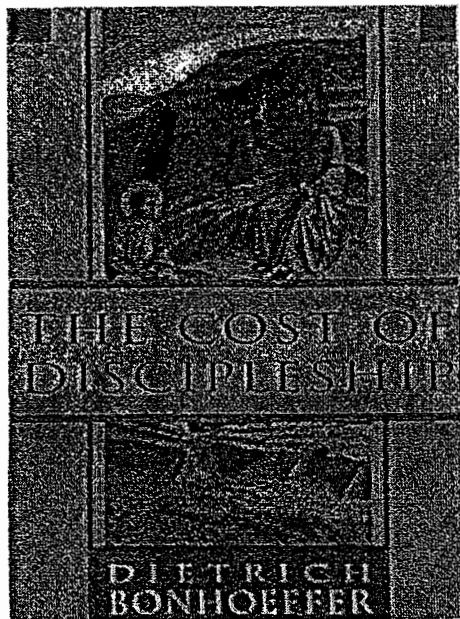
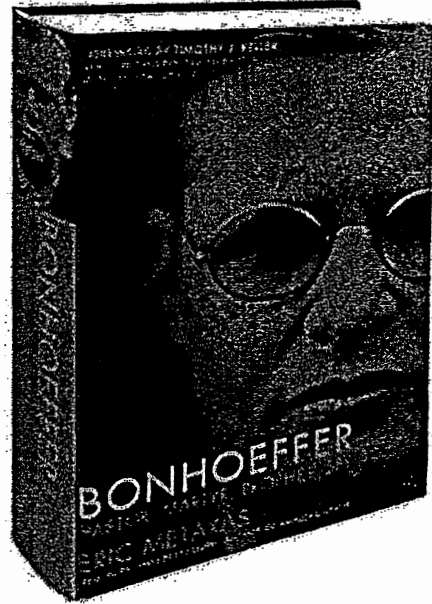


Was Dietrich Bonhoeffer an Evangelical Theologian?



Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Dietrich Bonhoeffer

On Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Six Questions for Eric Metaxas

By [Scott Horton](#)

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BROWSINGS

The Harper's blog

Eric Metaxas, whose best-selling biography of William Wilberforce, Amazing Grace, provided the framework for an important motion picture, is now out with a thick review of the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor and theologian who played a key role in one of the attempts to kill Adolf Hitler. I put six questions to Metaxas about Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy:

1. You dedicate your book, in German no less, to your grandfather. Tell us the significance of that dedication, and how in the course of your own life you were drawn to Dietrich Bonhoeffer.



3. John Baillie and Reinhold Niebuhr wrote that Bonhoeffer, during his time in New York, was tenaciously non-political. You give us a Bonhoeffer who seems to have taken sides in the controversy that then raged between "modernists" and "fundamentalists," siding with the latter, who admired in particular the fundamentalist churches of Harlem, and who was appalled and moved by the sufferings of American blacks. Is there any contradiction between these two portraits?

Not at all. As Whitman says in *Leaves of Grass*, "I am large. I contain multitudes." The truth is inevitably large and forces a wider perspective on things. Bonhoeffer was not a liberal or a conservative, but a Christian. He was zealous for God's perspective on things, and God's perspective is inevitably wider than the standard parochial political points of view. It sometimes forces us toward a liberal view and sometimes toward a conservative view.

But because Bonhoeffer has been so consistently portrayed as a theological liberal—which he was not—it's important for us to see the other side, and I hope I've shown that in my book. He is clearly horrified at the way so many at Union Theological Seminary had cavalierly dispensed with the fundamentals of the Christian faith and had created an ersatz religion in their own progressive image. He was impressed with and moved by their earnest desire to help the poor, for example, but he wondered on what basis they called any of this "Christianity." He found their theology shallow to the point of being almost evaporated entirely. But he was equally alive to the dangers on the other side, the dangers of fundamentalism and pietism. He's complicated, but in the best sense. He's an equal opportunity theological critic.

