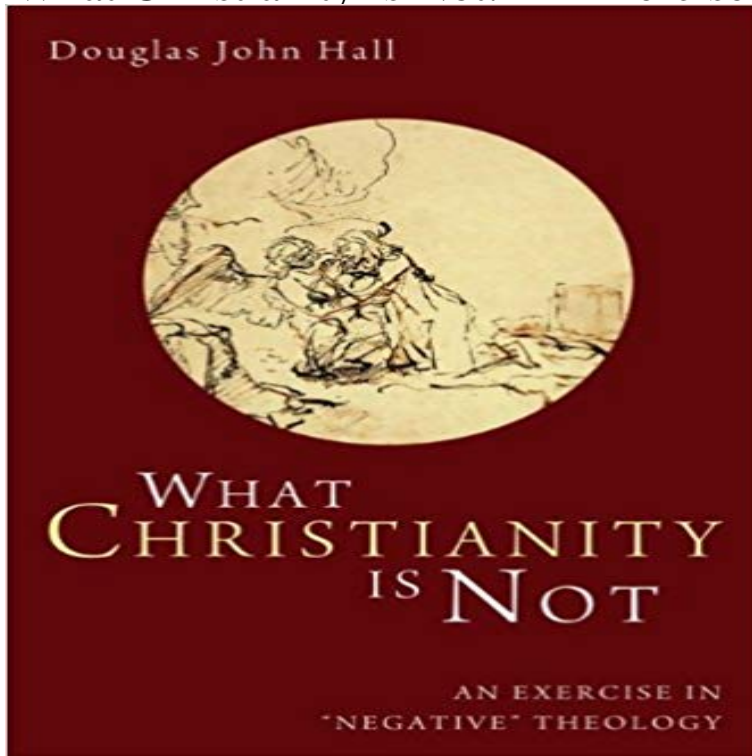


## What Christianity Is Not: An Exercise in Negative Theology



What really is Christianity? If all the religious packaging in which it is wrapped were removed, what would remain? These were Bonhoeffer's questions, and they must be ours today even more urgently! For in many quarters Christianity is being so narrowly identified with some of its parts, cultural associations, and past ambitions that like all militant religion, it represents a threat to the planetary future. We may no longer speak clearly of the essence of Christianity, as von Harnack and other nineteenth-century thinkers did; but perhaps we may still have a sufficiently shared sense of the kerygmatic core of this faith to be able, in the face of these misrepresentations of it, to say what Christianity is not. Those who know the work of Hall will know what to expect in this book: wisdom that comes from long years of faithful discernment, pathos about foolish fickleness in the name of the gospel, and buoyancy because he trusts the God of the gospel. Readers who do not know his work may take this book as an access point. In his critique of idolatrous misconstructions of the faith, Hall is himself a forceful antidote to the dysfunction of our society and to the dismay of the church. Walter Brueggemann, Professor Emeritus, Columbia Theological Seminary As one of this generation's most profound theological thinkers, Douglas John Hall reveals his magisterial grasp of the depth and complexity of the Christian tradition. His elegance [is] matched only by profound understanding of human longing in his presentation of the God of steadfast and loving kindness. He is a master craftsman whose building blocks are the broad themes of systematic theology, which he brings together with his legendary stylish and grace-filled writing. Patricia G. Kirkpatrick, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible, McGill University Douglas John Hall is Emeritus Professor of Christian Theology in McGill

University, Montreal. He is the author of twenty-five volumes, including two recent offerings from Cascade Books: *The Messenger: Friendship, Faith, and Finding Ones Way* (2011); and *Waiting for Gospel: An Appeal to the Dispirited Remnants of Protestant Establishment* (2012).

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