


2007

CADBURY, HENRY J(OEL) (1883-1974)

Paul N. Anderson

George Fox University, panderso@georgefox.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ccs>

 Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Anderson, Paul N., "CADBURY, HENRY J(OEL) (1883-1974)" (2007). *Faculty Publications - George Fox School of Theology*. 97.
<https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ccs/97>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Theology at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications - George Fox School of Theology by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

C

CADBURY, HENRY J(OEL) (1883-1974)

Henry Joel Cadbury was one of the most significant and influential New Testament scholars the United States has ever produced. In addition to publishing more than 160 essays and books on New Testament subjects, he reviewed more than 250 books on biblical topics and published nearly as many works on Quaker themes. He held the Hollis Chair of Divinity at Harvard (the oldest endowed chair in America) from 1934 to 1954, having also taught at Haverford (1911-1919), Andover Theological Seminary (1919-1926) and Bryn Mawr (1926-1934). He served as president of the Society for New Testament Studies ([SNTS] 1957-1958, having been one of its founders) and of the Society of Biblical Literature ([SBL] 1936, having served as its secretary from 1916 to 1933). For nearly half a century he was regarded as a pre-eminent authority on Luke-Acts, and he contributed extensively to the translation and reception of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

The depth and breadth of Cadbury's works are impressive. He worked critically with Luke-Acts but interpreted Jesus and early Christianity meaningfully for popular audiences as well. He contributed many detailed lexical analyses and surveyed broad trends in biblical studies. The impact of his work extended beyond the United States, and he introduced the results of German form-critical work to English-speaking audiences. He was a founder of the American Friends Service Committee in 1917 (serving as its chairman, 1928-1934 and 1944-1960), and he was a corecipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in

1947 on behalf of Quaker peace and service work in Europe. He was the first biblical scholar to have received that award. Cadbury was a conservative liberal, arguing for going no further than what was clearly suggested in the text. He thus embodied the ideals of positivistic rationalism, while at the same time claiming that the Bible speaks powerfully to contemporary issues of the day.

Historical and Intellectual Context. As Cadbury began his biblical studies, the optimism of nineteenth-century Jesus quests had ceded place to historical skepticism. As a result, historical interests had shifted from Jesus to the formation of Gospel traditions. Cadbury furthered such skepticism by challenging the certainty of some historical claims. In addition to analyzing the style of Luke and Acts, his doctoral thesis at Harvard challenged the assumption that the so-called medical language of Luke-Acts proved this two-volume work was written by the beloved physician and companion of Paul. If the same language was also used with reference to veterinarian medicine, would that prove that Luke was a horse doctor? Not necessarily—either way. It is thus said that Cadbury obtained his doctorate at Harvard by depriving Luke of his.

Cadbury's emphasis on scholarly modesty of claim extended also to other exegetical ventures. While archaeological discoveries of a man named Erastus at Corinth might tempt one to connect that person with the same name in the Pauline correspondence, Cadbury reminds the modern reader of just how many people might have held such a name in ancient times. And yet, while questioning the inference that references to "we" in Acts implies the au-

thor's having been a traveling partner on those ventures, he also challenged the view that Luke's mention of indebtedness to eyewitnesses proves he was *not* an eyewitness. He challenged formalistic interpretations of the early church, showing the great diversity of belief and expression.

Cadbury's contribution to the translation of the Revised Standard Version favored text-focused conservatism—not claiming more than the original language of the text would allow. Such moves posed a threat to those wanting to see orthodoxy bolstered by the biblical text, and yet Cadbury also challenged liberal claims on such subjects as the non-Pauline authorship of Ephesians. He saw a 70 percent imitation of Paul's thought and style as a more extended inference than assuming Paul's 30 percent departure from his customary work. While being a rational positivist, he also challenged the opposite fallacy—that of claiming “not necessarily so” implies “necessarily not so”—a mistake at times also made by readers of his work.

One of Cadbury's submerged contributions relates to his impact on academic freedom. As a factor of his writing a letter to the editor of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* in 1918, criticizing the “orgy of hate” in recent editorials, he was asked to resign from Haverford College. He argued that a vengeful attempt to negotiate a more favorable treaty with a humbled enemy, rather than insuring a stable peace, would be the curse of the future—an unfortunately prophetic warning! Interestingly, his creative book on nationalistic ideals in the Old Testament (1920) received greater critical acclaim in Germany than it did in America. Cadbury also worked for liberty of conscience in the United States, especially within academe, and did so on the basis of appeals to conscience in the New Testament.

