

History of New Testament Research. Vol. 3: From C. H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz. By William Baird. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013, xix + 775 pp., \$70.00.

This volume completes a trilogy that might be termed epochal on two counts. Volume 1 (1992) was subtitled from *Deism to Tübingen*, while volume 2 (2002) covered *From Jonathan Edwards to Rudolf Bultmann*. Together the volumes are epochal, first, because of the era they cover. Understanding of the Bible worldwide was transformed by the scholarship Baird chronicles, and such a study earns a share in the earthshaking story it tells. Second, they are epochal in the way they cover their subject: comprehensively, insightfully, and generally sympathetically. This is not to say that different selections and interpretations of scholars and movements might not be preferable, but it is to commend the author for achieving a breadth and depth of coverage of NT scholarship's modern history matched to date by no other single researcher. In addition, since the three volumes together seemed to have claimed the biggest share of 30 of the productive years of a leading NT scholar, one may ask how long it will be before another person arises with the determination (or need) to match Baird's achievement in this field.

The book is most of all about and for research. Some 18 percent consists of endnotes, and another 12 percent of bibliography and indices, so that nearly a third

of the book is simply references. Yet therein lies a major portion of its value: Baird has catalogued, surveyed, and often scrupulously analyzed the works of dozens of major scholars, their key works, and the movements of which they were part. For anyone seeking information in these areas, Baird's book will frequently be a first port of call in amassing bibliography or simply becoming oriented in some aspect of this vast field of study.

Baird organizes the volume in three parts. The first is "The Renaissance of New Testament Criticism." It consists of three chapters. Chapter 1, "The Zenith of Enlightenment Criticism: Anglo-American Research in the Gospels," presents the contributions of Vincent Taylor, Henry J. Cadbury, T. W. Manson, and C. H. Dodd. Chapter 2 is "The New Biblical Theology" and is devoted almost entirely to Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. Baird treats them in considerable detail and with great respect but faults their failure to give history its due: "The biblical theology of Barth is Barth's theology; the biblical theology of Bultmann (the theology of Paul and John) is Bultmann's theology" (p. 117). Is the Jesus known and revealed by the empirical sources really the center of their "new biblical theology"? Baird has his doubts. Chapter 3 is "The Bultmann School." Baird accesses this vast subject by giving extended attention to Ernst Käsemann, Günther Bornkamm, and James A. Robinson (with a cameo appearance of Robert Funk). A feature of this volume is Baird's inclusion of personal recollections and encounters with the scholars he treats, and in this chapter he tells of a semester spent in Heidelberg (1971-72) in which he rode to class with Bornkamm every Monday-Wednesday-Friday. He learned that "this great teacher—in his last year of lecturing on a subject he had presented scores of times before—was still preparing for every lecture until the last minute" (p. 148).

Part 2 of the book is "The Revisiting of Critical Problems." Chapter 4 ("New Discoveries, Archaeology, Textual Criticism") does not really seem to be about "revisiting critical problems," but it is admittedly not easy to fit everything that this history chooses to cover under neat headings. Baird gives thorough airings of the Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea finds, as well as snapshots of twentieth-century NT archaeology and textual criticism. Chapter 5 takes up "Historical Backgrounds: Judaism" with special attention to the work of Joachim Jeremias, Matthew Black, W. D. Davies, E. P. Sanders, and finally Martin Hengel, to whom Baird strangely attributes "A Revival of the Old Perspective."

While Baird calls Hengel "one of the great NT scholars of the twentieth century" and "above all an eminent historian" (p. 322), he slips in arch insinuations that Hengel is somehow culpable in continuing "the old perspective" by interpreting "Judaism from the Christian point of view" (p. 323). Baird supports his contention with a quote from John Collins that "at some points Hengel has not entirely shed the negative view of Judaism which has been endemic in Christian biblical scholarship" (p. 323). This is a partisan judgment, not a scholarly one. If historic Christian claims are true and Jesus was the Messiah and viewed his death as a "universal, atoning sacrifice," as Hengel argues (pp. 317-18), then it follows that Judaism with its negative view of Christianity leaves the logical Christian thinker no alternative to a "negative view of Judaism." Or is one automatically anti-Semitic

unless one rejects Jesus' messiahship? That seems to be Baird's position and basis for impugning Hengel. On the same page that Baird punishes Hengel for a Christian point of view, he warns "conservatives" against "exaggerating Hengel's orthodoxy" and claims all Hengel's virtues for Baird's own cause: "For all the variations in detail, Hengel is above all a champion of the historical-critical method" (p. 323). This seems to be refuted by Hengel's verdict on "critical biblicism" quoted by Baird (p. 317), which actually indicts Baird's veneration of historical criticism.

