

A SUMMARY OF
HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT RESEARCH, VOL. 1–3
BY WILLIAM BAIRD

VOLUME 1: FROM DEISM TO TÜBINGEN

INTRODUCTION

Baird introduces his book with a quick sketch of the history of NT research before the Enlightenment, as well as a brief word about the methodology of his book. His plan is that the volumes will investigate NT research in the modern age.¹

Before the Enlightenment

The early church dealt with the issue of the canon. They judged all of the books to be of apostolic authority. They moved between literal (Antiochene) and allegorical (Alexandrian) interpretation. They gradually agreed that the apostolic church had the exclusive right to interpret the scriptures.²

In the Middle Ages, people interpreted the Scripture according to the four levels of meaning: literal, allegorical, tropological (or moral), and anagogical. Thus, “in Gal. 4:24-25, ‘Jerusalem’ could properly be interpreted to mean the historical city in Judea (literally), the Christian church (allegorically), the human soul (morally), and the heavenly city (anagogically).”³ Some were aware of the potential to abuse, and gave priority to the literal sense (as with Aquinas, who said the three spiritual senses had to be rooted in the literal sense).⁴

During the Reformation, the Bible was placed at the forefront as the foundation for the Christian faith. The reformers were influenced by the exegetical methods of the Renaissance humanists. They inherited the technical methods that were used for the study of ancient literary works. Furthermore, they agreed that the only meaning Scripture has is the literal meaning. The Reformers attempted to return to a study of what the authors of Scripture meant. Baird claims that the Reformers were not willing to follow the method to its conclusion because of their faith commitments. Baird understands this as introducing the problem of subjectivity that frustrates the goal of historical objectivity.⁵

¹ Baird, xiii.

² Baird, xiv-xv.

³ Baird, xv-xvi.

⁴ Baird, xv-xvi.

⁵ Baird, xvi-xix.

Methodology

Baird admits that he must be selective in this book. His intention is to emphasize the issues of interpretation:

Although attention is given to textual criticism and philological research, I place more emphasis on higher criticism—questions of the authorship and historical contexts of the biblical books. I consider the issue of the authority of the Bible—how the NT is understood as word of God or divine revelation—to be prominent. In addition, I assume questions of hermeneutics and methodology to be significant, and I present examples of exegetical practice. I also give attention to the results of exegesis: how the interpretation of the NT results in an understanding of early Christian history or how it offers a theological exposition of biblical doctrine.⁶

He also intends to proceed chronologically. This volume will address Deism to the Tübingen School and responses to it. He selected those scholars who have been most influential in New Testament studies. He admits that by the nature of the case, most of the scholars covered are British and German Protestant men. He says that studying the history of NT interpretation is important because

The study of the history of the criticism and interpretation of the Bible is a crucial feature of the history of Christianity and the development of Western culture. Biblical scholars neglect this history at their own peril. Failure to know one's history is a failure to understand one's identity, a failure that destines one to repeat old mistakes and neglect venerable solutions, to put old wine in new wineskins without even knowing that it is old. Above all, the study of the history of NT research will move modern scholars to humility in the presence of a monumental accomplishment and will encourage them to continue their work in celebration of a splendid tradition.⁷

PART 1: EARLY DEVELOPMENTS IN NEW TESTAMENT RESEARCH

1. Backgrounds and Beginnings

In the 1700s, critical Bible study began because of a number of factors that allowed scholars to challenge traditional presuppositions and theological orthodoxy. Scientific method, emphasizing empirical observation and rational deduction, were driving the state of knowledge.⁸

⁶ Baird, xix.

⁷ Baird, xxii.

⁸ Baird, 3.

Formative Factors

Biblical study in the Enlightenment inherited the Reformation emphasis on the Bible, and the Renaissance emphasis on methods of historical research that were appropriate for ancient texts.⁹ Several important scientists led the way in shaping modern thought about the nature of the world, especially Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton. Newton's writings showed that the universe was a machine able to be understood by humans. This inspired people to apply human understanding to all human experience.¹⁰ This resulted in an optimism that the human mind could understand everything.¹¹

Precursors: Grotius, Lightfoot, and Simon

There were a number of important precursors to Enlightenment scholarship, but three are especially noteworthy.

*Hugo Grotius (1583-1645)*¹²

Grotius was a lawyer and served as the attorney general of Holland, as well as Sweden's ambassador to Paris. He was imprisoned for a time for his sympathies to the Arminians. He attempted to ground the laws of nations in natural law, and insisted that Christianity was the highest form of religion and that the truth of Scripture is not contrary to reason. In his study of the NT, he offers a historical interpretation which tends to be conservative, though he is not afraid to disagree with church authorities in his interpretation.

*John Lightfoot (1602-1675)*¹³

Son of an Anglican minister, he was educated at Cambridge and sided with Parliament in the civil war and the Presbyterians in Westminster Assembly. He was a Semitic scholar and used rabbinic texts to illuminate the historical background of the NT. While his interpretation was sometimes fanciful and his method sometimes less than perfect, his concern for historical interpretation and especially his use of rabbinic texts was groundbreaking.

⁹ Baird, 3.

¹⁰ Baird, 4.

¹¹ Baird, 4-5.

¹² Baird, 7-11

¹³ Baird, 11-17.

Richard Simon (1638-1712)¹⁴

Simon could be called “the founder of modern biblical criticism.”¹⁵ He had conflict with every group in his time, but “the one thing he could not tolerate was sloppy scholarship.”¹⁶ He was a priest who loved scholarship and disliked scholastic theology. He took a number of critical positions (such as against mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch) that brought him into constant conflict with Roman Catholic Church authorities. He used critical scholarship to try to undercut the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*. He affirmed the NT as a rule of faith, but thought it was insufficient without the interpretation of the fathers. “For Simon, the Christian faith was built upon facts, and the historical facts could be found by free investigation of the primary sources.”¹⁷

Simon thought it was “better to be a grammarian than a theologian,” and that “exegesis was a science that made use of scientific procedures.”¹⁸ He interpreted the text literally and historically, though he allowed that allegorical interpretation could be used. While he was often opposed by the church authorities, he was very influential in the history of NT interpretation.

Text Criticism: Mill and Bentley

John Mill (1645-1707)¹⁹

Mill’s greatest accomplishment was his edition of the Greek NT. It reused the text of Stephanus (for the most part), but it included “an extensive collection of variants and text-critical comments.”²⁰ His conclusions tended to be conservative, but they became important for future scholarship.

Richard Bentley (1662-1742)²¹

Richard Bentley was a classicist who proposed a complete revision of the Greek NT. While he never completed it, he rescued Codex Alexandrinus from a fire.

¹⁴ Baird, 17-25.

¹⁵ Baird, 17.

¹⁶ Baird, 17.

¹⁷ Baird, 19.

¹⁸ Baird, 19-20.

¹⁹ Baird, 25-28.

²⁰ Baird, 26.

²¹ Baird, 29.

2. The Attack on Revealed Religion: The English Deists

England was the birth place of Deism, which stressed rational religion that was available to all men through the light of nature and reason. They opposed the Bible because the Bible was the foundation for supernatural religion and special revelation.²²

An Advocate of Revealed Religion: Daniel Whitby (1638-1725)²³

Whitby was a moderate and progressive, an Arminian with sympathies toward Unitarianism. He viewed the belief in Jesus as the Messiah as the cornerstone of the Christian faith. He believed that God preserved the Bible without error, and so opposed text-critical editions of the NT. He believed in the authenticity of all the NT books. His *Commentary* was “a moderate version of the biblical religion the deists set out to destroy.”²⁴

The Significance of John Locke (1632-1704)²⁵

Locke was “the framework upon which [the deists] could build.”²⁶ His “Essay on Human Understanding” was important for the deists. While he was not orthodox in all of his beliefs (the trinity for example), he basically believed the Bible and professed to be a Christian. He believed that revelation was what God gave in the Bible that reason could not discover, though it did not contradict reason. The deists would attempt to use some of Locke’s thought to support a religion of reason alone. His study of the New Testament paid attention to the historical situation behind the writings, as well as linguistic data.

The Deists: Toland, Tindal, Collins, and Woolston

“The deists were children of the Enlightenment. . . . Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648), usually identified as the father of the movement, advocated rationalism, monotheism, and morality.”²⁷ They were characterized by skepticism about miracles and revelation, and belief that reason is a sufficient foundation for religion. By reason, God’s will can be known. God established the natural order but is distant from creation.

²² Baird, 31.

²³ Baird, 31-33.

²⁴ Baird, 33.

²⁵ Baird, 33-39.

²⁶ Baird, 33.

²⁷ Baird, 39.

John Toland (1669-1722)²⁸

Toland was a well-educated Irishman who was more moderate than later deists. He argued that “there is nothing in the gospel contrary to reason, nor above it.”²⁹ He wanted to show that reason and Scripture agree. While he believed in the miraculous and supernatural, he believed that the Bible should be treated like any other book, and that there are no mysteries, only things we know and things we do not. Religion should be rational.

Matthew Tindal (1657-1733)³⁰

His book *Christianity as Old as Creation* was extremely influential to deists. He argued that the gospel was “only a revised version of the original religion of nature.”³¹ True religion is available to all through reason. He believed in revelation, but it was “superfluous” because “revealed religion and natural religion were essentially the same.”³² He was critical of the Bible in terms of the content and the circular reasoning by which its authority is adduced. He attacked the idea that the Bible was the standard of truth. On the one hand, he stripped away the distinctive message of the Bible by affirming that Jesus said nothing but what people already knew; on the other hand, he denied that human religion evolved (something important to later Enlightenment thinkers).

Anthony Collins (1676-1729)³³

With Collins, the deists attacked the notion of fulfilled prophecy, which was one of the two most important Christian apologetic claims (the other being miracles). He was a friend of John Locke. He refuted the argument by William Whiston that the Jews changed their Scriptures so that no one would know that Jesus fulfilled the OT. Collins argued that early Christians proved that Jesus was the Messiah by using allegorical interpretation, which could be used to justify anything. Therefore, the argument from fulfilled prophecy, according to Collins, fails to constitute proof that Jesus was the Messiah.

Thomas Woolston (1669-1733)³⁴

²⁸ Baird, 39-41.

²⁹ Toland, quoted in Baird, 40.

³⁰ Baird, 41-43.

³¹ Baird, 41.

³² Baird, 41.

³³ Baird, 43-45.

³⁴ Baird, 45-49.

Woolston was educated at Cambridge and attacked the Bible's account of miracles. He wrote satire and "was like a comic bull gone berserk in the orthodox china closet."³⁵ He caustically ridiculed the biblical accounts of miracles, including the resurrection. He argued that the miracles should be interpreted allegorically to show spiritual truths.

According to Woolston, literal miracles simply did not happen. This denial of the historicity of the miracles struck a responsive chord in an era when belief in the supernatural was evaporating, when the universe was believed to be ordered by Newton's law, and when physical phenomena were attributed to natural causes.³⁶

He "had presented a serious challenge to biblical orthodoxy."³⁷

Other Deists: Annet, Morgan, and Chubb

Woolston was answered by Thomas Sherlock in *The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection* (1729). He defended the orthodox belief in the resurrection.

Peter Annet (1693-1769)³⁸

Annet responded to the defense by Sherlock, giving arguments against the resurrection. He pits the gospels against one another to argue that the accounts have discrepancies. He argues that God "does not expect people to believe what is against evidence or reason."³⁹ He furthermore "denies that can or should rest on provable fact."⁴⁰ In other words, religion cannot rest on historical facts. This anticipates G. E. Lessing's "ugly ditch." He also argues against miracles that no evidence can overrule the regularities of nature. He also wrote critically of Paul, accusing him of lying and contradicting himself.

Thomas Morgan (d. 1743)⁴¹

Morgan grew up poor but was educated and became a Presbyterian minister. He was dismissed because of his views and became a doctor. In his writing, *The Moral Philosopher*, "Morgan follows deism's party line: opposition to hierarchy and ceremony with their attendant miracles; promotion of natural religion and reason in the service of a universal morality."⁴² He claimed that Christ came to restore the "rational religion of nature. . . . Christ was the restorer of natural

³⁵ Baird, 46.

³⁶ Baird, 48.

³⁷ Baird, 49.

³⁸ Baird, 49-52.

³⁹ Baird, 50.

⁴⁰ Baird, 50.

⁴¹ Baird, 52-54.

⁴² Baird, 52.

religion; he was not the Jewish Messiah.”⁴³ He also argued that Paul followed Jesus in his opposition to Moses and the prophets. Paul appears, to Morgan, to be a free-thinking deist.

Morgan interprets the Bible historically. He denied Mosaic authorship of much of the Pentateuch. He denied that Paul approved of the atonement. Jesus was mostly a good example for us.

*Thomas Chubb (1697-1747)*⁴⁴

“Chubb’s main thesis is that reason is the sufficient guide in matters of religion. . . . any claim to revelation must be attested: in its internal character (as worthy of God), in its external evidence (as coming from God), and in its content (as totally in harmony with reason).”⁴⁵

In terms of NT scholarship, he advocated textual criticism and study into questions of authorship and date. Because of their anonymity, “Chubb was one of the first Enlightenment scholars to question the authenticity of the Gospels.”⁴⁶ He believed in Markan priority. He denied biblical infallibility on the basis of the existence of textual variants. He anticipated later scholarly attempts to present a historical study of the life of Christ. “Chubb presents Jesus as a sort of first-century Palestinian deist, garbed in the seamless robe of reason and natural religion.”⁴⁷ He denied the atonement as offensive. He also denied original sin and the Trinity.

Baird concludes that the deists raised important questions, but they were not biblical scholars.

3. Sensitive to the Spirit: The Pietists

Baird accuses the Protestants that followed Luther and Calvin of hardening into a rigid system where their precursors were more flexible. He criticizes their view of the Bible as a perfect book that is without error even in teachings about history and creation. He complains that they did not view it as a historically conditioned book. However, he also says that their high view of the Bible led to scholarship rather than impeding it. The centrality of the Bible meant study of linguistics, text-criticism, the use of reason, and the view that the truth was for everyone. Above all it was good for Bible scholarship because Bible study was essential to theology.⁴⁸

Beginnings of the Pietist Movement: Philip Jakob Spener (1635-1705)⁴⁹

Spener was a Lutheran pastor who stressed the practice of Christianity as a way of life over a mere intellectual assent to doctrines. While being fully orthodox, he felt that one could assent to

⁴³ Baird, 52.

⁴⁴ Baird, 54-56.

⁴⁵ Baird, 54.

⁴⁶ Baird, 55.

⁴⁷ Baird, 55.

⁴⁸ Baird, 58-59.

⁴⁹ Baird, 59-62.

the correct doctrines without engaging in the life of faith. He believed that studying the Bible was crucial for the life of faith. While being at times implicitly anti-intellectual, his belief in the simplicity of the Bible's message made him look for the original historical meaning. "Most important, Spener advocated a dynamic biblical theology in place of scholastic dogmatics. Within that biblical theology, spirit was closely related to the word."⁵⁰

Principles of Interpretation: August Hermann Franke (1663-1727)

Franke was a friend of Spener who was well-educated in orthodox doctrine, but felt that his life was lacking spiritual vitality.

Conversion and Religious Thought⁵¹

His "conversion experience was foundational for the rest of [his] life."⁵² He was to preach on John 20:31, and felt that he did not have the faith he wanted to elicit from others. He prayed to God and felt that God heard him. Franke lectured at Leipzig, but was reprimanded for his views. Spener got him a job at Halle, and he became an important spiritual leader in the community. Halle became strongly pietistic, which meant that the Bible was rigorously studied. Franke believed that the OT and NT both contain Law and Gospel, and they are intended to lead to faith in Christ. The Scripture has only one meaning, and the spiritual meaning is the sense intended by the words. "In search for this true meaning, faith is more important than reason."⁵³ Franke advocated the publication of the Bible, and revised Luther's version based on scholarly work.

Method of Biblical Interpretation⁵⁴

Franke's major work was *Manuductio ad lectionem scripturae sacrae* (A Guide to the Reading and Study of the Holy Scriptures, 1693). He said that the major task was to distinguish the "husk" from the "kernel" of Scripture (the letter and the spirit). The letter must be understood to comprehend the spirit, but the spirit is the point. His method is as follows:

- I. Finding the meaning of the Letter (*sensus litterae*)
 1. Grammatical reading (*lectio grammatical*)
 2. Historical reading (*lectio historica*)
 3. Analytical investigation (*lectio analytica*, includes genre, understanding the parts in light of the whole and immediate context, etc.)
- II. Finding the Spiritual meaning
 1. Expository reading (*lectio exegetica*, includes finding what the spirit intends to say, the *sensus literalis*)

⁵⁰ Baird, 62.

⁵¹ Baird, 63-65.

⁵² Baird, 63.

⁵³ Baird, 65.

⁵⁴ Baird, 65-69.

2. Doctrinal reading (lectio dogmatica, includes finding what theological truths are in the passage. Christ is the center of the Bible's message.)
3. Inferential meaning (lectio porismatica, meanings not primary but ones that may legitimately be inferred)
4. Practical reading (lectio practica, how the passage applies to life)
5. Spiritual or mystical sense (sensus spiritualis, sensus mysticus, the deeper meaning discerned through the literal meaning and insight provided by the Holy Spirit)

Franke also advocated that proper interpretation involves the emotions. For this reason, only born-again Christians can interpret the Scriptures correctly, because only they have regenerate affections.

Text Criticism and Exegesis: J. A. Bengel (1687-1752)⁵⁵

Bengel was moderate as far as pietism goes. He spent his life serving the church in Wurttemberg. He studied at Tübingen, and became a pastor. He served at the theological preparatory school in Denkendorf. He was sympathetic to the Moravian Brethren, but pronounced them as heretical when he they requested an official relationship with the established church. He believed pietism “needed to be cultivated within the boundaries of the orthodox church.”⁵⁶ He was prolific and wrote on a number of topics, including the book of Revelation and Bible/world chronology.

Text-Critical Research⁵⁷

Bengel was alarmed to discover the many variants. This led him to study, after which he became more confident. He believed that the original manuscripts were inerrant, and so the task of text-criticism was to restore the text. He developed a number of important principles for textual criticism: 1. He classified manuscripts according to the family, 2. He preferred the harder reading, 3. He preferred the more ancient witnesses to the more numerous, 4. He used the versions and patristic citations, etc. In practice he was conservative, judging passages like 1 John 5:7, the adulterous woman passage, and the ending of Mark to be authentic.

Exegetical Contribution⁵⁸

Bengel published his *Gnomon Novi Testament* in 1742. It is essentially a collection of notes on the NT. He views the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God, though some parts (especially the NT) he views as having more value than others. He believes that Scripture interprets Scripture, and that the letter and spirit are “bound together,” so that one must pay attention to the

⁵⁵ Baird, 69-71.

⁵⁶ Baird, 71.

⁵⁷ Baird, 72-74.

⁵⁸ Baird, 74-80.

letter to understand the spirit.⁵⁹ He seems to have a good balance of understanding the priority of the spirit, but also avoiding subjectivity. He insisted, in the context of the Enlightenment, that Faith was superior to reason. Reason might serve faith, but it is never legitimate to use reason against faith or to question the Bible. He sometimes shows anti-intellectualism, but mostly he engages in historical interpretation. He also agrees with Franke on the importance of the affections, and believes the Bible should be applied to life.

The Evangelical Movement and New Testament Research in England:
John Wesley (1703-1791)⁶⁰

Wesley was born in 1703, educated at Oxford, ordained to the priesthood in 1728, and converted in 1738 in a meeting of the Moravians. He became passionate to preach, and when churches would not let him preach, he began to hold open-air meetings that started a revival in England. This movement became the “Methodist” movement that eventually separated from the Anglican Church.

Religious Thought⁶¹

Wesley taught so that he could meet the needs of the people. He believed that “theology should be grounded in Scripture.”⁶² Though reason was useful for interpreting Scripture, it had been corrupted by sin. Soteriology was the central element in Wesley’s theology. He believed that God saved people when they received his free gift by faith. The Holy Spirit then begins to transform people until they reach perfection. Wesley thought that the Bible was the most important source of authority, but also reason and experience were important.

Wesley stressed the literal meaning and interpreting Scripture by Scripture. He made use of Greek in his teaching, and he agreed with Franke that religious experience was important for understanding the Scriptures. Another important idea is the “analogy of faith.” Each passage is to be interpreted by the whole message of the Bible.

Work on the New Testament⁶³

His most important works on the NT are his translation of the NT and his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, published together in 1775. His translation was an adaption of the King James Version for the sake of clarity, accuracy, as a result of scholarly advance (as with the text critical changes) or for theological reasons (against predestination). His *Explanatory Notes* are intended for a popular level to help uneducated people to read the Bible better. In it he relies

⁵⁹ Baird, 75.

⁶⁰ Baird, 80-81.

⁶¹ Baird, 81-84.

⁶² Baird, 81.

⁶³ Baird, 84-88.

heavily on several other scholars, including Bengel. He usually interprets literally, though sometimes he inadvertently uses allegory.

Conclusion

The pietists were different, but they each emphasized preaching and teaching for the Christian life. They all emphasized the affections and insisted on the necessity of religious experience. They shared some characteristics with the old orthodoxy, and some with the Enlightenment. With the orthodox:

- They affirmed the authority and inspiration of the Bible
- Dedication to serious Bible study
- The Bible has a unified message
- However, they emphasized Scripture as being given for life and salvation, rather than a collection of infallible data.

With the Enlightenment:

- They interpreted the Bible historically
- They made the Bible available to the masses (democratization of knowledge)
- Their emphasis on experience was similar to the Enlightenment emphasis on the individual

4. Defining Historical Research: Methods of Interpretation

Europe became enamored with empiricism and rationalism. This moved from England to the continent.

Moderate Rationalism in Switzerland: Turretin and Wettstein

*Jean-Alphonse Turretin (1671-1737)*⁶⁴

Turretin was the son of Francis Turretin, the famous theologian. He moved considerably from the position that his father held.

Theology: In terms of theology, Turretin was a leader in 18th century ecumenism. He thought Protestants should be able to get along and leave the minor differences aside. He believed that

⁶⁴ Baird, 93-101.

revelation was necessary for salvation, but that revelation must be in accordance with reason, since God is the author of both. Against the deists, he believed that the Christian faith is proved by miracles and fulfilled prophecy. In most theological areas, he is a moderate.

Exegetical Method: His most important work in NT research was *Concerning the Method of Interpreting the Sacred Scripture* (1728). Part one refutes false views, and Part two establishes the true view. In Part one, he refutes Roman Catholicism, “enthusiasts,” mystical interpreters, and others. In part two he affirms that the Bible ought to be interpreted like any other book. This is the “basic principle of historical criticism.”⁶⁵ He teaches that most important for the meaning of the text is the literary and historical context. He also says that no interpretation which contradicts reason or natural theology can be the right one.

He furthermore give rules for interpreting different kinds of literature, and encourages interpreters to come to the text like a “blank slate” to listen to what the text says. In practice, he “attends to textual, grammatical, and historical matters—all in the service of theological meaning.”⁶⁶

In essence, Turretin calls for a shift from doctrinal to historical exegesis. He is opposed to the imposition of external interpretations upon the Bible—interpretations by the church, interpretations from religious experience, or interpretations based on theological presuppositions. . . . Turretin objects to Francke’s idea that only those who have the Spirit can properly interpret Scripture. For Turretin, the Bible must be read like any other book, and other books do not require inspired readers. Interpretation, therefore, has been secularized.⁶⁷

Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693-1754)⁶⁸

Wettstein experienced a great deal of conflict because of his theological views and feisty personality. He was born in Basel, and became a minister in 1713.

Conflict with Orthodoxy: Wettstein was provocative, and the authorities were concerned with his plans to revise the text of the GNT. They were also concerned with some of his biblical interpretations. He moved to Amsterdam where there was more freedom to work. The authorities stipulated that he could teach if he did not revise the NT, but he did it anyway.

Text-Critical Research: Wettstein wanted to revise the GNT according to Codex Alexandrinus. While his printed edition ended up using the Elzevir version of 1624 instead of a revised text, it included an important apparatus and exegetical notes. He affirmed that the Bible should be interpreted like any other book. His textual judgments were less tethered to orthodoxy, and represented a step toward the modern critical text. He was critical of the received text.

⁶⁵ Baird, 97.

⁶⁶ Baird, 100.

⁶⁷ Baird, 101.

⁶⁸ Baird, 101-107.

Philological and Grammatical Method: Johann August Ernesti (1707-1781)

Ernesti studied at Wittenberg and Leipzig. He was appointed principle of a school in 1734 where he had conflict with J. S. Bach, who worked under him and was suspicious of Ernesti's "Enlightenment sympathies."⁶⁹ He eventually moved on to the University of Leipzig in 1742. He was a moderate theologically, though Baird says his view on Scripture was orthodox.

Ernesti's Principles of Interpretation⁷⁰

He was a classical philologist, and produced some works on the NT. His most important work was *Institutio interpretis Novi Testamenti* (Principles of New Testament Interpretation, 1761). He used philology and grammar to understand the text of scripture in its literary and historical context. In the first part of the book, he discusses understanding the meaning of words in light of the original author's historical intention. He suggests the NT interpreter should know Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac as well since the NT is influenced by Semitic thought. He discusses how to reconcile apparent discrepancies by interpreting the difficult in light of the clear.

In the second part, Ernesti addresses those who plan on translating or writing commentaries. The translator should try to reproduce the exact meaning. The commentator should attend to establishing the text, interpreting the words, then historical and theological matters. The third part discusses text criticism and issues of authorship, etc. the final part discusses resources for interpretation.

Exegetical Practice⁷¹

His practice is demonstrated in *Notes on the Books of the New Testament* (1786). He gives a grammatical, historical interpretation of the NT, though at times he appear to Baird to struggle with his conservative commitments.

Ernesti's "main contribution to the history of NT research is apparent: the rigorous use of linguistic and grammatical analysis in the service of historical interpretation."⁷² Baird thinks that there is a tension between Ernesti's desire to interpret the Bible like any other book and his conservative theology. However, he says that all of the scholars in this chapter

represent a fundamental shift in the study of the Bible away from a concern with doctrine to a concern with words. The new methodologies not only consider doctrinal presuppositions to be anathema but also believe doctrinal conclusions to be secondary. Of primary importance is the analysis of words in the service of historical reconstruction; doctrine follows and is built upon literal, historical exegesis.⁷³

⁶⁹ Baird, 108.

⁷⁰ Baird, 109-112.

⁷¹ Baird, 112-114.

⁷² Baird, 114.

⁷³ Baird, 115.

5. Refining Historical Research: Canon and Higher Criticism

Many scholars of this time were concerned with how to make sense of the Christian faith in light of the Enlightenment focus on the power of reason.

The Problem of Canon: Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791)⁷⁴

Semler was influenced by pietism and rationalism. He studied at Halle under S. J. Baumgarten. Baumgarten (under the influence of Christian Wolff) had a tension in his thought between faith and reason. Semler taught at Altdorf, and then Halle.

*Theological Perspective*⁷⁵

Semler, like Baumgarten, tried to harmonize revelation and reason. He rejected the orthodox teaching of verbal inspiration, as well as the subjectivism of the pietists and the rejection of revelation by the deists. He distinguished between religion (one's private experience of faith) and theology (the public explanation of faith). The inner experience is subjective, while theology and the bible are objective. He also distinguished between academic theology and theology for the laity, and within his theology he distinguished between law and gospel.

Semler ultimately resolved the tension between faith and reason by divorcing the two:

Since religion belonged to those inner truths of personal experience, it remained untouched by the sharp tools of criticism. Theology, on the other hand, was concerned with the external data of the faith and its objective expression. Thus, criticism was the appropriate instrument for investigating the historical ground and conceptual formulation of theology. In short, Semler had provided the rationale for the unrestricted use of criticism. Faith, since it was a matter of religion, could not be harmed by criticism; theology, which was a matter of objective expression, required the ruthless application of critical research. Thus, the persistent problem of the tension between faith and criticism was resolved by a drastic measure—a separation terminating in divorce.⁷⁶

Semler believed the essence of Christianity to be vaguely defined as belief in the Trinity and the redemption that is found in Christ. He prioritized the NT over the OT, Paul over the rest of the NT, and believed that historical criticism was necessary for understanding the Bible.

*Critique of the Canon*⁷⁷

“Semler’s most important work for the history of NT research is his *Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Canon*. . . . Semler’s main thesis is that the canon is a historical problem that

⁷⁴ Baird, 117-118.

⁷⁵ Baird, 118-120.

⁷⁶ Baird, 119.

⁷⁷ Baird, 120-124.

can be solved by the free use of the critical method. The effect of Semler's work is the dissolution of the classical, orthodox understanding of the canon."⁷⁸

His argument proceeds as follows: He notes the historical development of the canon, and insists that the church cannot be a witness to the inspiration of Scripture because inspiration is not a historical event that can be witnessed. Recognizing the canon is not essential to salvation. Much of the information the NT doesn't require inspiration to account for it anyway.

Semler argued that material that does not conform to the teaching of Christ (such as the book of Revelation) ought to be rejected. His criteria of orthodoxy is whether a passage is recognized to convey universal moral truth. This is discerned by an "inner convection" that one experiences when reading the passage.⁷⁹ This means that there is a distinction between Scripture and the Word of God. God's message is found in Scripture when it is studied historically. However, the

word of God which is detected by historical research is not subject to human criticism because it transcends it. . . . The word of God in the Bible that is identified by historical research can only be understood by the inner experience of the truth of Scripture, confirmed by the witness of the spirit.⁸⁰

Semler also proposed an "accommodation" theory in which, for example, Jesus did not believe in demons and the supernatural, but accommodated the ignorance of his contemporaries. God accommodates himself to human limitations.

New Testament Research⁸¹

Semler wrote a book on hermeneutics in which he denied that only Christians can read the Bible accurately. He also notes the danger of eisegesis. "Historical method is needed to ascertain what the Bible actually said in its own time and setting. Christians need to know what Jesus said and taught, and this requires critical analysis of the historical reports."⁸²

Semler also wrote a paraphrase of the NT, which included a loose Latin translation with explanatory glosses and notes at the bottom of the page. He "was one of the first scholars to give serious attention to the issue of the integrity of the NT writings." His reconstruction of early church history anticipated F. C. Baur by positing a Pauline Gentile faction and a Petrine Jewish faction that resolved in the early Catholic Church. He also anticipates later critical opinions on questions of authorship of books such as 2 Peter and Hebrews.

In conclusion, he incorporated both Enlightenment thought and Christian thought into his worldview in order to justify both the value of historical criticism as well as the importance of the Bible and the Christian faith. However, there were a number of problems with his work: his norm for determining canonicity is subjective, and there must surely be some relationship

⁷⁸ Baird, 120-121.

⁷⁹ Baird, 122.

⁸⁰ Baird, 123.

⁸¹ Baird, 124-127.

⁸² Baird, 125.

between religion and theology, rather than allowing them to function independently. Furthermore he operates on the presuppositions of the Enlightenment without noticing how this is at variance from the Christian faith he professes.

The Science of Introduction: Johann David Michaelis (1717-1791)⁸³

Michaelis was the son of a Semitic scholar, studied at Halle under Baumgarten, and studied at Oxford. He lectured at Halle and then Gottingen.