Life and Work. Having grown up in a Philadelphia Quaker family with many strong connections, Cadbury was personally grieved by his forced resignation from Haverford. Ironically, he was rejected from his Quaker alma mater as he took a stand for peace. This proved eventually, however, to be Harvard's gain, and his contribution as a scholar of international reputa-

tion grew as a result. He taught dialogically, eliciting statements from his students on the subject at hand and building his lectures on the strengths and weaknesses of their responses. As a New Testament scholar, Cadbury's contributions fall into five categories: Jesus, early Christianity, Luke-Acts, hermeneutical and translational issues, and miscellany.

Regarding Jesus, Cadbury challenged the eclipse of the historical Jesus long before the “New Quest” was announced by J. Robinson in the 1950s. While it cannot be claimed that Cadbury's work evoked those developments, it cannot be denied that they built on some of the groundwork to which he had contributed. In particular, he illuminated the Jewishness of Jesus. Within the tradition of the Jewish prophetic leaders, Cadbury showed how Jesus, rather than being a radical, was a conservator of the heart of the Law and the Prophets. He thus focused not simply on what Jesus taught, but on how he taught—aiming at the center of the Torah rather than its legal boundaries. Cadbury also emphasized what Jesus taught about social concern and moral responsibility. Lest Jesus, however, be reduced to modern canons of relevance, Cadbury wrote a book on the peril of modernizing Jesus (1937/2006)—and likewise, the peril of archaizing ourselves. He focused on the man Jesus and how people experienced and understood him. He had already published two significant books and several weighty articles on Jesus before the “New Quest for Jesus” had officially begun.

Cadbury's illumination of the character of early Christianity was also a significant contribution. Not only did he elucidate the informality of the early church, but he also challenged notions that the early church was pervasively hierarchical and structured in its developments. He pointed out the variety of religious experience among the various churches and claimed that particular motives of New Testament writings could be inferred critically. He added to the realism of early Christianity by showing some of the dissent and proselytizing (overconversion) among early Christian leaders, as well as their harmonious relations. Cadbury presented extensive evidence for the nonviolent

and pacifistic character of early Christianity, even suggesting that the exiled author of the Apocalypse may have been a conscientious objector, likely objecting to forced emperor worship. Cadbury was an innovator in illuminating the characteristics of Jewish and Hellenistic Christianity, showing also how developments led to evolutions of understanding and practice within the early Christian movement.

Cadbury's third contribution is his most penetrating and enduring: his work on Luke-Acts. At least in part due to *The Style and Literary Method of Luke* (1920/2001) and *The Making of Luke-Acts* (1927/1999), Luke and Acts have come to be treated inseparably by critical scholars as a two-volume work. He also contributed significantly to understandings of Luke's composition history with direct implications for Acts, noting that some of the discrepancies of style reflect Luke's respect for the sources he was using. Cadbury made significant form-critical observations on the speeches and summaries in Acts, and he wrote significant treatments on names for Christians and Christianity, titles of Jesus, markers of time and sociological details in Luke-Acts. His work on the four features of Lukan style is a classic, illuminating two sets of polarities: repetition *and* variation, and distribution *and* concentration. *The Book of Acts in History* (1955/2004) studies the characteristics of four socioreligious backgrounds underlying Acts: Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian. Cadbury contributed in major ways to volumes 2 through 5 in *The Beginnings of Christianity, Part 1: The Acts of the Apostles* as an editor, a writer of many of the essays and the author of the commentary and additional notes volumes (vols. 4 and 5). After nearly a century, this five-volume work still speaks with critical authority.

Cadbury's fourth contribution relates to his translation and interpretation work as a major player in the translation of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible and the Apocrypha for more than two decades. He also explained the work of the translators and its implications for general audiences. He commented on the adequacy of other translations, including the New English Bible and the King James Version.

He wrote several essays on New Testament grammar and vocabulary and wrote more than a half dozen authoritative reports on the past and future of New Testament scholarship. His 1936 SBL presidential address ("Motives of Biblical Scholarship") criticized three interpretive defects: a craving for something new, the tendency to modernize Bible times, and the inclination to bolster conservative investments by a bias-induced reading of the text. Cadbury elucidated the lack of theological homogeneity of biblical texts and the unprogrammatic character of early Christianity. The exegetical conscience of the interpreter must always focus inductively on the factual character of the textual content, allowing applications to flow from sober exegetical work, even if modest in its apparent promise.