Part 2 continues with three more chapters. Chapter 6, "Developments in Historical Criticism," centers on four foci of NT research and representative major scholars: NT introduction (Werner G. Kümmel, Helmut Koester), redaction criticism (Hans Conzelmann, Willi Marxsen), the Synoptic problem (William Farmer), and Q (Michael Goulder, John Kloppenborg). Chapter 7 takes up "Confessional Research: Roman Catholic Scholarship." The first half of the chapter title could have been omitted, since only Roman Catholic scholars are mentioned. Showcased are Rudolf Schnackenburg, Raymond Brown, and John P. Meier, the last of whom is praised for his "unswerving devotion to the historical critical method" (p. 437). Defense of and praise for that method (as if it were singular and monolithic) emerges as one of the leitmotifs of the volume. Chapter 8 completes part 2 with "The Development of Scholarly Societies." Those deemed worthy of mention are the Society of Biblical Literature, the Catholic Biblical Association, and the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*. Tacked on to commendations of those societies is a lengthy write-up on Robert Funk and the Jesus Seminar, which Baird assesses both negatively and positively (pp. 466–68).

The final section, part 3, is "Theological and Synthesizing Movements" and contains three chapters. Chapter 10 ("Theological and Hermeneutical Developments") is devoted to a significant collection of scholars who nonetheless make strange bedfellows: Oscar Cullmann, John Knox, and Paul Minear treated in tandem, and finally F. F. Bruce, praised as "at his best when he is writing history" (p. 516). "Bruce demonstrates that Protestant evangelicals can embrace historical criticism and maintain their faith" (p. 525). Chapters 10 and 11 have identical titles ("Critical, Exegetical, and Theological Accomplishments") but different subtitles: chapter 10 covers "Europe," while chapter 11 treats "North America." The European scene is depicted by singling out C. K. Barrett, James Dunn, and Birger Gerhardsson. The North American discussion focuses on three universities and leading scholars who served (or serve) there: at Harvard, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; at Yale, J. Louis Martyn, Leander Keck, and Victor P. Furnish; and at the University of Chicago, Hans D. Betz.

Most of Baird's summary statements come at the end of subsections or chapters. The "Epilogue" is a rambling survey of major emphases found in the current volume. Baird seems to go along with the idea that, text-critically speaking, the notion of an "original text" has now been supplanted by David Parker's claim that "the text is a process" (p. 690). Perhaps there is middle ground between Parker and "original text" as sometimes caricatured. If we really cannot be relatively sure about the text, most of the critical operations performed on that text as reported in Baird's *History of New Testament Research* are fatally compromised.

In sum, while Baird is correct that historical perspective is essential to the apprehension of ancient texts, the strength of this volume (and its two predecessors) is not the cogency of their arguments in favor of “historical criticism,” the note on which Baird chooses to end the work (pp. 695–96). In fact, a weakness of volume 3 is failure to come to grips with the extent to which Walter Bauerian historiography has enjoyed hegemony in NT scholarship (and popular applications of it) despite its dubious empirical grounds (cf. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Michael J. Kruger, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2010]). That is an indictment of “historical criticism” as actually practiced by the great many who subscribe to Bauer’s approach whether openly or tacitly. To his credit, Baird warns against the evil twin of “ecclesiastical authority,” which he describes as “the scholarly captivity of the Bible” (p. 695). Yet the warning rings weak compared to the many and too uncritical plugs for “the” historical-critical method that dot the book.

Baird’s strength is rather the patient, tireless drive that impelled him as he cast such a wide net over such a long time period and then as he examined so doggedly and painstakingly what his net collected for analysis. He completed a study that will be a staple in its field for generations to come. For that he has every reason to rejoice in an exceedingly arduous task completed with a high level of acumen and industry.

Robert W. Yarbrough
Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO