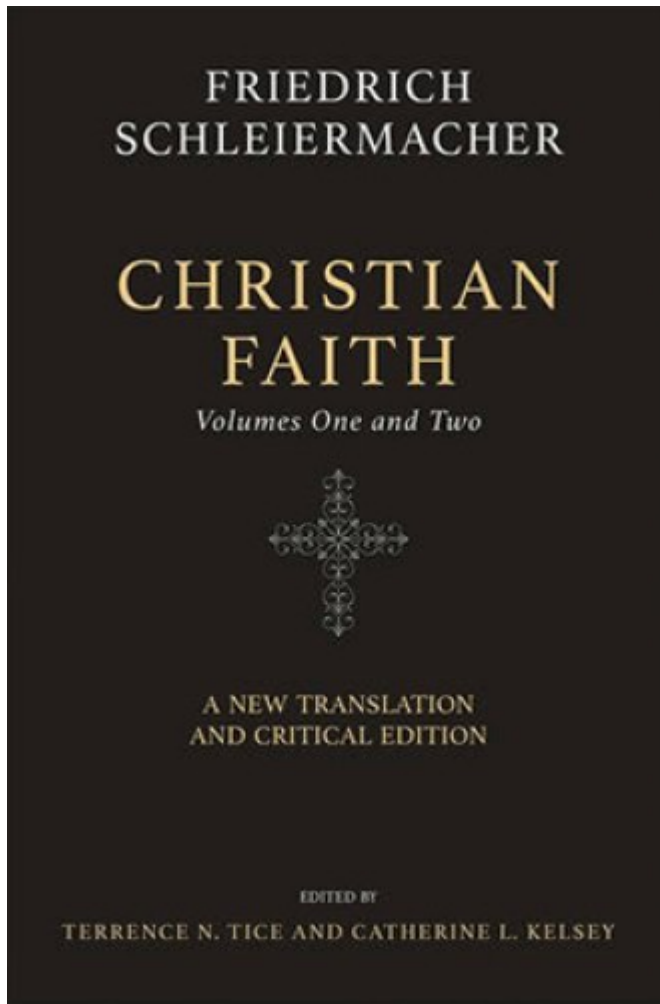


Systematic Theology

Volume 1, The Doctrine of God

by Katherine Sonderegger

Fortress

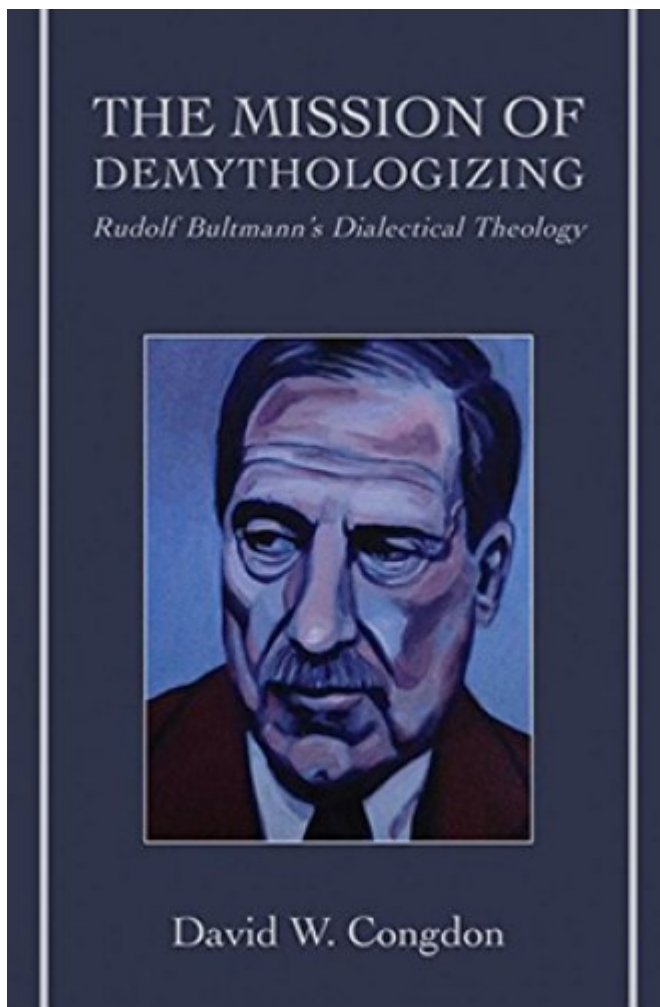


Christian Faith

A New Translation and Critical Edition (2 vols.)

by Friedrich Schleiermacher, translated by Terrence N. Tice, Catherine L. Kelsey, and Edwina Lawler

Westminster John Knox

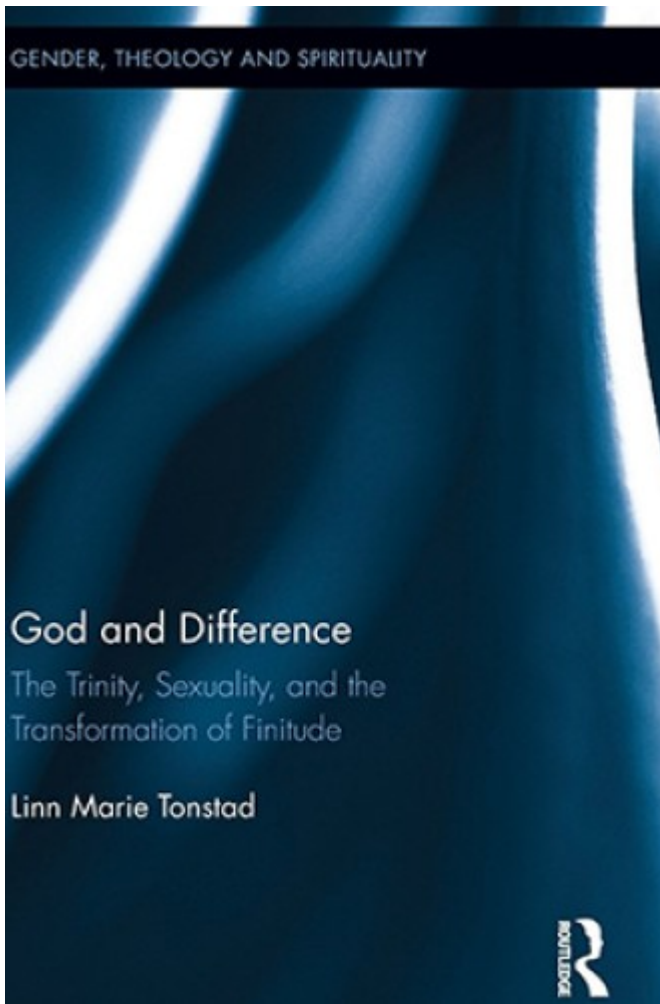


The Mission of Demythologizing

Rudolf Bultmann's Dialectical Theology

by David W. Congdon

Fortress

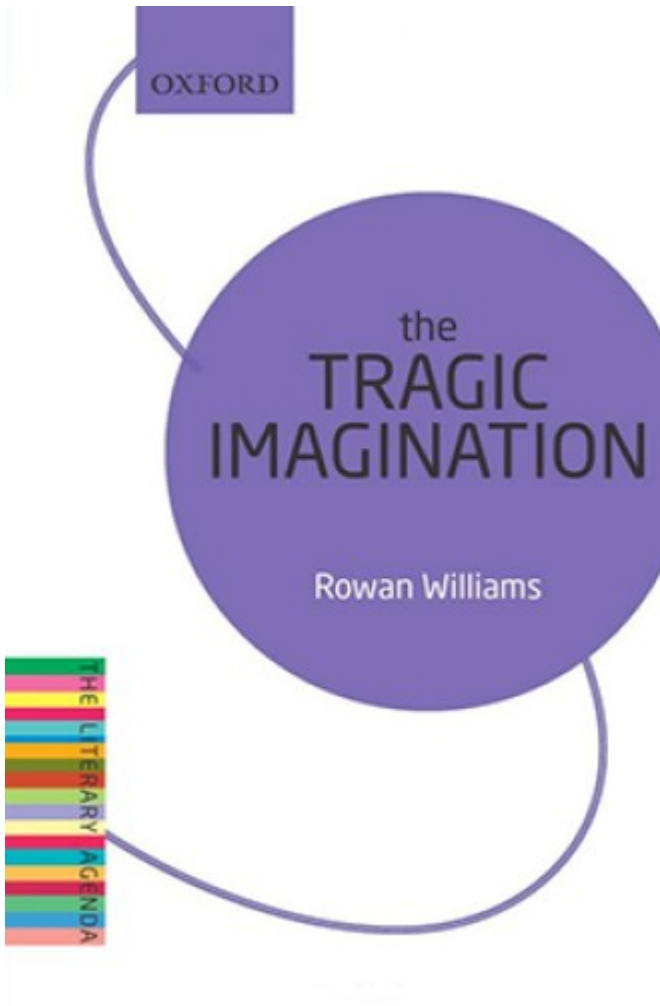