*Theological Position*⁸⁴

Michaelis was more conservative than Semler. He agreed with Semler on free investigation of the canon but disagreed on the results. He attempted to harmonize faith and reason. He affirmed that “the two sources of divine truth are the Bible and reason.”⁸⁵ He also affirmed traditional doctrines. He believed that Christianity is confirmed by fulfilled prophecy and miracles, and that the Bible accounts were reliable (though not infallible). He tends to harmonize apparent discrepancies.

*Introduction to the New Testament*⁸⁶

Michaelis’ Introduction is his most important work. Before Michaelis, historical information was presented in notes written by various scholars. Michaelis brings NT Introduction to its own as a discipline. A major motivation was to answer Semler’s critique of the authenticity of the canonical books. He wanted to demonstrate their authenticity through the historical research.

Michaelis distinguishes between inspired v reliable books. Only books written by the apostles are inspired, but the other books (Luke and Mark, for example) are still reliable. Michaelis uses this distinction to assess the relative merits of the various books. He believed that Matthew was originally written in Aramaic, so the Greek version may have errors because it is not inspired. This is why it might contradict John (which is written by an apostle and thus inspired). The NT use of the OT is questionable as well (in his view).

He also deals with text criticism and the synoptic problem. He believed that the synoptics were from a common source, but not dependent on one another. His Introduction was intended as a conservative defense of the canonical books, but it ended up undercutting the authority of the Bible. It is the result of combining orthodox and Enlightenment presuppositions.

The Students of Semler and Michaelis: Griesbach and Eichhorn

⁸³ Baird, 127-129.

⁸⁴ Baird, 129-131.

⁸⁵ Baird, 129.

⁸⁶ Baird, 131-138.

*Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812)*⁸⁷

Griesbach's father was a pastor. He was educated at Tübingen, Halle and Leipzig. He taught at Halle and Jena. While he opposed the view of verbal inspiration of Scripture, he believed that the apostles had supernatural aid in transmitting doctrine without error. He believed in accommodation, similar to Semler's view. God's revelation in history consisted of the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ, and the Bible is a "reliable" witness.

Griesbach's Hermeneutic⁸⁸

According to his *Lectures on the Hermeneutics of the New Testament* (posthumously, 1815), he interpreted the Bible in a grammatical-historical way. The Bible was to be read like any other book. However, there is a sense in which the Bible has its own peculiarities, and so it should be interpreted as the unique book that it is. Griesbach discusses general hermeneutics, that is, how language generally is understood. He is a nuanced thinker.

He understands the NT to have historical errors, and distinguishes between essential vs non-essential teaching. The Bible is not revelation, but it is a record of God's revelation in history. "In general, Griesbach's exegesis is a mixture of orthodoxy, creative insight, and fanciful rationalism."⁸⁹

Griesbach's Greek Text⁹⁰

"Griesbach's contribution to lower criticism was dramatic: he was the first of the Enlightenment scholars to present an actual revision of the hallowed Received Text."⁹¹ The changes he made were not radical, but cautious. He published a Synopsis of the Gospels in 1774 and his NT in 1796, 1806. It included a prolegomena including 15 rules for making text-critical decisions, the text, and critical notes giving evidence for the various decisions he made.

Griesbach's Synoptic Hypothesis⁹²

His theory for the relationship between the synoptic Gospels was anticipated by Henry Owen in 1764 (see also David Alan Black, *Why Four Gospels?*). He advocates for Matthean priority. Mark then used Matthew and Luke in composing his own Gospel.

⁸⁷ Baird, 138-139.

⁸⁸ Baird, 139-141.

⁸⁹ Baird, 141.

⁹⁰ Baird, 141-143.

⁹¹ Baird, 141-142.

⁹² Baird, 143-148.

1. In terms of the order of events in the Gospel, Mark zigzags back and forth between Matthew and Luke, sometimes following one and sometimes the other. This is all according to his authorial intention.
2. In terms of content, almost all of Mark is found in Matthew. This shows that he is primarily reliant on Matthew.
3. Objection: tradition attributes Markan material to Peter. Reply: tradition is not reliable at this point.
4. Objection: wouldn't the shorter Gospel be earlier? Why write Mark at all if Matthew were available? Reply: Mark was not trying to compete with Matthew, but write the gospel that served his audience's needs.
5. Assuming Matthew wrote Matthew, why would an apostle rely on a non-apostle (Mark)?
6. Objection: why would Mark omit so much good material from Matthew and Luke? Reply: The omitted material did not fit his authorial purpose.

“Like Semler and Michaelis, he attempted to accommodate traditional Christianity to the mind of the Enlightenment, and he thus was plagued by the same tension between faith and criticism which troubled his predecessors.”⁹³ His main contributions were in the area of textual criticism and the Synoptic problem.

*Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827)*⁹⁴

“Compared with Michaelis, Eichhorn was more sympathetic to Enlightenment ideas and more skeptical about such things as miracles and the resurrection.”⁹⁵ He taught at Jena, and then Göttingen. He was an intense worker, and studied from 5 AM to 9 PM with half-hour breaks for meals. He also lectured for 20 hours per week. He produced “a mountain of publications.”⁹⁶

Eichhorn's Hermeneutic of Myth⁹⁷

Following his teacher, Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812), Eichhorn said that Myth was the way primitive people explained things they could not understand. Eichhorn applied this to the Bible. He called this approach the “mythic method of Interpretation.”⁹⁸

Eichhorn's Introduction to the New Testament⁹⁹

“In relation to the pioneering work of Michaelis, Eichhorn's massive Introduction to the New Testament has two distinctive features: a complex theory about the synoptic problem and a more

⁹³ Baird, 147.

⁹⁴ Baird, 148.

⁹⁵ Baird, 148.

⁹⁶ Baird, 148.

⁹⁷ Baird, 149-150.

⁹⁸ Baird, 149.

⁹⁹ Baird, 150-153.

critical evaluation of authenticity.”¹⁰⁰ Eichhorn believed that the Synoptic Gospels were dependent on an earlier lost Gospel. Apostolic authority is found in this “Urgospel,” and the canonical Gospels are mythical expansions upon it. This enabled him to attribute apostolic authority to the Urgospel and strip away the mythical events that were hard for him to believe.

In the end, Eichhorn is less conservative than Michaelis, his work in the Gospels is important, especially as it opens space to begin thinking about earlier sources for the Gospels (later, oral tradition). Eichhorn engages in scholarship which attempts to harmonize Christianity with the Enlightenment worldview. Each of the scholars in this chapter “confirms the shift in biblical studies . . . from doctrinal to historical exegesis.”¹⁰¹

6. New Testament Research and Theological Meaning

Historical criticism was not universally accepted. Pietism and orthodoxy continued to be dominant. Several tragedies, such as the French Revolution (turned Reign of Terror), served to turn people away from the Enlightenment thought back to conservative views. Also, Jean Jacques Rousseau and his movement, Romanticism played an influential role.¹⁰² This chapter discusses alternate routes of NT research, including conservatism and romantic-influenced scholarship.¹⁰³

Conservative Alternatives: Calmet and Lardner¹⁰⁴

Conservatives were less influential in NT scholarship, but more numerous. “The term ‘conservative,’ in this context, is used loosely to designate scholars who stand closer to orthodoxy and who resist the secular and rationalistic tendency of the historical-critical movement.”¹⁰⁵ Baird says that one irony of NT research is that critical research came from France and England, but it flowered in Germany, whereas France and England were later more conservative.

*Augustin Calmet (1672-1757)*¹⁰⁶

“Augustin (or Antoine) Calmet is usually recognized as the greatest Roman Catholic biblical scholar of the eighteenth century. . . . He was dedicated to historical interpretation but loyal to the principles of the Council of Trent.”¹⁰⁷ His most important works were a commentary series

¹⁰⁰ Baird, 150.

¹⁰¹ Baird, 154.

¹⁰² “For him, truth was to be found in nature and was best expressed by the emotions” (Baird, 156).

¹⁰³ Baird, 155-156.

¹⁰⁴ Baird, 156-157.

¹⁰⁵ Baird, 156.

¹⁰⁶ Baird, 157-160.

¹⁰⁷ Baird, 157.

on the whole Bible and a Bible dictionary. In his commentary he affirms conservative conclusions about the longer ending of Mark, 1 John 5:7, Pauline authorship of Hebrews, advocates two Roman imprisonments for Paul, etc. Regarding the Last Supper, he says that Jesus celebrated it one day earlier (cf. R. T. France).

*Nathaniel Lardner (1684-1768)*¹⁰⁸

Lardner was “frequently cited by Michaelis.”¹⁰⁹ Lardner was a dissenting minister in England. His major work was an apologetic work in which he attempted to defend the historicity of the Gospel narrative. He attempted to answer Woolston’s objections regarding the miraculous events, such as raising the dead. He utilized a hermeneutic of accommodation in order to explain demon possession, which he ironically doesn’t believe in. Baird sees this as a capitulation to Enlightenment rationalism.

The New Testament as Literature: Lessing, Reimarus, and Herder

“Although they recognized the historical character of the biblical documents and accepted the historical-critical method, Lessing and Herder refused to allow the NT to be reduced to factual history. Instead of the historicizing of the biblical message, they advocated an aesthetic approach which interpreted the NT as a literary expression of religious truth.”¹¹⁰

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781)

Religious Thought

Lessing was a literary critic. He had no established theological system. He believed that absolute truth was “beyond the grasp of humans”¹¹¹ Revelation is the “process through which truth is disclosed by God and perceived by people—a process which is still going on. This progressive revelation is harmony with reason, for ‘revelation gives nothing to the human race which human reason could not arrive at on its own.’”¹¹²

He is most well-known for his view of the relationship between history and faith. In his essay, “On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power,” Lessing posits his famous “‘ugly ditch’—the chasm between faith and history.”¹¹³ It appears that he is talking about a “temporal gap” between then and now, but it turns out to be “metaphysical chasm.”¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Baird, 160-165.

¹⁰⁹ Baird, 160.

¹¹⁰ Baird, 165.

¹¹¹ Baird, 166.

¹¹² Baird, 167, quoting Chadwick.

¹¹³ Baird, 168.

¹¹⁴ Baird, 168.

Thus, Lessing concludes that “accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason.” The ugly ditch is a division between two different kinds of truth the truths of history and the truths of faith. Consequently, Lessing asserts that he is not bound to historical facts; he is bound instead to the Christian teachings themselves, to those universal moral truths intuitively perceived as self-authenticating.¹¹⁵

He also contributed to Gospels research by positing that “all the canonical Gospels rest ultimately on a lost *Urgospel*.”¹¹⁶ Lessing stressed “the spirit rather than the letter” when interpreting the Gospels.¹¹⁷ Love trumps dogma, in Lessing’s view. This is furthermore emphasized in his view of the “distinction between the religion *of* Christ and the religion *about* Christ.”¹¹⁸ Jesus taught people to live the way he lived, but Christianity teaches people that Jesus is the object of worship.

Lessing, Reimarus, and the Wolfenbüttel Fragments

Lessing got to know H. S. Reimarus (1694-1768). Reimarus wrote the book *Apology for the Rational Worshippers of God*, which denied the biblical miracles, and argued that Jesus was a moral teacher who taught about the Kingdom of God, but the disciples made up Christianity for selfish reasons by stealing the body of Jesus and concocting the story of the resurrection and inventing the idea of Jesus as a redeeming sufferer. This was important because Reimarus did not just ridicule miracles, as the Deists had done, but totally rewrote the story of early Christianity. While Lessing did not agree with much of the book, it suited his purposes to destroy the idea of a historically grounded faith.

J. S. Semler and the Wolfenbüttel Fragments

Semler was also critical of the Bible (as he had advocated for the free investigation of the canon), but he “thought the *Fragments* to be an impious assault on Christianity.”¹¹⁹ He put great effort into refuting the work. Baird says that it was the “spirit more than the letter of the *Fragments* that disturbed Semler.”¹²⁰

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803)

Herder was influenced by Kant and J. G. Hamann, as well as the proto-romantic movement “*Sturm and Drang*.” His major work was *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (4 vols., 1784-1791). It interprets the history of humanity according to an evolutionary model, with Jesus as a central figure in bringing human religion to a higher, more spiritual level.

¹¹⁵ Baird, 168.

¹¹⁶ Baird, 168.

¹¹⁷ Baird, 169.

¹¹⁸ Baird, 169.

¹¹⁹ Baird, 175.

¹²⁰ Baird, 177.

Herder believed that truth was revealed historically, but “absolute truth is beyond human comprehension.”¹²¹ He views all things as manifestations of the divine, and therefore, revelation. The Bible “is the record of God’s unfolding plan in history.”¹²² However, it is “a wholly human book.”¹²³ He stresses the human dimension, and so encourages the study of “linguistics, geography, and history,” etc.¹²⁴ He anticipates the history of religions approach by encouraging the study of Persian religion as part of understanding NT background.

Herder viewed the NT as higher than the OT in the evolution of religion, and Jesus proclaimed an ethical, spiritual kingdom. Jesus’s death was not a substitutionary sacrifice, but an example of love and obedience to God. He accepted the resurrection but spiritualized it.

Herder was interested in hermeneutics. He wanted people to read the NT letters as letters. He believed that there was an oral gospel tradition that became an *Urgospel*, which was the basis of the synoptic gospels. He changes his mind about the synoptic problem. Early on he thought Matthew was first, but later, Mark. Since he liked spiritualizing, he especially liked John’s gospel. He accepted James and Jude as genuine, and wrote on Revelation, though he changed his interpretation of it the second time.

Beginnings in New Testament Theology: Gabler and G. L. Bauer

Gabler changed the direction of Biblical Theology (BT). Previously (with a few exceptions), BT and Systematic Theology (ST) were considered one and the same. It was characterized by dehistoricizing the biblical text in order to extract proof-texts to support one’s theology. With Gabler, there was a move to hear the text of Scripture “on its own terms.”

*Johann Philipp Gabler (1753-1826)*¹²⁵

Gabler was educated at Jena, and taught by Griesbach and Eichhorn. He taught at Göttingen, Altdorf, and Jena, and he published on NT criticism, church history and historical theology.

Gabler’s Proposal: Gabler proposed to make a distinction between BT and ST. BT is unchanging because it deals with the historical meaning that the authors of Scripture taught; ST is always changing because the normative application has to be reformulated to keep up with human learning and cultural understanding. BT distills universal truths from the historical teaching of the Bible and passes them on to ST for use in doctrinal teaching.

Gabler says that while people often agree that the Scripture is the source of doctrine, there is no end of theological fights. He thinks that historical exegesis would solve many doctrinal disputes

¹²¹ Baird, 178.

¹²² Baird, 178.

¹²³ Baird, 178.

¹²⁴ Baird, 179.

¹²⁵ Bard, 183-187.

and promote unity. For historical exegesis, he advocates the historical-grammatical method. The Biblical Theologian exegetes the original authors in their historical context, and then attempts to “correlate the ideas of one biblical writer with the others and, finally, to discern the underlying unity of the biblical message.”¹²⁶

For Gabler, there is “true BT,” which consists of an accurate presentation of what the biblical authors taught; then there is “pure BT,” which consists of the universal truths that can be distilled from what the authors taught. He used three hermeneutical approaches to attain the “pure” from the “true”: 1. myth (distinguishing between content and form), 2. accommodation (the belief that doctrine was adapted to the worldview of the hearers), and 3. distinction between theology and religion (distinguishing between truth and statements about the truth). This makes the exegete primary over the theologian, and BT over ST.

*Georg Lorenz Bauer (1755-1806)*¹²⁷

Bauer took up Gabler’s “program” for BT. Bauer studied at Altdorf, pastored, then taught at Altdorf and later Heidelberg. He “accepted the distinction between biblical and systematic theology,” and like Gabler, used the category of myth in his interpretation of the Scriptures.¹²⁸

Bauer’s Theology of the New Testament: His early work had to do with parables. Bauer was rationalistic and used the category of myth to deny almost all supernatural events in the Bible. He published a work on mythology in the Bible in which he relied on parallels in other cultures to explain the Scriptures.

His major work was his 4 volume NT Theology. He attempted to rescue Christianity from supernaturalism and rationalism by seeking to determine what is at the heart of Christianity and what is superfluous (kernel and husk). He viewed the NT as higher than, and superseding, the OT. His 4 vols. deal with 1. The Christology of the synoptics, 2. The theology and anthropology of the synoptics and view of Christianity according to John, 3. Revelation and Peter’s works, 4. Paul. The two critiques that Baird levels are that 1. Bauer does not distinguish between the theology of Jesus and the theology of the gospel writers, and 2. That he imposes ST categories despite his attempt to do BT. The short of it is that Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah, and came to establish the Kingdom of God, a moral and ethical kingdom. While Bauer rationalizes away most of the miracles, he believes in some kind of resurrection (a mystery). He applies myth and accommodation everywhere.

He published what may have been the first ever NT ethics. He viewed ethics as progressing in the OT, and believed that Jesus and the NT conceive of a higher level of ethics than the OT. Baird points out that Bauer actually accommodates Jesus’s ethic to Enlightenment sensibilities. He says that while Bauer’s work is groundbreaking, he is a child of the Enlightenment.

Baird concludes the chapter with summary and critique.

¹²⁶ Baird, 186.

¹²⁷ Baird, 187-194.

¹²⁸ Baird, 188.

PART 2: NEW TESTAMENT RESEARCH IN AN ERA OF PHILOSOPHICAL FERMENT

7. The Rise of Liberalism

The beginning of the 19th century was turbulent as the continent was recovering from the Napoleonic wars and the Reign of Terror in France. Rationalism was weakened and romanticism grew stronger. “In place of the arrogant skepticism of the early Enlightenment, anxious people were seeking faith.”¹²⁹ European life would be complicated by the Industrial revolution and became powerful in the world through scientific and technological advances. Kant seemed to offer a solution by exchanging the Christian emphasis on metaphysics with a concern for morality.

Extreme Rationalism:
Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus (1761-1851)

Paulus is known for his extreme attempts to “rationalize the miracles” in the Bible.¹³⁰ He studied at Tübingen, taught at Jena and then Heidelberg. He was an advocate for academic freedom. He was motivated by an apologetic purpose: to remove the stumbling-block to faith that the miracles presented. About his aims in writing, he says, “The aim of my life, as I could conceive it then in relation to scientific matters, was, in accord with the preparation and resources which I believed I brought to it, directed toward the presentation of a biblical and rationally grounded and harmonious totality of religious certainties.”¹³¹

He is most well-known for his writings on the Gospels. He believed that the Gospel writers were honest, but that they did not understand the world the way modern men now know it to be. He believed that Christianity is faith in the Jesus as he existed and attempted to reconstruct this Jesus according to modern sensibilities. He is most interested in Jesus’ ethical teaching.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Religious Consciousness

Schleiermacher has been called “the most important theologian of the nineteenth century.”¹³² He grew up in a Reformed home but had pietistic influences from the Moravian boarding school that he attended. He was educated at Halle, and was there influenced by the Philosophy of Kant. He became a Reformed pastor. He was involved in the intellectual life in Berlin. He “believed that

¹²⁹ Baird, 199.

¹³⁰ Baird, 201.

¹³¹ Quoted in Baird, 208.

¹³² Baird, 208.

women had a special sensitivity for religious experience.”¹³³ He became a professor and preacher at Halle, then was part of the founding of the University of Berlin, where he was head of the theology faculty. He was an effective teacher, preacher and teacher of confirmation classes.¹³⁴

Schleiermacher’s Religious Thought

Baird says about The Christian Faith that it is “probably the most important Protestant systematic theology since Calvin’s *Institutes*.”¹³⁵ He distinguishes between religion (experience) and theology (reflection on experience). He was influenced in his thinking by Pietism in that he was sensitive to religious experience. “In essence, he believed that **religion is the sense of absolute dependence on God**. God cannot be an object of speculation but can be known only in relation to humans—in profound religious experience. . . . Christian theology is always historically conditioned and christocentric.”¹³⁶

Sin is understood as the “lack of God-consciousness,” and redemption is “accomplished through Christ, the founder of Christianity and the archetype of God-consciousness. Christ is the perfect expression of absolute dependence on God and is, therefore, sinless, although totally human. Faith is dependent on the historical event of Christ, and Scripture derives its authority from its witness to him.”¹³⁷ In terms of miracles, he believed that God works through nature, rather than overriding it. **A miracle is “inconceivable” for him** because it would imply that God saw some fault with his work in nature.¹³⁸

Schleiermacher’s Hermeneutical and Critical Research

With his work in hermeneutics, Schleiermacher makes a significant advance in pressing beyond the question of exegesis to the question of understanding. Hermeneutics is an art and not just a science. The Bible should be interpreted like any other book. It should be historically interpreted because the NT authors are “rooted” in time and place.¹³⁹ It should furthermore be interpreted in such a way that it takes into account the psychological and subjective aspects of the human dimension of communication. He therefore believes in a grammatical aspect as well as what Baird calls “technical-psychological.”¹⁴⁰ In terms of his critical research, his *Introduction* summarizes most of his thoughts on the matter.

Schleiermacher’s Life of Jesus

Baird says that Schleiermacher’s work “culminates” in the Life of Jesus, and that it is “a synthesis of exegetical and theological reflection.”¹⁴¹ The book is based off of his own and his students’ notes from his lectures. He discusses Jesus’s growth in God-consciousness, in the first

¹³³ Baird, 209.

¹³⁴ Baird, 208–210.

¹³⁵ Baird, 210.

¹³⁶ Baird, 210–211.

¹³⁷ Baird, 211.

¹³⁸ Baird, 211.

¹³⁹ Baird, 212.

¹⁴⁰ Baird, 212.

¹⁴¹ Baird, 213.

part. He discusses Jesus's public ministry in the second part. He believes that "the miracles were probably not as numerous as the Gospels imply."¹⁴² Baird says that the third part, dealing with the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus are "confusing," and that he "steers an unsteady course between natural and supernatural."¹⁴³ Baird concludes that Schleiermacher makes the death and resurrection of Christ secondary to his understanding of "God-consciousness."¹⁴⁴ What is important is that for him, the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are the same.

Followers of Schleiermacher: De Wette and Lücke

Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780-1849)

De Wette studied at gymnasium in Weimar, and was influenced by **J. G. Herder**. At Jena he studied under Griesbach and Paulus. He taught at Jena, Heidelberg, and the University of Berlin (with Schleiermacher). De Wette opposed the calling of Hegel to Berlin because he thought that Hegel's philosophy was a threat to Christianity. He was dismissed from Berlin for political reasons. He taught later at Basel. His approach was rationalistic, but was noted for his personal piety.¹⁴⁵

De Wette's Theological Perspective: De Wette wrote in OT, NT and Dogmatics. His views on Religion and Theology are best set out in his novel *Theodore, or the Skeptic's Conversion* (English trans., 1841). In this book he claims that "the essence of religion is feeling."¹⁴⁶ Feeling is the way to the transcendent. Baird says that for de Wette, Christ is "the supreme manifestation of historical revelation."¹⁴⁷ De Wette self-consciously occupied a territory between rationalism and supernaturalism. Scripture is not revelation, but it is the truest record of revelation. It gains its authority from its witness to Christ.¹⁴⁸

De Wette's New Testament Research: In his NT research, de Wette said that study of the Gospels must be "based on solid historical facts" and "follow clearly defined general and special principles."¹⁴⁹ While he did not believe everything could be known about Jesus, he believed that enough could be known for Christians to live faithfully.

De Wette's *Introduction to the NT*. De Wette deals with language and text criticism. Regarding the Gospels, he believes that the "Gospels rest on an oral tradition (Herder), which was written in a variety of fragments (Schleiermacher), which were used by the author of Matthew, which was used by Luke; finally, Mark used both Matthew and Luke (Griesbach)."¹⁵⁰ He is highly skeptical when it comes to issues of authorship.

¹⁴² Baird, 218.

¹⁴³ Baird, 219.

¹⁴⁴ Baird, 220.

¹⁴⁵ Baird, 221.

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Baird, 223.

¹⁴⁷ Baird, 223.

¹⁴⁸ Baird, 223.

¹⁴⁹ Baird, 224.

¹⁵⁰ Baird, 225.

He also wrote a set of exegetical handbooks on the NT. He generally prefers the account of John over the synoptics. He is much more positively disposed to the accounts found there. He rejects both the rationalist and liberal accounts of the resurrection and says that he is open to the resurrection as a supernatural event.¹⁵¹

In his *Biblical Dogmatics*, he discusses the religion of the OT and the religion on the NT. He believed that in the NT is a Jewish Christianity, a Hellenistic Christianity, and a Pauline Christianity. He prioritizes the teaching of Jesus found in John. He uses ST categories in his discussion of the theology of the various books.

His scholarship was characterized by brevity and clarity. He emphasizes, with Schleiermacher, the “significance of religious consciousness and the importance of communicating the Christian faith to the intelligent layperson.”¹⁵² His critical opinions about the NT were agreed upon by later scholars. Baird says in conclusion that “de Wette seems to have officiated at an unhappy marriage between rationalism and the supernatural. . . . [His] concept of religious feeling does not provide an adequate ontological ground for overcoming the tension between objective history and spiritual reality and, finally, moves in the direction of subjectivity.”¹⁵³

Friedrich Lücke (1791-1855)

Lücke was a moderate who studied in Halle and Göttingen. He also studied at Berlin under Schleiermacher, de Wette, and Neander. He began his teaching career at Bonn and then taught at Göttingen for the rest of his career. He was known for his “warm personal faith.”¹⁵⁴

Lücke’s Hermeneutic: Lücke’s hermeneutic represented a mediating position between rationalists and supernaturalists. Schleiermacher’s influence on him meant that he was Christocentric in his thought and concerned for the well-being of the church. His view on theology was that it had three main tasks: 1. Historical (critical) knowledge; 2. Philosophical reflection on the meaning of the faith, and 3. Combining the historical and philosophical dimensions for the benefit of the church.¹⁵⁵

Lücke’s most important contribution is in the area of exegesis and hermeneutics. According to Baird, he thought that there was a great need for hermeneutical understanding: “theology is plagued by a dogmatics that has not been based on exegesis, and by an exegesis that ignores theology. Properly understood, exegesis has two aspects: historical and philosophical. Hermeneutics is the philosophical prolegomenon to historical exegesis.”¹⁵⁶ In his *Outline of NT Hermeneutics*, he first searches for “a basic hermeneutical principle.”¹⁵⁷ While he believed that a

¹⁵¹ Baird, 227.

¹⁵² Baird, 228.

¹⁵³ Baird, 229.

¹⁵⁴ Baird, 229.

¹⁵⁵ Baird, 229–230.

¹⁵⁶ Baird, 230.

¹⁵⁷ Baird, 230.

lack of historical hermeneutics was detrimental, he also believed that historical-grammatical hermeneutics were insufficient when used exclusively.¹⁵⁸

In the end, he posits as his own basic principle the idea of the basic unity of the human spirit. He believes that there is a basic common ground that all people share by virtue of their shared humanity. “To understand a text, one must know the language and historical setting, and, most of all, be united in a spiritual relationship (*Seelenverwandtschaft*) with the NT author.”¹⁵⁹

The second part of his work deals with issues of form (including style and genre) and content (which includes doctrinal content and historical content). He tries to synthesize the rationalist and supernaturalist views on miracles. For the doctrinal content, he believes that the material ought to undergo theological analysis and synthesis that yields a NT theology grounded in historical revelation. “This harmony of analysis and synthesis—a unity of historical-critical and theological interpretation— Lücke calls ‘Christian philology.’”¹⁶⁰ In the third part, he discusses the scholarly and popular communication of Christian truth.

Lücke’s Johannine Research: He published a series of works on John’s writings in 1820–1832. He believed that the Gospel and Letters were genuine, but the Revelation was not John’s. His major work is his commentary on the Gospel of John. It “combines historical research with theological reflection in the service of the Christian faith.”¹⁶¹ He believes John’s gospel to be trustworthy. In his view, John and the synoptics are different because John deals with theological instruction to the disciples, whereas the synoptics deal with ethical instruction for the crowds. John’s Gospel was written to combat Gnosticism. The preincarnate Word is a teaching that comes from the ancient worldview, and is a “temporally conditioned symbolic expression of an essential Christian truth.”¹⁶²

With regard to the miracles, he attempts to “harmonize the rational and supernatural.”¹⁶³ He believes that it all comes down to presuppositions. He thinks it is unwarranted to reject the miracles because of an anti-supernatural bias. It is important to investigate each of them historically. In his John Commentary, he raises all of the important questions, and demonstrates mastery of all of the critical disciplines.

A Mediating Alternative: August Neander (1789-1850)

Neander was a church historian, a Jewish man (born David Mendel) who was converted after reading Schleiermacher’s *On Religion*. He was educated at Halle, and mentored by Schleiermacher. He continued at Göttingen, and then began teaching at Heidelberg, and then Berlin. He worked with Schleiermacher and de Wette.¹⁶⁴ He wrote on church history, including

¹⁵⁸ Baird, 230.

¹⁵⁹ Baird, 230–231.

¹⁶⁰ Baird, 231.

¹⁶¹ Baird, 232.

¹⁶² Quoted in Baird, 234.

¹⁶³ Baird, 234.

¹⁶⁴ Baird, 235.

books on Gnosticism and the early church. He was fairly conservative, with a view of Christianity that was fundamentally supernatural.¹⁶⁵

Neander wrote several “practical commentaries” on NT books (Philippians, 1 John and James). His more important work is the *Life of Jesus*, which answers the work of Strauss written two years earlier. Neander thought that anyone who writes a Life of Jesus must start from the presupposition that Jesus is the Son of God in a unique way. His goal is to provide historical support for that presupposition. He accepts the incarnation, which makes him view the miracles without suspicion. He believed that the miracles are not contradictory to nature, even though they transcend the laws of nature. He depends heavily on John’s Gospel.

His research into the early church is also important. The Acts and Epistles are the sources he uses. The resurrection proves that Jesus is the Son of God. Neander basically takes the Acts account as trustworthy (for which Baird condescends toward him). He believes that there were three early theologies in the church: Pauline, Jacobean, and Johannine. Baird appreciates that he sees a historical development in the theology of the NT.¹⁶⁶

8. The Influence of Philosophical Idealism

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) rocked the theological sandbox. His philosophy provided an all-encompassing system within which to fit religion, philosophy and all of life.

According to Hegel, the Absolute Spirit is manifest in nature and is constantly unfolding itself in history. As it manifests itself, the Absolute is always encountering oppositions: the infinite against the finite, truth against error. Thus, the unfolding of the Absolute involves a dialectical process: the subject encounters the object and is reconciled into a new subject. . . . In Hegel’s opinion, the absolute religion was Christianity, for Christianity affirmed the ongoing process of the Divine spirit realizing itself in history. Ni Moreover, the unity of divine and human, Spirit and body, infinite and finite, was realized in the idea of the God-man, a concept actualized in the historical Jesus.¹⁶⁷

Theologians thought Hegel would solve all of their problems, although some noted that Hegel’s God was not the same as Christianity. There were varieties of Hegelianism: left-wing radical Hegelians, Right-wing conservative Hegelians, and moderates. Hegel was influential in the life of Strauss and F. C. Baur.

Davis Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874) and the Life of Jesus

Baird says that Strauss’s *Life if Jesus* was “a theological bombshell.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Baird, 235–236

¹⁶⁶ Baird, 239–242.

¹⁶⁷ Baird, 244–245.

¹⁶⁸ Baird, 246.