What happened is unclear, but the results were obvious. For one thing, he now became a regular churchgoer for the first time in his life and took Communion as often as possible... Two years earlier, in New York, he hadn't been interested in going to church. He loved working with the children in Harlem, and he loved going to concerts and movies and museums, and he loved traveling, and he loved the philosophical and academic give-and-take of theological *ideas*—but here was something new.

—From *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*

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← UNFORTUNATELY, HE WAS

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (German: [ˈdiːtrɪç ˈboːnhœfɐ]; 4 February 1906 – 9 April 1945) was a German Lutheran pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi dissident, and key founding member of the Confessing Church. His writings on Christianity's role in the secular world have become widely influential, and his book *The Cost of Discipleship* became a modern classic.^[1]

Apart from his theological writings, Bonhoeffer was known for his staunch resistance to the Nazi dictatorship, including vocal opposition to Hitler's euthanasia program and genocidal persecution of the Jews.^[2] He was arrested in April 1943 by the Gestapo and imprisoned at Tegel prison for one and a half years. Later he was transferred to a Nazi concentration camp. After being allegedly associated with the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler, he was briefly tried, along with other accused plotters, including former members of the *Abwehr* (the German Military Intelligence Office), and then executed by hanging on 9 April 1945 as the Nazi regime collapsed, just two weeks before Allied forces liberated the camp and three weeks before Hitler's suicide.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Bonhoeffer in 1939

Born	4 February 1906 Breslau, Silesia Province, Prussia, German Empire
Died	9 April 1945 (aged 39) Flossenbürg concentration camp, Nazi Germany 49.734958°N 12.35577°E﻿ / ﻿
Education	Staatsexamen (Tübingen), Doctor of Theology (Berlin), Privatdozent (Berlin)
Church	Evangelical Church of the old-Prussian Union Confessing Church
Writings	Author of several books and articles (see below)
Congregations served	Zion's Church congregation, Berlin German-speaking congregations of St. Paul's and Sydenham, London

BEWARE OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER (Friday Church News Notes, August 19, 2011, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Like C.S. Lewis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer is a patron hero of New Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church. You will find the writings of both of these heretics in Southern Baptist bookstores. New Evangelicals pretend to hold to unity in the “essentials,” but in reality they are willing to overlook even the “essential” doctrines of the faith for the sake of a broad-based unity. They pretend to care deeply about the “core cardinal doctrines of the faith,” but they do not plainly condemn and decisively separate from those who deny those doctrines, and this is the exact destiny of those fundamentalists today who are flirting with the “essentials” only approach to separation. Like other Neo-Orthodox theologians, Bonhoeffer’s writings are obtuse and often contradictory. He did not speak with the clear voice of truth. For this reason, he can sometimes be cited on both sides of theological issues, but any man who speaks with such lack of clarity on the fundamental issues of the faith should be avoided as a dangerous spiritual guide. The following list of some of Bonhoeffer’s heresies is from Don Jasmin’s *Fundamentalist Digest*: **1. He denied the verbal-plenary inspiration of Scripture**, believing that the Bible is only a “witness” to the Word of God and becomes the Word of God only when it “speaks” to an individual; otherwise, it was simply the word of man (*Testimony to Freedom*, pp. 9, 104; *Sanctorum Communio*, p. 161). **2. He denied the biblical God**, believing that the concept of God as a “supreme Being, absolute in power and goodness,” is a “spurious conception of transcendence,” and that “God as a working hypothesis in morals, politics, and science ... should be dropped, or as far as possible eliminated” (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, S.C.M. Press edition, Great Britain: Fontana Books, 1953, pp. 122, 164, 360). **3. He questioned the Virgin Birth** (*Witness to Jesus Christ*, p. 115). **4. He denied the deity of Christ**, advocating that “Jesus Christ Today” is not a real person and being, but a “corporate presence” (*Testimony to Freedom*, pp. 75-76; *Christ the Center*, p. 58). **5. He denied the sinlessness of Christ's human nature** and further questioned the sinlessness of His earthly behavior (*Christ the Center*, pp. 108-109). **6. He denied the physical resurrection of Christ**, believing that the bodily resurrection is in “the realm of ambiguity,” and that it was one of the “mythological” elements of Christianity that “must be interpreted in such a way as not to make religion a pre-condition of faith.” He also believed that such things as miracles and the ascension of Christ are “mythological conceptions” (*Christ the Center*, p. 112; *Letters and Papers from Prison*, S.C.M. Press edition, Great Britain: Fontana Books, 1953, pp. 93-94, 110). **7. He believed that Christ is not the only way to God** (*Testimony to Freedom*, pp. 55-56). **8. He was an evolutionist** (*No Rusty Swords*, p. 143) and believed that the book of Genesis is scientifically naive and full of myths (*Creation and Fall: A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1-3*). **9. He adhered to neo-orthodox theology and terminology concerning salvation** (*Testimony to Freedom*, p. 130), was a sacramentalist (*Life Together*, p. 122; *The Way to Freedom*, pp. 115, 153), believed in regenerational infant baptism (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, Macmillan, pp. 142-143) as well as adult baptismal regeneration (*The Way to Freedom*, p. 151), equated church membership with salvation (*The Way to Freedom*, p. 93), and denied a personal/individualistic salvation (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, Macmillan, p. 156). Dr. G. Archer Weniger declared, “If there is wholesome food in a garbage can, then one can find some good things in Bonhoeffer, but if it be dangerous to expect to find nourishment in a garbage can, then Bonhoeffer must be totally rejected and repudiated as blasphemy. It is worse than garbage” (*FBF Information Bulletin*, May 1977, p. 12).