God and Difference

The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude

by Linn Marie Tonstad

Routledge

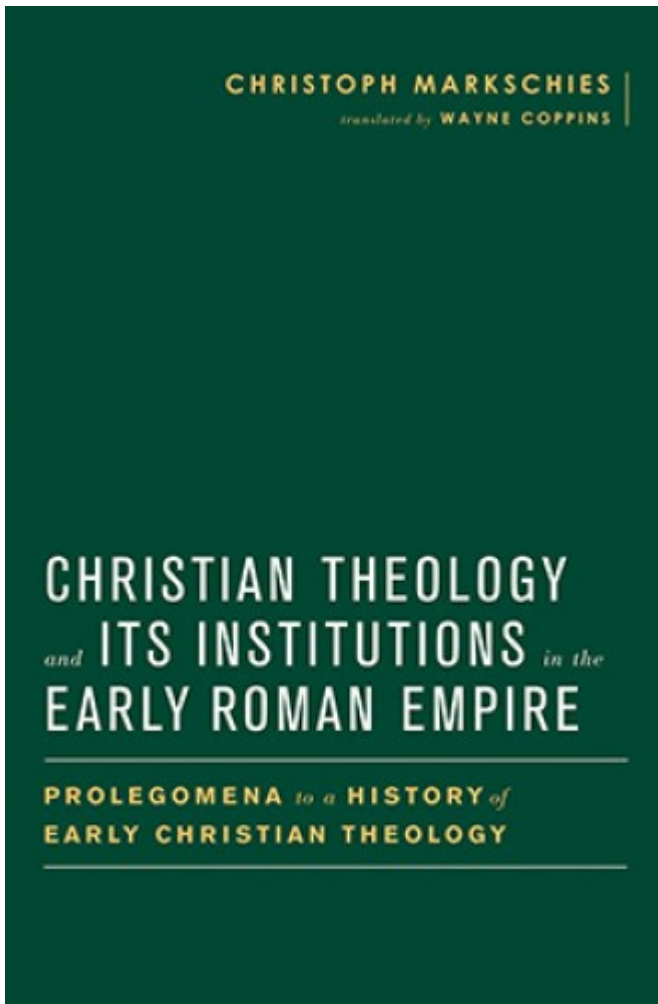


The Tragic Imagination

The Literary Agenda

by Rowan Williams

Oxford University Press

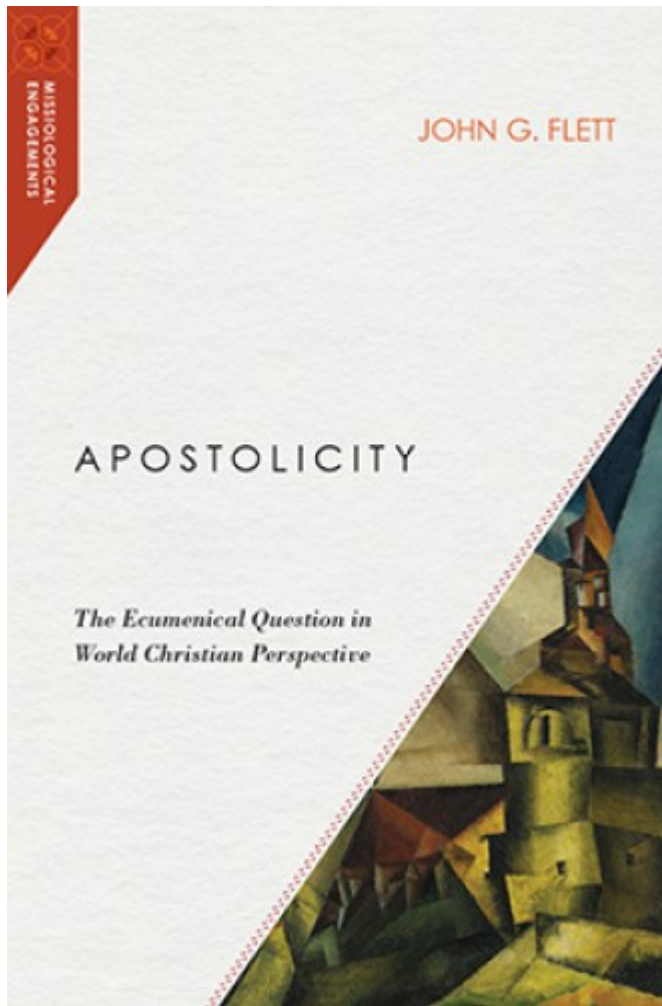


Christian Theology and Its Institutions in the Early Roman Empire