Strauss's Life and Thought: He was a boy genius. He was influenced by F. C. Baur. He studied at Tübingen. He read Schleiermacher, and disagreed with him. He served as a pastor for a short time. Hegel became more influential to him. He taught at Tübingen for a time but was dismissed. He was a controversial figure. He withdrew from theology for a while and wrote other things for a living. He was involved in politics for a bit. While he became politically conservative, he became religiously more liberal. He rejected miracles and theism altogether and embraced pantheism. The historical Jesus, for him, is a symbol of the unity of divine and human. He rejected all other orthodox doctrines. He also rejected Schleiermacher's attempt to combine rationalism and supernaturalism. He says that Schleiermacher's historical Jesus is a fabrication.¹⁶⁹

The Life of Jesus: This was his most important work. He had two goals: 1. Overthrow rationalist and supernaturalist interpretations, and 2. Advocate for a mythological interpretation.¹⁷⁰ Some, like Baur, noted that there was not much new in this. But what was new was the consistency in following previous thought to its conclusion and his "ruthless" way of arguing, including ridicule and irony.¹⁷¹

Strauss's idea of Myth is a non-historical narrative that expresses some idea about Jesus. It gives concrete shape to the early disciples' faith in Jesus. Some myths had their basis in historical events, but many did not. Strauss is original in applying this term to the whole Gospel narratives. The criteria for identifying myth is 1. Supernatural events, or 2. Contradictory events.

Strauss uses ridicule to refute the miraculous. Furthermore, he is aware that his work will destroy Christianity as it is known to this point. Jesus was a great person, but only a human. He functions as a symbol for the divine-human unity.¹⁷² He later published a defense of his work.

Strauss's Later Theological Writings: Strauss later published a follow-up: *The Life of Jesus for the People*. Here he stands by his work and tries to answer objections. Before his death he published *The Old Faith and the New*. Here he plainly rejects Christianity and embraces Hegelianism.

The Reconstruction of Early Christian History: Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860)

He is considered one of the greatest church historians of the 19th century. He was an important NT scholar. He was educated at Tübingen and taught there. He was known for being an industrious worker. He also preached regularly.

Baur's Theological Work: Baur recognized the historical nature of Christianity. He embraced a moderate Hegelianism. He believed that history was understood through historical criticism.

¹⁶⁹ Baird, 246–250.

¹⁷⁰ Baird, 250.

¹⁷¹ Baird, 250.

¹⁷² Baird, 254.

Christology is an important category for Baur, because faith rests on the historical Jesus. His methodology includes a dialectical relationship between fact and interpretation. He rejects supernaturalism and rationalism. He rejects the miraculous. He was very productive, authoring works in philosophy of religion, history, history of theology and Christian dogmatics. He also wrote NT works early on that proposed the conflict between Peter and Paul as central to understanding Christian history.

Early Christianity: Jesus and Christian Origins: Baur's reconstruction of early Christianity and his evaluation of the NT stand in a circular relationship to one another:

NT documents are used to reconstruct early Christian history; the reconstruction of early Christian history provides the framework for the assessment of NT documents. This hermeneutical circle functions in correlation with Baur's tendency criticism; the individual NT documents reveal the decisive tendencies that determine the developing history; the developing history provides the occasion for the expression of the various tendencies.¹⁷³

His reconstruction of the early history of the church is found in *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*. He discusses Jesus and Christian origins. Jesus is the founder of a new religion. Jesus' teachings emphasized righteousness and the kingdom of God. He distinguishes between the resurrection and the early church's *belief* in the resurrection. Only the latter is the historical origin of Christianity.

Early Christianity: Paul versus Jewish Christianity: Baur sees three Chronological periods of the early church. The **first** stage is *conflict* between Petrine and Pauline Christianity. He examines Acts, the Pauline epistles and Paul's theology. Paul's emphasis is universalism, as opposed to Jewish particularism. In his opinion, the NT letters have been written to smooth over the conflicts between these factions. Justification is the heart of Paul's theology, and has to do with the union between the believer and the divine. The resurrection did not take place in the tomb, but in the heart of the believer.

Early Christianity: Reconciliation and Accommodation: The **second** stage is the era of *reconciliation*, in which the opposing factions begin to try to harmonize and move toward each other theologically. "For Baur, the great reconciler is the author of the Acts of the Apostles."¹⁷⁴ This books is full of historical inaccuracies that are intended to portray Peter and Paul as partners, when in reality they were opponents. The **third** stage is the era of *accommodation*, in which the two movements have merged.

Baird says that Baur's legacy is mixed: he is known for his creative energy and his all-encompassing theory, but he made many historical errors and is guilty of circular reasoning.¹⁷⁵

The Tübingen School: Zeller and Hilgenfeld

¹⁷³ Baird, 262.

¹⁷⁴ Baird, 267.

¹⁷⁵ Baird, 262, 268–269.

Those who were influenced by Baur were mainly historians who were interested in the NT as a source for their work.

Eduard Zeller (1814–1908)

Zeller studied under Strauss and Baur at Tübingen. He taught at Tübingen, Bern, Marburg, Heidelberg and Berlin. He taught Greek philosophy. His major contribution is in the books of Acts. He follows Baur in many regards, and sees Acts as a tendency document, largely unhistorical. He is largely pro-Paul.

Adolf Hilgenfeld (1823–1907)

Attended Berlin and Halle. Read Baur and was influenced by Tübingen. He taught at Jena but taught poorly. He had to write reviews for income. He tried to become ordained, but was rejected as heretical. His most important work is his *Introduction to the NT*.

There were two primary reactions to Tübingen: 1. People rejected Tübingen's reliance of Hegelian philosophy. 2. People rejected Tübingen's reconstruction of Christian origins.

Alternatives to Tübingen: Hengstenberg, Tholuck, and Ewald

Baird presents these three scholars as representative of reactions to Tübingen.

Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802–1869)

Hengstenberg represented a return to orthodoxy. He was primarily an OT scholar. He was converted to confessional Lutheranism. He rejected historical criticism. He wrote an important work that argued for the proof of Christianity from OT prophecy. Baird thinks this is not a good work and that he is reading Christ back into the OT. Hengstenberg also has an interest in John. Baird's assessment is as follows:

Although Hengstenberg knew and even used the historical-critical method, his approach was essentially a return to Protestant scholasticism. For Hengstenberg, exegesis was enlisted in the service of orthodox theology. His Christological reading of the OT represents an unhistorical imposition of Christian doctrine upon the Hebrew Scriptures. At the same time, Hengstenberg, for all his hatred of Enlightenment interpretation, shared its inevitable outcome: the reduction of the narrative of the Bible to sheer history. To be sure, the historical residue left by Hengstenberg was much larger than that of the Enlightenment critics. Yet, in spite of Hengstenberg's allegiance to the Scriptures, the Bible, like Lazarus, came forth, bound hand and foot: the poetry of the OT turned into allegory, the symbols of the NT reduced to facts.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Baird, 282.

August Tholuck (1799–1877)

Tholuck represents the Pietist reaction to Tübingen. “In theology, Tholuck was a moderate who braced reason but renounced rationalism.”¹⁷⁷ In his novel *Guido and Julius*, he replied to de Wette’s *Theodore*, arguing through the interchange between the main characters that Theodore did not understand the “seriousness of sin and the necessity of atonement, with the result that Theodore remained too skeptical and not really converted.”¹⁷⁸

He wrote a commentary on Romans, Hebrews, and the Sermon on the Mount. His most important work was an apologetic work titled *The Rehabilitation of the Gospel Story*. He wanted to “provide historical proof for the miracle stories of the Gospels.”¹⁷⁹ He believes that the reason that Strauss denies miracles is because of wrong presuppositions. He wrote a commentary on the Gospel of John. Baird concludes, “Tholuck’s Pietism has added an element of vitality to his understanding of the NT, but, in the main, the spirit is captive to an apologetic Biblicism.”¹⁸⁰

Heinrich Ewald (1803–1875)

He was an OT scholar who “thrived on conflict,” and who sparred with Baur at Tübingen.¹⁸¹ He produced a number of OT works, including a *History of Israel*. He believed that the Bible is a record of revelation, and that despite some errors, the Bible is basically reliable. Historical research confirms the Bible’s basic veracity. He offers an elaborate solution to the Synoptic problem, but basically accepts the priority of Mark and the two-document hypothesis. He is a moderate conservative. Baird assesses Ewald as follows:

Heinrich Ewald presents NT scholars of the nineteenth century with a viable alternative to the Tübingen approach. He demonstrates that it is possible to employ the historical-critical method and still reach relatively conservative conclusions. Ewald, with his recognition of pseudonymous documents within the canon and his acknowledgment of discrepancies in Scripture, is no Biblicist. He is also attuned to the Enlightenment belief in progressive revelation and is sensitive to the idea of the spirit in contrast to exclusive preoccupation with the letter. Like the mediating theologians and the neologians, Ewald attempts to combine natural and supernatural. However, he tends to reduce biblical literature to historical record, even though his idea of revelation in history involves religious experience and the significance of the biblical message for human salvation.¹⁸²

9. Literary, Historical, and Textual Criticism alongside and in the Wake of Tübingen

¹⁷⁷ Baird, 283.

¹⁷⁸ Baird, 283–284.

¹⁷⁹ Baird, 284.

¹⁸⁰ Baird, 286.

¹⁸¹ Baird, 287.

¹⁸² Baird, 292.

Baird says that along with the Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment thought continued to refine itself with regard to biblical criticism. To use Kuhn's terminology, this was "normal science;" the paradigm had undergone a revolution, and it was now just a matter of working out the implications. Much of the work done was a response to Strauss and Tübingen.¹⁸³

Research on the Synoptic Problem

Johann Carl Ludwig Gieseler (1792–1854): Common Oral Tradition

Educated at Halle and Bonn, he taught at Göttingen. He was a church historian. Gieseler believed that "a common oral source can account for the agreements among the Gospels, and the variations can be explained by individual usage of the common source by the different evangelists."¹⁸⁴ He said that this took place in three stages: 1. The preaching of the Apostles, 2. The teaching of later disciples (when the language changed from Aramaic to Greek), and 3. When they were committed to writing. They were not written by eyewitnesses.¹⁸⁵

Herbert Marsh (1758–1839): A Common Written Gospel

Marsh was educated at King's School, Canterbury, St. John's College, Cambridge, and Leipzig. He taught at Cambridge, and later became a bishop. He worked in church history and biblical studies. He is an advocate of historical interpretation. Marsh suggests that a common Aramaic document is the best explanation for the agreements and variables between the Synoptic Gospels. He proposes the following order of events:¹⁸⁶

1. The earliest Gospels (Aleph) is written in Aramaic.
2. Aleph was translated into Greek.
3. Different material is added to different copies of Aleph.
4. A Semitic teachings document (Beth) is composed.
5. Matthew composed an Aramaic Gospel using Aleph and Beth and original material.
6. Luke used the Greek version of Aleph and Beth and his own research.
7. Mark used Greek Aleph and his own sources.
8. Canonical Matthew translated Aramaic Matthew and used Mark and Luke.

Note this presents an early version of two-source hypothesis.

Christian Gottlob Wilke (1786–1854): The Priority of Mark

¹⁸³ Baird, 295.

¹⁸⁴ Baird, 297.

¹⁸⁵ Baird, 297–298.

¹⁸⁶ Baird, 300.

Wilke was a pastor who retired and converted to Catholicism. He was interested in biblical philology. He wrote a refutation of Strauss's *Life*. ". . . Wilke rejected supernaturalism, while seeking a rationalism sensitive to religious feeling."¹⁸⁷ He also wrote a book on Hermeneutics.

Regarding his contribution to the Synoptic problem, Baird says that Wilke's book "is one of the most extensive treatments (over 690 pages) of the problem ever published."¹⁸⁸ Mark is the original Gospel, according to Wilke. He argues on the basis of the orderings that Matthew and Luke (generally) follow Mark. On the basis of content, Mark has the least amount of distinctive material. He believes that Matthew and Luke's additions are based on their own style and purpose. He also believes that Matthew used Luke.¹⁸⁹

***Christian Hermann Weisse (1801–1866):
Two-Document Hypothesis***

Weisse was educated at Leipzig, where he studied philosophy. He later taught there and was "an important representative of nineteenth-century idealism."¹⁹⁰ Regarding the Synoptic Problem, he believed that Mark preserved Peter's memories. Mark was then used by Matthew and Luke, who also used a *logia*, or sayings source (later called *Q*). Regarding the Gospel narrative, he is skeptical of its historicity, similar to Strauss.¹⁹¹

Hajo Uden Meijboom (1842-1933)

Meijboom was a Dutch patristics scholar. He prefers the Griesbach hypothesis, and attempted to refute the Markan priority view.

The Authenticity of the Gospel of John

Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider (1776–1848)

Educated in Leipzig, he taught at Wittenberg, then pastored, and finally became a church official. He wrote in the area of Reformation history. He wrote his inquiry into the historicity of John in Latin out of concern for the faith of the average person. Basically, he pits John against the Synoptics, and then favors the Synoptics against John, refuting the historicity of John. The author of John's Gospel was neither an eyewitness, nor a Palestinian, nor a Jew. He had apologetic concerns, and wrote to portray Jesus in a way that was acceptable to Gentiles.

John James Tayler (1797–1869)

¹⁸⁷ Baird, 1:301.

¹⁸⁸ Baird, 1:303.

¹⁸⁹ Baird, 1:303–305.

¹⁹⁰ Baird, 1:305.

¹⁹¹ Baird, 1:307.

Educated at Manchester College, then Glasgow, and in 1834–5 he travelled and met German Theologians. He taught at Manchester, and then London. He also rejected Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel.

Text Criticism

Karl Lachmann (1793–1851)

Educated in Leipzig and Göttingen, he taught in Göttingen and then Berlin, then Königsberg and then Berlin again. He was a classicist who studied Homer, he also worked on the Synoptic Problem and Textual criticism. With regard to the Synoptic Problem, he focused on the issue of the order of the narratives. Basically he believed that Mark was closer to the original order than Matthew or Luke. However, neither Matthew nor Luke used Mark.

With regard to Textual criticism, his key accomplishment was to break away from the Textus Receptus. He produced a critical text with an extensive list of variants, though manuscript evidence is limited.

Constantin von Tischendorf (1815–1874)

Baird says that Tischendorf was “perhaps the greatest text critic of all times.”¹⁹² He was educated at Leipzig under Winer, and taught there as well. He was a conservative Christian who felt it was his duty to show the “authenticity of the Gospels.”¹⁹³ He was committed to finding manuscripts and producing a critical NT. He discovered Codex Sinaiticus in 1844, and used Codex Vaticanus. He produced a very reliable critical NT (8th edition was 3 vols., including prolegomena).

10. Moderate and Mediating Criticism

Roman Catholic Scholarship

Roman Catholic scholars were slow to adopt Enlightenment methods. Though it would have furthered their attempt to undercut the Protestant principle of sola scriptura, it also would have undercut their own view of the Bible and tradition.¹⁹⁴

Text Criticism and Response to Strauss

There were a number of Catholic scholars who did adopt historical-critical research methods. Johannes Martin Augustinus Scholz (1794-1852) was a textual critic. He produced a critical NT text (1830–36) that preferred the Byzantine text (he later changed his mind about the value of this text family).

¹⁹² Baird, 322.

¹⁹³ Baird, 322.

¹⁹⁴ Baird, 330–331.

Catholic scholars also repudiated Strauss's *Life of Jesus*. They criticized his philosophical presuppositions (anti-supernaturalism), his understanding of the historical method, and his view of "mythological" interpretation of the Gospels.¹⁹⁵

Johann Leonhard Hug (1765-1846) and Higher Criticism

Hug was the "most important Catholic biblical scholar of the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century."¹⁹⁶ He was educated in Freiburg and Meerburg and ordained. He taught at Freiburg: Semitic Languages, OT and NT. He focused on the historical background of the NT. He also wrote against Strauss, as others had done. His most important work for NT research is his *Introduction*. Baird summarizes:

At first glance, Hug appears to contribute little to the advance of higher criticism: he affirms the authenticity of every NT book, a position which was increasingly difficult to accept in the nineteenth century. A careful reading of Hug's *Introduction*, however, will prove that he has not reached his conclusions with ease. Hug knows the literature and skills of criticism, he faces. The critical issues head on, and he presents about as convincing an argument as the data allows.¹⁹⁷

Romanticism and Imagination in England

England tended to be more conservative because the church controlled the universities. Since the Deists, few people were willing to boldly reject the authority of a traditional understanding of Scripture. Romanticism provided an influence that moved people to engage in historical criticism in a way that was moderate and not too radical.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

Coleridge studied at Cambridge and Göttingen. He was a romantic who was once interested in Unitarianism, but was eventually convinced of a moderate historic Christianity. Drawing on Kant, he believed that there was a distinction between imagination (reason) and understanding. Understanding brought knowledge via the senses, but imagination allowed access to spiritual and universal truths.¹⁹⁸ He believed that Christianity was not "a set of doctrines to be proved, but a way of life."¹⁹⁹ The crucial event in this story was the incarnation.

Regarding Scripture, the Bible ought to be interpreted like any other book. He denied infallibility and inspiration. Not everything in the Bible is revelation. Human language cannot grasp God's truth. The teaching of Christ is more important than Scripture. Scripture witnesses to Christ.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ Baird, 331–333.

¹⁹⁶ Baird, 333.

¹⁹⁷ Baird, 338.

¹⁹⁸ Baird, 339–340.

¹⁹⁹ Baird, 340.

²⁰⁰ Baird, 340–343.

Thomas Arnold (1795-1842)

Arnold studied at Oxford and later taught there. He was influenced by Coleridge. He advocated a practical Christianity. Christ is a guide in life. He argued that the resurrection was different than the other Biblical miracles and was crucial to Christianity. He intended to write a commentary on Paul's letters, but never managed to do it.

His major contribution is his essay, "On the Right Interpretation and Understanding of the Scriptures."²⁰¹ In this essay, he discussed biblical interpretation. He discusses the idea of historical interpretation, and progressive revelation. "Arnold, like Lessing and Herder, believed the human race developed in a way analogous to the development of the individual—from childhood, through adolescence, to maturity. Consequently, God's revelation to humans in the era of infancy had to take primitive form, thus, for example, the description of God in anthropomorphic terms."²⁰²

In interpreting the Bible, some works are religious (doctrinal), some are mixed (doctrinal and historical), and some are historical. Arnold denied infallibility. Nevertheless, he feels secure, because, like Lessing, the "Christian faith is secure and cannot be destroyed by historical and scientific research."²⁰³

Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815-1881)

Stanley was educated at Oxford under Arnold. He was ordained and taught church history at Oxford. His sermons were judged unorthodox. He was appointed dean at Westminster's, and influenced the religious life of England, and in this way increased support for biblical criticism.²⁰⁴ Baird says that in one sermon, he encouraged people to determine what is "central and lasting" in the Apostolic writings, and what is "local and temporary."²⁰⁵

His major contribution to NT research is his commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians.²⁰⁶

Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893)

Jowett was known for his translation of Plato. He studied at Oxford, and then taught there later. He had no theological system. "Three main themes characterize Jowett's own theology: God as the transcendent being who possesses personality; Christ as the ultimate disclosure of divine truth; and religion which takes account of history and science."²⁰⁷

²⁰¹ Baird, 345–346.

²⁰² Baird, 346.

²⁰³ Baird, 347.

²⁰⁴ Baird, 348.

²⁰⁵ Baird, 349.

²⁰⁶ Baird, 350.

²⁰⁷ Baird, 354.

Along with Stanley, he worked on a commentary of Paul's letters, writing the volumes on 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians and Romans. His commentary "reflects his moderate approach."²⁰⁸ His exegesis is historical. He rejects substitutionary atonement.

He was part of a great controversy when he wrote an essay that was published in the infamous *Essays and Reviews* (1860). In this essay he said that the Bible should be interpreted like any other book. He rejects the dogmatic view of inspiration, and states that "no view of inspiration is valid which contradicts the facts of history or science."²⁰⁹ He also rejects an interpretation that is meant to support one's theology. He also says that the Bible cannot be easily understood by modern westerners. He ultimately thinks that criticism provides a useful service that will allow people to understand the Bible better.²¹⁰

11. Synthesizing Accomplishments

Baird calls this chapter "Synthesizing Accomplishments" because it deals with two areas in which scholars had to bring together all the tools of biblical scholarship for the exegetical task: Bible Commentaries and Lives of Jesus.

Commentary Series

Hermann Olshausen (1796–1839)

Olshausen was educated at Kiel and Berlin. He studied under de Wette. He taught in Berlin, Königsburg, and Erlangen. He is a conservative and wrote an apologetic work (*The Genuineness of the Four Canonical Gospels*, 1823), and two books on biblical interpretation (*Ein Wort über tieferen Schriftsinn*, 1824; *Die biblische Schriftauslegung*, 1825).

His commentary series, *Biblical Commentary on the New Testament*, was very popular. He used the historical-critical method to confirm the authenticity of the NT books. "Olshausen's main concern is to provide doctrinal meaning for the common reader, rather than philological research for scholars. Nevertheless, he deals with linguistic details and attends to matters of text and grammar."²¹¹ Olshausen thought the genuineness of the NT books was important for the faith and employed historical-criticism in defense of the NT books. Of course, Baird says that his exegesis is "predictable."²¹²

Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer (1800–1873)

Baird says that Meyer was "the most notable NT commentator of the nineteenth century."²¹³ He was educated in Gotha and studied under Bretschneider. At Jena, he studied under professors

²⁰⁸ Baird, 256.

²⁰⁹ Baird, 358–359.

²¹⁰ Baird, 359.

²¹¹ Baird, 363.

²¹² Baird, 365.

²¹³ Baird, 365.

such as J. P. Gabler. He served in the church and never held an academic position. His greatest accomplishment was his commentary series, *Kritisch exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament*. (*Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the New Testament*). While he has no problem with the miracles of the Bible, he was not necessarily an inerrantist (he denied the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles). He was “convinced that historical-critical exegesis, freed from dogmatic presuppositions, could provide the solution to the theological crisis of his time.”²¹⁴

Johann Peter Lange (1802–1884)

Lange was educated at Bonn and became a pastor. Later, he taught at Zurich and Bonn. His works included “a three-volume work on dogmatics, a two-volume history of the apostolic age, and a life of Jesus that ran to six volumes in translation.”²¹⁵ Lange’s most important work is his commentary series. Philip Schaff thought very highly of it and took part in translating it into English.

Philip Schaff wrote, “It is the greatest literary enterprise of the kind undertaken in the present century.” The series, which included both OT and NT, was an international effort, employing the talents of German, Swiss, and Dutch scholars. Lange himself wrote the commentaries on Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Matthew, Mark, John, Romans, Revelation, and (with the collaboration of van Oosterzee) James.²¹⁶

Lange’s approach is a “salvation history” approach. He believed the Bible was the Word of God that had to be preached. He is generally conservative.

Frédéric Louis Godet (1821–1900)

Godet was educated at Bonn and Berlin. He served as a pastor, and then taught at “the theological academy of the Free Church in Neuchâtel.”²¹⁷ He wrote on the OT, NT, and apologetics. He wrote an NT introduction, and commentaries on John, Luke, Romans, and 1 Corinthians.

“The purpose of criticism, according to Godet, is to put the reader in the historical situation of the biblical writer.”²¹⁸ Godet wants to establish the historical credibility of the Bible. Because of this, his exegesis is often concerned with history. He had no problem with miracles and the supernatural.

Lives of Jesus

Ernest Renan (1823–1892)

²¹⁴ Baird, 366.

²¹⁵ Baird, 370–371.

²¹⁶ Baird, 371.

²¹⁷ Baird, 372.

²¹⁸ Baird, 372–373.

Baird says that Renan's *Vie de Jésus* is "the most popular life of Jesus ever written."²¹⁹ He was trained for the priesthood, but had doubts about the faith and left the church. He studied Semitics in Paris, and taught Hebrew at the College of France, but was suspended for his liberal views. He was later reinstated.

The *Life of Jesus* was the first volume in a series called *The History of the Origin of Christianity*. He admitted that the material for constructing the Life of Jesus was scant, therefore, according to Baird, "the project requires **historical imagination**, a characteristic Ernest Renan possessed in abundance."²²⁰ He used Matthew as his primary source. Jesus was an important person for the history of the world (in Renan's opinion). Renan thought that Jesus "advanced" human religion. Renan portrayed Jesus as a moral teacher, but when he met John the Baptist, John filled his head with strange, revolutionary ideas. "Renan does not fully resolve the tension between the gentle Jesus and the messianic revolutionary—nor does he try; history, he thinks, is a chronicle of all sorts of inconsistencies. Nevertheless, what dominates Renan's portrait is Jesus as the teacher of a universal, moral religion—a sort of ethical humanism."²²¹ The resurrection of Lazarus, according to Renan, is a hoax "contrived by Jesus."²²² The Apostles "resurrected Jesus in their hearts by the intense love which they bore toward him."²²³

This book was received negatively. He also wrote on Paul, and thought that Paul "transformed Jesus into a metaphysical figure. . . . In Renan's opinion, true Christianity is not to be found in the epistles of Paul, but in the Gospels that witness to the religion of Jesus."²²⁴

Theodor Keim (1825–1878)

Keim studied at Tübingen under F. C. Baur, as well as at Bonn. He taught at Tübingen, pastored for a few years, and then taught at Zurich, then Giessen. He was an "eloquent preacher" and wrote in the area of church history.²²⁵ His major work was *Geschichte Jesu von Nazara* (1867–1872). He attempted to write as a "pure historian, devoid of dogmatic presuppositions."²²⁶ He believed that German philosophical idealism and progressive Christianity could provide a way to finally gain clarity on the historical Jesus. Baird evaluates:

For the nineteenth-century intellectual. Keim presented a Jesus who was unique without being supernatural, a noble, ethical teacher who is free from the embarrassment of the miraculous. . . . For [traditional, conservative Christians], Keim's Jesus was not divine enough to be their redeemer, nor human enough to share their weakness. Of course, by anyone's estimate, Keim had hardly kept his promise to remain an objective historian. His philosophical and theological presuppositions are apparent on almost every page. But, most of all, the magnitude of Keim's accomplishment is the measure of its

²¹⁹ Baird, 375.

²²⁰ Baird, 377.

²²¹ Baird, 380.

²²² Baird, 380.

²²³ Quoted in Baird, 381.

²²⁴ Baird, 383–384.

²²⁵ Baird, 384.

²²⁶ Baird, 384.

weakness. Here is a life of Jesus too complete, too accurate, too fulsome in detail—above all, too confident. The observer stands in wonder at how, by some legerdemain, Keim has transformed a small collection of fragmentary sources into six ponderous volumes of accurate biography. In a sense, Keim epitomizes the course of Enlightenment criticism: he had become skeptical of the narrative of the Gospels; he remained confident in the science of the historians.²²⁷

Epilogue

Summary of this book: There were two major worldviews that impacted NT study: the **Enlightenment** and **German Idealism**. There was a repeated concern over the relationship between reason and revelation. People struggle regarding whether miracles were possible. History was the primary category of thought, and many people tried to show the historicity (or lack thereof) of the Bible. Some people resorted to rationalism to try to save Christianity, but undermined the NT message.

There was a great concern for hermeneutics: this moved from rules to interpretation to Schleiermacher's concern for "a philosophy of understanding that involved the personal participation of writer and reader."²²⁸

The Historical-critical method made great progress in this period. According to this method, one had to "bracket" their beliefs and do their research as a "neutral, objective observer." Many people qualified the historical method, either by stipulating a place for the place of the Spirit, or by showing that the original authors were engaged in writing "myths."

Text criticism made great headway, but questions of introduction were still debated. There was some progress made on the synoptic problem, and people tried to rewrite the history of Jesus or the early church.

With regard to Theology, Gabler made a distinction between BT and ST, but ST suffered and orthodox doctrines were undermined.

²²⁷ William Baird, *History of NT Research*, 1:389–390.

²²⁸ Baird, 394.

HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT RESEARCH: VOL 2
FROM JONATHAN EDWARDS TO RUDOLF BULTMANN

Introduction

This book is significant because the Bible is significant. It is important as scholars to understand where the discipline came from and where it is going. This volume is limited to the time between around 1870–1940. NT research consists of “the whole discipline of the study of the NT, including text criticism, philology, higher criticism, hermeneutics, exegesis, and theology.”²²⁹

PART I: NEW TESTAMENT RESEARCH IN THE ERA OF EXPANDING EMPIRE

1. New Testament Research in America during the Nineteenth Century

The Bible and the Enlightenment have both been important in the history of America. American Bible scholarship has mostly been conservative (Calvin was influential). Revivalism was also influential. Scholars thought that theology should be rational. American scholarship was “characterized by freedom, individualism, revivalism, sensitivity to religious experience, and perception of the American dream. Above all, American NT scholarship was closely related to the church.”²³⁰

A Calvinist Precursor:
Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)

Edwards was a theologian, but his thinking was biblical. He was a minister in MA until he was expelled for requiring evidence of conversion for communion. He preached to the Native Americans, and was made president of the College of New Jersey, but died soon after of a smallpox inoculation.

Edwards was inspired by John Locke and Scottish common-sense realism. He was a traditional Calvinist, believing in the doctrines total depravity and the others. He believes this is taught in Scripture. He believes the Bible to be inspired and infallible. Scripture may have more than one meaning, and uses typology to access this meaning. The theological key to Scripture is Christ. His biblical scholarship consists of notebooks on Scripture (“Miscellanies”), sermons, and theological works. John Gerstner has compiled a commentary on Hebrews from Edwards’ various writings.

²²⁹ Baird, 2:xv.

²³⁰ Baird, 2:5.

His “Magnum Opus” is *Original Sin*. He was also interested in Revelation. He was a post-millennialist. His scholarship is conservative. He brought together rationalism and empiricism (reason and the affections).

From Unitarian Biblicism to Transcendental Skepticism

Unitarians oppose the Trinity and deny the deity of Christ. In 1805, a Unitarian was appointed at Harvard, illustrating their growing influence.

Andrews Norton (1786–1833)

Born in MA, educated at Harvard, he taught at Bowdoin College and Harvard, but married into wealth and quit his job to focus on writing. Norton agreed with Unitarians, though he did not like the title. He believed the Bible to be infallible. He believed also in natural theology.

He argued against the doctrine of the Trinity in *A Statement of Reasons for Not Believing the Doctrines of the Trinitarians* (1819). His major contribution to NT studies is *Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels* (1837–1848). He takes very traditional views in this work. He complemented it with *Internal Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels* (posthumously in 1855). Baird says that “For the history of NT research, what seems ironic is the use of a ‘conservative’ criticism in support of a ‘liberal’ theology.”²³¹

Theodore Parker (1810–1860)

Born in MA, educated at Harvard, he became a Congregational minister. He advocated for social issues. He was a transcendentalist (a kind of Unitarian), and was hostile to “bibliolatry” and orthodox Christology.²³² The teachings of Jesus are more important than the Bible, because they are moral truths that can be reached intuitively. He rejected verbal inspiration. The religion of Jesus is as old as creation. He translated de Wette’s OT introduction.

“For the history of NT research, Books III and IV of Parker’s *Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion* are important.”²³³ He takes the Griesbach Hypothesis on the synoptic problem. He sees Jesus as a teacher of morals. Miracles are impossible. Jesus was limited, but because of his greatness, he transcended his limitations.