The fifth category can be called miscellany simply because it becomes a rubric for gathering Cadbury's other New Testament work. Commenting on the contextual settings of Paul's ministry, he wrote more than a half dozen essays on Paul's ethics, message, competition, Qumran parallels and audiences. He highlighted the Macellum of Corinth, drawing connections with what might have been associated with eating meat offered to idols in the Corinthian situation. He wrote several essays on the Apocalypse, expressing appreciation for not only the prophetic character of the work, but also for its contribution to mystical religious experience in later generations. He treated such disparate themes as the odor of the Spirit at Pentecost, wind and spirit, dust and garments in Acts, Roman trials, the Herodian family tree, christological titles in Acts, and other New Testament themes. Sometimes a theme was targeted simply because it piqued the interest of the author; a reading of his essays suggests that such inclinations are invariably justified.

Interpretive Principles. Cadbury's interpretive principles are squarely rooted in prioritizing the clear meaning of the text and openness to where sober exegesis might lead. He was a philologist par excellence, and he knew the primary texts well enough to have an intuitive feel for nuance and emphasis, bolstered by objec-

tive measurements of style. He called for temperance and modesty with relation to application, not wanting interests in relevance to overshadow original meanings of the text. He was willing to challenge scholarly opinions as well as traditional ones, always alert to where an interpreter might have made too much of the evidence at hand. In so doing, Cadbury contributed significantly to the scientific and linguistic authority of New Testament scholarship—a value inherited by all critical scholars in his wake.

Significance. Cadbury's contributions to the history of biblical interpretation are manifold. First, his contribution to the study of Luke-Acts stands as a highly significant one, especially regarding his lexical, linguistic and stylistic analyses of this two-volume work.

Second, his contribution as a sober and accurate translator of Scripture influenced greatly the authoritative impact of the Revised Standard Version, and he embodied respect for the biblical text enough to let ambiguities stand rather than resorting to guesswork.

Third, he showed how studies of Jesus and the early church could be relevant precisely because scholarship had sought to understand them as they were, rather than imposing a modernistic or a traditionalistic grid over their interpretation. The truth speaks clearly enough on its own.

Fourth, he showed how the ethical teaching of Jesus and the New Testament reaches from one generation, causing ripples of moral influence beyond what can ever have been imagined. When asked whether his work with social concerns were a distraction from his work as a biblical scholar, he replied that in his peace and service work as well as in his scholarship, he was still trying to "translate the New Testament."

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Works. "Acts of the Apostles," *IDB* 1 (1962) 28-42; "Animals and Symbolism in Luke (Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts, 9)," in *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature: Essays in Honor of A. P. Wikgren*, ed. D. E. Aune (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972) 3-15; "The Basis of Early Christian Antimilitarism," *JBL* 37 (1918) 66-94; *The Beginnings of Christianity, Part 1, The*

Acts of the Apostles, vol. 2, ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake (London: Macmillan, 1922); *Behind the Gospels*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 160 (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1968); *The Book of Acts in History* (London: A & C Black; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955; reprint ed., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004, with a foreword by P. N. Anderson); Collation of the Vulgate Text of Acts (276-90) and collation of the Peshitto Texts of Acts (291-316), in *Beginnings of Christianity: Part 1, The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 3, ed. J. H. Ropes (London: Macmillan, 1926); "Current Issues in New Testament Studies," *Harvard Divinity School Bulletin* 51 (1954) 49-64; "The Dilemma of Ephesians," *NTS* 5 (1958) 91-102; "Divine Inspiration in the New Testament" (369-75), "Questions of Authorship in the New Testament" (376-84) and "Results of New Testament Research" (385-94), in *An Outline of Christianity: The Story of Our Civilization*, vol. 6, ed. F. J. McConnell (New York: Bethlehem Publishers, 1926); *The Eclipse of the Historical Jesus*, Haverford Library Lectures, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 133 (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1963; translated into German in 1972); "Erastus of Corinth (Acts 19:22)," *JBL* 50 (1931) 42-58; "Four Features of Lucan Style," in *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert*, ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966) 87-102; "Gospel Study and Our Image of Early Christianity," *JBL* 83 (1964) 139-45; "The Informality of Early Christianity," *Crozer Quarterly* 21 (1944) 246-50; "Intimations of Immortality in the Thought of Jesus," Ingersoll Lecture, *HTR* 53 (1960) 1-26, reprinted in *SPCK Theological Collection* 3 (London: SPCK, 1964) 79-94; "Jesus and the Prophets," *JR* 5 (1925) 607-22; *Jesus: What Manner of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947; reprint ed., London: SPCK, 1962); "The Knowledge Claimed in Luke's Preface," *The Expositor* (Series 8) 24 (1922) 401-20; "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts, 1," *JBL* 44 (1925) 214-27; "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts, 2, Recent Arguments for Medical Language," *JBL* 45 (1926) 190-209; "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts, 3, Luke's Interest in Lodging," *JBL* 45 (1926) 305-22; "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts, 4, On Direct Quotation, with Some Uses of *hoti* and *ei*," *JBL* 48