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Metaxas's Counterfeit Bonhoeffer: An Evangelical Critique

Review of Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy: A Righteous Gentile Vs. the Third Reich* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010)

by [Richard Weikart](#) ^[1], **California State University, Stanislaus**

Eric Metaxas's Bonhoeffer biography has won many accolades from evangelicals, not only because Metaxas is an excellent writer, but also because he serves up a Bonhoeffer suited to the evangelical taste. Many evangelicals admire Bonhoeffer and consider him a fellow evangelical. Metaxas's book confirms this image. In an interview with *Christianity Today* Metaxas even made the astonishing statement that Bonhoeffer was as orthodox theologically as the apostle Paul.

As orthodox as Paul? Metaxas does not seem to know that in his Christology lectures in 1933 Bonhoeffer claimed, "The biblical witness is uncertain with regard to the virgin birth." Bonhoeffer also rejected the notion of the verbal inspiration of scripture, and in a footnote to *Cost of Discipleship* he warned against viewing statements about Christ's resurrection as ontological statements (i.e., statements about something that happened in real space and time). Bonhoeffer also rejected the entire enterprise of apologetics, which he thought was misguided. [1]

How did Metaxas get it so wrong? Part of the problem, perhaps, is that Metaxas simply got in over his head. Bonhoeffer was a sophisticated thinker immersed in early twentieth-century German philosophy and theology. Even though I have a Ph.D. in modern European intellectual history and have read Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Barth, Bultmann, and many other philosophers and theologians who shaped Bonhoeffer's thought, I do not find Bonhoeffer's writings an easy read. For one thing, Bonhoeffer (like his mentor Barth) admitted that Kierkegaard was one of the most powerful influences on his theology, which means that Bonhoeffer was committed to an irrationalist, existentialist worldview that is quite different from the mindset of American evangelicals. Though most evangelicals probably do not know it, most Bonhoeffer scholars dismissively reject the idea that Bonhoeffer's theology is compatible with American evangelical theology.