The Maturing of American Scholarship

Joseph Stevens Buckminster (1784–1812) helped prepare the way for American scholars. He supervised an edition of Griesbach’s text. Conservatives eventually founded Andover Theological Seminary when Harvard was no longer suitable for pastoral training.

²³¹ Baird, 2:15.

²³² Baird, 2:16.

²³³ Baird, 2:18.

Moses Stuart (1780–1852)

Stuart was born in CT, studied at Yale, and was converted in a revival when Timothy Dwight (Jonathan Edward's grandson) was preaching. He studied under Dwight, and became a minister of a congregation in CT. He eventually taught at Andover, where he taught Bible. Stuart intentionally mentored young men who seemed promising.

He was a biblical scholar with a strong theological perspective. He responded to a famous Unitarian in *Letters to Rev. Wm. E. Channing* (1819). He believed that the Bible should be read like any other book, and he denied verbal inspiration (at least a "dictation" view of inspiration), but he believed in the authority of the Bible and its plenary inspiration (i.e., all of it was inspired). He believed in progressive revelation and historical interpretation. He translated Ernesti's *Institutio*. He believed Scripture interprets Scripture. He also focused on the meaning of words (grammatical) and the meaning of things (historical). He produced some linguistic and grammatical works. He translated Georg Winer's *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* (1825), and wrote his own Greek grammar, *A Grammar of the New Testament Dialect* (1834). His Major works were his commentaries on Romans, Hebrews, and Revelation.

Edward Robinson (1794–1863)

Robinson Studied under Stuart. He contributed to an understanding of Biblical geography. He was educated at Hamilton College and Andover, then studied in Europe (Halle, Berlin). He taught at Andover, then Union Theological Seminary. Robinson advocated for a historical understanding of the Bible. However, he also believed that one needed a sensitivity to spiritual things to understand it rightly.

He traveled to the near east several times. He wrote his observations in the form of a diary. Baird says that he made important progress in biblical geography. "He properly identified more than one hundred biblical sites."²³⁴ His vivid description "may have done more to promote the study of the Bible than hosts of academic lectures on higher criticism."²³⁵

Classical Orthodoxy at Princeton: Charles Hodge (1797–1878)

Princeton was established by the Presbyterian Church to train people for the ministry. The two original faculty members were Archibald Alexander and Samuel Miller. Alexander, who was the more influential of the two, like Jonathan Edwards, was influenced by Calvinism, Locke epistemology and Scottish common-sense realism.

Hodge grew up in Philadelphia, and was educated at the College of New Jersey (which would later become Princeton). He was converted in a campus revival, graduated from the seminary, and taught in biblical languages. He studied for two years in Europe (Paris, Halle, and Berlin), and returned to Princeton to teach ST (and NT).

²³⁴ Baird, 2:30.

²³⁵ Baird, 2:31.

Hodge's method was based on Scripture, Calvinist confessionalism, and Scottish common-sense realism. Hodge believed that theology was a science:

Hodge believes that theology is a science, committed to two basic tasks: (1) to ascertain and state the facts recorded in the Bible—the duty of the biblical theologian; and (2) to discern the inner relation of these facts and to arrange them in a harmonious order—the work of the systematic theologian. Thus, the Bible scholar works inductively, collecting data from the Bible the way the scientist collects data from nature. “The Bible,” says Hodge, “is to the theologian what nature is to the man of science. It is his store-house of facts.” In arranging the biblical facts, Hodge believes the systematic theologian should use reason and religious experience, although experience is judged by Scripture.²³⁶

He also believed that ultimately Scripture and nature do not contradict each other.

Also very important is Hodge's view of revelation and inspiration. The whole Bible is inspired, including the words, which means that it is also inerrant. In terms of interpretation, Scripture should be interpreted historically, and in light of other passages of scripture. Also, the Holy Spirit ought to guide interpretation. “. . . Hodge's doctrine of inerrancy would be refined by his disciples, and continue to play a crucial role in the ongoing study of the NT in America.”²³⁷

His most influential works are the commentaries on Romans, Ephesians, and 1 and 2 Corinthians. “. . . Hodge was sensitive to exegetical issues and was in command of a vast amount of critical material, but his commentaries are, nevertheless, heavily theological.”²³⁸

A Hermeneutical Alternative: Horace Bushnell (1802–1876)

Born in CT, educated at Yale under Nathaniel Taylor, he became a pastor. His thinking was unsystematic, and he was influenced by Coleridge and romanticism. His theory of language was the key to his thought. He thought all religious language is the language of emotion, metaphor, spirit and poetry. Revelation is God's self-communication (personal, not informational). The reader of the Bible must try to share the author's religious experience.

His work *Nature and the Supernatural* (1858) addresses the problem of miracles. Miracles are not supernatural, because everything God does is natural. He rejected original sin, but acknowledged the fall and universal sin. In his lecture at Yale entitled “*Concio ad clerum: A Discourse on the Divinity of Christ*,” he tried to navigate between orthodoxy and Unitarianism, and in Baird's opinion, he actually sacrifices the humanity of Christ to his divinity.”²³⁹ He stated that Jesus differs not in degree, but kind.²⁴⁰ He rejected the doctrine of penal substitution.

²³⁶ Baird, 2:32.

²³⁷ Baird, 2:37.

²³⁸ Baird, 2:34.

²³⁹ Baird, 2:40.

²⁴⁰ Baird, 2:41.

History, Piety, and Ecumenism:
Philip Schaff (1819–1893)

Schaff taught at the seminary in Mercersburg, PA. He and John W. Nevin articulated “Mercersburg Theology.” Schaff was born in Switzerland and raised in an orphanage. He studied at Tübingen and was influenced by F. C. Baur. He was also educated at Halle, and influenced by Tholuck, and Berlin, where he was influenced by Neander.

He taught at Mercersburg, then Union Theological Seminary where he taught numerous subjects. He was a leader in the organization of SBL. His most important works are in church history. He brought a unique philosophy of history: idealism (from Bauer), and romanticism (through Neander, emphasizing the importance of the individual).

In NT, he wrote *The Person of Christ* (1865). He works from Christ’s humanity to his divinity through a historical analysis of his life. He shows Jesus’s unique character, and then shows that only Jesus’ divinity can account for the quality of his humanity. He repudiates the work of Strauss and Renan. He supervised the translation of J. P. Lange’s commentary into English.

2. The Establishment of Historical Criticism in Great Britain

Westcott, Hort, and Lightfoot established historical critical research in Great Britain. The nation was “at the height of its power” at that time.²⁴¹ British rule was growing and religion was increasing as well. On the other hand Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* was published in 1859, and Herbert Spencer applied evolution to all of human life. The anonymous *Supernatural Religion* popularized German scholarship in 1874 in such a way that it could no longer be ignored.

New Testament Studies before and in the Time of the Cambridge Three

After the Deists, biblical studies had become conservative in Britain. Baird mentions the very conservative flavor of the “Lives of Jesus” written during this time (for example, by Farrar).

Samuel Davidson (1807–1898)

Davidson was a Congregationalist who taught at Lancashire Independent College, but was dismissed for denying Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. He published important OT and NT introductions. He was heavily influenced by reading F. C. Baur. He was an exception to the conservative British scholarship, but because he was alone he made no real impact.

The Cambridge Triumvirate

²⁴¹ Baird, 54.

They were all educated and taught at Cambridge, and were all dedicated to the church.

Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828–1892)

He studied classics, moral philosophy, and natural science.²⁴² He was not persuaded by German scholarship, and he was by nature a perfectionist (which may explain why he published so few works). He primarily worked as a textual critic. As a scientist, he was open to Darwin, and was more open to the use of liberal criticism than his colleagues. He was less inclined to start with the infallibility of Scripture. Hort completed none of the commentaries that the three began together, but his fragments were published and reveal basically conservative judgments.

The Greek New Testament produced with Westcott is his enduring legacy. In terms of text critical method, they examine internal evidence (including author's style, etc.), copyist habits, and genealogy (external evidence). They also basically take the Byzantine text-type to be inferior. They claimed that all of the most important changes to the text happened before the 5th century. "Distinctively Byzantine" readings can therefore be set aside. The "Western" text is "characterized by paraphrase and interpolation."²⁴³ They propose that Sinaiticus (Aleph) and Vaticanus (B) witness to a "neutral text" that is free from Western and Byzantine corruptions.²⁴⁴ Some people were upset by the Westcott-Hort text, and thought aspects of their theory (such as the "neutral text") have been rejected, much modern work stands on their shoulders.

Joseph Barber Lightfoot (1828–1889)

He studied classics, taught at Cambridge, and became the bishop of Durham. He was primarily a historian. He had a "theological view" of history.²⁴⁵ He defended the orthodox position against *Supernatural Religion*. "In the main, Lightfoot took a position between rationalist critics on the left and the uncritical orthodox on the right. He was devoted to careful reading of the original sources in their historical context."²⁴⁶

"Lightfoot's major contribution to NT research is to be found in his commentaries."²⁴⁷ He wrote on the Pauline letters (Galatians, Philippians, Colossians and Ephesians). Especially important is his reconstruction of early Christianity (see his Galatians commentary). He also wrote an important historical work on the development of the church offices, originally as part of his Philippians commentary, but later published independently. In his commentary on Colossians, he says that the heresy was similar to the Essenes, combining Gnosticism and Judaism.

His "most enduring contribution is in the area of church history."²⁴⁸ His major work, the *Apostolic Fathers*, undermined the reconstruction of early church history proposed by Tübingen.²⁴⁹ This work deals with the dating of Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp, and shows that

²⁴² Baird, 2:60.

²⁴³ Baird, 2:64.

²⁴⁴ Baird, 2:64.

²⁴⁵ Baird, 2:66.

²⁴⁶ Baird, 2:66.

²⁴⁷ Baird, 2:66.

²⁴⁸ Baird, 2:70.

²⁴⁹ Baird, 2:71.

the early church shows no sign of the conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christianity as the Tübingen School supposed.

Brooke Foss Westcott (1825–1901)

He served at Cambridge and succeeded Lightfoot as bishop of Durham. He was considered to be a theologian, and was eclectic in his approach. He “reveled in paradox and his thinking was imprecise.”²⁵⁰ His theology centers on the incarnation and resurrection. The Bible is a record of God’s action in history. He believed in the authority of the Bible, though he did not use the term “infallibility.” “I have always tried to read [the Bible] like any other book, and because I have done so I have come to the conclusion that it is utterly unlike any other book in the world.”²⁵¹

Westcott worked with Hort on the famous Greek NT, and in general published a great number of works. He wrote on the harmonization of the Gospels. His view of inspiration was neither dictation, nor mere human insight, but involved “Partial human knowledge and absolute Divine truth.”²⁵² He believed the Synoptics all depended on an oral gospel (Gieseler). He also wrote on the history of the canon because he believed the authenticity of the Bible was important for the life of the church. He argued that God guided the canonization process similar to the way he inspired the books.²⁵³

His “major contribution to NT research is . . . his commentaries.”²⁵⁴ His main work was the Johannine literature. He believed that the Gospel of John is a theological interpretation of the events recorded in the Synoptics. He also wrote on the Letters of John, and Hebrews.

Summary

These three scholars left behind important works: the most important is the Greek NT, but also the commentaries. They also cooperated together with others such as American scholar Philip Schaff to produce the Revised Version of the NT.

3. The Triumph of Liberalism on the Continent

1870–1871 was the Franco-Prussian war. This united Germany against France. In addition to national and economic advance, Germany became intellectually more powerful as the universities grew in influence. While politically and socially, Germany was conservative, theologically it became more and more liberal.²⁵⁵ Part of this was the connection between science and freedom of inquiry with an opposition to old orthodoxy. They rejected orthodox Christianity and embraced optimism that humans could master all the old problems through science.

²⁵⁰ Baird, 2:73.

²⁵¹ B. F. Westcott, Quoted in Baird, 2:74.

²⁵² Baird, 2:75.

²⁵³ Baird, 2:77.

²⁵⁴ Baird, 2:77.

²⁵⁵ Baird, 2:86.

The Establishment of Liberalism:
Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889)

He studied at Bonn, Halle, Berlin, Heidelberg and Tübingen. He taught at Bonn and Göttingen. He was influenced for a time by F. C. Baur and he taught Wrede and Weiss.

Theologically, he embraced salvation by faith but “he opposed Lutheran orthodoxy’s transformation of the dynamic message of the Reformation into dogma.”²⁵⁶ He was influenced by Schleiermacher and Kant. He was opposed to metaphysics and had a strong historical category in his theology. He is Christocentric, but focuses on Christology “from below.” “Although Ritschl is usually viewed as a systematic theologian, he considered himself to be a biblical theologian.”²⁵⁷ He had a “high view of biblical authority.”²⁵⁸ He “rejected the orthodox doctrine of inspiration, but was conservative on critical issues.”²⁵⁹

Ritschl wrote on the Gospels. He also researched into the history of early Christianity. He asserted that Baur did not really use the critical method because he was driven by philosophical presuppositions.²⁶⁰ Ritschl himself emphasizes love of God and neighbor as the dominant ethic of Jesus and the NT. “Ritschl’s main contribution to NT research is found in the second volume of his massive three-volume work on *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*.”²⁶¹ He believed that the kingdom of God is a spiritual/ethical concept. He rejects the wrath of God and penal substitution.

The Reconstruction of Early Christian History:

Eduard Reuss (1804–1891)

Reuss was a “mediator between German and French scholarship.”²⁶² He was the founder of the “Strasbourg school.” He studied at Strasbourg, Göttingen, Halle, and Paris. He taught at Strasbourg. He was a “rational mystic,” influenced by Schleiermacher, Kant and romanticism, and opposed to orthodoxy as well as radical liberalism.

Reuss believed that Jesus was the model human. He worked on the NT, producing his own translation with notes. He was interested in Textual criticism. He was also interested in the Gospel of John. His two major works on the NT were *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament* (1842), and *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age* (1852). He believed that the original teaching of the apostles was made into dogma by the later church.²⁶³

²⁵⁶ Baird, 2:87.

²⁵⁷ Baird, 2:88.

²⁵⁸ Baird, 2:88.

²⁵⁹ Baird, 2:88.

²⁶⁰ Baird, 2:89.

²⁶¹ Baird, 2:91.

²⁶² Baird, 2:93.

²⁶³ Baird, 2:99.

Carl Weizsäcker (1822–1899)

He was educated at Tübingen, where he eventually took over Baur's position as professor. He held a mediating position between orthodoxy and Baur. He was a historian, but published some works on the NT. He stressed ethics in the NT.

Faith and Historicism:
Bernhard Weiss (1827–1918)

Weiss was educated at Königsberg, Halle, and Berlin. He taught at Königsberg, Kiel and Berlin. He is another example of a mediating view between radical and conservative. "Above all, he believed theological truth to be historically grounded and recorded in the Bible. According to Weiss, what the Bible says, historically interpreted, is the truth—a historicism permeated by profound religious faith"²⁶⁴

Weiss produced large amounts of material. He published a number of works on the synoptic problem that basically affirmed the two-source view. He also produced a mountain of other works, including works on textual criticism, introduction, biblical theology, and commentaries. He also produced a popular life of Jesus. While he insisted that the Gospels be interpreted historically, he also insisted that faith was important for understanding their message. His NT theology argues that BT is a "historical discipline that assumes God's revelation in history."²⁶⁵ He produced works on textual criticism in his later years. Baird concludes that Weiss was immensely productive, though his pictures of Jesus and Paul are slightly out of focus.

Toward Critical Consensus:
Heinrich Holtzmann (1832–1910)

Holtzmann studied at Heidelberg and Berlin. He taught at Heidelberg and then Strasbourg. He taught Albert Schweitzer. He is often presented as a mediating scholar, but is actually a liberal because of his emphasis on the religious consciousness of Jesus and the spiritual/ethical nature of the kingdom. He affirmed revelation in history, especially in Christ.

He published a history of Judaism and Christianity in the NT period. He also produced an introduction to the NT. He posits Mark as the basis for an outline of the life of Jesus. He also eventually adopts the two-document hypothesis on the synoptic problem. His book on the Messianic consciousness of Jesus is important. He wanted to prove by the exegesis of important texts that Jesus understood himself to be the Messiah.²⁶⁶ He also produced commentaries (on the Pastorals, Synoptic Gospels, Acts, John, Johannine Epistles, Revelation). His NT Theology is the "crown" of his scholarly work.²⁶⁷

Baird summarizes Holtzmann:

²⁶⁴ Baird, 2:102.

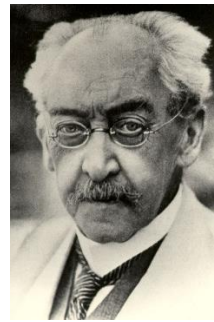
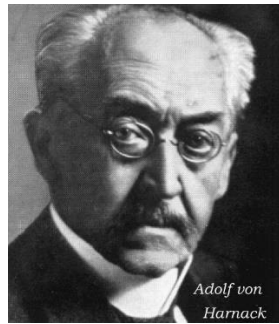
²⁶⁵ Baird, 2:108.

²⁶⁶ Baird, 2:117.

²⁶⁷ Baird, 2:119.

. . . he articulated an emerging critical consensus that was to prevail among liberal scholars for a century: the two-document hypothesis; the pseudonymity of Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles; the questionable reliability of Acts; the problematic authorship of the Catholic Epistles; the theological, rather than historical, character of the Fourth Gospel; the importance of Hellenistic backgrounds for the understanding of Paul and John.²⁶⁸

The Zenith of Liberalism:
Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930)



Harnack studied at Dorpat, then Leipzig. He wrote on the history of Gnosticism. He taught at Leipzig, Giessen, Marburg, and Berlin. “During his tenure at Berlin, Harnack taught a host of students, including Adolf Jülicher and Karl Barth, and Americans such as S. J. Case and E. J. Goodspeed.”²⁶⁹ He was influenced by Lutheran orthodoxy (from his father) as well as F. C. Baur’s Tübingen School. He was incredibly productive. He was influenced by Baur to believe that Christianity is the result of historical development. He was also influenced by Ritschl. “Like Ritschl, Harnack **rejected metaphysics and philosophical speculation**: his theology was anthropocentric and Christocentric.”²⁷⁰ History was in important category of thought for Harnack. History “is the key for understanding reality.”²⁷¹

Harnack believed that Christianity was founded on Jesus and his teachings. Jesus’s death was a moral example, not a propitiatory sacrifice. The “essence” of Christianity, to Harnack, is “Firstly, the kingdom of God and its coming. Secondly, God the Father and the infinite value of the human soul. Thirdly, the higher righteousness and the commandment of love.”²⁷²

His most important work is *History of Dogma* (1886–1890). He is especially against making the religion of Jesus into Dogma. He believes that Marcion was the first to come up with the idea of a canon, and is sympathetic to Marcion’s attempts to focus on Paul. He especially thinks that the process from disciples to Dogma is the problem with the church and that dogmas need to be thrown off. He suggests that the OT ought to be de-canonized. In regard to the development of

²⁶⁸ Baird, 2:121.

²⁶⁹ Baird, 2:123.

²⁷⁰ Baird, 2:124.

²⁷¹ Baird, 2:124.

²⁷² From *What is Christianity?* Quoted in Baird, 2:125.

the church, Harnack believes that the church was led in early times by gifted leaders, but the gifting of the spirit was replaced by hierarchies and offices which represent a distortion to true Christianity.

Harnack did a number of historical-critical studies, translated as *New Testament Studies*. He did studies on Luke-Acts and Q. He takes the two-document hypothesis for solving the synoptic problem. He believed the “we-sections” of Acts were made up of parts of Luke’s diary. He made a significant contribution into Pauline studies in investigating the Pauline letter collection.

4. The Return of Skepticism

At this time the world was moving toward the First World War because of aggressive nationalism. Science was considered to be important and human achievement was grand. Education was more widespread and the culture was experiencing upheaval as Liberal theology seemed still too conservative and depended on too many presuppositions. This led to skepticism regarding the Jesus of the NT and Christianity in general.

Militant Skepticism:
Franz Overbeck (1837–1905)

Overbeck was educated at Leipzig, Göttingen, and Berlin. He taught at Jena, then Basel. Overbeck befriended Nietzsche. Overbeck and Nietzsche shared a dislike for Christianity. Overbeck claimed not to be a Christian. He “considered himself a member of the Tübingen School without the Hegelian framework.”²⁷³ History was the central category for him, and he believed that Christianity was a living thing that grew, and when it claimed to be unchanging and eternal it died. He more than anything wants to research Christianity historically, that is, without presuppositions. He attacked Christianity of his day on the basis that all of the attempts to follow it have distorted true Christianity. He believed that Christianity was an apocalyptic, world-denying religion, and Liberals have missed this. He believes that the conservatives are trying to defend primitive myths.²⁷⁴

His major work is in the book of Acts. He revised de Wette’s commentary on Acts. The book of Acts is not accurate history, but is based on church conflicts. It attempts to revise Paul to make him look more Jewish, and misrepresents him. The author of acts is not trustworthy, but manipulates the record for his own purposes. He had a distinctive view of the early church. Original Christian writings are sharply distinguished from later Christian writings. He thought Hebrews and John were forgeries. He believed that the early Christianity was vibrant and living, but that this was destroyed when it syncretized gentile world-views into itself.

Doctrine Conceals History:
William Wrede (1859–1906)

²⁷³ Baird, 2:139.

²⁷⁴ Baird, 2:140.



Life: studied at Leipzig and was influenced by Harnack, and studied at Göttingen and was influenced by Ritschl. He was pastor, then taught at Göttingen and Breslau. He was associated with the History of Religions School.

Thought: he was a historically oriented NT scholar, and was “suspicious of tradition and dogma.”²⁷⁵ He affirmed that BT is strictly historical. He believed that NT theology should arrange the material around NT themes, not ST categories. Actually, he rejects the term NT theology. “The appropriate name for the subject-matter is: early Christian history or religion, or rather: the history of early Christian religion and theology.”²⁷⁶

Messianic Secret: He attacks the idea that Mark shows the development of Jesus’s messianic consciousness. Rather, Mark intentionally portrays Jesus as concealing his discipleship. This is theology and not history. *Because it is not historical, Mark provides no foundation for the life of Jesus, and therefore all of the “Lives of Jesus” are false.*

Paul: He wrote that Paul was not a theologian, but was Christocentric in his thinking. Justification by faith only comes up in conflict with Judaism. Paul’s background is apocalyptic Judaism. Wrede saw a wide divide between Jesus and Paul. Paul is further from Jesus than Jesus is from Jewish teachers. Paul is the “second founder of Christianity.”²⁷⁷

Tradition Transforming History:
Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918)

Life: He taught at Göttingen, then Greifswald. He later moved to Halle, then Marburg, and finally Göttingen.

Thought: Wellhausen was “opposed to imposing philosophical patterns upon history.”²⁷⁸ He believed history was an evolutionary process, and that it should be objectively investigated. He traced the evolution of human religion from primitive beginnings to Jesus. He thought of the kingdom of God as a call to personal responsibility and striving for God. He believed that after Jesus died, his followers were so impressed with him that they had visions of him raised from the

²⁷⁵ Baird, 2:145.

²⁷⁶ Baird, 2:145.

²⁷⁷ Quoted in Baird, 2:150

²⁷⁸ Baird, 2:152.

dead. Paul was misled by his Jewish background. Christianity is following the religion of Jesus, not the religion about Jesus.

While he was primarily an OT scholar, he wrote in the area of NT as well. He wrote about the Pharisees and Sadducees, and his most important NT work is on the Synoptic Gospels. Baird summarizes, “Wellhausen’s major contribution to NT research is his demonstration that meticulous literary analysis is indispensable for the investigation of the history of early Christian tradition. Wellhausen’s actual reconstruction of the tradition by means of this method, however, is not entirely convincing.”²⁷⁹

Criticism contra Skepticism:
Adolf Jülicher (1857–1938)

Life: He studied at Berlin with Otto Prleiderer, and Bernard Weiss. He taught at Marburg.

Thought: Jülicher was a historian and NT critic. He embraced the empiricism and rationalism of the Enlightenment. He was skeptical of the supernatural. The gospels he viewed as “propaganda documents.”²⁸⁰ He believed that Jesus saw himself as Messiah. The resurrection faith came as a result of Peter’s having thought he saw the risen Christ. Contra Wrede, he believed that there was continuity between Jesus and Paul. He believed that the church declined from Jesus to Paul to John to Nicea like a stone rolling downhill.

Parables: He is most well-known for his work on parables (1886–1910). The parables are the most reliable part of the tradition. They are not allegories, but express a single point in order to facilitate comprehension of spiritual truth. He rejected the idea that Jesus used parables to conceal truth from people.

Introduction: His introduction became the standard, and represented the main positions of German criticism at the end of the 19th century. He says that NT introduction is “that branch of the science of history—or more accurately, the history of literature—which treats of the New Testament.”²⁸¹ He adopts standard views of the NT books, and says that Pseudonymity would not have been a problem for the original audience. He takes the two-document hypothesis as the solution for the synoptic problem. He also addresses the text and canon of the NT in parts 2 and 3.

What is unique about Jülicher is that he “uses criticism to counter skepticism. By means of the historical-critical method, he defends the essential reliability of the gospel tradition, the messianic consciousness of Jesus, and the continuity between Paul and Jesus.”²⁸²

Heretical Skepticism:

²⁷⁹ Baird, 2:155.

²⁸⁰ Baird, 2:157.

²⁸¹ Quoted in Baird, 2:160.

²⁸² Baird, 2:162.

Alfred Loisy (1857–1940)

Life: Loisy was a Catholic who had trained for the priesthood. He was educated at Châlons-sur-Marne and the Catholic Institute in Paris. He was dismissed from the Institute because of his critical views. He lectured at Sorbonne (Paris), but was excommunicated for his views on biblical criticism. He taught at the College de France.

Thought: he was a leader in the movement called “Catholic modernism.”²⁸³ He embraced biblical criticism and his thoughts evolved as he continued to write. He wrote against von Harnack. He believed that Harnack had modernized the idea of the kingdom and stripped it of its essentially eschatological nature. He also resists reducing Jesus’s role as the Son of God down to his inner disposition.

NT research: Loisy’s views changed as his relationship with the Catholic Church changed. He affirms that the Bible has errors. He produced a major work on the Synoptics. He wrote on the life and teachings of Jesus. He produced commentaries on Mark and Luke. He denied Johannine authorship of all the Johannine literature. His final work was a historical understanding of the origins of Christianity in the person of Jesus. He became more liberal as he grew older.

Summary

All of these scholars were confident in the historical critical method. They also agreed with the Enlightenment worldview and assumed that historical research could guarantee results. They all oppose orthodoxy and reject inspiration, but are open to the fact that there is something important in the NT. They also show a critical consensus on the results of their historical investigation.

PART II: NEW TESTAMENT RESEARCH IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL CONFLICT

5. New Discoveries: Linguistic, Geographical, and Historical Research

European expansion meant the discovery of new Archeological finds, but also the growing nationalism that would lead to WWI. Among the important discoveries are the Oxyrhynchus papyri by Grenfell and Hunt in 1896.

Words and Their Social and Religious Implications: Adolf Deissmann (1866–1937)

Life: Deissmann was educated at Tübingen (under Weizacker) and Berlin (under Pfleiderer and Weiss). He moved to Marburg to work with Georg Heinrici on the historical background to the

²⁸³ Baird, 2:163.

NT, and began teaching there. He toured the Mediterranean. He taught at Berlin as the successor of Weiss. He did archeological research in Ephesus.

Thought: He was religious but not theological. He “believed the Christian ethic should be applied to social and political problems. During the war, he tried to promote understanding among Protestants across national borders . . .”²⁸⁴ He did his dissertation at Marburg on the phrase “in Christ Jesus” in Paul and felt that Paul was drawing on the Hellenistic world for this concept, and that it was a mystical, local concept.

Work: Deissmann is known for his work on the use of papyri and ancient inscriptions to understand the NT. He famously made a distinction between letters (real communication between two people) and epistles (literary productions for mass consumption) and tried to classify the NT letters accordingly (Paul’s writings were letters, but the Catholic Epistles were epistles). He especially rejected the idea that NT Greek was special, and affirmed that it was the common Greek of the period. He believed that this illuminated the social history of Christianity.

In *Light from the Ancient East*, he said that Christianity began as a social movement among the lower classes. He attempted to show how newly discovered archeological finds shed light on the social and religious history of the NT. In his work on Paul, he tried to view Paul as a human being in light of his social context. Paul, according to Deissmann, was a Jew, a mystic, and a man of contrasts. Paul’s religion is “a ‘Christ-mysticism’—a religion of personal communion.”²⁸⁵ In his research on Jesus, he tries to reach behind the sources to discover the religious experience of Jesus.

Grammatical and Lexicographical Research:

Alexander Buttmann and Friedrich Blass (1843–1907)

Buttmann revised his father’s grammars and in the process produced a new work attempting to show that the NT Greek was distinct from classical Greek. He said that NT Greek was influenced by LXX and vernacular Hellenistic (descended from Attic). It was translated by Thayer and widely used.

Blass taught classical philology at Halle. His Grammar was revised by A. Debrunner, and eventually translated and revised by R. W. Funk (now called BDF). He said that NT Greek is the common Greek of the day.

Hermann Cremer (1834–1903) and C. L. W. Grimm (1807–1891)

Cremer, a professor of ST at Greifswald, wrote a lexicon of the NT. He “reverts to the traditional view of biblical Greek as ‘the organ of the Spirit of Christ... adequate to the new views which the Spirit of Christ reveals.’”²⁸⁶ His lexicon treats only theologically significant words.

²⁸⁴ Baird, 2:179.

²⁸⁵ Baird, 2:182.

²⁸⁶ Baird, 2:185.

Grimm was a professor at Jena who produced a lexicon of the NT. His “main focus was philological.”²⁸⁷ His lexicon was translated by Thayer.

Linguistic Research in England:
James Hope Moulton (1863–1917)

Life: Moulton was educated at Cambridge and taught there. He also taught at the University of Manchester. He became friends with Deissmann and was influenced by him. He was basically conservative on critical issues. He died at sea when his ship was torpedoed.

Work: His father, William F. Moulton (1835–1898) translated Winer’s *Grammar*. J. H. Moulton at first revised this, but it became a totally new work. Only the prolegomena and most of a second volume were completed before his death. He believed that the NT was written in the common Greek. He also contributed to a lexicon, completed by George Milligan.

New Testament Geography, History, and Apologetics:
William M. Ramsey (1851–1939)

Life: Ramsey was born in Glasgow and educated at Aberdeen and Oxford. He studied classics, and then studied at Tübingen (Sanskrit). He studied further in Greece, then traveled to Anatolia. He taught at Oxford and Aberdeen, and was knighted in 1906.

Thought: He did not like theologians, and especially rejected German scholarship. He thought Paul promoted a religion of progress that combined “the Hellenistic principle of freedom of the individual with the Hebrew idea of divine action in history.”²⁸⁸

Work: His main work was in the area of historical geography. He defended the South Galatian theory in his book on Galatians. He wrote two books on Paul. He wrote a book on the book of Revelation. He also wrote some apologetic books.

Linguistic and Cultural Setting of Jesus:
Gustaf Dalman (1855–1941)

Life: Dalman lived among the Moravians. He studied at Gnadenfeld (a pietistic seminary) and later taught there. He also taught at Institutum Judaicum in Leipzig at the invitation of Franz Delitzsch. He traveled in the near east before teaching at Leipzig and Greifswald.