Prolegomena to a History of Early Christian Theology

by Christoph Marksches, translated by Wayne Coppins

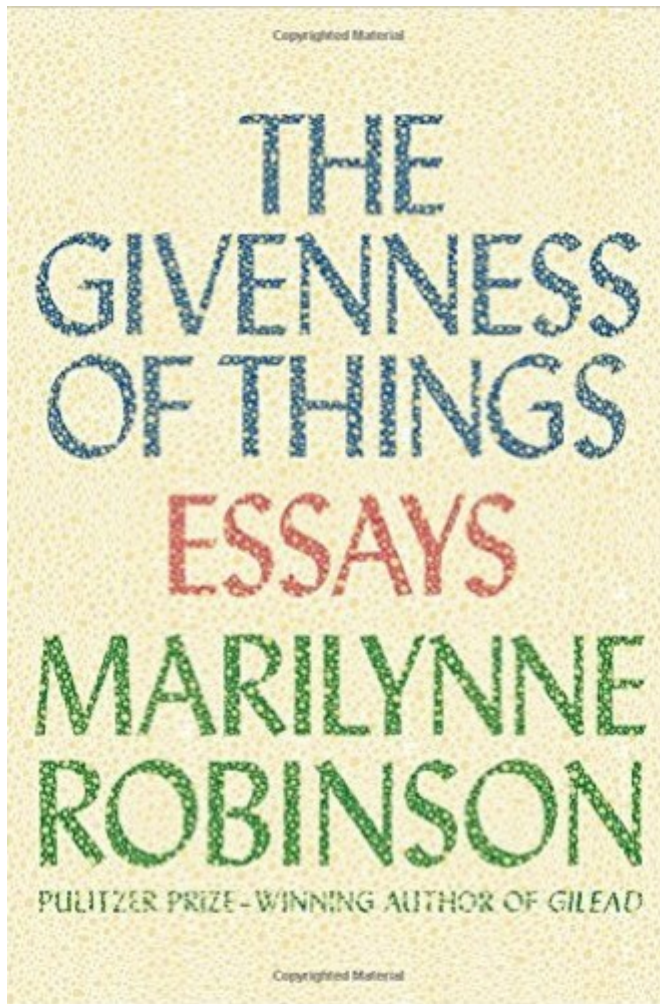
Baylor University Press,



Apostolicity

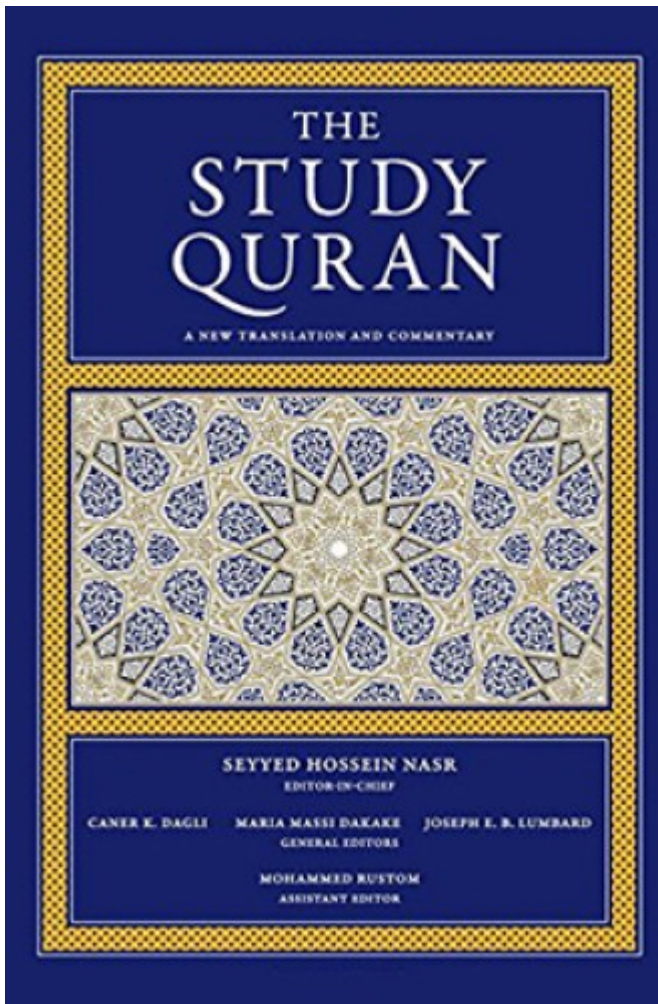
The Ecumenical Question in World Christian Perspective