I trust that Metaxas is my brother in Christ, but unfortunately he simply does not have sufficient grounding in history, theology, and philosophy to properly interpret Bonhoeffer. This is not just my opinion. Victoria Barnett, the editor of the English-language edition of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, wrote a scathing review of Metaxas's biography. In her opinion, Metaxas "has a very shaky grasp of the political, theological, and ecumenical history of the period." She then calls Metaxas's portrayal of Bonhoeffer's theology "a terrible simplification and at

times misrepresentation." [2] Clifford Green, another bona fide Bonhoeffer scholar who has edited part of Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works and has written extensively about Bonhoeffer, has also criticized Metaxas heavily, claiming that Metaxas's biography should be entitled, "Bonhoeffer Hijacked." [3]

Let's start with the historical problems. Metaxas read enough about Bonhoeffer's life to get many facts right about the events of Bonhoeffer's life. This is the strongest part of the biography. Even here, however, there are some major problems. For instance, Metaxas mistakenly claims, "From the beginning of his time until the end, Bonhoeffer maintained the daily discipline of scriptural meditation and prayer he had been practicing for more than a decade. . . . Once he got his Bible back he read it for hours each day." (p. 438) This portrait will certainly make Bonhoeffer popular among serious evangelicals, but unfortunately this image is false. In 1944 Bonhoeffer wrote to his friend Eberhard Bethge, "Once again I'm having weeks when I don't read the Bible much." Bonhoeffer had told Bethge the same thing twice before in 1941 and 1942. [4]

Metaxas also does not have a solid grasp on Bonhoeffer's historical context. It is hard to give much credence to someone writing about German history who thinks that Bonn is in Switzerland or that Hitler was democratically elected into office or that Germany was not yet a police state in August 1934. Metaxas also claims that the Barmen Declaration, which was the doctrinal statement of the Confessing Church, rejected anti-Semitism. In reality, the Barmen Declaration does not mention anti-Semitism at all, and many scholars have criticized it for this.

Metaxas also seems to have little understanding of German theology. His bibliography contains no works on German theology, except for works specifically about Bonhoeffer, and even many important works on Bonhoeffer's theology are missing from his reading list. Metaxas correctly acknowledges that Karl Barth was the most important influence on Bonhoeffer's theology. However, he never explains anything about Barth's theology, except that Barth opposed liberal theology. Metaxas does not seem to understand that Barth's rejection of liberal theology did not cause him to embrace biblical inerrancy.

Events dominate this biography, and Metaxas only devotes a few pages to discussing Bonhoeffer's writings. Indeed it is hard to tell how much he has even read of Bonhoeffer's corpus. For example, in 1932-33 Bonhoeffer taught theology at the University of Berlin; two of his courses were published: *Creation and Fall* and *Christ the Center*. Though Metaxas lists both in his bibliography, he does not discuss them nor cite them. Both of these works contain ideas that would cause most evangelicals to cringe (or worse). Even Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* receive only cursory treatment, and Metaxas does not fathom Bonhoeffer's support for situation ethics therein.

Metaxas, then, has presented us with a sanitized Bonhoeffer fit for evangelical audiences. Evangelicals can continue to believe comfortingly that Bonhoeffer is one of them, and that his heroic stance against Hitler was the product of evangelical-style theology. This view is naive, but many wish it to be so. They might prefer Metaxas's counterfeit Bonhoeffer to the real, much more complex, German theologian who continued to believe in the validity of higher biblical criticism, who praised Rudolf Bultmann when he called for demythologizing the New Testament, and who in his prison writings called for us to live "as if there were no

God." In 1944, toward the end of his life, Bonhoeffer admitted that he was a theologian who "still carries within himself the heritage of liberal theology." [5]

Notes

1. For an evangelical critique of Bonhoeffer's theology, see Richard Weikart, *The Myth of Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Is His Theology Evangelical?* (International Scholars Publications, 1997), or Richard Weikart, "[Scripture and Myth in Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#)," [2] *Fides et Historia* 25 (1993): 12-25; also, I am currently writing another book that will probably be entitled, "Why Evangelicals Do Not Understand Bonhoeffer."
2. Victoria Barnett, review of Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer*, in *Association of Contemporary Church Historians Newsletter* 16, 3 (September 2010), at <http://journal.ambrose.edu/ojs/index.php/acchquarterly/article/view/46/92> [3], accessed September 2010.
3. Clifford Green, "Hijacking Bonhoeffer," *Christian Century* (Oct. 5, 2010), at www.christiancentury.org/reviews/2010-09/hijacking-bonhoeffer [4], accessed Jan. 13, 2011.
4. Bonhoeffer to Bethge, March 19, 1944, in *Widerstand und Ergebung: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus der Haft* (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1954), 163 (also in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, trans. Reginald Fuller et al. [NY: Macmillan, 1971], 234); Bonhoeffer to Bethge, January 31, 1941, and June 25, 1942, in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, 5 vols. (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1958ff.), 5:397, 420. 5. Bonhoeffer to Bethge, 3 August 1944, in *Widerstand und Ergebung*, 257 (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, 378).