Work: One of his major concerns was the language of Jesus. He studied Aramaic and wrote a Grammar on it. He wrote a lexicon for use with the Targums, Talmud, and Midrash. He believed

²⁸⁷ Baird, 2:186.

²⁸⁸ Baird, 2:190.

that Jesus's native language was Aramaic, and that the early church was bilingual (Aramaic and Greek). He examined the Passover according to Jewish custom.

He was also concerned with the geography and culture of Palestine. He believed that it was important that the NT is historical, because there is no foundation for faith otherwise. His "major work" was a seven volume tome on the "industry and customs of Palestine."²⁸⁹ He also wrote on the archeological dimensions of Jerusalem.

Research in Jewish Backgrounds

Emil Schürer (1844–1910)

Life: Schürer was born in Augsburg and educated at Erlangen, Berlin, Heidelberg, and Leipzig. He taught at Leipzig, Giessen, Kiel, and Göttingen. He was a friend of Adolf Harnack.

Thought: Schürer was "sympathetic to Ritschlian liberalism."²⁹⁰ For him, "Judaism is the dark backdrop before which the vital religion of Jesus is portrayed."²⁹¹

Work: His main work is the *History of the Jewish People*. He thought Judaism was important to understand Christianity. His history begins with the ascendancy of the Pharisees (in the Maccabean period), and ends at their triumph with the dominance of rabbinic Judaism (around 135 AD). He discussed the political dynamics with the Maccabeans, Herod, etc., as well as the Jewish life during this time (religion, Sanhedrin, priesthood, and scribes). Most people feel that his work is valuable, except that he is unduly harsh on the Jewish people, presenting a caricature of them as an apologetic foil for Christianity.

Robert Henry Charles (1855–1931)

Life: Charles was born in Ireland, educated at Belfast, Dublin, Oxford and Germany. He taught at Dublin and Oxford, and was appointed Canon of Westminster Abbey and Archdeacon of Westminster.

Thought: He was a liberal Anglican. "While a student at Dublin, Charles was troubled by the orthodox picture of hell. This provoked him to a career in the study of Jewish and Christian eschatology."²⁹²

Work: His first work was a critical edition of the Book of Enoch. He prepared several others, and his work culminated in the editing of Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. His work is generally recognized to be quite good, though his portrait of Judaism may be a caricature. He produced numerous works on Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic. He believed that Apocalyptic was an

²⁸⁹ Baird, 2:198.

²⁹⁰ Baird, 2:200.

²⁹¹ Baird, 2:200.

²⁹² Baird, 2:204.

advance, rather than a decline, from the prophetic genre. He also wrote a commentary on Revelation for the ICC series.

Research in Hellenistic Backgrounds

Research into Hellenistic background to Christianity tended to suppose that Christianity was influenced by paganism or Greek philosophy. C. F. Georg Heinrici (1844–1915) taught at Marburg and Leipzig and used parallels from Hellenistic literature to explicate the NT documents.

Paul Wendland (1864–1915)

Wendland was born in East Prussia, and taught classics at Kiel, Breslau and Göttingen. He was known for work on Philo. His most important work is his work on the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity. He basically believed that Christianity was a Hellenistic religion. Christ's preaching is unrelated to Hellenism, but Paul's conversion dislodged him from Judaism and was a first step in the eventual Hellenization of the faith.

Edwin Hatch (1835–1889)

Hatch was born in England, and educated at Oxford. He taught classics at Toronto and Oxford. His most important work is his concordance to the LXX. He suggested that the early church was influenced by Greco-Roman associations in the development of church government. He also studied how the early church was at first hostile to Greek philosophy, but later embraced it. While he recognizes the influence of Greek culture upon the church, he notes that the Greek element is not essential to it.

Otto Pfleiderer (1839–1908)

Life: Pfleiderer studied at Tübingen, the "last of the important students of F. C. Baur."²⁹³ He was a pastor for a time, then taught at Jena, and Berlin.

Thought: He disagreed on the details, but he was heavily influenced by Baur's view of philosophical idealism and Christianity as "the historical expression of universal truth."²⁹⁴ Christianity was a historical development, which meant he disagreed with von Harnack and other liberals who believed that Christianity underwent a historical devolution from a pristine form. He believed Hellenistic backgrounds were key to understanding Christianity. Greek philosophy was a precursor for Christianity and prepared the ground for it.

Work: His most important work is *Primitive Christianity*. He supported Baur's view of Christianity as a historical development. He examines Paul's contribution, and finds that Paul seems to be influenced by Stoicism, and reflects a combination of Jewish and Hellenistic backgrounds. But Paul, in the end, supports a universal ethical religion (as Pfleiderer does). The

²⁹³ Baird, 2:213–214.

²⁹⁴ Baird, 2:214.

idea of a heavenly redeemer involves syncretism with Hellenistic thoughts. Jesus opposes legalism and represents a return to the spirit of the prophets. John combines Pauline Hellenism and Gnosticism to overcome Gnosticism. “Like F. C. Baur, Pfleiderer has assumed a comprehensive view that enlists philosophical idealism and scientific criticism in the service of a normative historical Christianity. . . . The norm in all of this is the ethical idealism of Otto Pfleiderer.”²⁹⁵

6. Methodological Developments

Because of the new discoveries, new methods were developed. NT scholars followed the lead of scholars in other fields of scientific research such as the social and psychological fields.

History of Religion and Related Methods

The history of religions school could be defined as those who taught and studied at Göttingen in the 1880s and 1890s: “William Wrede, Johannes Weiss, Hermann Gunkel, Albert Eichhorn, Wilhelm Heitmüller, and Wilhelm Bousset.”²⁹⁶ Or it could be defined as those who focused on religion rather than theology, and viewed Christianity as shaped by the surrounding religious environment: “Gunkel, Eichhorn, Heitmüller, and Bousset; Weiss, Paul Wernle, and Heinrich Weinel shared some of the concerns of the school, while Wrede was on the fringes.”²⁹⁷ All of these scholars were interested in Christianity, but they were interested in understanding it as one religion among the many, rather than viewing it as having a special significance and normativity.

Thoroughgoing Eschatology

Johannes Weiss (1836–1914)

Life: He was the son of Bernhard Weiss, born at Kiel, educated at Marburg, Berlin, Göttingen, and Breslau. He taught at Göttingen, Marburg, and Heidelberg. He married Albrecht Ritschl’s daughter. He taught Rudolf Bultmann.

Thought: He denied being a part of the History of Religions School because he did not agree that Christianity was a syncretism of its neighboring religions. He embraced liberalism, but he did not think it was grounded in the NT. This introduced a methodological chasm between critical study and theology.

Work: His most important work was *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (1892; 2d ed., 1900; Engl. *Jesus’ Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, trans. and ed. R. H. Hiers and D. L. Holland, 1971). He said that Jesus preached an apocalyptic, and ultimately mistaken, message. This undermined both liberal and conservative attempts to find a foundation for theology in Jesus’

²⁹⁵ Baird, 2:219–220.

²⁹⁶ Baird, 2:222.

²⁹⁷ Baird, 2:222.

teaching. He did not think that Jesus thought of himself as Messiah, but as a preparer of the way (like John the Baptist). This book caused confusion among the theologians because of its effect on theology. After the criticisms he received, he emphasized that there were ethical dimensions of Jesus's teaching that could be enduring (love), and that there was something about Jesus's personality that was special.

He also wrote on the book of Acts. He also wrote on the book of Revelation. He wrote on Mark, affirming that it is the oldest Gospel. He also wrote a commentary for the Meyer series (on 1 Corinthians). He wrote on the history of early Christianity. He wrote on Paul and Jesus and generally sees more continuity between them than many suppose. However, he suggests that Paul has misunderstood Jesus because Paul, influenced by Hellenistic thought, has recasts the man Jesus into a cosmic significance, which is not the true meaning of the historical Jesus.²⁹⁸

Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965)

Life: He was educated at Strasbourg, studied philosophy with Wilhelm Windelband, and NT with H. J. Holtzmann; he studied in Paris as well. He wrote on Kant for his dissertation, then a second dissertation on the Lord's Supper. He taught at Strasbourg, served as a pastor, and studied Bach, then studied medicine and opened a hospital in Africa.

Thought: He stressed apocalyptic as the key to understanding Jesus. His "basic principle" was "reverence for life."²⁹⁹ His philosophy could be described as "ethical mysticism."³⁰⁰

Schweitzer's Jesus: He is most well-known for his work on the historical Jesus. However his first important NT work was his book on the Lord's Supper. Here he began to be interested in the apocalyptic dimension of the Supper. He also honed his method of surveying the history of research as an angle on a topic.

Schweitzer's Jesus had an "interim ethic," a radical way of life because of the impending end of the world (about which he was mistaken). Jesus expected another Messiah to come, but revised his understanding. He believed that he could bring about the messianic kingdom with his own death, which Schweitzer says did not happen. After Jesus's death, the early church "domesticated" his apocalyptic approach.³⁰¹ His criticism of liberalism was extremely sharp because they had dressed Jesus according to their own presuppositions; they had used the historical method to make an utterly unhistorical Jesus. Ultimately, Schweitzer thought the relationship that we have with Jesus is mystical.

Schweitzer's Paul: Schweitzer thought similarly about the apostle Paul. He believed that scholars modernized Paul, taking all the rough edges off him. He thought Paul needed to be understood in the context of Jewish eschatology, not Hellenism. Justification is secondary for Paul. Baird says that Schweitzer has made Paul in his own image as a freethinking man opposed to the church and academy.

²⁹⁸ Baird, 2:228.

²⁹⁹ Baird, 2:230.

³⁰⁰ Baird, 2:230.

³⁰¹ Baird, 2:232.

The History of Religion School

Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932)

Gunkel studied at Giessen, Leipzig, and Göttingen. He taught at Göttingen, Halle, Berlin, Giessen, and finally Halle. His main concern was the OT, but he also published on the NT. His important work was *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12* (1895). He suggested that Babylonian myths form the background for the biblical accounts of both creation and eschatological consummation. He also published a work on the history of religions approach to the NT where he says that “Paul’s idea of a preexistent redeemer of cosmic dimensions cannot have arisen from Judaism or Jesus; such ideas have come to Paul from Persian and Babylonian religion by way of Hellenism.”³⁰²

Auxiliary Disciplines:

Franz Cumont (1868–1947): Cumont wrote a popular level book that argued that Rome was a syncretistic environment that produced Christianity.

Richard Reitzenstein (1861–1931): he wrote that oriental religions form the background of Christianity. Paul and John were influenced by pre-Christian gnostic redeemer myths. Mysticism and Gnosticism entered Christianity via Hellenistic syncretism. Christianity has inherited Iranian redeemer myths and has brought it into Christian theology.

History of Religion and the Sacraments:

Albert Eichhorn (1856–1926): Educated at Leipzig, Erlangen, Göttingen, he taught at Halle, and Kiel. He wrote that the accounts of the Lord’s Supper are not history, but later theologizing about the event. The sacramental theology of the church is rooted in oriental syncretistic Gnosticism.

Wilhelm Heitmüller (1896–1926): studied at Greifswald, Marburg, Leipzig, Göttingen, he taught at Marburg, Bonn, and Tübingen. In his book on Baptism, Paul understood baptism “understood baptism as a mystical rite that incorporated the devotees into Christ, freed them from supernatural powers, and conveyed the divine Spirit.”³⁰³ The Lord’s Supper leads to a secret communion with Christ. Paul was influenced by the “syncretistic oriental religion of the Hellenistic world.”³⁰⁴

Wilhelm Bousset (1865–1920)

³⁰² Baird, 2:239.

³⁰³ Baird, 2:242.

³⁰⁴ Baird, 2:243.

Life: “Wilhelm Bousset is generally recognized as the brightest star in the galaxy of the history of religion school.”³⁰⁵ He was educated at Erlangen, Leipzig (under von Harnack), and Göttingen. He taught at Göttingen and Giessen.

Thought: He was influenced by his parents’ faith, by the liberalism of Harnack and Ritschl, by philosophical idealism, and by J. F. Fries, who emphasized religious experience. Christianity is the highest of the religions, and it evolved from lower forms of primitive religion. Religions of Law make religion legalistic, but Jesus is a definitive improvement and stressed the internal and universal dimensions. The early church succumbed to dogmatism and sacramentalism, which is a devolution from the pure religion of Jesus.

Work on Jesus and Judaism: “According to Bousset, Judaism in the time of Jesus was a legalistic, national religion; Jesus, by way of contrast, revived the religion of the prophets, and proposed a universal ethic of love.”³⁰⁶ Jesus inspired faith in his resurrection. He also wrote on the history of Judaism from the Maccabean revolt until the time of Hadrian. He paints Judaism as a legalistic religion that serves as a foil for Christianity. He says that Judaism at that time was the result of influences such as “Assyrian-Babylonian cosmology, Iranian dualism, Hellenistic syncretism, and the religions of Egypt.”³⁰⁷

Work on History of Religion and the NT: Bousset also studied the influence of Hellenistic religions, especially Gnosticism, on Christianity. The idea of the heavenly redeemer originates in the gnostic syncretism of Iranian and Babylonian ideas (Reitzenstein). He wrote a commentary on Revelation. He said that the Antichrist is from Babylonian mythology. He wrote a book on the historical development of faith in Christ in the early church. He finds that the idea of Christ as heavenly Lord originated in Hellenistic churches, where Paul found the idea after he was converted. Paul develops this idea into a mysticism centered on the Spirit. John transforms Christ mysticism into God mysticism. Baird says that Bousset is inconsistent because he wants to maintain the uniqueness of Christianity despite the fact that it resulted from historical development.

Peripheral Members:

Paul Wernle (1872–1939): Educated at Bonn and Göttingen, he taught at Basel. He published a work on the synoptic problem, but his most important work is *The Beginnings of Our Religion*. His book agreed in large part with Bousset, but he later was more skeptical and critical of history of religions.³⁰⁸

Heinrich Weinel (1874–1936): Educated at Giessen and Berlin, he taught at Berlin, Bonn and Jena. He wrote a book on the *Theology of the NT*, but he is really interested in the history of early Christian religion. Jesus’s religion, according to him, is distinct from Judaism and Hellenistic mysticism, but Paul is a syncretizer who brought together the mystery religions and the

³⁰⁵ Baird, 2:243.

³⁰⁶ Baird, 2:244.

³⁰⁷ Baird, 2:246.

³⁰⁸ Baird, 2:252.

distinctive religion of Israel. “Basically, Weinel uses the history of religion method in support of liberal theology—a theology that affirms the uniqueness of Jesus, his religion, and his ethics.”³⁰⁹

Jewish Research and the New Testament

Claude G. Montefiore (1858–1938)

Life: Born in London and educated at Oxford (influenced by B. Jowett), attended the Hochschule in Berlin (influenced by Solomon Schlechter). He was president of University College of Southampton.

Thought: He was a liberal Jew, and thought that the Torah is not infallible, and does not believe in miracles. The Prophets are more important than the law. Baird says that “In his tolerant attitude toward Christians, Montefiore looked like a twentieth-century Gamaliel.”³¹⁰ However, he believed that Christians made a caricature of Judaism for apologetic reasons.

Work: contributed to NT research with his book on the Synoptic Gospels. He accepted the two-document hypothesis, and thought that the Gospels were “largely reliable.”³¹¹ He notes that people in Jesus’s day loved the law, but he thought that the NT presents a caricature. He believes that Jesus most had conflict over the cultic matters, so it was probably the priests who collaborated with the Romans to have Jesus killed. He believed that Jesus saw himself as the Messiah, and that his concern for outcasts was unique: while the Pharisees would have accepted the repentant, Jesus actively sought out those who are bad.

Joseph Klausner (1874–1958)

Life: Born in Lithuania, He was educated at Heidelberg, and moved to Jerusalem, where he taught at Hebrew University.

Thought: Klausner was a Zionist and was less tolerant of Christianity than Montefiore.

Work: Klausner composed a “Life of Jesus” from a Jewish perspective. He said that “the teaching of the Pharisees remained the basis of early Christian teaching until such time as it gathered within itself elements from non-Jewish sources.”³¹² He saw a political dimension to Jesus’s visit to Jerusalem. He believed that the disciples’ resurrection faith was not a deception, but rather they had a vision of Jesus. Jesus is not original in terms of his ethic: it was all available in the diverse forms of Judaism from his day, or the OT and other writings. Paul was the real founder of Christianity. Paul took the faith to the nations when the church was composed of exclusively Jewish people. Paul’s thought originates in Hellenistic Judaism.

³⁰⁹ Baird, 2:253.

³¹⁰ Baird, 2:254.

³¹¹ Baird, 2:255.

³¹² Quoted in Baird, 2:258.

Gospel Research in England:

Gospel research in England was promoted by the Oxford seminar held from 1894 and continuing for more than a decade. Contributors included J. C. Hawkins, W. C. Allen, B. H. Streeter, and the group was chaired by William Sanday. Out of this group came a growing support for Markan priority as a solution to the Synoptic problem.

William Sanday (1843–1920)

Life: Born in Nottingham and educated at Oxford, he taught at Oxford.

Thought: He had basically conservative convictions regarding critical issues (accepted as genuine all but 2 Peter), but he rejected the doctrine of inspiration.

Work: He wrote on the fourth Gospel and defended its authenticity until near the end of his life. He viewed the fourth gospel as a “blending of fact and interpretation.”³¹³

B. H. Streeter (1874–1937)

Life: Educated at Oxford, he taught there later. He was ordained in the Anglican Church. He was killed in an airplane crash.

Work: He wrote on the Synoptic problem. In his book *The Four Gospels*, he proposed a four-source theory as a form of Markan priority on the synoptic problem. He also did a study on the early church with reference to church government in which he argued that there was no one form of church government in the apostolic age.

F. C. Burkitt (1864–1935)

Life: Born in London and educated at Cambridge, he taught at Cambridge. He was an Anglican, and emphasized the incarnation.

Work: Burkitt published some works on the Gospels. He tended to be conservative, and rejected the history of religions school.

Form Criticism:

Form criticism moved one step back behind source criticism. If even Mark is not history, but theology (Wrede), then what is behind Mark? Using the materials of history of religions school (investigation of folk literature in other cultures), they investigated the tradition behind Mark. Baird summarizes the basic assumptions of form criticism:

They believe that the Gospels are folk literature, not literary compositions, not biography. They believe that the Gospels are collections of small, isolated units of tradition. They

³¹³ Baird, 2:264.

believe that these units of tradition were shaped by the faith and life of the Christian community, and that they have their origin and development within a social setting, a *Sitz im Leben*. They believe that these forms follow principles or laws of development, and that they have parallels in other folk and religious traditions.³¹⁴

Karl Ludwig Schmidt (1891–1956)

Life: born in Frankfurt am Main, educated at Marburg and Berlin, he taught at Giessen, Jena, Bonn, and Basel (where he fled because of opposition to National Socialism).

Work: His major contribution was examining the Gospels by means of form criticism. He said that the Gospels have no literary parallels because they are not literature in the sense of literary works (high literature), but rather folk literature. He said that other than the passion narrative, the Gospels do not present a history, but rather a series of stories fitted together into a narrational framework.

Martin Dibelius (1883–1947)

Life: son of a conservative pastor, he was born in Dresden, educated in Neuchatel, Leipzig, Tübingen, and Berlin. He taught at Heidelberg.

Thought: His theology was Christocentric. He thought that Jesus was the sign of God's sovereignty, to which one must respond in faith, which includes obedience to Christ's teaching.

Work: His first work was a history of religions examination of Paul and his view of the spiritual world. He believed that foreign religions were influential to Paul, but were not central to his thought, but rather functioned as the idiom for expressing his unique thought. His major work was *Form Criticism* (1919). He agreed with Schmidt on many of the basics, and affirmed that the life situation of the preaching of the church determined the form of the story. He classified the stories according to his identification of forms (such as Tales, Legends, and Parables). He thought there were analogies for these forms in Rabbinic and Hellenistic literature.

He also applied the form critical method to the development of all early Christian literature in *History of Early Christian Literature*. Here he basically looks at the various writings from a genre sensitive standpoint. He also wrote on Acts. When it comes to Jesus, he says a biography cannot be written because the Gospels don't provide that kind of information. All of this is intended by Dibelius to make the permanent value of the Gospels clear. He also worked on numerous commentaries.

Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976)

Life: His father was a Lutheran pastor, and he was educated at Tübingen, Berlin (where he was influenced by Gunkel), and Marburg (where he was influenced by Julicher and Johannes Weiss). He taught at Marburg, Breslau, Giessen, and settled at Marburg. In his early years he was part of a liberal group "Friends of the Christian World."

³¹⁴ Baird, 2:270.

Work in History of Religions: His early work was influenced by the history of religions approach. His dissertation compared Paul's writings to ancient diatribe. He also did a study on John's prologue in light of ancient parallels, and concluded that the logos of John originates with a gnostic myth that praises "the preexistent Sophia."³¹⁵ He believed that the comparisons with other religions made Christianity stand out. With regard to Judaism, he presented a caricature of the Jewish faith in order to provide a foil for Christianity. He also notes the importance of Gnosticism for illuminating Christian origins.

Work in Form Criticism: His major work is *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (1921). He believed that the "purpose of Form Criticism is to study the history of the oral tradition behind the gospels."³¹⁶ He stresses the "move of Christianity from its Palestinian to its Hellenistic setting."³¹⁷ He "also recognizes the circular argument of the form-critical method: the study of the elements of the tradition is used to reconstruct the history of the community; but the history of the community is used in the analysis of the tradition."³¹⁸

Bultmann classifies the sayings of Christ. He also classifies the narratives. He studies how the materials are edited (i.e., redaction criticism). He shares Schmidt's evaluation of Mark's historicity, and concludes that a life of Jesus cannot be written, and that Jesus as he was cannot be recovered. While Bultmann and form-criticism has been criticized, it has continued on.

7. The Advance of American New Testament Research

During this time America grew in influence and power. It was also a time of difficulty, in light of the tensions between the North and South following the civil war, the end of WWI, and difficulties for minorities and women. Also the religious environment was tense in light of the conflict over religion and science.

New Testament Research at Union Theological Seminary

Charles Augustus Briggs (1841–1913)

Life: born in NY, educated at the University of VA, and converted in a revival. He served in the Union army for three months, then studied at Union Seminary (under Edward Robinson) and then in Berlin (influenced by Isaac Dorner). He taught at Union Seminary, but was at the center of a heresy trial when he rejected inerrancy and verbal inspiration. In light of the conflict, Union Seminary severed its relationship with the Presbyterians, and became non-denominational. Briggs became an Episcopal.

³¹⁵ Baird, 2:281.

³¹⁶ Baird, 2:283.

³¹⁷ Baird, 2:283.

³¹⁸ Baird, 2:283.

Thought: He rejected inerrancy and verbal inspiration, holding to the idea that the meaning was inspired and infallible, but the words were not. He believed in historical interpretation and Christocentric interpretation. He believed that historical criticism was clearing the path of human tradition in order to clearly hear the Scriptures. He believed that there were three sources of authority: Scripture, the church, and reason.

Work: He is most well-known for the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon. His major work for NT research is in the idea of Messiah in the Bible. He traces the development of this theme through the OT. He also examines the idea of Messiah in the Gospels, Acts, and some of the epistles. He wrote on the life and teaching of Jesus.

James Moffatt (1870–1944)

Life: Born in Glasgow, educated at University of Glasgow, he served as a pastor before teaching at Oxford, Theological College in Glasgow, Union, and lectured at Drew University after retirement. He worked on the translation of the RSV.

Thought: He was a historian, and not a theologian. He was a sincere man of faith who was dedicated to the historical method.

Work: His most important work is his *Introduction to the NT*. He translated the NT, and then the whole Bible. He completed the commentary on Hebrews of the ICC, and several commentaries for the Moffat New Testament Commentary series. He wrote on the Christology of the Gospel writers. He produced a mountain of work.

New Testament Research at Yale

Benjamin Wisner Bacon (1860–1932)

Life: born in CT, educated in prep school in Germany and Switzerland, he studied at Yale but never earned a doctorate (Breslau, Oxford, and Harvard gave him honorary doctorates). He taught at Yale.

Thought: Bacon practiced historical criticism. His basic thought was similar to F. C. Baur in that he believed that history is “an evolving process in which God was at work.”³¹⁹ He believed there is a gospel of Jesus and a gospel about Jesus, and both are necessary (similar to the religion of Jesus and about Jesus).

Work: He produced a NT introduction. He worked primarily on the Gospels. He understood that the Gospel writers wrote to explain or defend the Christian faith, not to “satisfy the curiosity of the critical historian.”³²⁰ He supported the tradition that Mark was a roman gospel. He denied Johannine authorship of John’s Gospel.

³¹⁹ Baird, 2:301.

³²⁰ Baird, 2:302.

The Chicago School

The Chicago school was oriented toward reaching more than just the educated elite. Founded in 1892, it was supported by John D. Rockefeller. It was characterized by a distinctive methodology: the socio-historical method. The school was also characterized by an interest in natural theology.

Ernest DeWitt Burton (1856–1925)

Life: born in Ohio, he studied at Rochester Theological Seminary and Leipzig. He taught at Chicago school of divinity.

Thought: He was a man of faith who followed the historical-critical method. He believed there are two types of interpretation: interpretation of expression (art), and interpretation of facts (history). Christ is the interpretive center of biblical history. The biblical scholar begins this process of interpretation, but the theologian completes it. Interpretation is never complete, but must be done over and over again (hermeneutical spiral?).

Work: Burton worked with Greek Grammar. He produced some works on word studies in the NT. His major work was his Galatians commentary for the ICC series. It is characterized by linguistic and grammatical investigation in order to understand the historical meaning of the text. He also studied the Gospels.

Shailer Mathews (1836–1941)

Life: born in Maine, He was educated at Colby College (influenced by Albion W. Small, the “father of American sociology”).³²¹ He studied under Burton at Newton Theological Institution; he studied history and economics at Berlin. He taught NT and historical theology at Chicago, and promoted a modern understanding of the NT and early Christianity.

Thought: He opposed orthodoxy, fundamentalism, and any speculative theology. He thought that “the criterion of truth was pragmatic and functional.”³²² Truth is what meets people’s needs. His thought was grounded in naturalism and humanism. He thought doctrines were the result of social processes. He was a modernist (not a liberal) who thought it was important to apply Christianity by means of the scientific, historical, social method.

Work: He promoted Christian sociology—that is, the application of Jesus’s teaching to social institutions. He was early on very optimistic about man’s ability to transform the world through the application of Jesus’s teachings to society. He later was chastened by study and the War. He thought that Jesus’s’ teaching was eschatological in form but religious and spiritual in essence (kernel-husk). He saw the same thing in Paul: his religious experience was the essence but

³²¹ Baird, 2:311.

³²² Baird, 2:312.

eschatology was the form. He also applied this to the early church. Finally, he viewed doctrine as sociological in nature. He advocated understanding the atonement in terms of modernism (informed by scientific understanding).

Shirley Jackson Case (1872–1947)

Life: Born in Canada, educated at Acadia University. He studied at Yale and then Taught at Chicago.

Thought: He disagreed with the kernel-husk approach. He believed the value of religion is in the function it served in the people that believed in it. Doctrine is always relative and functional.

Work: He was a historian, and believed that history is the result of human, not divine activity. He was opposed to supernaturalism, and thought that God's work was best seen in terms of nature. He believed that Christianity was influenced by Gnosticism and mystery religions (history of religions). The apocalyptic teaching of the Bible cannot be applied today. The world is getting better, not worse. He advocated for religious naturalism. He produced a historical Jesus work that portrayed Jesus as a modern liberal. He was most interested in Jesus's religious teaching.

Edgar Johnson Goodspeed (1871–1962)

Life: born in IL, studied at Yale, then received a PhD from Chicago under Harper (first president of Chicago). He also studied at Berlin. He taught at the University of Chicago.

Work: His distinctive theory was of a Pauline letter collection with Ephesians at its head. Eventually this became a theory in which most of the NT was written at Ephesus. He produced an Intro to the NT, and his own translation of the NT, then the Bible. Baird says that his later works are “disappointing.”³²³

Conservative Reaction

If members of the Chicago school were missionaries for modernism, then the conservatives would push back. The debate exploded into the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. Fundamentalism became a more powerful force in America. The volumes titled *The Fundamentals* were published from 1910–1915. Harry Emerson Fosdick preached the sermon “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” in 1922.

Benjamin B. Warfield (1851–1921)

Life: born in KY, he was educated at the College of NJ (later called Princeton). He studied in Europe and then returned to Princeton where he prepared for ministry. He studied at Leipzig, then returned to PA where he taught NT at Western Theological Seminary in PA. He moved to Princeton in 1887.

³²³ Baird, 2:329.

Thought: He followed Charles Hodge in believing that theology was a science. He was influenced, like Hodge, by Calvinism and Scottish common-sense realism. He was unashamedly a supernaturalist who thought that Christianity was fundamentally a supernatural religion. He believed in inspiration and inerrancy. This is rooted in his doctrine of special revelation. He opposed mechanical dictation view of inspiration, but rather sees a concurrence of divine and human in Scripture. Because God speaks in the Bible, it must be inerrant. Inerrancy has to do with the original manuscripts. Because the Scriptures are inerrant, the canon was completed when the last book was written, and only later recognized.

Work: He wrote that Paul's prophecies were fulfilled in the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. His major contribution is in Biblical Theology. He wrote about NT Christology, the virgin birth, and the atonement.

J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937)

Life: born in Baltimore, MD, he studied at Johns Hopkins University, Princeton, then one year in Germany (Marburg, Göttingen). He began teaching Greek at Princeton, and eventually his faith strengthened and deepened and his doubts resolved. In 1929, Machen resigned from Princeton over concerns about the seminary's orthodoxy, and within a year founded Westminster Theological Seminary. In 1933, he founded an independent mission board, and was suspended in 1935 from the Presbyterian Church for being a schismatic. In 1936 he founded the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), and died in 1937.

Thought: He respected those he disagreed with. Thought he was a conservative, he refused to be condescending toward others. He was called by some a fundamentalist, but he rejected the label. He agreed with fundamentalist doctrines, such as supernaturalism and inerrancy, but he also rejected dispensationalism and premillennialism. He also opposed prohibition and approved of smoking. Thought he was strict when it came to the church, he was a libertarian when it came to society and resisted imposing Christian practices on society.

He was a historian. He shared with Warfield's Calvinism and common-sense realism. He wrote in *Christianity and Liberalism* that Christianity is supernatural and non-supernatural religion is not Christianity. In *What is Faith?*, he argued against anti-intellectualism and advocates historical interpretation. He emphasized the importance of Scripture. He affirms that the NT teaches the trinity of God, and the incarnation and resurrection of Christ.

Work: In addition to his Greek grammar, his most important works were on the religion of Paul and the virgin birth. In his book on Paul, he argued that Paul is important for Christianity. He attempts to refute false portraits of him. He claims that Paul was a Pharisee who was not influenced by the Hellenistic world. Paul's religion, he says, is founded on the Jesus who really existed. This book was received well even by those who disagreed with him because it was well-written and he presents opponents fairly.

His book on the virgin birth is his "Magnum Opus."³²⁴ He basically argued that the belief in the virgin birth originates in the fact that it happened.

³²⁴ Baird, 2:356.

8. Conservative Alternatives on the Continent

While there was no fundamentalist movement in Europe, there were people who disagreed with the liberal direction of Biblical studies and wanted to push back against the current flow of thought.

