

# Atonement

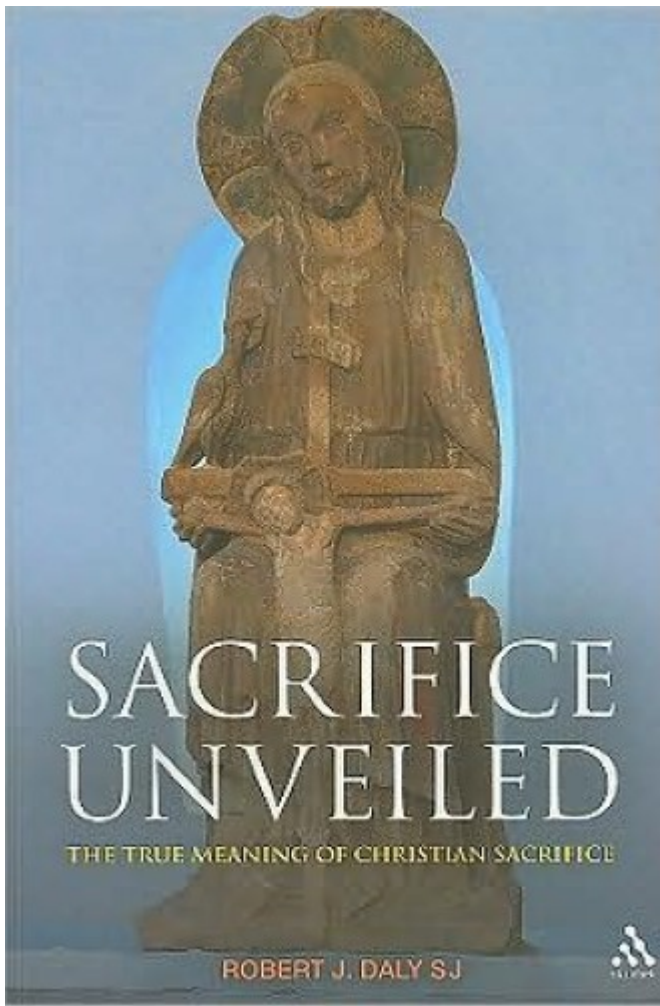
selected by [S. Mark Heim](#) in the [October 18, 2011](#) issue

## In Review



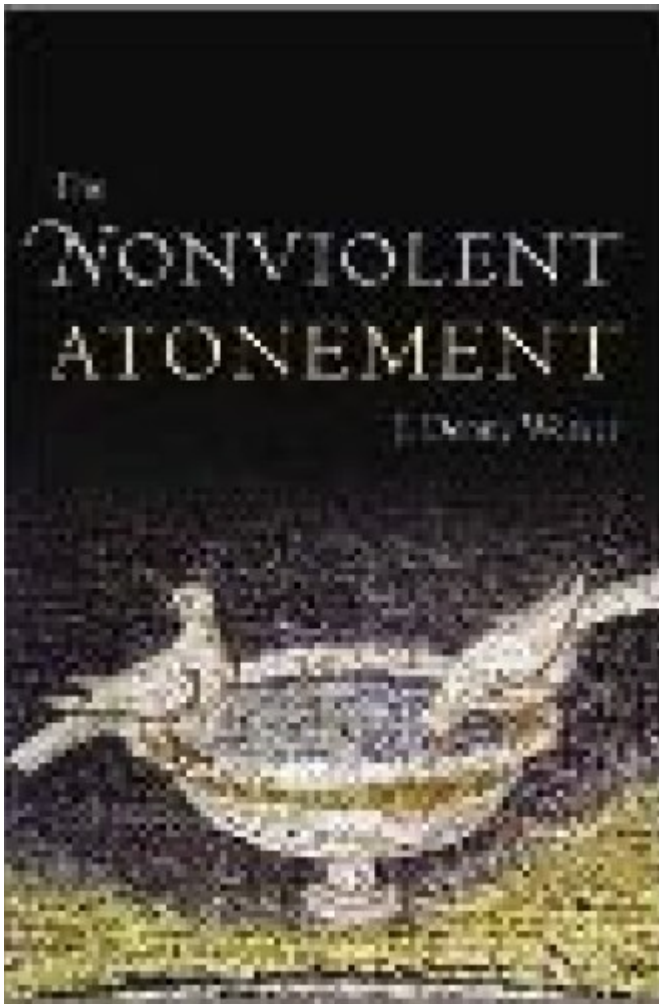
## Cross Examinations: Readings on the Meaning of the Cross Today