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WHO WAS DIETRICH BONHOEFFER AND WHAT DID

HE BELIEVE OR NOT BELIEVE?

Dr. Don Jasmin

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German pastor, theological professor and lecturer, preacher, radio broadcaster, prolific writer in theology, poetry and prose. His theological career basically spanned the 1930's and early 1940's, during the rise, rule and downfall of Adolf Hitler.

Bonhoeffer became a strong opponent of Hitler's "Nazi Socialism" movement and a spy for the underground resistance movement. Shortly before Hitler's own demise, he was executed by Hitler's henchmen after having spent considerable time imprisoned for his resistance to the Nazi movement.

Bonhoeffer's theology and thought however, are satanic poison! Instead of having a drama extolling him, the theology department of GRBC & S should have a conference exposing him! [1991-Ed] A prolific writer during his brief career, over 14 books and documents are attributed to his pen. He was, however, a rank apostate (with basic neo-orthodox views), who denied or questioned nearly every major doctrine of the historic Christian faith.

In preparing this analysis of Bonhoeffer's blasphemous theological "denials", this writer read every page of 10 of his books, scanned three others written by his hand, and several other sources concerning his life and theological views. [A laborious task!]

If one reads much of Bonhoeffer, he will quickly discover that Bonhoeffer uses religious language and terminology that is familiar to-similar to-and often sounds like that which Bible believing Christians use.

While some of Bonhoeffer's terminology may sound much like that of the Bible-believer, one must remember that he used a different religious dictionary! While the "script" may sometimes appear to be "evangelical" (classic use of the term!), the "substance" is "existential." Avoiding Bonhoeffer's religious "doubletalk" the writer will concentrate on his statements that reveal his blatant apostasy.

BONHOEFFER ON CHRIST

1. Bonhoeffer believed that it was impossible to know the objective truth about the real essence of Christ's being-nature.

“From now on, it will no longer be permissible to state anything about the substance of Jesus Christ. Speculation about the natures is at an end.” Christ the Center, p. 101

“Such sentences as make statements about Jesus Christ with unequivocal directness are designated as false in theological content.” Christ the Center, p. 100

2. Bonhoeffer questioned the Virgin Birth, and in reality denied it.

“The question ‘how’? For example, underlies the hypothesis of the Virgin Birth. Both historically and dogmatically, it can be questioned. The biblical witness is ambiguous. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth is meant to express the incarnation of God, not only the fact of the incarnation. But does it not fail at the decisive point of the incarnation, namely that in it Jesus has not become man just like us.” The Cost of Discipleship, p. 215

3. Bonhoeffer denied the deity of Christ; he advocated that “Jesus Christ Today” is not a real person and being, but a “corporate presence.” Christ today” is three things: (a) the “encountered Christ” of neo-orthodoxy [not to be equated with the historical Christ of the Bible-or the Bible itself]; (b) the sacraments: Christ is not just present in the sacraments, he exists as the sacraments; (c) the church & the church in its preaching. Some samples:

Christ equals the “community of the church”, “Christ acting as community”; “Christ is the corporate person of the Christian community;” “The community is a corporate person whose name is also Christ”;

Testimony to Freedom, pp. 75 & 76

“Christ as the Logos of God...is the Word in the form of a living address to men.” Christ the Center, P. 58

4. Bonhoeffer denied the sinlessness of Christ’s human nature and further questioned the sinlessness of His earthly behavior.

