Spirituality in the Modern World

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1. 20TH-CENTURY SPIRITUALITY: CLASSIC TEXTS

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol. 4 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000). Better known in English under the title The Cost of Discipleship, this was Bonhoeffer's magnificent account of a spirituality of resistance. Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran minister, leader of the "Confessing Church" that resisted the Nazis. He would die as a martyr in a Nazi prison camp. This recent translation is based on the critical edition of the recent German edition of Bonhoeffer's complete works.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, vol. 10, trans. John W. DeGruchy (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010). One of the most profound works of Christian prison literature and one of the most influential works of 20th century spirituality. This superb new translation is based on the critical edition of the German collection of Bonhoeffer's complete works.

Frederick Von Hügel, The Mystical Element of Religion: As Studied by Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends, ed. Michael Downey (New York: Crossroad, 1999). A classic. First published in 1908, this sprawling, diffuse, yet brilliant study was pivotal in sparking the modern study of mysticism.

Bibliographies for Theology, compiled by William Harmless, S.J.


Bede Griffiths, *Return to the Center* (Templegate, 1982).


C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (reprint: Touchstone Books, 1996). This is Lewis’ great apologia to non-believers.


2. 20TH-CENTURY SPIRITUALITY: STUDIES


### 3. THOMAS MERTON: WRITINGS

Thomas Merton (d.1968) has been perhaps the most popular spiritual writer of the 20th century, at least in the English-speaking world. He was also extraordinarily prolific. Here is a small sampling of his major works.


Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (reprint of 1948 edition: New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978). This is Merton’s masterful autobiography, a work that became a bestseller and made Merton famous. It presents a highly romanticized view of monasticism (and a correspondingly pessimistic view of the secular world), a view that Merton would later reject. Still a beautifully written and poignant self-portrait.

Patrick Hart & Jonathan Montaldo, eds., *The Intimate Merton: His Life from His Journals* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1999). This is a selection drawn from the remarkable 8-volume series of Merton’s intimate journals. This (and the whole series) sheds important new light on Merton. Kenneth Woodward has remarked that “Merton’s real autobiography is in his personal journals. They reveal an uncaged mind ceaselessly churned by contemporary events and culture.”


4. THOMAS MERTON: BIOGRAPHIES & STUDIES

For up-to-date studies on Thomas Merton, see *The Merton Annual: Studies in Culture, Spirituality & Social Concerns*, edited by George A. Kilcourse, Jr. and Victor A. Kramer, and published by Continuum. 15 volumes to date. Here are some of the important book-length studies:

Michael Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986). This is a massive and thorough biography. Mott was Merton’s official biographer and had access to his private journals—which have just been published. He exposes the rich complexity (and foibles) of the man.

William H. Shannon, Christine M. Bochen & Patrick F. O’Connell, eds., *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002). This is a major resource for all students of Thomas Merton, a good place to start one’s research on the various aspects of Merton’s life and thought.


5. MARTIN LUTHER KING: TEXTS & STUDIES


Noel Leo Eskine, *King Among the Theologians* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1994).


### 6. SPIRITUALITY OF LIBERATION: TEXTS & STUDIES


### 7. POPULAR SPIRITUALITY: A MISCELLANY OF RECENT WORKS

capture the flavor of Laird's brilliant prose: "We are built for contemplation. This book is about cultivating the skills necessary for this subtlest, simplest, and most searching of the spiritual arts. Communion with God in the silence of the heart is a God-given capacity, like the rhododendron’s capacity to flower, the fledgling’s for flight, and the child’s for self-forgetful abandon and joy."