Marit A. Trelstad, ed.  
Augsburg Fortress



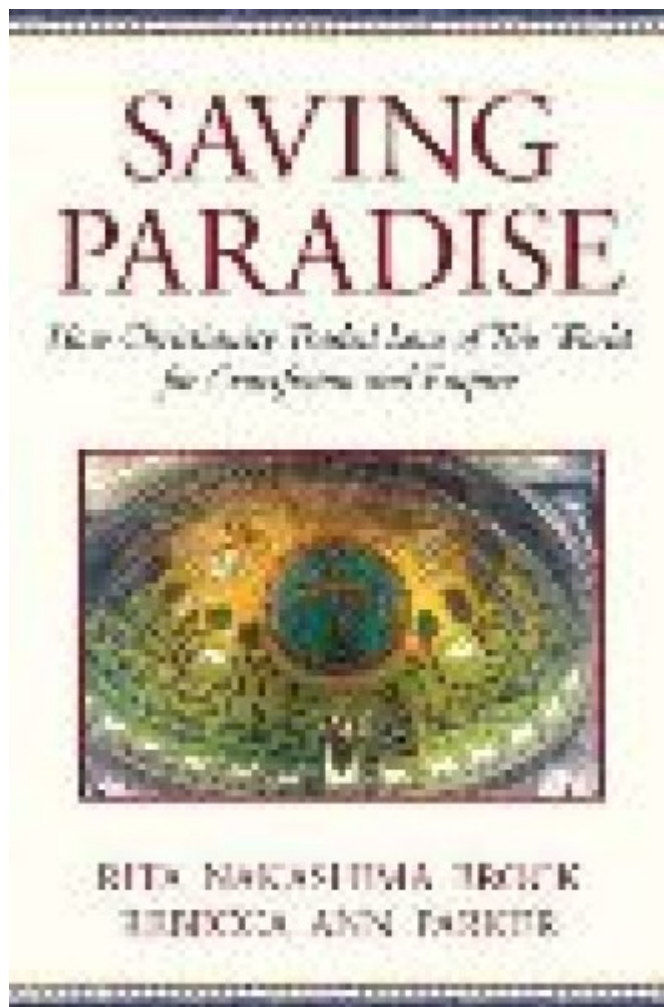
## **Sacrifice Unveiled**

by Robert J. Daly



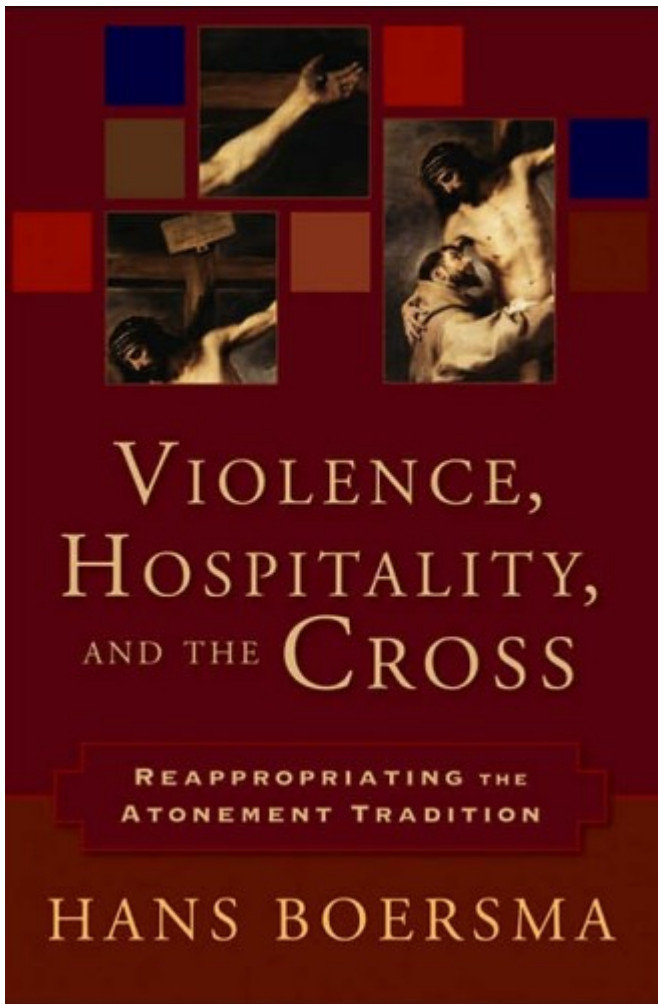
## **The Nonviolent Atonement**

by Denny J. Weaver  
Eerdmans



## **Saving Paradise**

by Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker  
Beacon



## **Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross**

by Hans Boersma

*Cross Examinations: Readings on the Meaning of the Cross Today*, edited by Marit Trelstad. This is the best one-stop survey of contemporary critiques and concerns related to the cross. The book is not an anthology of excerpts but a collection of essays, many written specifically for this volume. The collection is especially illustrative of the range of feminist thinking on the subject. If none of these 19 voices raises your pulse, this theological topic is probably not for you.

*Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice*, by Robert J. Daly. An accessible distillation of a lifetime of work by a leading scholar on Christian sacrifice, *Sacrifice Unveiled* weaves autobiography and research. It reads like a three-part detective story as Daly unveils his unexpected discoveries of the deeper meaning of the idea of sacrifice in its historical, liturgical and ethical contexts. Great erudition

stands behind this tour of the horizon, from Jewish origins through New Testament teachings, from early liturgical expressions to the current canon of the Roman Catholic mass, from church history to contemporary social issues.

*The Nonviolent Atonement*, by J. Denny Weaver. A Mennonite theologian, Weaver is among those who have thought earliest and deepest about recasting our understanding of the cross. Mennonites are clear in their commitment to nonviolence but generally uninterested in systematic theology. The reverse may be said of many major theological voices. In bringing his Mennonite perspective to a rigorous theological argument, Weaver bridges that gap.

*Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire*, by Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker. In their earlier work, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering and the Search for What Saves Us*, Brock and Parker set out problems with atonement theology in searingly experiential and autobiographical terms. This book takes its cue from the fact that crucifixion images are absent from the first four centuries of Christian history (although Christ's death figures centrally in the writing and liturgy of the same period). The authors lay out a sweeping historical claim about atonement thinking as a theological wrong turn and issue a passionate plea for a return to the path they believe was forsaken.

*Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition*, by Hans Boersma. Those who critique the critics of atonement theology and reject efforts to downplay the cross often suggest that these revisionist approaches are not serious about the depth of sin and understate the cost of reconciliation. Boersma's book, crisply Reformed in tenor, may be the most thoughtful and nuanced exploration of these concerns. He carefully probes how far glib dismissals of notions of wrath or expiation might go in preventing us from appreciating what God is against or what is incompatible with God's love.