by John G. Flett
IVP Academic



The Givenness of Things

by Marilynne Robinson
Farrar, Straus and Giroux



The Study Quran

A New Translation and Commentary

edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr
HarperOne

***Systematic Theology: Volume 1, The Doctrine of God*, by Katherine Sonderegger.** This might turn out to be the most influential work of systematic theology of recent times. Katherine Sonderegger calmly but firmly rejects the developments of recent trinitarian theology and makes a strong case for grounding theology in the confession of God's oneness. Highlights include her quirky archaic-reverential prose style (which is more delightful than I've just made it sound) and her richly textured readings of Old Testament passages.

***Christian Faith: A New Translation and Critical Edition (2 vols.)*, by Friedrich Schleiermacher, translated by Terrence N. Tice, Catherine L. Kelsey, and Edwina Lawler.** At last somebody has blown the cobwebs off this major work of systematic theology. The new English translation is a vast improvement on the old one, especially in the way it reflects Schleiermacher's terminological consistency. The industrious translators also assembled a 60-page analytical index of topics that provides a key to Schleiermacher's intricate tapestry of concepts. I read this index from start to finish and found it as eye-opening as any monograph.

***The Mission of Demythologizing: Rudolf Bultmann's Dialectical Theology*, by David W. Congdon.** Just when theologians had all but forgotten the name of Rudolf Bultmann, the great German scholar makes a comeback in this mighty book. David Congdon demonstrates that there are deep affinities between the projects of Barth and Bultmann. Congdon wants to revitalize a dialectical theology that centers on mission, translation, and the experience of salvation. Will this book launch a new left-wing Barthian theology?

***God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude*, by Linn Marie Tonstad.** Linn Marie Tonstad thinks trinitarian theology has taken a wrong turn. Contemporary theologians see the Trinity as a practical doctrine, a template for understanding social relationships, gender differences, and ecclesiology. Tonstad shows how much trouble comes from these seemingly benign strategies and proposes a surprising alternative. Her book is challenging and at times unsettling, by turns fiercely orthodox and outrageously revisionist.

***The Tragic Imagination: The Literary Agenda*, by Rowan Williams.** Why is it that life can be represented in tragic stories? It's not that life is essentially tragic, argues Rowan Williams. But the ability to tell tragic stories is foundational to our culture and our capacity to imagine a shared world. This book is about language and the way meaning is created with others. A small volume that punches above its weight, it reads like a sequel to Williams's Gifford Lectures, *The Edge of Words*.

***Christian Theology and Its Institutions in the Early Roman Empire: Prolegomena to a History of Early Christian Theology*, by Christoph Marksches, translated by Wayne Coppins.** Christoph Marksches's ambitious and rewarding book explains how new theological ideas emerged in early Christianity. Theology was embedded in institutional forms, and theological diversity can be explained by

the diversity of Christian institutions. Highlights include a terrific section on Origen's school and a magisterial account of the normative function of the biblical canon.

***Apostolicity: The Ecumenical Question in World Christian Perspective*, by John G. Flett.** Ecumenical discussions assume that the apostolic faith is transmitted through ecclesial practices and institutional structures. John Flett shows how this assumption leads, quite logically, to colonization as a mode of Christian mission. Alternatively, he argues that the experience of world Christianity should be taken as a point of departure. Diverse expressions of Christianity already share the apostolic faith; they do not need to be linked to some Western tradition to justify their apostolic continuity. This book's implications for ecclesiology and mission are huge.

***The Givenness of Things: Essays*, by Marilynne Robinson.** Nobody today, except perhaps Wendell Berry, writes so profoundly and so generously about the continuing promise of the Christian faith for our hurly-burly world. Marilynne Robinson combines uncompromising criticism with a seemingly infinite serenity. In this book, she's at her best when she's talking about her two great loves, Calvin and Shakespeare, and the grace she finds in both.

***The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr.** In today's globalized, information-saturated world there should be no excuse for Christians to remain ignorant of the other Abrahamic faiths. The prospect of encountering the Qur'an is now far less intimidating, thanks to Seyyed Hossein Nasr and his editorial team. They have produced a new translation with a very readable verse-by-verse commentary, together with introductory material and topical essays. The typesetting and binding are beautifully done, making this volume a book to last a lifetime.