Critics of the History of Religion:

Ernst von Dobschütz (1807–1934)

Life: He was born in Halle, educated at Leipzig, Halle, and Berlin. He taught at Jena, Strasbourg, Breslau, and Halle.

Work: He worked primarily in philology and history. He affirmed the distinctiveness of the Christian faith against the History of Religions School. He said that ethics was more important than eschatology for the early church. “Influenced by liberalism and lingering piety, von Dobschütz finds the center of Christianity in morality.”³²⁵

Paul Feine (1859–1933)

Life: he was born at Golmsdorf, studied at Jena and Berlin. He taught at Göttingen, Vienna, Breslau and Halle.

Work: His most important work is his intro to the NT. It is short and clear, and his judgments are conservative. He focused much of his research on Paul. He said that Paul was a great thinker. He thought that Paul’s conversion was central, and that it was at that point that Christ became the “center of his religion.”³²⁶ He also wrote on the history of Pauline Studies. He also wrote a NT theology. Feine emphasized that Christianity was distinct from other religions (against the History of Religions School).

Conservative Criticism:

Theodor Zahn (1838–1933)

Life: he was born in Mörs and studied at Basel, Erlangen (where he was influenced by J. C. K. von Hofmann), and Berlin. He taught at Göttingen, Kiel, Erlangen, Leipzig, and finally Erlangen.

Work: His work focused on the canon, New Testament Introduction, and Commentaries. He is conservative in his judgments. Baird notes that he was incredibly well-learned, and shows a mastery of the exegetical and critical tools. His critique is that “In his dedication to tradition,

³²⁵ Baird, 2:363.

³²⁶ Baird, 2:364.

Zahn has enormous confidence in the scholars of the ancient church and very little in those of his own time.”³²⁷

Adolf Schlatter (1852–1938)

Life: born in Switzerland, he studied in Basel (studying history with Jakob Burckhardt), Tübingen (under Johann Tobias Beck), and back to Basel. He pastored for a few years, then taught at Bern, Greifswald, Berlin, and Tübingen. He retired twice, and when he was almost 80 he produced a massive amount of work on the NT. He also wrote in OT, theology and Ethics.

Thought: An important category to Schlatter is the idea of history. He rejects atheistic view of history that focus on what happened without reference to God. Christ is the center of history and the Bible. The study of history has two aspects: observation (perception) and judgment (interpretation). The whole Bible is about the grace of God in Christ, and he often focuses on the inner life of Christ. He doesn't follow enlightenment conventions and “rarely cites the work of others.”³²⁸ He is concerned with both history and doctrine.

Work: He wrote about the Christian idea of faith. He wrote an introduction to the Bible. He believed that the Bible was the inspired word of God, yet he was not an inerrantist. He wrote a two volume NT theology. The life of Jesus (vol. 1) must be investigated historically, and the four Gospels were his primary source. He wrote several commentaries, one commentary series on the whole Bible and several major critical commentaries. Baird concludes that he offers profound insights, but also that there are some shortcomings of his work because he does not depend on other scholars.

Roman Catholic Biblical Research: Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855–1938)

Life: Born Albert Lagrange, he studied law in Paris, then entered the order of the Dominicans and took the name Marie-Joseph. He was ordained, and taught at the Catholic Institute in Toulouse. He studied at Vienna, and then in 1890 was sent to Jerusalem to start the *École Pratique d'Études Bibliques* (now known as *École Biblique et Archéologique Française*). He also founded the *Revue biblique* (the first RCC journal for critical scholarship). He was caught up in the controversy over modernism in the Catholic Church, but he was willing to submit to church authority. He opposed Alfred Loisy's more liberal perspectives on the NT.

Thought: He was a “historian and exegete.”³²⁹ He consciously followed Roman Catholic teaching and tradition. He was skeptical about critical scholarship coming from Germany. He promoted scientific criticism, because God is the author of science, but he opposed the idea of excluding the miraculous a priori. The church, he believes, is sensitive to the meaning of the

³²⁷ Baird, 2:373.

³²⁸ Baird, 2:376.

³²⁹ Baird, 2:385.

Bible because the church shares its faith. Following the church precludes “individualistic or idiosyncratic interpretations.”³³⁰

Work: He wrote a large number of works. He wrote two important books on historical background to the NT. He wrote important commentaries on the Gospels, Romans and Galatians. He wrote an important set of volumes introducing the critical study of the NT. The first volume dealt with the question of the canon, the second deals with textual criticism, and the fourth (he skipped the third) deals with historical criticism. His work led Romans Catholics into mainstream NT scholarship.

9. The Refining of Historical Criticism

The world was an uncertain place at the time of WWI and WWII. Optimism failed in Europe, and in the US there were contrasting conditions. Science and technology advanced and gave more opportunities for the development of NT research. However, liberalism, which had brought progress, became the establishment and churned out the same old, same old.

Continuing Discovery and Research in Text Criticism

1881 was a high point in textual criticism because of Westcott and Hort’s text. However, people were critical of their understanding of the “neutral text.” Also, they used no papyri in their text, and in the meantime, new papyri had been discovered.

Hermann Freiherr von Soden (1852–1914)

Life: born in Ohio, he was educated in Tübingen, pastored, and then taught at Berlin. He was a liberal, which is reflected in his many works.

Work: His most important contribution is his text-critical work, arranged in two parts consisting of two sections each. Many scholars have been critical of his work, though this should not disqualify all of his work.

James Rendell Harris (1852–1941)

Life: born in Plymouth, England, he was educated at Cambridge (influenced by Hort). He taught at Cambridge (mathematics) but turned to text criticism. He taught at Johns Hopkins, Haverford, Cambridge, Leiden, and Woodbrooke, and was appointed curator of the John Rylands Library. He was torpedoed twice (the second time surviving in the lifeboat in which Mouton died).

Work: He was primarily a text-critic, and thought of textual criticism as a “hands-on discipline.”³³¹ He works on the Didache and other ancient Christian works, but his major contribution was his work on the Western text. He also worked on the manuscripts of the “Ferrari

³³⁰ Baird, 2:386.

³³¹ Baird, 2:402.

Group.” He claimed that the early Christian churches used a “testimonia,” a collection of proof-texts taken from the OT. Baird says that he was brilliant, and though he often went beyond the evidence, he was influential and made an impact.

Kirsopp Lake (1872–1946)

Life: Born in Southampton, educated at Oxford, he was a cataloger at the Bodleian Library. He taught at Leiden and Harvard, but had to move from the divinity school to the history department after scandal from divorcing his wife and marrying a student (who was married). He was considered heretical because of his view that the resurrection of Christ was not bodily, rather it meant that life triumphs over death, and only through later tradition was the physical dimension added.

Work: His most significant contributions were in the area of textual criticism. He produced a pocket guide to NT textual criticism, edited mss (such as Codex Sinaiticus). He investigated the relationship between mss (such as family 1 and 13). He suggested that Θ was a distinct textual family, the caesarean text. (Since then this has mostly been abandoned.) He edited a 5 vol. historical critical work on Acts.

New Testament Grammar and Lexicography

Debrunner edited Blass’s Grammar in 1913 and 1943. This would become a respected grammar, especially after having been edited and translated by R. W. Funk.

Archibald Thomas Robertson (1863–1934)

Life: born in VA, he grew up on a farm in NC. He was baptized at age 13 and from that point on was a Southern Baptist. He graduated from Wake Forest College and Studied at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in KY. In 1892 he was made a professor there, and he taught there until the day he died in 1934. He was a conservative, but when it came to linguistic analysis and New Testament Greek, he was “unrivaled.”

Work: His main work was his “Big Grammar.” Baird calls it a “monumental accomplishment.”³³²

Walter Bauer (1877–1960)

Life: Born in Königsberg, he was educated at Marburg, Berlin, and Strasbourg. He taught at Marburg, Breslau, and Göttingen. He contributed in the area of lexicography and the history of early Christianity (discussed below).

Work: His Lexicon was intended as a revision of Preuschen’s *Vollständiges Griechisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch zu den Schriften des NTs und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (1910). It was revised and translated into English. Its two strengths are the great number of

³³² Baird, 2:414.

words that Baur discovered had parallel in other koine literature, and his extensive treatment of difficult words such as preposition.

Research in Jewish Backgrounds

Hermann L. Strack (1848–1922) and Paul Billerbeck (1853–1932)

Strack: Born in Berlin, educated in Berlin and Leipzig. He taught at Berlin. He was a student of Judaism, and though “he believed Jews should be converted to Christianity, Strack opposed anti-Semitism.”³³³ He wrote an Aramaic grammar, and his introduction to Rabbinic Literature. His most well-known work is his collaboration with Billerbeck on the *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (4 vols., 1922–1928).

Billerbeck: born in Prussia and educated at Greifswald and Leipzig, he was a pastor. He may have been the true writer of (most of?) the collaboration with Strack.

George Foot Moore (1851–1931)

Life: born in PA, he studied at Yale and Union Theological Seminary. He was ordained to the congregational ministry in Ohio, but later taught OT and Andover. He then taught at Harvard, where he taught History of Religions. He is most well-known for his study of Judaism as a religion in its own right, rather than simply as a foil for Christianity.

Work: He wrote a commentary on the book of Judges, and wrote on the history of religions. He believed that Jesus was primarily a moral teacher. He defended Judaism regarding frequent charges made by Christian scholars that Judaism viewed God as distant, and that it was a legalistic religion. Baird thinks very highly of him in that he is a corrective, though he wasn't perfect.

Research in Hellenism:

Arthur Darby Nock (1902–1963)

Life: born in England, he studied at Cambridge. He taught history of Religions at Harvard. He began as a practicing Anglican, but later became an agnostic. He was very self-critical, and published mostly a number of essays.

Work: Nock was mostly a student of history of religions, but he was not subject to parallelomania. His main interest was in Hellenistic religions.

The History of Early Christianity

Hans Lietzmann (1875–1942)

³³³ Baird, 2:417.

Life: born in Düsseldorf, he was educated at Jena and Bonn, and taught at Jena and Berlin. He objected to National Socialism, and agreed with the confession church.

Thought: He was concerned to produce an objective reconstruction of the facts, history “as it really happened.” To this he adds a theological concern, so that history is the medium for revelation and the source of theological understanding. He said that the goal of NT study is to hear the apostles according to what their writings meant historically. To this one had to add faith and a concern to hear the Bible as God’s word to mankind. One could say that he advocated “historical-spiritual” exegesis. He was a liberal and advocated a moderate use of the history of religions approach.

Work: He produced work of all kinds: he was concerned with textual criticism, issues of canon and early Christian writings: on the Muratorian Fragment, the early Christian creeds, and the Didache. He also revised Huck’s synopsis. He wrote on the canon, and contributed to a commentary series. He asserted that all biblical preaching must be preceded by scientific historical exegesis. He wrote on the Aramaic term “son of man” as used in the Gospels. He wrote about early Christian history: the traditions of Peter and Paul and their martyrdoms in Rome; the origins of the Lord’s Supper.

Maurice Goguel (1880–1955)

Life: born in Paris, he studied in Paris and Marburg (influenced by the liberal Wilhelm Herrmann). He taught at Faculté Libre de Théologie de Paris. He was a liberal after the type of Alfred Loisy and Renan. He was interested in the inner life and evolution, and studied psychology and sociology. While he was originally interested in theology, he placed a value on historically grounding theology and became a historian of Jesus and early Christianity.

Work: His major works were an intro to the NT and a survey of the history of early Christianity. He basically takes a liberal perspective in which the resurrection and other miracles are explained as later additions of tradition.

Walter Bauer

Work: he was interested in postapostolic Christianity, and worked in non-canonical literature. His most important work besides his lexicon was his book *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, where he suggested that actually, heresy produced orthodoxy. He suggested that there was a variety of versions of Christianity, and the idea of one normative version did not come until later when the “orthodox” had triumphed. This idea was criticized by many. Some thought that his work was great, and others thought he was on the wrong track. Baird says that everyone agreed that the use of the terms “orthodoxy” and “heresy” was misleading because it suggested a normative judgment based on later criteria. Bauer also contributed to Lietzmann’s commentary series (the Gospel of John), which he interprets from a history of religions perspective.

Hans Windisch (1881–1935)

Life: born and educated in Leipzig, he taught there for a time, then at Leiden, Kiel, and Halle. He was committed “to historical-critical exegesis in the service of theology.”³³⁴ He was opposed to a theological exegesis where theology was read into the text as a primary meaning; however, he was happy to move from history to theology when the historical task had been completed. Baird says that he is a model of liberal historical-criticism at the beginning of the 20th century.³³⁵

Work: He wrote on the question of sin after baptism in early Christianity. He also wrote on the fourth Gospel and its relationship to the synoptics. His major works include a book on the Sermon on the Mount in which he attempts to practice historical-critical exegesis before then interpreting the significance of the passage for modern times. He wrote a book on Paul and Christ which was generally criticized for making too much of the divine man parallel in Hellenistic thought. He wrote an important commentary on 2 Corinthians for the Meyer series, and for the *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament* series he contributed books on Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles, and the Epistle of Barnabas.

Ernst Lohmeyer (1890–1946)

Life: born in Westphalia, he studied at Tübingen, Leipzig, Berlin, and Erlangen. He studied at Heidelberg under Dibelius, and taught there. He also taught at Breslau. He opposed National Socialism, and aligned with the confessing church. He taught at Greifswald, then served in the military. When the Russians won, he was arrested and shot by them.

Thought: He was aware of his philosophical presuppositions. His exegesis was informed by his understanding of German Idealism. His work is marked by an observance of dialecticisms in the texts. Baird says that his work is exceptional, despite the fact that he often brings his philosophy to the text.³³⁶

Work: He wrote an important work on the Christ-hymn of Philippians 2. He sees in it a dialectic between the eternal and the earthly resolved in the ascension. He wrote a book on Christology that suggested that there were two early Christologies that were resolved into one later Christology. He wrote commentaries for the Meyer series (Mark, Matthew, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon). He wrote a commentary on Revelation for the Lietzmann series.

Epilogue

³³⁴ Baird, 2:456.

³³⁵ Baird, 2:462.

³³⁶ Baird, 2:469.

Highlights from this volume: 1. “the historical-critical method was universally adopted.”³³⁷ 2. “Progress was made in the area of text criticism.”³³⁸ 3. The understanding of linguistics also improved. 4. The history of religions school appeared. 5. Geographical research was increased. 6. Form criticism was pioneered. 7. The socio-historical method was used. 8. The problem of presuppositions has not been overcome. 9. The NT introductions continue to be written, and on some issues, there is some critical consensus. 10. There were a number of exegetical and theological works written that demonstrate great learning and ability with the new tools. 11. The life of Jesus and early Christianity was a topic of debate and controversy. 12. A number of hypotheses were built with little evidence.

³³⁷ Baird, 2:471.

³³⁸ Baird, 2:471.

HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT RESEARCH: VOL 3
FROM C. H. DODD TO HANS DIETER BETZ

Introduction

The study of the NT is significant regardless of the particular beliefs one has about it. This book focuses on the history of NT scholarship in the Enlightenment tradition through the 20th century. Baird confesses that it is selective. He also confesses his love for the historical-critical method. He says that it has strengthened his faith and “deepened my devotion to the New Testament.”³³⁹

PART I: THE RENAISSANCE OF NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM

1. The Zenith of Enlightenment Criticism

Baird situates this chapter between WWI and WWII, when hope in the future and the endless progress of man would be dashed by the horrors of the war. He says that the Enlightenment rationalism and empiricism were further refined during this time. Scholarship moved toward greater consensus and complexity. British and American scholars accepted much of the critical scholarship of Germany, but generally tempered it.

Reaction to Form Criticism:
Vincent Taylor (1887–1968)

Life: Taylor was born in England and studied at the Methodist theological school in Richmond. He was given a PhD from the University of London for his book on the Virgin Birth of Christ. He taught at Wesley College in Leeds. He was disciplined and committed to producing one page a day. His first work was on the virgin birth of Christ, in which he said that the teaching could not be proved or disproved by historical investigation, and that the historicity was not crucial.

Critical work on the Gospels: He worked on the synoptic gospels. He defended Streeter’s proto-Luke hypothesis. He especially was interested in the origin of Luke’s record of the passion. He modified and tempered form criticism. He believed that radical form critics attributed too much to the early church. “If the Form-Critics are right, the disciples must have been translated to heaven immediately after the Resurrection.”³⁴⁰ His most important critical work is his

³³⁹ Baird, 3:4. Is it significant that he does not say that it has deepened his devotion to Christ and the gospel?

³⁴⁰ *Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, 41; quoted in Baird, 3:11.

commentary on Mark. He accepted the 2 document hypothesis. He also said that the “messianic secret” originated with Jesus, not Mark.

NT Theology: He produced three works on atonement and three works on Christology.

Studies in Luke-Acts:
Henry J. Cadbury (1883–1974)

Life: Cadbury was born in Philadelphia PA and raised Quaker. He graduated from Haverford College. He studied classics at Harvard, and taught there, but had to resign because of a political letter he wrote. He taught at Haverford, Bryn Mawr, and then at Harvard again. He was involved in the Quaker peace movement and won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1947. He participated in the Translation of the RSV and served as president of ABL and SNTS. [He was also the PhD mentor of G. E. Ladd.]

Because of his Quaker background, he believed that the teachings of the Bible were in there because they were self-evidently true, not true because they were in the Bible. As a Quaker, he believed that the Holy Spirit continues to give revelation and that the Bible was simply a record of the Spirit’s work in older times. He was known for being a careful scholar who refused to make assertions without appropriate evidence.

Luke-Acts: He seems to have been the one to coin the term “Luke-Acts” and those books took up much of his professional life. His dissertation was on *The Style and Literary Method of Luke*. He believed that the study of Luke’s use of Mark could reveal how Luke used his sources. He also responded to form criticism. He believed that the tradition was basically reliable. He participated with Kirsopp Lake in the writing and editing of *Beginnings of Christianity*. Baird says that his book *The Making of Luke-Acts* is his most important contribution.³⁴¹

Jesus and Criticism: He was opposed to portraying Jesus in the image of modern man. He believed that objective critical research would show that Jesus is essentially an ancient Jewish man. Of course, Cadbury does his own reimagining of Jesus when he says that Jesus is mainly an ethical teacher who taught self-evident truths. He was simply an ethically-mature person. He also reflected on the practice of NT criticism. He had a “lifelong preoccupation with the method and practice of criticism.”³⁴² In various essays he assesses the development of NT studies and points out the tendency to fanciful conjectures without proper evidence.

Life and Teaching of Jesus:
T. W. Manson (1893–1958)

³⁴¹ Baird, 3:23.

³⁴² Baird, 3:25.

Life: Manson studied at Glasgow and Cambridge, and taught at Oxford and Manchester. He served as a president of SNTS. His basic approach is that the Bible, unlike other faiths, contains revelation from God. Revelation reaches its highest point in the person of Jesus.

Gospels: Manson presented a major work on the form and content of Jesus's teaching. He said that "the substance of the gospel is the person of Christ [and] the key to understanding the NT is the idea of the saving remnant."³⁴³ He also discusses the kingdom of God. Manson also wrote a book on the sayings of Jesus. He also wrote that a glimpse into the historical Jesus can be reconstructed on the basis of the reliability of Mark's Gospel. He attempted to do this in his book *The Servant-Messiah*.

NT Criticism and Theology: Manson wrote introductory comments for the various NT books, as well as dealing with issues such as the ending of Romans. He made a contribution to NT theology in his book *The Beginning of the Gospel*, where he said that a historical study of Jesus is important for Christology. He wrote a book on the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount. He also wrote a book on the ministry of the church in which he said that the church's ministry is a continuation of Christ's ministry. He also wrote a series of essays on Paul and John. Baird evaluates him by saying that he united faith and criticism.³⁴⁴

A British Master of the Discipline:
C. H. Dodd (1884–1973)

Life: Born in North Wales, he was educated in Oxford, Berlin (where he was influenced by von Harnack) and Oxford. He was ordained as a Congregationalist and taught at Oxford. He also taught at Manchester and Cambridge, participated in the New English Bible translation, and was a founder of SNTS. He was committed to ecumenicity and served with the World Council of Churches. His theological thought has three prominent characteristics: 1. Natural theology, 2. A particular theology of history, and 3. Platonism.

Early Work: He rejected the heavy dependence on parallels characteristic of the history of religion school. He did not want to separate history and theology. He focused on Paul in his early years. He produced a commentary for Romans. He said that Paul's theology was expressed in metaphors. He believed that Paul spoke of "expiation" rather than "propitiation." He believed that Paul was a universalist.

Distinctive Thoughts: The two most prominent ideas in Dodd's work are realized eschatology and the idea of "kerygma." Dodd examined the parables and believed that they reveal a view of eschatology that has already arrived (in contrast with Schweitzer). He says that other parables look like they foresee a coming kingdom, but they have been changed by the early church (most scholars say that he is being too strong on this point).

³⁴³ Baird, 3:27.

³⁴⁴ Baird, 3:34–35.

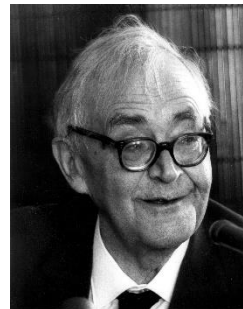
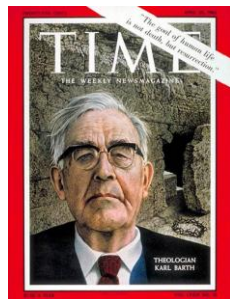
The “kerygma” is Dodd’s view on the message that the early church preached. He believed that the proclamation regarding Christ formed the “central message of the NT.”³⁴⁵ He believed that Mark took the basic message of the Kerygma and used it as a framework for his Gospel. The background of the kerygma is in the OT. Contrary to many scholars, Dodd believed that NT writers were taking the OT context into account rather than use proof texts taken out of context. He also distinguishes between kerygma and didache (teaching) and says that the proclamation of God’s grace always leads to teaching about how to live for God.

Major Works: Dodd’s favorite book was John’s Gospel because it supported his realized eschatology. He believed that the author of John’s letters was different from the author of John’s Gospel. His most important work is *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (1953). It deals with the historical background, most important ideas, and its argument and structure. He wrote another important book called *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (1963). This book tried to show that the fourth Gospel contained independent tradition that was reliable for understanding the historical Jesus.

2. The New Biblical Theology

WWI ended and dictators arose in Europe, leading to WWII. This was reflected in what Baird call “a theology of crisis.”³⁴⁶ Karl Barth is the leader of this development.

Dialectical Theology and Dogmatics: Karl Barth (1886–1968)



Life and Theological Development: Baird says that Barth “was destined to become the most important theologian of the twentieth century.”³⁴⁷ He was born in Basel, Switzerland, and studied at Bern, Berlin (where he was influenced by Harnack), Tübingen, and Marburg (where he was influenced by Wilhelm Herrmann). He served as a pastor from 1911–1921, and became disillusioned with Liberalism. In 1919 he published his Romans commentary, then taught at Göttingen. He then taught at Münster and Bonn. He was ejected from Bonn because of his opposition to National Socialism. He moved to Basel (1935).

³⁴⁵ Baird, 3:42.

³⁴⁶ Baird, 3:63.

³⁴⁷ Baird, 3:64.

Barth's Theology: Baird says that his theology developed in three stages: 1. Liberalism, 2. Dialectical theology (Romans commentary), 3. Mature thought (when he wrote his *Dogmatics*).

In his second stage (“early Barth”), he wrote his Romans Commentary, and debated with Adolf Harnack on the value of the historical-critical method. In the mature stage (mature thought), he wrote his book on Anselm, and began his *Dogmatics*. Baird praises the *Church Dogmatics* as “one of the greatest works in the history of Christian doctrine.”³⁴⁸ It is arranged in four sections: The “Doctrine of the Word of God, the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Creation, and the Doctrine of Reconciliation.”³⁴⁹ The Word of God is 1. The Word preached, 2. The Word written, and 3. The Word revealed (Christ). He believes that revelation = Christ. All theology is Christology. The resurrection is a different kind of event. The resurrection takes place in time, but makes “the event of Christ an eternal event, contemporary and universal.”³⁵⁰

Barth and the Bible: Baird call Barth a “Biblical Theologian.”³⁵¹ His *Dogmatics* contains immense amounts of exegetical work. The Bible is not itself revelation. It is a witness to revelation. Hermeneutics contains some circularity, because the interpreter “must know the subject, but the subject can only be known through the text.”³⁵² For Barth, “the church did not create but only confirmed the canon.”³⁵³ He rejects infallibility.

The responsibility to interpret and apply Scripture falls on all members of the church, not just scholars. Barth suggests three steps:³⁵⁴ 1. *Explicatio*, involving literary and historical research. This includes historical criticism (though he is suspicious of pretend objectivity). 2. *Meditatio*, involving the situation and perspective of the interpreter. This consists of wrestling with the text until “the interpreter is one with the author.” 3. *Applicatio*, where the word becomes contemporary, speaking to today. At all steps, the Scripture is the subject and we are the object.

Barth's Commentaries: His Romans commentary was a controversy. It offended many. Baird says that “for many reviewers the commentary was less an exposition of the thought of Paul in his historical context than the propagation of the theology of Karl Barth, accosting the Christendom of the twentieth century.”³⁵⁵ Another important commentary was his commentary on 1 Corinthians, where he proposed that chapter 15 was the center of the whole book. He wrote a shorter commentary on Romans that was a little more traditional (1941). He also wrote a commentary on Philippians. He also wrote on the fourth Gospel (on chapters 1–8, published posthumously).

Theological Hermeneutics:
Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976)

³⁴⁸ Baird, 3:68.

³⁴⁹ Baird, 3:68.

³⁵⁰ Baird, 3:71.

³⁵¹ Baird, 3:71. James Barr disputes this.

³⁵² Baird, 3:72.

³⁵³ Baird, 3:73.

³⁵⁴ Baird, 3:73–74.

³⁵⁵ Baird, 3:78.



Life and Work: Baird says that Bultmann is “the most important NT scholar of the twentieth century.”³⁵⁶ He was educated at Tübingen, Berlin, and Marburg. He taught at Breslau, Giessen, and Marburg. His youngest brother was killed in WWI and his other brother died in a concentration camp in WWII. He was a member of the confessing church. He was influenced by dialectical theology early in his career. He was also influenced by the existentialism of Martin Heidegger. Bultmann and Barth became friends at Marburg, and though they gradually became opposed to one another theologically, they continued to interact personally throughout their lives.

Bultmann’s Theology: His theology consisted of three major influences: 1. Liberalism and Enlightenment criticism; 2. Reformation and Lutheran doctrine seen through the lens of neo-Kantians and early Barth; and 3. Existentialism from Kierkegaard and Heidegger.

Regarding Enlightenment criticism, he advocated for a radical criticism as a demolition project because he thought that scholarly attempts to reconstruct Jesus were attempts at salvation by works. Regarding Reformation doctrine, under the influence of early Barth, Bultmann turned from faith in the historical Jesus (liberalism) to the Christ of the proclamation (dialectical theology). He took Luther’s principle of salvation by grace and took it in an epistemological and philosophical direction.

Regarding existentialist philosophy, His main influences were Kierkegaard and Heidegger. From Kierkegaard he got the idea of the “infinite qualitative distance between time and eternity.”³⁵⁷ From Heidegger, he learned the emphasis on “the centrality of human existence . . . for theological understanding.”³⁵⁸

Above all he was “a biblical theologian.”³⁵⁹ For him, all theology is exegesis. History and eschatology are important for Bultmann. Revelation is also important because he defines revelation, not as the giving of knowledge, but as “an occurrence or event that puts humans in a new situation.”³⁶⁰ Revelation is therefore not informational.

For Bultmann, Jesus is also important. He is “not concerned with the biography of Jesus . . . not concerned with the messianic consciousness of Jesus, [. . . but] with the message of Jesus.”³⁶¹ For Bultmann, Jesus’s message can be viewed in terms of three concentric circles: 1. the outer

³⁵⁶ Baird, 3:85.

³⁵⁷ Baird, 3:88.

³⁵⁸ Baird, 3:89.

³⁵⁹ Baird, 3:89.

³⁶⁰ Baird, 3:90.

³⁶¹ Baird, 3:90–91.

circle has to do with Jesus as an apocalyptic preacher; 2. the second circle has to do with Jesus as a teacher of radical obedience of love; 3. the innermost circle has to do with Jesus's teaching about God: he is paradoxically near and remote (corresponding to the present and future aspects of the kingdom).

Along with his view of Jesus, Christology is important to Bultmann. Jesus Christ is the eschatological event. "The decisive feature of NT Christology, according to Bultmann, is the affirmation that the proclaimer (Jesus) became the proclaimed (Christ); the one who preached the Word is identified as the Word."³⁶² Jesus Christ is a paradoxical event that calls humans to a decision.

Hermeneutics and Criticism: Demythologizing: Bultmann wrote on hermeneutics. He said that historical and theological hermeneutics are inseparable. He said that "the interpreter must have a 'life relation' to the text—what he often describes as pre-understanding."³⁶³ He says that this is not subjectivism, but rather recognizing that the most objective understanding of the text is the one in which the person recognizes their own existence. Therefore, the most subjective is the most objective.

Bultmann is also well-known for his concept of demythologizing. He suggested that "demythologizing is necessary because the NT message of salvation is presented in the language of ancient cosmic myth—a language incredible to modern humans, demanding sacrifice of the intellect. . . . Bultmann believes the message of Jesus is expressed in mythological language and assumes a mythological worldview."³⁶⁴

Demythologizing is a hermeneutical method. It takes the "mythological" elements and translates them into existential categories; in other words, it claims that biblical writers portrayed the transcendent realities in objective, space-time categories. They must be back-translated into their existential realities. Bultmann engaged in this program because he wanted to "salvage" Christianity for the intellectual who "could not believe in miracles." For Bultmann, "demythologizing is the radical application of the doctrine of justification by faith to the sphere of knowledge and thought."³⁶⁵ Actually, scholars debate as to whether his definition of myth changed over his career. Baird concludes that "demythologizing is nothing other than existentialist interpretation, a method Bultmann had been using since the mid-1920s."³⁶⁶ He also concludes that for Bultmann, anthropology is at the "center of the theological arena."³⁶⁷

New Testament Exegesis: Baird says that "Bultmann's *Gospel of John* is one of the greatest commentaries in the history of NT exegesis."³⁶⁸ Bultmann posits an initial gospel that was later rearranged by a redactor. His commentary totally revises the order of the Gospel according to Bultmann's theory. His main concern is the theology of the original Gospel. "History of religion parallels, Heideggerian concepts, and dialectical doctrine are woven together into a seamless

³⁶² Baird, 3:93.

³⁶³ Baird, 3:94.

³⁶⁴ Baird, 3:94–95.

³⁶⁵ Quoted in Baird, 3:96.

³⁶⁶ Baird, 3:97.

³⁶⁷ Baird, 3:97.

³⁶⁸ Baird, 3:97.

robe of theological interpretation.”³⁶⁹ His commentary on 2 Corinthians was published posthumously.

New Testament Theology: He advocated “the use of historical criticism in the service of theological interpretation.”³⁷⁰ He writes that “the message of Jesus is a presupposition for the theology of the New Testament rather than a part of that theology itself.”³⁷¹ In other words, Christian theology does not start until “the proclaimer becomes the proclaimed.”³⁷² The theology of the New Testament, in his opinion, begins with the proclamation of the early church, and not before it. He believes that the early church was captivated by Jewish apocalyptic, but that Paul was the key to the growth of gentile Christianity, which broke the bounds of its Jewish heritage. For Bultmann, Paul was the founder of Christianity. Bultmann analyzes Paul’s theology around the topic of anthropology (because of his existentialist bias).