(1929) 412-25; "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts, 5, Luke and the Horse Doctors," *JBL* 52 (1933) 55-65; "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts, 6, A Proper Name for Dives," *JBL* 81 (1962) 399-402; "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts, 7, Some Lukan Expressions of Time," *JBL* 82 (1963) 272-78; "A Liberal Approach to the Bible," *JRT* 14 (1957) 119-28; "Litotes in Acts (Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts, 8)," in *Festschrift to Honor F. W. Gingrich: Lexicographer, Scholar, Teacher and Committed Christian Layman*, ed. E. H. Barth and R. E. Concroft (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972) 58-69; "Looking at the Gospels Backwards," *SE* 2 (1964) 47-56; "Luke—Translator or Author?" *AJT* 24 (1920) 436-55; "The Macellum of Corinth," *JBL* 53 (1934) 134-41; *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York: Macmillan, 1927; reprint ed., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999, with a foreword by P. N. Anderson); "Mixed Motives in the Gospels," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 95 (1951) 117-24; "Motives of Biblical Scholarship," *JBL* 56 (1937) 1-16; *National Ideals in the Old Testament* (New York: Scribner's, 1920); "The New Testament and Early Christian Literature," in *The Interpreter's Bible* 7 (1951) 32-42, translated into Chinese (Hong Kong, 1959) 79-110; "New Testament Scholarship: Fifty Years in Retrospect," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 28 (1960) 194-98; "The New Testament Versus Christianity," *Harvard Divinity School Annual* (1935-36) 25-36; "New Testament Study in the Next Generation," *JR* 21 (1941) 412-20; "The Peril of Archaizing Ourselves," *Int* 3 (1949) 331-37; *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1937; reprint ed., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); "A Possible Case of Lukan Authorship," *HTR* 10 (1917) 237-44; "The Present State of New Testament Studies," in *Haverford Symposium on Archaeology and the Bible* (New Haven, CT: American Society of Oriental Research, 1938) 79-110; "The Purpose Expressed in Luke's Preface," *The Expositor* (Series 8) 21 (1921) 431-41, "The Greek and Jewish Traditions of Writing History" (with the editors, 7-29), "The Tradition" (209-64), "Subsidiary Points" (with the editors, 349-59), "Appendix C: Commentary on the Preface of Luke" (489-510); "The Social Translation of the Gospel," *HTR* 15 (1922) 1-13; "Some Foibles of

New Testament Scholarship," *JBR* 26 (1958) 213-16; *Style and Literary Method of Luke* (Harvard Theological Studies 6; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1920); "Towards a Bibliography of Henry Joel Cadbury," *Harvard Divinity School Annual Lectures and Book Review* 19 (1953-1954) 65-70; "Translation Principles of the R.S.V.," *Christian Century* 70 (1953) 1388-90; and K. Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity, Part 1: The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 4, English translation of Acts and commentary (London: Macmillan, 1933; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979); and K. Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 5, additional notes to their commentary, twelve of which were written by Cadbury, including, "Note 7: The Hellenists" (59-74), "Note 24: Dust and Garments" (269-77), "Note 26: Roman Law and the Trial of Paul" (297-338), "Note 27: The Winds" (with Lake, 338-44), "Note 28: *Hupozymata*" (345-54), "Note 29: The Titles of Jesus in Acts" (354-75), "Note 30: Names for Christians and Christianity in Acts" (375-92), "Note 31: The Summaries in Acts" (392-402), "Note 32: The Speeches in Acts" (402-27), "Note 36: The Family Tree of the Herods" (487-89) and "Note 38: Lucius of Cyrene" (489-99) (London: Macmillan, 1933).

