



Baird, William

*History of New Testament Research (Volume 3):
From C. H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz*

Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013. Pp. vii + 775. Hardcover.
\$70.00. ISBN 9780800699185.

Clifford B. Kvidahl
Logos Bible Software
Bellingham, WA

With the publication of volume three, William Baird brings to a close his masterful work on the history of New Testament research. Beginning with Enlightenment and closing with the Betz, Baird has bequeathed to the guild of New Testament studies a history that she can consult for many years to come. As with the previous two volumes, each chapter contains important figures in the field of NT research. For every NT scholar, Baird includes a brief biography and a relatively detail discussion on the development of thought. By selecting a NT figures most influential work(s), the reader is shown key developments in the trends of NT research that were taking place during the twentieth century.

In part one, Renaissance of New Testament Criticism, Baird highlights the work of a number of NT scholars who would impact the field for decades to come. With the exception of Henry Cadbury and James Robinson—who studied under Bultmann—all of the individuals discussed were born and educated in the UK or Germany. Before the two great Wars, the cutting edge of NT scholarship was taking place mostly in Europe. Students from all over the world were filling lecture rooms at Marburg, Cambridge, Basel and elsewhere to learn from the best NT scholars in the world. Some of the NT scholars reviewed in part one would include C. H. Dodd, Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and Ernst Käsemann.

Part two, Revisiting of Critical Problems, begins with an evaluation of the major discoveries of the twentieth century. Arguably the greatest event in NT research, the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls and the Nag Hammadi witnessed a renaissance of sorts that touched on both Testaments. With these discoveries, old assumptions were once again in need of reevaluation. Whereas in the previous generation scholars argued for a

more syncretist Christianity, the post WWII generation of scholars looked to Jewish soils for both understanding the calling and work of the Messiah as well as the development of Christianity. Influential for this resurgence of sorts were Joachim Jeremias, W. D. Davies, E. P. Sanders, and Martin Hengel. Part two finishes with a chapter on the founding and influence of the academic societies SBL, SNTS, CBA, and the Jesus Seminar.

The final section surveys the Theological and Synthesizing Movements on both sides of the Atlantic. The shift from Europe to America as the center of NT research begins to take shape in these final chapters, a shift evidenced by the teaching posts held by a good number of the scholars reviewed. In contrast with the first two parts, this final part lacks a real theological/exegetical/historical controversy that shapes the development of NT research. Nevertheless, this final generation of scholars stands out for their rigorous exegetical and synthesizing skill, especially noticed in the commentaries they published.

Volume three of Baird's History of New Testament research is a must own for anyone desiring to know the major trends in and key scholars of the NT period. Baird is informative while at the same time entertaining. He brings the reader along through the life and work of each scholar without getting bogged down in too much detail—something that I am sure would be easy to do given the scholars that fill this volume.

While there is much to commend, I do have a few criticisms. First, the lack of evangelical scholars is a shame. I am thankful for the inclusion of F. F. Bruce, but the overall lack of fine evangelical scholars is a shame. For example, a section on G. E. Ladd would have been a nice addition to this work. His work on eschatology has been very influential in NT scholarship. Second, the failure to even recognize the Evangelical Theological Society as an important society for NT study is puzzling. While not the size of SBL, ETS is nevertheless an important venue for the development of NT scholarship. I may have been able to overlook this if it were not for the inclusion of the Jesus Seminar. And third, while this is not as important as the first two I do want to mention the sprinkling of grammar and spelling errors that are noticed.

William Baird has done a great service by providing for us these three volumes on the History of New Testament Research. While there is much more that can be said regarding the field of NT research and the men and women who have shaped it, Baird has provided for us a starting point from where we can venture off into the field and explore the landscape more in-depth.