While he has been criticized for a number of reasons (philosophical presuppositions, reductionism, etc.), Baird says that what made him a great scholar was his “overarching synthesis” by which he brought all the various strands of his thought together.³⁷³

3. The Bultmann School

The Bultmann School in Germany

Ernst Käsemann (1906–1998)



Life: Käsemann was a combative scholar. He was born in Westphalia, and studied at Bonn (influenced by Erik Peterson), Marburg (influenced by Bultmann), and Tübingen (studied with Adolf Schlatter). He pastored for a time, and in 1937 he was thrown in prison for four weeks for anti-Nazi preaching. He was drafted in 1942 and eventually became a prisoner of the Americans. He was influential in the life of Peter Stuhlmacher, Leander Keck, and J. Louis Martyn. He was also interested in social causes. His daughter was murdered as a revolutionary in Argentina. He was influenced by Luther (justification by faith, etc.), F. C. Baur (criticism and emphasis on history), Barth (theological exegesis) and Bultmann (though he disputed with him on many issues). His theology was “theology in combat.”³⁷⁴ The center of his canon was Paul.

³⁶⁹ Baird, 3:99.

³⁷⁰ Baird, 3:106.

³⁷¹ Quoted in Baird, 3:106–107

³⁷² Baird, 3:107.

³⁷³ Baird, 3:116.

³⁷⁴ Baird, 3:131.

Käsemann's Early Writings: There are two phases to Käsemann's writings. The early works show the influence of Bultmann in the form of history of religion methods. His book on the book of Hebrews emphasized the wandering of the people of God and finds its background in Gnosticism.³⁷⁵ Christ is the end of Myth as he is the end of Law. Käsemann also wrote on apostleship, ministry and the sacraments.

Käsemann and canon: He asked if the church's unity is grounded in the canon, and he replies no, rather the multiplicity of confessions is grounded in the canon. For him the Bible is not the Word of God, but rather it is the Word of God inasmuch as it "is the Gospel." He holds to a canon within the canon, and his canon is centered in Paul and justification (as with Luther). He believed the Gospel of John should not have been included in the canon. He also made a distinction between "letter" and "spirit." "Letter" was how the Jews and fundamentalists and pietists interpreted the Bible. "Spirit" was how Paul and Käsemann interpreted the Bible. The law has been replaced by Christ.

The Quest of the Historical Jesus: He began the "New Quest for the Historical Jesus." He disagreed with Bultmann that there was great discontinuity between the historical Jesus and the risen Christ preached by the church. He also thought there was some reliable tradition preserved in the synoptics.

Apocalyptic and the Righteousness of God: He made a decisive shift in thinking in 1960. He declared that "apocalyptic is the mother of Christian theology."³⁷⁶ Apocalyptic thinking, Käsemann says, made historical thinking possible. It emphasizes the linear nature of time, and impacted the fact that the Gospel is in narrative form. He also wrote on the Paul's understanding of the "righteousness of God." God's action in Christ "establishes his sovereignty over the world."³⁷⁷ He also responded to Krister Stendahl's article in the "Introspective Conscience" by arguing that salvation is not individual, but rather has to do with the whole creation.

Käsemann on Romans: His commentary on Romans is his "crowning achievement."³⁷⁸

Günther Bornkamm (1905–1990)



³⁷⁵ Baird, 3:133.

³⁷⁶ Baird, 3:138.

³⁷⁷ Baird, 3:140.

³⁷⁸ Baird, 3:141.

Life and Thought: He was born in northeast Germany, and studied at Marburg, Tübingen, Berlin, Breslau. He was influenced by Bultmann at Marburg. He taught at Königsberg and Heidelberg, but was barred from teaching for his anti-Nazi views. He was associated with the confessing church. He taught at Bethel, served as a pastor, and then was drafted. After the war, he taught at Bethel, Göttingen, and Heidelberg. He served as president of SNTS.

He was influenced by the revival of interest in Luther by dialectical theologians. He agreed with Bultmann on demythologizing, but disagreed with Bultmann's reduction of Christ to a saving event, rather than a person. He was influenced early in his career by Bultmann's emphasis on history of religion methodology.

Bornkamm's Historical-Critical Research: His dissertation compared the Acts of Thomas to early Christian Gnosticism. Gnosticism provided the background for other things he wrote (for example a work on Colossians). He wrote an introduction to the NT which explains many of his views on critical matters. He wrote works on 2 Corinthians, Philippians, and Romans. He pioneered redaction criticism and produced some works on Matthew.

New Testament Exegesis: He wrote a number of exegetical works, for example on 1 Corinthians 13, 1 Cor 9:19–23, Rom 6, Rom 7, the Parousia in Mark 9:1 and Matt 25:1–13. He rejected Käsemann's view that John presents docetic ideas.

Theological Writings: Bornkamm was a Biblical Theologian. He accepted a canon within a canon that consisted of the message of God's grace, especially as it is presented in Paul. He wrote important discussions on the idea of "confession" (in Matthew, Paul and Hebrews). He also wrote on Reformation themes: "law and gospel, judgment and justification, the righteousness of God."³⁷⁹ He also wrote on the idea of reward in the NT.

Two Best-Sellers: Jesus and Paul: His book on Jesus is a famous attempt of the second quest for the historical Jesus. He affirmed that faith and history cannot be separated from one another. While a biography cannot be written, there are some things that can be known.³⁸⁰ He says that the resurrection narratives are not history but confessions of faith.³⁸¹ Baird concludes his review with the statement that "the hermeneutical problem and its philosophical-theological basis demand further investigation."³⁸² His book *Paulus* is also important. He examines the life and work of Paul (part 1), and the gospel and theology of Paul (part 2). While there are differences between Jesus and Paul, Bornkamm "affirms a fundamental unity" that consists of "the doctrine of justification by faith."³⁸³

Bultmann in America: James M. Robinson (1924–)

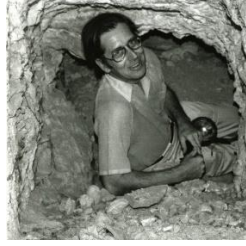
³⁷⁹ Baird, 3:156.

³⁸⁰ Baird, 3:160.

³⁸¹ Baird, 3:162.

³⁸² Baird, 3:163.

³⁸³ Baird, 3:167.



Life and Thought: Born in Gettysburg, PA, he studied at Davidson College, Columbia Seminary, Basel (with Barth), Marburg (with Bultmann), as well as Zürich, Heidelberg, Strasbourg, and Paris. He finished under Otto Piper at Princeton. He taught at Emory and Claremont, and worked on NHC, Q, and was president of SBL.

Early Works: His Basel dissertation was on the Holy Spirit in Wilhelm Herrmann (whom Barth and Bultmann studied under). At this point he was critical of Bultmann, but he later changed his position. He also wrote on the problem of history in Mark (his Princeton dissertation). In this work he is more in line with Bultmann.

The New Quest of the Historical Jesus: He said a new view of history made a new quest possible. He shows the impossibility and illegitimacy of the old quest in view of their view of historical knowledge. He says that the new view of history and the self makes a new quest possible. He says it is legitimate because theology is concerned with human existence, and it is necessary in light of our situation and the NT kerygma. Demythologizing also facilitates the new quest. Historical criticism is a legitimate tool as a way to engage in the new quest. It is only illegitimate when it “fails to recognize its limits.”³⁸⁴ The new quest is effective because it is faithful to the kerygma and historical criticism.

This book aroused controversy. Robinson argued that American scholarship was too slow to embrace the new methods. He also worked on the New Hermeneutic along with Gerhard Ebeling, Ernst Fuchs, and Robert W. Funk. This movement was influenced by later Heidegger and tried to construct a theology of language. It focuses on language from God rather than language about God.

PART II: THE REVISITING OF CRITICAL PROBLEMS

4. New Discoveries, Archaeology, Textual Criticism

After WWII, new methods were developed to know and understand the past. Carbon-14 dating became a viable option after 1947; computers were also invented.

³⁸⁴ Baird, 3:175.

The Nag Hammadi Codices

Discovery and Publication: The discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices (NHC) occurred in 1947. In the 1950s and following thirteen codices were discovered near Nag Hammadi, Egypt. They had been buried in a jar in what appeared to be a cemetery.

The Nag Hammadi collection contained, thirteen codices, eleven of them in leather bindings or covers. The codices consist of a total of some 1,200 papyrus pages containing more than fifty documents or tractates (some duplicates), forty of which were previously unknown. The texts, written in two principal dialects of Coptic, are the work of several scribes and are fourth century translations of texts originally written in Greek.³⁸⁵

James Robinson is responsible in large part for making these writings accessible.

Content, Classification, and Provenance: The following is the system used for citing the texts:

Codices are numbered by Roman numerals and individual tractates by Arabic numbers (in italics); references within the tractates are indicated by the page and line within each codex. For instance, *The Gospel of Truth* is identified as: NHC I, 3, and the opening phrase of the document, “The gospel of truth is joy,” is cited as NHC I, 3, 16, 31, where I is the codex number, 3 is the tractate number, 16 is the page number (in Codex I), and 31 is the number of the line on page 16 of the codex.³⁸⁶

These works were characterized a “gnostic.” NT research has attached various significance on Gnosticism for the background of the NT: Harnack thought that Gnosticism was a Christian heresy, while the History of Religion School thought of Gnosticism as an influence on the development of Christianity. Since these resources were discovered, we have been able to understand Gnosticism as Characterized by the following beliefs:³⁸⁷

1. Salvation by knowledge, especially of the self
2. Incomprehensible, transcendent deity
3. Matter is fundamentally evil
4. The body is the prison for the divine spark
5. Individuals and the elect will be saved, but the world destroyed

1. Gnostic Texts: Two kinds of Gnosticism were discovered in the NHC: 1. Sethian Gnosticism, and 2. Valentinian Gnosticism. Sethian Gnosticism derives its teaching from gnostic interpretations of Genesis 1–7. Sethian texts are categorized as either Christian or non-Christian. Many of these texts seem to indicate a Christianization of essentially gnostic text, in which the Christian elements are basically added on at a superficial level.

³⁸⁵ Baird, 3:196.

³⁸⁶ Baird, 3:197.

³⁸⁷ Baird, 3:200.

Valentinian Gnosticism is a Christian Gnosticism that was attacked by Irenaeus. In Valentinian Gnosticism, Jesus escaped the flesh in the resurrection; the resurrection has already passed (2 Tim 2:17–18?).

2. Sapiential, Hermetic, and Philosophical Texts

3. Various Other Texts: Some of these are related to church authorities such as James, Paul, Peter, or Judas Thomas.

There is some question as to why these texts all belonged in the same library. Baird notes that it is important that there were no NT manuscripts included in this collection.³⁸⁸

Significance of the Nag Hammadi Codices

These documents help us to understand Gnosticism. They help us understand the background of Gnosticism, especially the use of Jewish traditions and stories (though they are distorted). These texts also help us understand that Gnosticism was not a Christian heresy, but reflected syncretistic tendencies in the Hellenistic world. However, they have also contributed to the view that Gnosticism was in no way an influence on Christianity. Furthermore, the idea of a fully-developed and pervasive redeemer myth has been exposed as a “scholarly fabrication.”³⁸⁹ There were various redeemer myths, but not some monolithic idea that Christianity was founded upon.

These writings show the variety of ancient Christianity (Baird says). There are also a number of texts that may be illuminated by gnostic ideas. However, Baird rightly suggests that “Rather than arguing that the NT is dependent on pre-Christian Gnosticism, it may be better to assume that the writers of the NT and the early (pre-gnostic or protognostic) thinkers drew from a common conceptual and linguistic reservoir that was deep and wide in the Hellenistic world.”³⁹⁰

Nag Hammadi and the Jesus Tradition: The Gospel of Thomas

Many of the NHC refer to Christ (about half). The most famous is the *Gospel of Thomas*. Many of the sayings have parallels in the synoptics, but many are also gnostic. Some have suggested that the Gospel of Thomas preserves primitive traditions not recorded elsewhere (James Robinson, Helmut Koester). Most have not been convinced.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Discovery and Research

³⁸⁸ Baird, 3:204–205.

³⁸⁹ Baird, 3:206.

³⁹⁰ Baird, 3:208.

Beginning in 1947, the DSS were a major find for biblical studies. There was quite a bit of controversy over the way that the documents were kept under wraps. Eventually they were all been made public.

Content of the Dead Sea Scrolls

The DSS consists of biblical and non-biblical scrolls. This collection contributes to our understanding of canon in the first century BC. For text criticism, the DSS provide a text that is 1,000 years earlier than the previous earliest Hebrew MSS. They also show the reliability of the MT tradition. The non-biblical texts include “re-written scriptures,” commentaries (peshet), legal texts, etc. There are also interesting parallels with NT hermeneutics.

The Religious Ideas of the Qumran Community

The DSS shows that there was no such thing as “normative Judaism” in the first centuries. There was a great variety of diversity. The DSS show an interest in God, the Law of Moses, the inspired Teacher of Righteousness, and Eschatology.

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament

Most of the parallels are a result of a common Jewish background. They also share a common Bible (the OT). People have speculated about the relationship between Qumran Essenes and John the Baptist and Jesus, but there is no explicit link to be made. There are some interesting parallels with the titles of Jesus in the NT and the language of the DSS. There is the use of the title “Lord” as an indication of divinity (for YHWH in the DSS), as well as a reference to the future king as a “Son of God,” which shows that Hellenistic backgrounds are not necessary to explain these ideas in the NT. There are also parallels with Paul and John.

Archaeology and the New Testament

Archaeology advanced during this time. The periods of history for NT archaeological study are:³⁹¹

The Hellenistic Period (332–63 BC)

The Early Roman Period (63 BC–135 AD)

The Middle Roman Period (135 AD–217 AD)

The Late Roman Period (217 AD–324 AD).

While older archaeology was mainly apologetic (focused on showing the historicity of the Bible), newer biblical archaeology tends to be more descriptive.

³⁹¹ Baird, 3:227. He notes that there is some variety in the dates.

The New Archaeology

Interesting for the study of the NT is the “new archaeology.” This way of practicing focuses on the social dimension of the NT.

Instead of following the steps of Jesus and tracing the journeys of Paul, the new archaeology focuses on daily life in Galilee and the social structures of Hellenistic culture. This new science, sometimes called “processural” or “cognitive-processural” archaeology, is concerned less with monuments and more with people and communities with their political, social, cultural, and religious lives.³⁹²

Textual Criticism

There were a number of advances made in this century regarding the Greek text of the New Testament. There were a number of useful Introductions written.

Developments and Debates in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

The field was advanced by the discovery of many additional papyri. The “major discovery” was the Bodmer Papyri. There were advances in the evaluation of textual materials (for example, Epp suggested calling a unit of text with several readings a “variant unit” rather than viewing divergences from some standard text as “variants”). Methods for collating were devised.

There are still three different positions on textual criticism. The historical documentary method stressed retracing the genealogy of the text. The rigorous eclectic method stresses internal evidence. The reasoned eclectic method stresses internal and external evidence, and has generally prevailed. There is a continuing problem with identifying text-types. The Alands have based their categorization on manuscript quality, but their argument to do so is circular. Some have advocated a majority text, but this has not been influential in scholarly circles. Computers will revolutionize TC in the future.

Results of Textual Criticism: the Publication of Editions of the New Testament

There have been several important editions of the GNT, but the Nestle-Aland and the UBS text are the most important. The 1979 26th ed. of the NA adopted the same text as the 1975 UBS text. Metzger published his Textual Commentary (1970), and Aland et al published a Gospel Synopsis. Two major projects are the critical apparatuses of the International Greek New Testament Project (IGNTP) and the *Editio Critica Maior*.

Textual Criticism and the Socio-Cultural and Theological Development of Early Christianity

³⁹² Baird, 3:230.

Recent research has investigated whether there might have been changes made for theological as well as cultural and ideological reasons. Epp's Harvard dissertation examined the theological tendency of Codex Bezae in Acts. Bart Ehrman wrote on the Orthodox Corruption of Scripture. David Parker suggests there is no such thing as an "original text," but only a living tradition.

5. Historical Backgrounds: Judaism

WWII and the Holocaust provoked biblical scholars to rethink their approach to Judaism, especially in light of the blatant anti-Semitism of many Christians. Many wanted to view Christianity on its own terms, rather than as a backdrop for Christianity.

Introductions, Texts, and Translations

There were a number of studies done on early Judaism that have application for the NT. George W. E. Nickelsburg wrote a number of works that are useful for understanding Jewish history and writings. R. H. Charles' collection of Pseudepigrapha was replaced by J. H. Charlesworth's 2 vols.

Judaism as the Context of Early Christianity

Joachim Jeremias (1900–1979)



Life and Early Work: Jeremias was born in Dresden and educated at Leipzig under Gustaf Dalman. He taught at the seminary at Herrnhut, Leipzig, Berlin, Greifswald, and Göttingen. He edited some excurses for the Strack-Billerbeck commentary, and wrote his dissertation on the location of Golgotha and Jesus's tomb. He also did some archeological work.

Major Works: the two most important works are *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, and his book on *Parables*. His book on the Eucharist supposes that the Last Supper was a Passover meal. He believes that the words of institution are early and independent. In his book on Parables, while he believes that the parables developed at the hands of the church, he also believes that we can hear the "very voice" of Jesus in them. He also wrote other works such as a book on the Sermon on the Mount and a commentary on the Pastoral Epistles.

Jesus and New Testament Theology: He was “especially concerned with Christology.”³⁹³ He believes that the historical Jesus is important, and so he rejects Bultmann’s attempt to turn to the proclamation of the church against the historical Jesus. For Jeremias, it is important that the “word became flesh.” He also emphasized Jesus’s use of the Aramaic “Abba” as important for understanding Jesus self-identity. In his study on the prayers of Jesus, he distinguishes between the *ipsissima vox Jesu* and the *ipsissima verba Jesu*. The former is accessible to us even if the latter is not. He also did some work on the term “Servant of God.” He believes this ties in ideas from 1 Enoch and the Son of Man, as well as Isa. 53. He continued to work out some of these ideas in *The Central Message of the New Testament*. Finally, he began his New Testament Theology, but it was not completed. Baird comments that Jeremias continues to view Judaism in light of Christianity.

Matthew Black (1908–1994)

Black was born in Scotland, and studied at Glasgow and Bonn. He taught at Glasgow, Manchester, Aberdeen, Leeds, Edinburgh, and spend the majority of his time at University of St. Andrews. He was the first editor of the SNTS periodical, *New Testament Studies*.³⁹⁴

Black was committed to the Jewish background of the New Testament and early Christianity, and he was of the “Old Perspective,” in which Judaism is understood through the New Testament writings.³⁹⁵ He wrote on 1 Enoch, and believed that the “Parables of Enoch” were written before the Gospels. He also worked on the DSS as a background to the NT.

His most important contribution was on the Aramaic background of the Gospels. He believes that there was an Aramaic tradition behind the Gospels, and that the sayings of Jesus were originally in Aramaic. However, he believes that the Greek form of the sayings found in the Gospels are less what Jesus taught and more the early church’s interpretation.³⁹⁶

The New Perspective

The Dawn of the New Perspective: W. D. Davies (1911–2001)

³⁹³ Baird, 3:286.

³⁹⁴ Baird, 3:290.

³⁹⁵ Baird, 3:290ff.

³⁹⁶ Baird, 3:292.



Life: He was born in South Wales and studied at the University of Wales, Memorial College, and Cambridge (studying with C. H. Dodd). He taught at Yorkshire United College, Duke, Princeton, Union Theological Seminary, and Texas Christian University.³⁹⁷ He is known for emphasizing the Jewish background to Paul and the NT: “the ark of the New Testament floated on Jewish waters.”³⁹⁸ He believed that Christianity and Judaism were “part of the same family” and did not need to be pitted against one another.

Paul and Judaism: He believed that Paul should be understood against the background of Rabbinic Judaism, and that Paul “is grounded in an essentially Rabbinic world of thought” and that much of his thought is Pharisaic Judaism that has been “baptized.”³⁹⁹ He thought there should be less of a sharp line between law and Gospel, and that Justification was not the center of Paul’s thought. “The centre of his theology lay not in justification by faith as opposed to works, important as that was, but in participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Christ crucified . . . was his point of departure.”⁴⁰⁰ He notes that it is only in conflict with the claims of Judaism (Romans and Galatians) that Paul emphasizes justification by faith.⁴⁰¹ Davies claimed that Christ and Torah are identified in Paul. “In a real sense conformity to Christ, His teaching and His life, has taken the place for Paul of Conformity to the Jewish Torah. Jesus Himself—in word and deed or fact is a New Torah.”⁴⁰² While he recognizes Paul’s debt to Rabbinic Judaism, he also affirms that Christianity challenges every religion, including Judaism, with the claims of Christ.

The Gospel of Matthew and the Land of Israel: Davies accomplished some important works on Matthew’s Gospel. He wrote on the Sermon on the Mount, and emphasized that it needs to be viewed as a coherent whole in Matthew’s Gospel. He believes the New Exodus Motif is a major strand of Matthew, and thinks this is influenced by the importance of the thought in the Judaism of the day. His commentary with Dale Allison is very important, but “although Davies was the inspiration, architect, and supervisor of this monumental project, most of the actual research and writing (virtually all in Volumes 2 and 3) was done by Dale Allison.”⁴⁰³ (Allison was Davies’s

³⁹⁷ Baird, 3:293.

³⁹⁸ Quoted in Baird, 3:293.

³⁹⁹ Quoted in Baird, 3:295.

⁴⁰⁰ Quoted in Baird, 3:294.

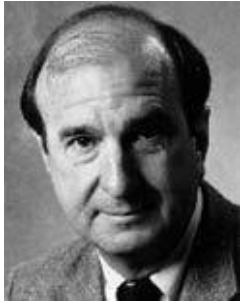
⁴⁰¹ QUESTION: Doesn’t this undercut his point by underscoring the antithetical nature of Christianity and Judaism?

⁴⁰² Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, 148. Quoted in Baird, 3:295.

⁴⁰³ Baird, 3:298.

research assistant, and was steeped in his thought.) Davies also wrote on the importance of the Land of Israel in Judaism and the NT.

***The New Perspective:
E. P. Sanders (1937–)***



Life: Sanders was born in Texas and studied at Texas Wesleyan College and Perkins School of Theology (where he met William R. Farmer). He also studied at Oxford, Göttingen, Jerusalem, Union Theological Seminary (with W. D. Davies) and took classes at Jewish Theological Seminary. He taught at McMaster University (Canada), studied with Mordechai Kamrat (expert in Rabbinics) and taught at Oxford and Duke.

Sanders on Judaism: Sanders wanted to view Judaism in terms of its practice, what he called “Common Judaism.” He believes that the Judaism can be characterized as “covenantal nomism.” Grace precedes law. One gets in the covenant by grace and stays in by obedience and atonement. He believes that the Pharisees have been unfairly interpreted as self-righteous legalists.

Paul and Palestinian Judaism: This was his most influential book. Baird says that it is the “Magna Carta” of the New Perspective on Paul (NPP).⁴⁰⁴ In it he compares Christianity and Judaism in terms of “pattern of religion.” The question is how a person “gets in” and “stays in” in the religion. He believes covenantal nomism best describes the belief of Judaism: “Briefly put, covenantal nomism is the view that one’s place in God’s plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression.”⁴⁰⁵ The covenant was based on grace, and what kept one in the covenant was obedience and the intention to obey; when one broke the covenant atonement was the way of restoring it.

The second part of the book focuses on Paul. Baird comments that it is more a new perspective on Judaism than a new perspective on Paul.⁴⁰⁶ With regard to Paul, Sanders sees Paul as reasoning from solution to plight: because God has provided the solution for the sins of all mankind, therefore the problem must be that we all need to be saved. Sanders also believes that Paul is more concerned with participating in Christ and judicial justification. According to

⁴⁰⁴ Baird, 3:302.

⁴⁰⁵ Quoted in Baird, 3:302.

⁴⁰⁶ Baird, 3:309.

Sanders, for Paul, the problem with Judaism is that “it is not Christianity.”⁴⁰⁷ Sanders believes that Paul is opposed to the Law because only Christ can bring salvation.

Jesus and Judaism: Sanders attempts to situate Jesus in his historical context. He believed that Jesus came to restore Israel, and that he was executed because he welcomed sinners apart from repentance (as opposed to other forms of Judaism), and because of his attack on the Temple. Sanders believed that Jesus held on to hope that the Kingdom would come and Israel would be restored even while on the cross, but finally declared that he had been forsaken (i.e., God let him down and did not accomplish the restoration he had hoped for). Jesus was important and claimed to be the coming King, but he was not an “exceptional Jew who alone believed in love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness, and that for such views he was executed.”⁴⁰⁸

Baird lists some critiques against Sanders, but especially interesting is his citation of Jacob Neusner’s critique in fn. 170:

An extensive criticism of Sanders’s work is presented by Jacob Neusner, *Judaic Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: A Systematic Reply to Professor E. P. Sanders*, SFSHJ 84 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993). Although he is sympathetic to Sanders’s idea of “covenantal nomism” and appreciative of Sanders’s attack on anti-Judaism, Neusner opposes Sanders at many points, including his understanding of “Judaism,” the Mishnah, purity, and the Pharisees.

***A Revival of the Old Perspective:
Martin Hengel (1926–2009)***

Life: Born in Baden Wurttemberg, he studied at Heidelberg, and Tübingen (under Otto Michel). He taught at Erlangen and Tübingen. He was director of the Institute for Ancient Judaism and Hellenistic Religion. He was president of SNTS in 1993. He is committed to the historical critical methods (he calls it philological-historical). He is “skeptical of skepticism.”⁴⁰⁹



Judaism: Hengel’s most important work was attempting to destroy the sharp division between Judaism and Hellenism. He claimed that all Judaism was Hellenistic Judaism by the second century BC. He believed that Judaism struggled against Hellenization and as a result became

⁴⁰⁷ Quoted in Baird, 3:305.

⁴⁰⁸ Baird, 3:307.

⁴⁰⁹ Baird, 3:311.

invested in the Law and the Temple and Nationalism. This was the context of early Christianity. He believed that Christianity developed in the context of Judaism, not Hellenism, and that any Hellenistic influences were filtered through Judaism, not syncretism among Christians.

Jesus and Christology: Hengel says that Christians were a sect of Judaism. Any Hellenistic influences were filtered through Judaism. He believed that key to understanding Jesus is the radical nature of his call of discipleship. This shows that Jesus did not fit the categories of the day (i.e., wise man, scribe, rabbi). He affirms the view of the early Church that there was one Gospel but four witnesses. Hengel is concerned with Christology and find the Christian view of the atonement, though not unprecedented, to be distinctive.

Paul, Acts, and John: With regard to Paul, he believed that Paul was influenced by his Jewish background. He emphasizes the importance of eschatology and the resurrection for Paul. He believed there was a deep divide between Paul and Peter. He does not think that Acts is always accurate, but thinks that it was written by Luke and generally trustworthy. He believes that the author of the Gospel of John is the Elder John, who was not an apostle, but was a witness. He thinks that the Gospel is “Christological poetry” rather than “real history.”

6. Developments in Historical Criticism

The Science of Introduction

Werner Georg Kümmel (1905–1995)

Life and Pauline Research: Kümmel was born in Heidelberg and studied at Heidelberg, Berlin, and Marburg. He was an assistant lecturer at Marburg, then taught at Zürich, Mainz and Marburg. He was an editor of *Theologische Rundschau* and “Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit.” He was president of SNTS. His dissertation (under Martin Dibelius) was on the problem of Romans 7; he says that it is about non-Christians from a Christian perspective, not about Paul.



Introduction: He wrote a standard Introduction that began as an edition of the Feine-Behm Introduction, but in the 17th edition became his own. He was dedicated to the historical-critical method. He defines Introduction as follows:

Accordingly the science of introduction is a strictly historical discipline which, by illuminating the historical circumstances of the origin of the individual writings, provides

for exegesis the necessary presuppositions for understanding the writings in their historical uniqueness. Through the study of the development and preservation of the collection, it furnishes a sure historical foundation for the question of the doctrinal content of the New Testament.⁴¹⁰

His introduction deals with the formation of the NT documents (Part 1), the canon (Part 3), and textual criticism (Part 3). His Introduction reflects the liberal critical consensus in the 20th century.

History of Research: His History of NT Research appears to be the Father of Baird's own work. He deals with the study of the NT from the Enlightenment forward, generally praising the success of the historical-critical method.

Teachings of Jesus and Theology of the New Testament: In his work on the teaching of Jesus, he believes that Jesus was wrong about the immanent coming of the Kingdom, but that this does not present a problem for the true meaning of the Gospel. He believes that the Historical Jesus is an important part of the NT. He also produced works on NT theology.

Helmut Koester (1926–)



Life and Early Work: Born in Hamburg, he studied with Bultmann at Marburg and served as Günther Bornkamm's research assistant at Heidelberg. He began as an instructor at Heidelberg, then taught at Harvard. His dissertation studied the synoptic problem in the Apostolic Fathers. He believed that the Apostolic Fathers' use of the synoptic tradition indicates that the Fathers stand in the middle of the synoptic development, not after it. This leads to an emphasis on understanding early Christianity through the witness of various documents and sources outside of the NT.

Introduction: Koester's Introduction is an advanced resource rather than a popular volume. He presents the historical background to the NT, but also to 60 other works, so that it is more a history of early Christianity than an intro to the NT. He follows Walter Bauer's thesis that heresy was not a phenomenon that followed orthodoxy, but rather there was diversity of Christianities from the beginning. For this reason, he studied apocryphal as well as canonical gospels.

Archaeology and Theology: Koester also thought that Archeology was an important tool for understanding the historical background of the NT.

⁴¹⁰ Quoted in Baird, 3:339–340.

Redaction Criticism

Redaction criticism “is concerned with studying the theological motivation of an author as this is revealed in the collection, arrangement, editing, and modification of traditional material, and in the composition of new material or the creation of new forms within the traditions of early Christianity.”⁴¹¹ In relation to form criticism, it proposes a third *sitz im leben*: 1. Life setting of Jesus, 2. Life setting of those who shaped tradition, 3. Life setting of the editor.

Hans Conzelmann (1915–1989)

Life: born in Thailfingen, Wurttemberg, he was educated at Tübingen and Marburg (where Bultmann influenced him). He completed his doctorate under Bornkamm at Heidelberg. He taught at Heidelberg, Zürich, and Göttingen.

Redaction Criticism and Jesus: His dissertation was the important *Die Mitte der Zeit*. He analyzed the theology of the author of Luke-Acts. He focuses on Luke’s salvation-history approach and its three stages: 1. Israel, 2. The ministry of Jesus, 3. The church age.

With regard to the historical Christ and faith, he shows Bultmann’s influence by rejecting an “objectification” of faith whereby faith somehow rests on scholarship, by which it can be either proven or disproven.

Theology of the New Testament and Exegesis: He emphasized the theology of the final documents. The central message of the NT documents is the “person and work of Christ.”⁴¹² He produced a number of important commentaries.

Willi Marxsen (1919–1993)



Life: born in Kiel, he studied theology there, then pastored a church. He taught at Bethel, then University of Münster.

