Karl Barth & 20th Century Protestant Theology

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1. KARL BARTH (1886-1968): MAJOR WORKS

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics [Die kirchliche Dogmatik, 1932-1970], 13 vol. (New York: Herder & Herder / Edinburgh: T&T Clark). Karl Barth has been widely acclaimed as the finest theologian of the 20th century. A native of Basel, Switzerland, he taught for some years in Germany, but was thrown out in the mid-1930s because of his outspoken and vigorous opposition to the Nazis. He spent his remaining years teaching in Basel. Barth was an extraordinarily original and rigorous thinker, yet deeply committed to orthodoxy. The Church Dogmatics is Barth’s summa, the work of his mature years. The German original is divided into four volumes: The Doctrine of the Work of Christ (vol. 1-2); The Doctrine of Creation (vol. 3), and The Doctrine of Reconciliation (vol. 4). For a useful anthology of key texts, see Hellmut Gollwitzer & Geoffrey Bromiley, eds., Karl Barth: Church Dogmatics: A Selection (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994).

Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans [Der Romerbrief, 1918, rev ed., 1920], trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968). This was one of the most influential and controversial works of 20th century theology. It abandoned the whole 19th and early 20th century liberal Protestant project, and directly engaged Paul’s text, meditating deeply and with enormous eloquence on Paul’s “gospel” of the radical deed of God in Christ.


James M. Robinson, ed., *The Beginnings of Dialectic Theology* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1968) A valuable collection of essays by Barth, his defenders, and his opponents, on his early theology, especially the *The Epistle to the Romans*.

### 2. KARL BARTH: STUDIES


John Webster, *Barth, Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series* (New York: Continuum, 2000).


### 3. RUDOLF BULTMANN (1884–1976): MAJOR WORKS

Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* [*Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, 1921], trans. John Marsh (reprint: Hendrickson, 1994). Rudolf Bultmann was one of the finest and most controversial biblical scholars and theologians of the 20th century. He was one of the finest practitioners of form criticism and, famously, applied an existentialist hermeneutic to interpreting Jesus and the New Testament.


**4. RUDOLF BULTMANN: STUDIES**


**5. DIETRICH BONHOEFFER (1906-1945): MAJOR WORKS**

John W. DeGruchy, ed., *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999- ). Dietrich Bonhoeffer was executed by the Nazis for his involvement with a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Tragically, he was killed just one week before the American army liberated the concentration camp where he was being held. Bonhoeffer was both a brilliant theologian and one of the leaders of the Confessing Church in Germany. His most influential writings, *The Letters and Paper from Prison,* were penned in Tegel Prison from 1943 to 1945. This text would deeply influence theology in the 1960s, both in Europe and the United States and would be seen as a forerunner of political (and liberation) theology. Fortress Press has nearly finished translating and publishing the complete works of Bonhoeffer based on the critical edition of his German works, the *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke,* ed. Eberhard Bethge et al. Eleven volumes are now available:


6. DIETRICH BONHOEFFER: STUDIES

Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography, rev. & ed. Victoria J. Barnett (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). Bethge was one of Bonhoeffer's closest disciples and spent his career editing his works and preserving his memory. This is the definitive biography, now back in print.


Stanley Hauerwas, Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence (Grand Rapid, MI: Brazos Press, 2004).


7. OTHER LEADING PROTESTANT THEOLOGIANS