“In his flesh was the law which is contrary to God’s will. He was not the perfect good...but all depends upon the fact that it was he who assumed the flesh with its tendency to sin and self will.” Christ the Center, p. 108

“The sinlessness of Jesus fails if it is based upon the observable acts of Jesus. His acts take place in the homoionia sarkos. They are not sinless, but ambiguous. One can and should see both good and failure in them.” “We should not therefore deduce the sinlessness of Jesus out of his deeds.” Christ the Center, p. 109

In his critique of Bonhoeffer entitled “Devotion, Doctrine and Duty in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *(Biblio Theca Sacra, Oct.-Dec. 91, pp. 399-409) Dr. Bruce Demarest states that since Bonhoeffer believed that Christ was the church and all persons are reconciled to God and in the church and thus identical with Christ, this amounts to pantheism!

BONHOEFFER ON THE CHURCH

“**Secularity**” is the key term. In Bonhoeffer’s views, the church equals the world and is to be equated with it. In “secularity”, the church loses its identity but finds its real meaning. It is little wonder that the earliest proponents of the “Death of God” theology pointed to Bonhoeffer as its real “father” and “founder.”

“The secularity of the church follows from the incarnation of Christ. The church, like Christ, has become world...it is entirely world.”

“While the church is in the world and is even a bit of the world, it cannot hope to represent itself as a visible communion of saints. Secularity means renunciation of the ideal of purity.” “The church has been in the process of becoming world, not some ‘pure’ entity, since its origin. Not even primitive Christianity was ‘pure.’ Otherwise, one confuses church with a religious community”....renunciation of its claims to ‘purity’ leads the church back to its solidarity with the sinful world... Only this kind of church is free, the church that confesses its secularity.” Testimony to Freedom, p. 92 A sermon “the Nature of the Church”-summer 1932

*Not an endorsement of the critiquer’s seminary (Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary) or of the seminary which produces the Biblio-Theca Sacra (Dallas theological Seminary). Sources quoted only to validate material.

CHRISTIANITY NOT EXCLUSIVE

The Cost of Discipleship

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

than the Christ of St Paul. The Christ who is present is the Christ of the whole scripture. He is the incarnate, crucified, risen and glorified Christ, and he meets us in his word. The difference between the terminology of the Synoptists and the witness of St Paul does not involve any break in the unity of the scriptural testimony.¹

Where the Synoptic Gospels speak of Christ calling men and their following him, St Paul speaks of *Baptism*.

Baptism is not an offer made by man to God, but an offer

1. The direct testimony of the scriptures is frequently confounded with ontological propositions. This error is the essence of fanaticism in all its forms. For example, if we take the statement that Christ is risen and present as an ontological proposition, it inevitably dissolves the unity of the scriptures, for it leads us to speak of a mode of Christ's presence which is different e.g. from that of the synoptic Jesus. The truth that Jesus Christ is risen and present to us is then taken as an independent statement with an ontological significance which can be applied critically to other ontological statements, and it is thus exalted into a theological principle. This procedure is analogous to the fanatical doctrine of perfectionism, which arises from a similar ontological misunderstanding of the scriptural utterances on the subject of sanctification. In this instance the assertion that he who is in God does not sin is made a starting-point for further speculation. But this is to tear it from its scriptural context and raise it to the status of an independent truth which can be experienced. The proclamation of the scriptural testimony is of quite a different character. The assertion that Christ is risen and present is, when taken strictly as a testimony given in the scriptures, true only as a word of the scriptures. This word is the object of our faith. There is no other conceivable way of approach to this truth except through this word. But this word testifies to the presence of both the Synoptic and the Pauline Christ. Our nearness to the one or to the other is defined solely by the Word, i.e., by the scriptural testimony. Of course this is not to deny the obvious fact that the Pauline testimony and that of the Synoptists differ in respect both of their object and their terminology, but both have to be interpreted in the light of the scriptures as a whole.