Studies. M. H. Bacon, *Let This Life Speak: The Legacy of Henry Joel Cadbury* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987); W. W. Gasque, *A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 169-83; B. R. Gaventa, "The Peril of Modernizing Henry Joel Cadbury," *SBLSP* (1987) 64-79 (with bibliography of Cadbury's work on Luke-Acts, 78-79); S. G. Hall, "The Contribution of Henry Joel Cadbury to the Study of the Historical Jesus" (diss., Boston University, 1961); J. H. Hayes, "Cadbury, Henry Joel (1883-1974)," *DBI*, 1:156; Mary H. Jones, "Henry Joel Cadbury: A Biographical Sketch," in *Then and Now: Quaker Essays*, ed. A. Brinton (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960) 11-70; H. C. Niles, "The Wit and Wisdom of Henry Cadbury," *Harvard Divinity School Bulletin* 29 (1965) 35-48; "Tributes to Henry Cadbury," *Friends Quarterly* 8 (1973) 145-55; M. C. Parsons and J. B. Tyson, eds., *Cadbury, Knox and Talbert:*

American Contributions to the Study of Acts (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); A. Wilder, "In Memoriam," *NTS* 21 (1974-1975) 313-17.

P. N. Anderson

CAIRD, G(EOERGE) B(RADFORD) (1917-1984)

Life and Work. George Bradford Caird, a distinguished British biblical scholar, was born in London in 1917. A Dundee Scot, he received his early education in Birmingham, England, where his father worked as a construction engineer. Later he was able to attend Peterhouse, Cambridge, on a major scholarship in classics, receiving the B.A. (1939; first class honors in both parts of the classical tripos, with distinction in Greek and Latin verse). Moving to study theology at Mansfield College, Oxford, Caird gained the Oxford M.A., first class honors (1943). A year later he submitted "The New Testament Conception of *Doxa* (Glory)" to the theology faculty at Oxford, for which he was awarded the D.Phil. degree. After a challenging three-year wartime pastorate in the much-bombed London district suburb of Highgate, Caird and his young bride, Viola Mary (Mollie), moved to Canada (1946), where they were to spend the next thirteen years. In Canada, Caird served as professor of Old Testament at St. Stephen's College in Edmonton, Alberta, and later as professor of New Testament at McGill University and principal of the United Theological College of Montreal.

In 1959 Caird returned to Mansfield College, Oxford, serving first as senior tutor under J. Marsh and later as principal (1970-1977). Caird's reputation as a biblical scholar of judiciousness and insight grew steadily. His vast knowledge of both Testaments (he remains one of the few major modern interpreters twentieth-century scholars to have been a professor of both Old and New Testaments), his fastidiousness with words and his poetic imagination brought him numerous international distinctions, including four honorary doctorates (climaxed by the Oxford D.D.), election to the British Academy and the awarding of its coveted Burkitt Medal for Biblical Studies, appointment to be Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy

Scripture at Oxford and the winning of the Collins Religious Book Award (for *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, 1980). Caird's later years were taken up with biblical translation as a member of the translation panel of the Revised English Bible (following his previous experience as a translator of the New English Bible's Apocrypha) and editorial work (coeditor of the *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1977-1984). The author of approximately sixty articles, more than a hundred book reviews and six major volumes, Caird was hard at work on his seventh substantive work, *New Testament Theology*, when he died of a heart attack. A memorial volume, *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird*, was published in his honor (1987). There an extensive bibliography of his works may be found.

Context. Some of Caird's most formative educational years were carried on in turbulent international times (1939-1944) and equally turbulent theological times. The influence of Karl *Barth and Albert *Schweitzer had by 1939 made deep inroads in mainstream theological circles. The old liberalism of the nineteenth century was now out, as was the fundamentalism of the early twentieth. Caird, in some ways influenced by the neo-orthodox insights of Barth and E. Brunner, was affected more deeply by his teachers at Mansfield College, particularly N. Micklem and C. H. *Dodd, who, like Barth, stressed heavily the importance of history within theology and the essential trustworthiness of the apostolic witness but without the rigidity of fundamentalism. But now there was a new presence on the British scene. Rudolf *Bultmann and the form critics were beginning to be taken seriously in Britain, and Caird, like Dodd, took up a vigorous stand against the incursions of German historical skepticism while at the same time employing the historical-critical method in ways that were new, positive and challenging.

As is the case with most profoundly influential thinkers, it would be impossible to trace all of the influences that helped to make Caird the scholar he was to become. It may be said, however, that he can never be understood apart