Redaction Criticism and Introduction: His dissertation focused on a redaction-critical analysis of Mark, which became important in his future work. His introduction attempted to bridge the gap between introduction and theology.

⁴¹¹ Quoted in Baird, 3:353.

⁴¹² Baird, 3:358.

Theology: He is considered important for theology as well. He emphasized the subjective aspect of faith over the objective theology and creed. He emphasized the importance of the interdependence of both exegesis and theology. However, for him, it was the earliest stratum of tradition that was authoritative. For him, it is not the canon that is normative (because the canon is the decision of the early church). Rather it is Jesus Christ, as he is found in the earliest stratum of tradition. This becomes the criteria by which he sifts the canonical books.

He also had a controversial understanding of the resurrection. He does not clearly say what he believes about it, but rather says that “‘Jesus is risen’ simply means: today the crucified Jesus is calling us to believe.”⁴¹³ He understands faith to be experiential, not creedal.

He also wrote on NT ethics.

The Synoptic Problem: Challenges to the Consensus

The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis: William R. Farmer (1921–2000)

Life: Born in California, Farmer studied at Occidental College, Cambridge, and Union Theological Seminary. He studied under John Knox. He taught at Emory, DePauw, Drew, and Perkins school of theology at Southern Methodist University. He believed in Ecumenicity, and joined a Catholic church with the hopes of being both a Catholic and Methodist (but the Methodists said he gave up membership in the Methodist church when he joined a Catholic church).

Work: Farmer’s work focused on the synoptic problem. In preparing to teach on the subject, he came to the conclusion that the Griesbach hypothesis was correct. It was later called the “two Gospel Hypothesis” (i.e., Matthew and Luke were used by Mark, as opposed to the two Document Hypothesis, in which Mark and Q were used by Matthew and Luke). Farmer also argued that the “long ending of Mark” is original.

Dispensing with Q: Michael Goulder

Earlier Work: Austin Farrer argued that there was no evidence for the existence of Q. He was an influence on Goulder.

Michael Goulder (1927–2010): He studied at Cambridge and Oxford, where Farrer influenced him. He was an Anglican and taught in an Anglican school in Hong Kong, but became an Atheist and taught biblical studies at Birmingham University.

⁴¹³ Quoted in Baird, 3:363.

His major contribution was the argument that Matthew used Mark, and that Matthew was intended not as literature, but as liturgy. He believed that Matthew was written as a Christian lectionary. Most scholars have been unconvinced.

Research on Q

Work of John S. Kloppenborg

Kloppenborg is an example of a prolific attempt to explicate the setting(s) and message(s) of Q.

7. Confessional Research: Roman Catholic Scholarship

The movement of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) toward historical-critical scholarship was as follows:

- 1893: Pope Leo XIII publishes *Providentissimus Deus*. This permitted study of the Scriptures in the original languages and some use of the historical method.
- 1920: Pope Benedict XV publishes *Spiritus Paraclitus*. This affirmed dual authorship but located the message of Scripture in the religious elements.
- 1943: Pope Pius XII publishes *Divino Afflante Spiritu*. This emphasized the human dimension and gave freedom and encouragement to study the Scripture historically.
- 1962–1965: Vatican II held by Popes John XXIII and Paul VI. The outcome was *Dei Verbum*. This claimed that Revelation was in Christ, and there are two witnesses: Scripture and Tradition.

While there were numerous critics, the church affirmed the need for historical interpretation while pointing out the limitations of it and the role that presuppositions play.

A European Example:
Rudolf Schnackenburg (1914–2002)



Born in Kattowitz, Upper Silesia (formerly German territory, now Polish), he studied at Breslau and Munich. He became a priest and taught at Bamberg and Würzburg. He served on the Pontifical Biblical Commission and was president of SNTS. He believed that revelation was given in history, but received by faith. It is found in tradition as well as Scripture. He affirms the historical method but believes that it is wrong to focus exclusively on the literal meaning without concern for the *sensus plenior*. He owned his presuppositions as explicitly Catholic.

The Gospel of John and Other Exegetical Works: His Commentary on John was one of his most important contributions. He also published commentaries on other books: John's letters, Mark, Matthew, and Ephesians.

NT Ethics and Jesus: His two volumes on ethics are also important. He discusses the ethics of Jesus, the early church, the early Christian preachers, the Gospels, and their significance for today. He also wrote on the life and teaching of Jesus. He believes that "much can be known about the historical Jesus, but he insists that this sort of knowledge is not adequate for faith."⁴¹⁴ He wrote that the four Gospels witness to one Christ. He also wrote on the Kingdom of God, a book on the current state of Biblical Theology (in French).

American Examples

Raymond E. Brown (1928–1998)



Life: Born in NYC, he studied at St. Charles, Catholic University of America, St. Mary's, and Johns Hopkins. He became a priest, taught at St. Charles, St. Mary's, Woodstock, and Union Theological Seminary. He was the first person to be president of SBL, CBA, and ANTS. He was an advisor to one of the archbishops at Vatican II. He was on the Pontifical Biblical Commission and part of the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue. He was attacked by conservative Catholics.

Early Work and Hermeneutics: He wrote his dissertation on the *Sensus Plenior*. He said that since God is the ultimate author of Scripture, there is a deeper sense, but it cannot contradict the literal sense. The fuller sense must be contained in the literal.

Historical-Critical Research: He produced a large NT Introduction.

Exegetical Work: He produced important work on the Johannine Literature. He wrote a two-volume commentary on John, and had revised the introduction before his death. He also wrote a book about the "Johannine Community." He also wrote an important work on the Birth of Jesus (using the Matthean and Lukan infancy narratives) and another on the Passion of Jesus (using all four Gospels).

Historical and Theological Research: He wrote on apostolic tradition in the post-apostolic period, and a book on Christology.

⁴¹⁴ Baird, 3:404.

John P. Meier (1942–)



Life: He studied at St. Joseph's, Gregorian University in Rome, and the Biblical Institute in Rome. He taught at St. Joseph's, Catholic University of America, and University of Notre Dame.

Early Work: Matthew: His dissertation was on Jesus's view of the Law in Matt 5:17–20. He used salvation history as a way to understand the author's perspective.

The Historical Jesus: His book *A Marginal Jew* "is one of the most important books on the historical Jesus in the history of NT research."⁴¹⁵ He attempts to place Jesus in the context of first century Judaism and see him as a Jew.

8. The Development of Scholarly Societies

The Society of Biblical Literature (SBL)

- Began in 1880. It was started by Philip Schaff and a small group of other scholars such as Charles A. Briggs.
- The society was restructured in 1968 under the leadership of Robert W. Funk. The **Annual meeting** structure is as follows:
 - Sections (scholars in a major area)
 - Groups (working session where scholars explore new areas of research)
 - Seminars (select scholars working on a clearly defined topic)
 - Consultations (groups exploring ideas that lead to the formation of a new section, group, or seminar)
 - Plenary sessions (presidential address and other special programs)
- In the 1970s there was controversy involving accusations against leadership. Funk resigned and cut ties at that time.
- Major activities are **annual meetings** and **publications**. The Publications are as follows:
 - The *Journal of Biblical Literature* (JBL) begun in 1881
 - The *SBL Monograph series* (SBLMS) begun in 1945
 - The journal *Semeia* (begun in 1974)
 - Scholars Press, founded in 1974 with American Academy of Religion (AAR).
 - *Review of Biblical Literature* (beginning in 1998; previously it was *Critical Review of Books in Religion*).

⁴¹⁵ Baird, 3:423.

- A Bible Dictionary and One-volume commentary.

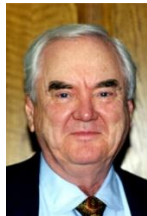
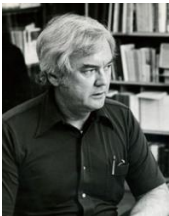
The Catholic Biblical Association

- Begun in 1937
- Early on reflected Catholic conservatism, but in the 50s it became more “critical”
- Since 1962 it is open to non-Catholics
- Publishes:
 - *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (CBQ)
 - *CBQ Monograph Series* (CBQMS)
 - *New Testament Abstracts* (since 1956)
- There is ongoing question about how “Catholic” the CBA should be

Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (SNTS)

- Focused exclusively on NT studies
- Began in 1938
- The first meeting was in 1947 due to WWII
- Focused on international membership.
- It is the most select in terms of membership
- Publications:
 - The journal *New Testament Studies* (NTS)
 - *NTS Monograph Series* (NTSMS)
- The annual meeting includes prayers, addresses, seminar groups, papers, etc.

Robert W. Funk (1926–2005) and the Jesus Seminar



Life and Work: He was a controversial figure. Born in Indiana, he studied at Vanderbilt, where he got his PhD. He taught at Texas Christian University, Harvard, Emory, Drew, Vanderbilt, and University of Montana. He was influential in transforming SBL into a large international organization. After SBL, he founded Polebrige Press, the Jesus Seminar, and Westar Institute.

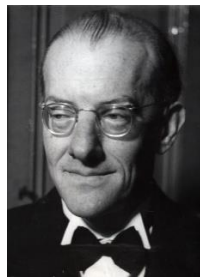
His early work was focused on Greek Grammar. He translated Blass/Debrunner into English, and then published his own works on NT Greek. He worked on hermeneutics, and finally focused on the historical Jesus. He proposes a “New Quest” in which Jesus is “secularized.”

The Jesus Seminar: Funk founded the Jesus Seminar in 1985. From 1985–1991 they studied the sayings of Jesus, and from 1991–1996 they studied the acts of Jesus. They came to radical conclusions that to some degree follow from their starting assumptions. They displayed an overly skeptical attitude in, for example, assuming the burden of proof is on the NT to be proved historical. They rated 18 percent of Jesus’s NT sayings authentic and 82 percent inauthentic. They also included the Gospel of Thomas in their witnesses because they rejected the canon as a limitation. In the end, much of the results are misleading in that they claim to represent mainstream, cutting edge scholarship but are neither new, nor mainstream, and many of their results have been predetermined from their assumptions coming in.

PART III: THEOLOGICAL AND SYNTHESIZING MOVEMENTS

9. Theological and Hermeneutical Developments

Salvation History:
Oscar Cullmann (1902–1999)



Life and Early Work: Born in a liberal home and church in Strasbourg, he studied at Strasbourg (hearing Albert Schweitzer) and Paris (with Alfred Loisy and Maurice Goguel). He taught at Strasbourg, and then Basel. He believed in Ecumenicity and was present as an observer at Vatican II.

In his early career, reading Karl Barth moved him away from liberalism, though he later rejected a totally theological interpretation. He worked to establish the relationship between history and revelation in his idea of salvation-history (Heilsgeschichte).

History of Salvation: He wrote numerous works on salvation history. His book *Christ and Time* was his first major treatment of it. He said that the biblical writers viewed time as linear, as opposed to Hellenistic writers who saw time as cyclical. The decisive event has happened in the death and resurrection of Christ. He uses the analogy of D-day (past) and V-day (future). Christ is the midpoint, and he gives us understanding of the rest of salvation history. Cullmann also

views salvation history as narrowing from creation to Christ and widening from Christ to new creation. His Magnum Opus is *Heil als Geschichte*. Here he continues to expound upon the views previously developed.

Christology: He wrote on Christology from the salvation-history perspective. He examined the titles used for Christ in relation to his earthly work, his future work, his present work, and his preexistence. He believes that emphasis on the nature of Christ (ontology) is mistaken.

Peter: Cullmann also looks at the career of Peter. He examines Peter as a disciple, Peter as a martyr, exegetical and theological questions, (such as Matt 16, where he suggests that Peter is the rock, but that the role is not passed down to his successors).

Shorter Works: He also wrote a number of shorter works on biblical theology, worship and the Christian life.

Biblical Theology in America

John Knox (1900–1999)

Life: Born in KY, he was a Methodist. He resisted historical critical research early in his life, but later accepted it during his study at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He studied at the University of Chicago where he was influenced by Edgar J. Goodspeed and Shirley Jackson Case. He taught at Hartford Theological Foundation, University of Chicago, and Union Theological Seminary. He also taught at the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest in Texas after retirement. He was a dedicated churchman.

Philemon, Canon, and Chronology: His dissertation was on Philemon. His early work was dedicated to historical criticism. Baird says that he is characterized by “unconventional” and “imaginative” criticism.⁴¹⁶ He believed that Marcion had the first canon and the orthodox canon was a response to his. He wrote a book on Paul that claimed a distinctive chronology.

Exegesis, Theology, and Christology: He did not write any major commentaries, but produced shorter contributions. In the 40s and 50s, he moved toward an interest in theology. He wrote on the relationship between criticism and faith, and was a proponent of the category of myth as a description of Christian teaching. In his study of Paul’s theology, he is critical of Paul’s thought and thinks that Paul made theological missteps.

His most important contribution is in the area of Christology. He wrote several major works, but his Christology is not orthodox. He focuses on Christology as an event, and shies away from talking about ontology. He also subsumes Christology under ecclesiology. The humanity of Jesus is very important to him, but the divinity of Christ is not recognizably orthodox.

Paul Sevier Minear (1906–2007)

⁴¹⁶ Baird, 3:489, 490.



Life: He was born in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa in a Methodist home. He studied at Iowa Wesleyan, Garrett Biblical Institute (very liberal), Northwestern University, and Yale. He taught at Hawaii school of theology, Garrett, Andover Newton Theological School, and Yale. His most important students were Leander Keck and J. Louis Martyn. He was a dedicated Methodist, and later joined the Congregational Christian Church (now United Church of Christ). He was dedicated to Ecumenism (he was a leader in the Faith and Order commission of the WCC), was on the translation committee of the NRSV and served as president of SNTS. He had what he described as a “conversion experience” which changed the direction of his scholarly work.

Historical-Critical Research: Before this, he was mostly a historical-critical scholar. His dissertation was a history of religions approach to the origin of the Christian view of salvation. He later regretted the “uncritical dedication to criticism” and “liberalism” of this time.⁴¹⁷

The Eyes of Faith: Hermeneutics and Exegesis: He underwent a radical shift. The book *Eyes of Faith* reflects this shift. He insists that we must adopt the Bible’s point of view to understand it correctly. He believes that the Bible has a “unique understanding of time.”⁴¹⁸ He wrote a commentary on Mark, and a work on the Gospel of John.

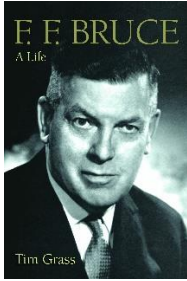
Theology and Eschatology: His major theological work is *The Kingdom and the Power*. This book is written to explain the NT view of history. He was especially interested in eschatology and wrote on the book of Revelation.

The Church: He also had a concern for the church and wrote works about the NT understanding of the church. His major work is the Images of the *Church in the New Testament*. He examines the images (he finds 96 of them) and focuses on the major ones, such as “people of God,” the new creation,” and “the body of Christ” (which he thinks is the most important). He especially wants the reader to see each of the images in light of each other.

A Conservative Alternative:
F. F. Bruce (1910–1990)

⁴¹⁷ Baird, 3:502.

⁴¹⁸ Baird, 3:503.



Life and Thought: Born in Scotland and educated at the University of Aberdeen and Cambridge. He never completed his PhD, but instead began to teach at Edinburgh. He also taught at Leeds, Sheffield and University of Manchester. He was president of the Society of Old Testament and SNTS. He had a high view of Scripture as the written word of God, but claimed that he based his doctrine of Scripture on the study of Scripture, and not vice versa. He believed in historical criticism.

Apologetics and Theology: He wrote numerous apologetic works, such as *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* He wrote biblical theological works such as *The New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes*. He also wrote on Christology.

Historical Research: He wrote several historical works, such as a history of NT times, a book on the canon of the NT, and books on the DSS.

Exegesis: He wrote numerous commentaries. Especially important is his commentary on the Greek text of Acts and the commentary on Galatians from the NIGTC series.

The Life and Thought of Paul: He was especially interested in Paul.

10. Critical, Exegetical, and Theological Accomplishments: Europe

NT Interpretation in England

C. K. Barrett (1917–2011)



Life and Early Work: He was born in a Methodist home. He studied at Cambridge, served as a Methodist minister, and then taught at Durham. He was president of SNTS in 1973. An early work deals with the Holy Spirit and the Gospel tradition.

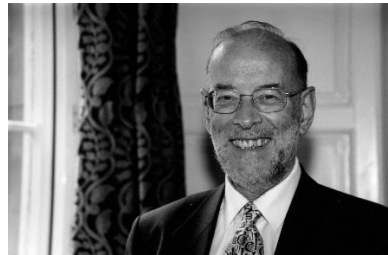
The Gospel of John: He wrote an important commentary on John. He presented an “imaginative reconstruction” of the background involving John and his “circle.”⁴¹⁹ He thought of John as an apocalyptic preacher whose disciples compiled the books in his name.

Paul: He wrote on the theology of Paul. He thought that Paul’s controversies were the key to understanding his thought. He wrote commentaries on Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians. He also wrote a book on Paul’s anthropology that looked at people that Paul wrote about (Adam, Abraham, Moses, etc.).

The Acts of the Apostles: His 2 volume commentary on Acts (ICC) is his “Magnum Opus.”⁴²⁰ The introduction is in vol. 2.

Jesus and Tradition: He gave lectures on the development of the traditional teaching about Jesus.

James D. G. Dunn (1936–)



Life: He was born in Birmingham, UK, educated at Glasgow and Cambridge (under C. D. F. Moule). He was a chaplain at Edinburgh, and taught at University of Nottingham and Durham. He followed Barrett and held the J. B. Lightfoot chair (Lightfoot was his “academic hero”).⁴²¹ He was an active member of the SBL panel on the Theology of Paul, and had a famous debate with Richard Hays over the phrase “pistis christou” in 1991. His scholarly output is immense.

Early Work: His dissertation examined the baptism of the Spirit in the NT contra Pentecostal claims that the baptism of the Spirit is an experience distinct from conversion. He wrote another book on Jesus and the Spirit examining a similar topic. He concludes that the early church was spirit-led, but this died off and office and tradition unfortunately took its place. He wrote an important book on the *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*. He looks at the unity in diversity and diversity in unity. He believes that the bond between the diverse writings and theologies (he would say sometimes contradicting theologies) is the identity between the historical Jesus and the “kerygmatic Christ.”⁴²² He also wrote on early Christology, where he examined the origins of NT Christology.

⁴¹⁹ Baird, 3:540.

⁴²⁰ Baird, 3:545.

⁴²¹ Baird, 3:549.

⁴²² Baird, 3:551.

The New Perspective: Dunn changed direction when he adopted the New Perspective on Paul (NPP, a phrase he apparently coined). He was converted by reading E. P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. He was convinced that "covenantal nomism" explained Judaism, but he disagreed with Sanders's portrayal of Paul. He believed, rather, that Paul was attacking Jewish nationalism. The phrase "works of the law" he took to be the "boundary markers" that separated Jews from Gentiles. Paul, in Dunn's view, was dealing with Jewish ethnocentricity. He wrote a number of important works that reflect the NPP. He wrote a Romans Commentary for WBC, and he wrote a book about the separation of Christianity and Judaism.

Theology of Paul: His most important work is his book on the Theology of Paul. This book also reflects the NPP.

History of Early Christianity: He began a project on the history of early Christianity called *Christianity in the Making*. The first volume is *Jesus Remembered*, and deals with a third quest for the historical Jesus. He believes that this third quest should be sensitive to the Jewishness of Jesus, and should make a place for faith in the hermeneutical process. The basic idea is that what stuck with the disciples was the distinctive impressions that Jesus left them with, and that these can be traced back to the historical Jesus.

New Testament Research in Scandinavia:
Birger Gerhardsson (1926–[2013])⁴²³

Life: Studied at University of Uppsala. He taught at University of Lund. He was a president of SNTS.

The Transmission of Tradition: His major work had to do with his dissertation, *Memory and Manuscript*. He basically examines the Pharisaic/Rabbinic method of handing on tradition—memorization—in light of the question of early Christian tradition that culminated in the Gospels.

Midrash, Miracles, and Ethics: He wrote a number of other works, including a work on the Temptation scene in Matthew 4 that he characterizes as "Christian Midrash." He also looked at the miracles accounts in Matthew's Gospel.

Baird praises his work and suggests that it has seen a revival, but he also is skeptical. He suggests that according to Mark, the disciples did not even understand what Jesus was talking about, let alone memorize it. He thinks the theory is assuming too much.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ "During the holidays, on 25 December, one of Sweden's finest exegetes ever, Prof. em. Birger Gerhardsson, passed away at the age of 87. Gerhardsson was born in 1926 in Vännäs. He studied in Uppsala and became ordained priest in the Church of Sweden in 1953. During 1953-58 and 1961-64 he was teacher at Fjellstedtska skolan in Uppsala and in 1961 he received his PhD and docentur at Uppsala University, after successfully defending his thesis *Memory and Manuscript; Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*" (Tommy Wasserman, <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2014/01/rip-birger-gerhardsson-1926-2013.html>).

⁴²⁴ Baird, 3:580.

11. Critical, Exegetical, and Theological Accomplishments: North America

Harvard:

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1938–)



Life and Early Work: She was born into a Catholic family in a German section of Romania. She had to flee to Hungary with her family (later, Austria) because of the war. She studied at Würzburg under Schnackenburg, who would not grant her a position because she was a woman. She studied at Münster, then moved to America because she could not teach as a woman in Germany. She taught at Notre Dame, but her feminism was not embraced, so she moved to Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, then Harvard. She has taught as visiting professor at Union Theological Seminary, Tübingen, and Heidelberg. “She was the first woman to be elected president of SBL.”⁴²⁵ Her research began in historical-critical study of the NT, but she eventually embraced a radical feminist hermeneutic that attacks the historical method.

In Memory of Her: Her most important work is *In Memory of Her*, which attempts to reconstruct Christian history as women’s history. She believes that the Bible itself is androcentric, and so rejects other feminist approaches as insufficient inasmuch they try to read the Bible as supporting feminism. The book is an attempt to read the NT with a feminist liberation approach.

Jesus: Her book on Jesus is another important book in which she uses the radical feminist approach to deconstruct “male-dominated” orthodox Christology. She believes that the cross should not be read as atonement or sacrificial suffering, but as an indictment on the politics of oppression. She also tries to reinterpret Jesus according to a feminist reading of Wisdom Christology. Her goal is to question and undermine the cultural gender system by rearticulating the theological symbols in light of women’s concerns. She also deconstructs Mariology because she views it as a support of the oppressive male dominated system. She also published other works on the historical Jesus question in light of feminist concerns.

Hermeneutics: she published several books on hermeneutics which Baird summarizes thematically. She often uses idiosyncratic terminology to disrupt gender roles. She views hermeneutics as a weapon in the battle for women’s liberation. She believes authority is not in the Bible, Jesus, or the early Christian witness, but in the community of women inspired by the spirit of Sophia. She also wrote on the book of Revelation.

⁴²⁵ Baird, 3:590.

In evaluation: 1. Baird mentions that she is concerned with what the Bible means today. Her method is grounded in the experience of the interpreter, but she embraces this subjectivity, not ignorantly, but purposefully in light of her broader worldview of liberation.⁴²⁶ However, her worldview is independent from the Bible. It is this worldview that it ultimately authoritative, and she tries to co-opt the Bible to support this worldview. But if the Bible is right, this is another worldly philosophy which causes harm. Despite her best of intentions, she ultimately needs redemption from her idol—her view of God made in her own image.

2. Baird points out that she is a part of the system that she is attacking.⁴²⁷ She teaches at Harvard, writes best-selling books, and lectures everywhere. She is connected to ad lives off of the system that she is attacking.

3. She claims to reject the historical-critical model, but she uses it in all of her works.⁴²⁸ Going beyond Baird, the method is rooted in some philosophical commitments that work because there is a God and the world is a certain way. She can only reject the true God by making use of the faculties he gave her and by making use of her knowledge of the world (general revelation). While she claims that she rejects the historical method, it is only because there is truth, beauty and meaning that are really there that she can weave her web of philosophical feminism.

Yale

J. Louis Martyn (1925– [2015]⁴²⁹)



Life: Martyn was born in Texas and raised a Southern Baptist. He attended Andover Newton Theological School where he was influenced by Paul Minear and befriended Leander Keck. Martyn and Keck both did PhDs at Yale under Paul Schubert. He also had the opportunity to study at Göttingen with Jeremias and Käsemann, and then Tübingen, where he again studied with Käsemann. He taught at Wellesley College and then Union Theological Seminary.

The Gospel of John: His book *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* is one of the most important works on John since Bultmann. He believed that John's gospel was set as a "two-tiered drama" in which the stories being told were reflective of the story of Jesus on the first tier, but on the second tier the drama pertained to the community and their experiences at the time of the Gospel's writing. The main event in the community's life is the expulsion from the synagogue and threat of death, and these events can be seen in the Gospel, for example, in the story of the

⁴²⁶ Baird, 3:603.

⁴²⁷ Baird, 3: 603.

⁴²⁸ Baird, 3:603–604.

⁴²⁹ <http://ntweblog.blogspot.com/2015/06/tribute-to-j-louis-martyn-by-joel-marcus.html>

man born blind. He believes that the Gospel of John can be “excavated” in terms of its literary stratum to reveal the situation of the early community.

Paul: Martyn’s most important work on Paul is his commentary on Galatians. He views the book in light of what he understands to be Paul’s apocalyptic framework, and works to reconstruct the historical background of the text. Especially important to his reconstruction is his understanding of the false teachers in the Galatian church. He also wrote a number of helpful essays on Paul in *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul*.

Leander E. Keck (1928–)



Leander E. Keck, Winkley Professor Emeritus of Biblical Theology and former YDS dean.



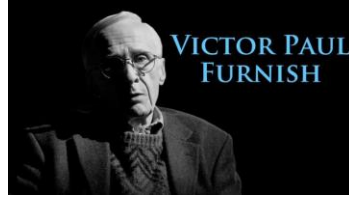
Life: He was born in North Dakota in a German Baptist home. They moved to Washington during the depression, and Leander did farm work and lumbering. He attended Andover Newton in MA, where he met J. Louis Martyn and studied under Paul Minear. He studied at Yale with Erich Dinkler (student of Bultmann) and Paul Schubert. He also studied for a time in Kiel and Göttingen. He began teaching at Wellesley College and then Vanderbilt Divinity School. He also taught at Emory, then Yale. His students included Charles H. Talbert and M. Eugene Boring. His early works were for a more popular audience.

Paul: His book *Paul and His Letters* “is widely viewed as a classic.”⁴³⁰ He also wrote an important commentary on Romans.

Jesus: He also wrote important works on Jesus. They are related to the question of the historical Jesus. He says that the historical Jesus is important, even though we can’t know everything about him. He says that we are to trust in Jesus, and historical work serves the proclamation so that I can trust Jesus. The proclamation is commending a historical person to me so that I can trust him, and historical research can help to establish my knowledge of that person.

Victor Paul Furnish (1931–)

⁴³⁰ Baird, 3:624.



Life: He was born in Chicago, and his father was a Methodist minister. He studied at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, then Yale where he got a PhD with Dinkler and Schubert. He also studied in Jerusalem, Tübingen, Bonn, Munich, and Münster. He taught at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, and remained there, despite other offers, so that he could train ministers. He served as President of SBL, editor of JBL, and general editor for Abingdon NT Commentary series.

Ethics: His most important works were in ethics. He wrote on *Theology and Ethics in Paul*. He claimed that Paul's ethics were not secondary but primary to his theology. The indicative and imperative were both present together (rather than imperative resting on indicative). The doctrine of the two ages was important to Paul, so that he believed that the power of the coming age had broken in on the present. Paul's ethic was theological, eschatological, and Christological. The command of Paul was love.

He wrote a book on the Love commandment in the NT. He examined Jesus, the gospel writers, Paul, and John. He also wrote a popular level book on ethics and Paul. Furnish's view of ethics is fairly liberal. He believes homosexuality is not prohibited by God, and is egalitarian.

Exegesis: He wrote an important commentary on 2 Corinthians, and another commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

Theology: He believed that Paul was primarily interested in preaching the Gospel, and so he was not a systematic theologian; however, Paul did reflect ethically on the Christian faith, and was therefore a theologian. He discusses the way of understanding Paul's theology, and suggests that Paul's theology should be understood, but it cannot be turned into scholastic theology.

Chicago

Hans Dieter Betz (1931–)



Life: Born in Germany, he studied at Mainz (with Herbert Braun, a Bultmannian), Cambridge (with J. Y. Campbell and C. D. F. Moule), and finished his PhD in Mainz (1957). As a younger

man, he had wanted to be an artist. He served as a pastor for a time, and then taught at Claremont, then University of Chicago. He co-taught with professors from the classics department. He has served as president of SBL and SNTS, and has been guest lecturer in many schools.

Early Work and the History of Religion: His early work was in the Hellenistic background to the NT. He examined parallels between Lucian and the NT, and then wrote on the concept of imitation of Christ in Paul, and finds that Paul was influenced by Greek cults.

Commentaries: His major contribution is his commentaries on Galatians, 2 Corinthians 8–9, and the Sermon on the Mount. In the Galatians commentary, Betz analyzes the letter according to classical rhetoric, and discovered that Paul was writing a particular genre of letter (“apologetic letter”). This becomes the grid through which Galatians is examined. His 2 Corinthians commentary discovers one letter in chapter 8 to Corinth, and one letter in Chapter 9 to Achaia.

Baird says that Betz’s “Magnum Opus” is his Sermon on the Mount commentary.⁴³¹ He argued that the Sermon on the Mount (SM) and the Sermon on the Plain (SP) represent two redactions of traditional material that were found in two recensions of Q. Matthew and Luke each used a different recension of Q, and the result is that the distinctive features of the SM and SP belong to the redactors of Q, not Matthew and Luke. The SM is for Jewish Christians, and the SP is for Greek Christians.

12. Epilogue

In conclusion, Baird wraps up with a summary of progress discussed in this volume. He notes that the sources for understanding the Bible have multiplied through the discovery of the DSS and the NHC. [I think it is interesting that Baird notes that the information available for interpreting the Bible has increased. On the other hand, our sympathy with the text has decreased. We ought to keep the blessings of the added sources in mind while trying to recover our sympathy to the text.]

Baird also notes the increase of technology for studying the text. Text criticism has made some process in the collation of manuscripts and the addition of Papyri to the most important critical editions. Linguistics and grammar have been attended to as well.

The historical background has been debated. The ground has oscillated between Judaism and Hellenism as the appropriate background for the NT. Archeology has played a part, and NT Introductions have been written. There was challenge to the consensus in terms of Gerhardsson’s view of oral tradition and the 2GH. The Gospel of John was “a battlefield.”⁴³² Numerous commentaries have been written.

⁴³¹ Baird, 3: 671.

⁴³² Baird, 3: 692.

Jesus and Paul were the major subjects of research. Biblical Theology was increasingly an important part of the landscape. The theology of Paul and Christology were major areas of research.

Finally Baird notes the criticisms of the historical critical method. He admits that objectivity cannot be reached, but insists that some amount of objectivity is necessary and possible. He says that this area needs more research. He believes that historical interpretation of the Bible is important and necessary, and that while not everyone must be a scholar to understand the Bible, scholarship is necessary to understand the Bible. He also says that there is the threat of scholarly captivity of the Bible because of the complexity of the issues. He insists that good research needs to be translated to a popular level.