This conclusion is not merely a piece of *a priori* knowledge based on a rigid doctrine of the canon of scripture. The legitimacy of our view must be put to the test in every instance. Thus in the ensuing argument, our purpose is to show how St Paul takes up the Synoptic notion of following Christ and subjects it to further development.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer (from here)

Eric Metaxas' book, *Bonhoeffer – Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* supposedly (as advertised) "presents a profoundly orthodox Christian theologian." How could the biographer have missed Bonhoeffer's denial of a literal, physical resurrection of Christ? He calls the resurrection account not an ontological proposition, meaning, it never actually happened. To take it literally, as every Christian does, is the "essence of fanaticism." Bonhoeffer also denied the virgin birth of Christ and the inerrancy of the Scriptures. One must applaud his patriotism but theologically he was a liberal neo-orthodox theologian.

He advocated a "religionless Christianity" and said that we should live as if God did not exist.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

Creation and Fall

A THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION
OF GENESIS 1-3

THE FIXED

29

there was morning, a second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Here we have before us the ancient world picture in all its scientific *naïveté*. While it would not be advisable to be too mocking and self-assured, in view of the rapid changes in our own knowledge of nature, undoubtedly in this passage the biblical author stands exposed with all the limitations caused by the age in which he lived. The heavens and the seas were not formed in the way he says: we would not escape a very bad conscience if we committed ourselves to any such statement. The idea of verbal inspiration will not do. The writer of the first chapter of Genesis is behaving in a very human way. Considering all this there is apparently very little to say about this section. And yet something completely new occurs on this next day of creation. The world of the fixed, the firm, the unchangeable, the unliving comes into being.

It is characteristic that those works of creation which are most distant and strange to us in their fixedness, immutability and repose, were created in the beginning. Unaffected by human life the fixed world stands before God, unchangeable and undisturbed. An eternal law binds it. This law is nothing but the command of the Word of God itself.

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CREATION AND FALL

Here everything takes place in a very earthly way. The language is extremely childlike, and shocking for those who want to "understand," to know anything. How can we speak of God in the way that we speak of a man shaping his vessel out of earth and clay? The anthropomorphisms become more intolerable: God forming and shaping the clay, and man shaped like a vessel out of a clod of earth. This can surely not produce any knowledge about the origin of man! To be sure, as a narrative this story is just as irrelevant or meaningful as any other myth of creation. And yet in its capacity as the Word of God it is the source of knowledge concerning the origin of man. And now we shall see that what is narrated here fits in exactly with the previous narration and forms a unity with it.

Yahweh shapes man with his own hands. This expresses two things: First, the bodily nearness of the Creator to the creature, that it is really he who makes me—man—with his own hands; his concern, his thought for me, his design for me, his nearness to me. And secondly there is his authority, the absolute superiority in which he shapes and creates me, in which I am his creature; the fatherliness in which he creates me and in which I worship him. That is God himself, to whom the whole Bible testifies.

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CREATION AND FALL

life, but it afflicts him from outside, he must continually run against it, it always stands in his way. The German fairy tale of the Sleeping Beauty differs from the story told here by the fact that because of the cutting, flaming sword of the cherubim, no living human being makes his way across. The tree of life is guarded by the power of death, it remains un-touchable, divinely unapproachable. But Adam's life before the gate is a continuous attack upon the realm from which he is excluded. It is a flight and a search upon the cursed ground to find what he has lost, and then a repeated, desperate rage against the power with the flaming sword. That this sword of the guard cuts, that it is sharp—this the biblical writer says, not without reason; Adam knows this, he feels it himself time and again: but the gate remains shut.

The Real Dietrich Bonhoeffer -- a summary



Was Bonhoeffer an evangelical or a heretic?

Eric Mataxa's Book: *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*Paul.

The Issue: Metaxas claims that Bonhoeffer was as orthodox as the Apostle

Bonhoeffer scholars are horrified at Mataxas' distortions and deletions.

Metaxas ****misrepresentations:**

****misunderstanding:**

****mistakes:**



Bonhoeffer's Theology:

Bible:

God:

Christ:

Man:

Sin:

Salvation

Church

Last Things

1 Thess. 5:21 "Prove all things. . ."